Journal of People & Worldviews (JPW)

ISSN PRINT: 3141-1827
e-ISSN: 3141-1835



Vol 1, No. 4
September, 2026

A Publication of the Department of Philosophy University of Uyo, Nigeria.
In Collaboration with The European University of Nigeria, Abuja and Center of Didactics and Research in Education, Protestant University of Rwanda.

Journal of People and Worldviews is a peer reviewed academic journal devoted to the systematic study of human experience, belief systems, social meaning, and interpretive frameworks across cultures and contexts. The journal provides a scholarly space for examining how people understand themselves, others, and the world they inhabit.

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Article Processing Charges

Peer Review Fee, payable at submission: ₦5,000

Article Processing Charge, payable upon acceptance: ₦20,000

Payment Details

Account Name: Journal of People and Worldviews JPW

Bank: Union Bank of Nigeria ,Plc

Account No: 0237920017.

Submission Email

For inquiries or alternative submission arrangements:

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Printed & Published by:
Robertminder International Limited
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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

Influence of ICT Integration on Administrative Effectiveness of Principals in Public Secondary Schools in FCT

Abstract

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into educational administration has transformed the management of schools by enhancing efficiency, communication, and decision-making processes. This study examined the influence of ICT integration on the administrative effectiveness of principals in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the extent to which ICT utilization improves administrative functions such as planning, record management, communication, supervision, decision-making, staff management, and resource allocation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with principals and teachers in selected public secondary schools serving as the study population. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to determine the relationship between ICT integration and administrative effectiveness. The findings revealed that ICT integration significantly enhances principals' administrative effectiveness by improving the accuracy of record keeping, facilitating timely communication, promoting data-driven decision-making, strengthening instructional supervision, and increasing overall operational efficiency. However, the study also identified several challenges hindering effective ICT integration, including inadequate ICT infrastructure, irregular electricity supply, limited internet connectivity, insufficient funding, inadequate technical support, and inadequate ICT competency among some school administrators. The study concluded that effective ICT integration is a critical determinant of administrative effectiveness in contemporary secondary school management. It therefore recommended increased government investment in ICT infrastructure, continuous professional development programmes for school administrators, improved internet access, and the formulation of sustainable ICT policies to strengthen educational administration in public secondary schools. The study contributed to the growing body of knowledge on digital leadership and educational management by providing empirical evidence on the role of ICT in enhancing administrative effectiveness within the context of public secondary schools in the FCT, Nigeria.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Integration, Administrative effectiveness, School principals, Public secondary schools, educational administration, Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

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Date Received: 09th July, 2026

Date Accepted: 03rd August, 2026

Introduction

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has fundamentally transformed virtually every sector of human endeavor, including education. Over the past two decades, educational institutions have increasingly embraced digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning, research, and administrative processes. The emergence of digital platforms, cloud computing, artificial

intelligence (AI), big data analytics, mobile technologies, and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) has redefined how educational institutions are managed, creating more efficient, transparent, and data-driven administrative systems (Bond *et al*., 47). Consequently, ICT has shifted from being merely a supplementary tool to becoming an indispensable component of educational governance and institutional management. The evolution of ICT in education has progressed from the simple use of computers for instructional purposes to sophisticated digital ecosystems that support institutional planning, resource allocation, communication, monitoring, and decision-making. During the early phases of ICT adoption, educational technologies were largely confined to classroom instruction and basic record keeping. However, recent technological innovations have expanded ICT applications beyond pedagogy to encompass virtually every aspect of school administration, including student enrollment, personnel management, financial administration, timetable scheduling, examination management, inventory control, and institutional communication (Ghufron, 2024). This transformation has significantly improved the speed, accuracy, and accessibility of administrative information while reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies associated with manual administrative practices.

Administrative effectiveness remains one of the principal indicators of educational quality because the success of teaching and learning largely depends on the efficiency of institutional management. Effective school administration ensures optimal utilization of human, financial, and material resources while fostering accountability, organizational productivity, staff motivation, and improved student outcomes. Administrators who effectively leverage ICT are better positioned to make informed decisions based on reliable data, coordinate institutional activities, enhance stakeholder participation, and strengthen overall institutional performance. Recent systematic reviews indicate that ICT-supported administrative systems significantly improve operational efficiency, reduce administrative workload, strengthen communication, and facilitate data-driven governance in educational institutions (Liu *et al*., 2025). Despite these global advancements, the adoption and effective integration of ICT into educational administration remain uneven across countries and educational systems. While many developed nations have institutionalized digital governance in education, numerous developing countries continue to experience infrastructural deficiencies, inadequate funding, limited digital literacy, poor internet connectivity, and weak policy implementation that constrain the effective utilization of ICT in school administration. These disparities underscore the continuing digital divide that exists both across and within countries, thereby limiting the realization of the full benefits of digital transformation in education (UNESCO, 2023).

Citation: Emmanuel, Ukata E.. "*Influence of ICT Integration on Administrative Effectiveness of Principals in Public Secondary Schools in FCT*". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp1-20.

The increasing complexity of educational management demands administrative systems that are efficient, transparent, accountable, and responsive to rapidly changing educational environments. Nevertheless, many educational institutions, particularly in developing countries, continue to rely heavily on manual administrative procedures characterized by cumbersome documentation, delayed information processing, poor record management, ineffective communication, and limited evidence-based decision-making. Such administrative inefficiencies often contribute to poor resource utilization, delayed service delivery, reduced institutional accountability, and diminished educational quality (Agbesanya *et al.*, 2024). Another persistent concern is the widening digital divide between educational institutions with access to advanced technologies and those operating under severe infrastructural constraints. Schools located in rural and economically disadvantaged communities frequently experience inadequate ICT facilities, resulting in unequal access to digital administrative tools and reduced institutional capacity to benefit from technological innovations. This disparity reinforces educational inequalities and limits opportunities for effective governance and quality assurance (UNESCO, 2023). The purpose of this study is to critically examine the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing administrative effectiveness within educational institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to synthesize contemporary literature on the evolution and integration of ICT in educational administration, evaluate its contributions to administrative efficiency, decision-making, communication, and institutional accountability, identify the major challenges limiting successful ICT implementation, and discuss emerging technological trends and evidence-based policy implications for strengthening educational administration in the era of digital transformation.

Conceptual Clarifications

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the most influential innovations shaping modern education and organizational management. Although the concept has been interpreted differently across disciplines, scholars generally agree that ICT encompasses the technological tools, systems, and processes used to create, process, store, retrieve, transmit, and disseminate information efficiently. ICT combines computing technologies with communication networks, thereby facilitating rapid information exchange across individuals, organizations, and societies (Laudon & Laudon, 2022).

School Administration

School administration refers to the process of coordinating human, financial, material, and technological resources to achieve educational objectives effectively and efficiently (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). It encompasses planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, supervising, evaluating,

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and controlling educational activities within formal institutions. Educational administration extends beyond routine office management. Contemporary school administrators function as instructional leaders, policy implementers, organizational managers, financial planners, technology leaders, and agents of institutional change.

Theoretical Perspectives

The successful integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school administration cannot be fully understood without reference to theoretical frameworks that explain why individuals and organizations adopt, reject, or continue to use technological innovations. Theories of technology adoption provide conceptual lenses for examining the behavioural, organizational, and environmental factors that influence ICT implementation within educational institutions. They explain administrators' attitudes toward technology, organizational readiness for innovation, institutional support mechanisms, and the conditions that facilitate or impede successful digital transformation. Educational institutions are complex organizations characterized by multiple stakeholders, hierarchical structures, established routines, and diverse professional cultures. Consequently, the adoption of ICT involves more than the acquisition of technological infrastructure; it requires changes in organizational behaviour, leadership practices, institutional culture, professional competence, and policy implementation (Fullan, 2016). Several theoretical models have therefore been developed to explain technology adoption across different organizational contexts. Among the most influential are the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). These theories have been widely applied in educational research to explain ICT integration in teaching, learning, and school administration.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was developed by **Fred D. Davis (1989)** as an adaptation of the Theory of Reasoned Action developed by Fishbein and Ajzen. Davis proposed TAM to explain why individuals accept or reject information technologies within organizational settings. Since its introduction, TAM has become one of the most influential and widely tested models for understanding user acceptance of technological innovations across education, healthcare, business, and government. The central premise of TAM is that individuals' intention to use technology is primarily determined by two cognitive beliefs: **Perceived Usefulness (PU)** and **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)**. According to Davis (1989), if users believe that a technological system will improve their job performance and can be used without excessive effort, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the technology, leading to behavioural intention and eventual actual use.

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Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)

The **Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)** was developed by **Everett M. Rogers (1962, revised 2003)** to explain how new ideas, technologies, and innovations spread within societies and organizations over time. Rogers defined diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through particular channels over time among members of a social system (Rogers, 2003). Unlike TAM, which focuses primarily on individual perceptions, DOI examines innovation adoption as a social and organizational process involving communication, leadership, institutional culture, and social influence.

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

The **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)** was developed by **Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003)** to integrate the strengths of eight earlier technology acceptance theories, including TAM, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Motivational Model, the Innovation Diffusion Theory, and the Social Cognitive Theory. UTAUT was proposed to provide a more comprehensive explanation of technology adoption by incorporating both individual and organizational determinants of technology use.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) collectively provide robust theoretical foundations for understanding ICT integration in school administration. While TAM emphasizes individual perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, DOI explains how innovations spread through organizational and social systems, and UTAUT integrates technological, organizational, and social determinants of technology adoption into a unified framework. Together, these theories demonstrate that successful ICT integration extends beyond technological availability to encompass leadership commitment, organizational culture, professional competence, facilitating conditions, and supportive public policies. Consequently, they offer valuable guidance for researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders seeking to promote sustainable digital transformation and improve administrative effectiveness in

Applications of Information and Communication Technology in School Administration

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school administration has fundamentally transformed the management of educational institutions worldwide. The increasing complexity of educational systems, coupled with the demand for efficiency, accountability, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making, has necessitated the adoption of digital technologies in administrative processes. ICT has shifted school administration from traditional paper-based procedures to digitally enabled systems that facilitate the collection, storage, processing, dissemination, and utilization of institutional information (Laudon & Laudon, 2022). School

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administration encompasses a wide range of managerial activities, including student affairs, personnel administration, financial management, communication, scheduling, planning, supervision, monitoring, and institutional evaluation. Traditionally, these responsibilities relied heavily on manual record-keeping and bureaucratic procedures, which were often characterized by inefficiency, duplication of effort, delays in information retrieval, and susceptibility to errors. The emergence of ICT has revolutionized these processes through the introduction of School Management Information Systems (SMIS), Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS), cloud-based platforms, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness and administrative efficiency (UNESCO, 2023). The application of ICT in school administration extends beyond automation of routine tasks. Contemporary digital technologies support strategic planning, institutional accountability, predictive analysis, collaborative decision-making, and educational governance. Consequently, ICT has become a strategic instrument for improving institutional performance, enhancing service delivery, promoting transparency, and supporting sustainable educational development (OECD, 2023).

Student Records Management

Student records management is one of the earliest and most significant applications of ICT in educational administration. Student records constitute the foundation of institutional planning, decision-making, academic administration, and educational accountability. These records include personal information, admission data, attendance, academic performance, disciplinary history, health information, financial records, and graduation status. Traditionally, student records were maintained manually through paper files, registers, and filing cabinets. Such systems were prone to loss, physical deterioration, duplication, unauthorized access, and delays in information retrieval. ICT has transformed student records management through the adoption of Student Information Systems (SIS), electronic databases, and cloud-based management platforms that provide centralized and secure repositories for student information (Alabi, 2017).

Computerized student information systems facilitate efficient data entry, storage, retrieval, updating, and reporting. Administrators can access comprehensive student profiles within seconds, enabling timely decision-making regarding admissions, progression, graduation, transfers, and disciplinary matters. Automated systems also reduce clerical errors associated with manual documentation while improving data accuracy and consistency.

Furthermore, electronic records support real-time communication with parents through online portals that provide information on attendance, examination results, fee payments, behavioural reports, and academic progress. Such

systems enhance parental involvement and institutional transparency. Digital student records also contribute to educational planning. Administrators can analyse enrolment trends, demographic characteristics, completion rates, and academic performance to support strategic resource allocation and policy formulation. Integration with learning management systems further enables continuous monitoring of student engagement and academic achievement.

Staff Management

Human resource management represents another critical area in which ICT has significantly enhanced school administration. Effective staff management involves recruitment, deployment, attendance monitoring, performance appraisal, payroll administration, professional development, promotion, leave management, and retirement planning. Modern Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) automate these administrative processes by maintaining comprehensive digital personnel databases containing employees' qualifications, employment history, professional certifications, salaries, promotions, disciplinary records, and training activities (Dessler, 2020).

Electronic staff management systems improve administrative efficiency by eliminating repetitive paperwork, reducing processing time, and facilitating rapid retrieval of personnel information. Payroll processing becomes more accurate through automated salary calculations, tax deductions, pension contributions, and statutory remittances. ICT also supports teacher performance evaluation through digital appraisal systems that integrate classroom observations, student performance indicators, professional development records, and institutional performance metrics. Such systems provide objective evidence for promotion, recognition, and capacity-building decisions. Biometric attendance systems further enhance staff accountability by providing accurate records of employee punctuality and attendance while minimizing fraudulent attendance practices. Additionally, online professional development platforms enable administrators to monitor teachers' participation in training programmes, certifications, and continuous professional learning activities, thereby supporting institutional capacity development.

Communication Systems

Communication constitutes one of the fundamental functions of school administration because effective educational management depends upon timely exchange of information among administrators, teachers, students, parents, governing boards, education authorities, and external stakeholders. ICT has transformed institutional communication through electronic mail, mobile applications, Short Message Service (SMS), video conferencing, institutional websites, social media platforms, cloud collaboration tools, and School Management Systems (Bush, 2020).

Digital communication significantly reduces delays associated with traditional correspondence while

facilitating instant dissemination of information regarding academic calendars, examinations, meetings, emergencies, policy changes, and institutional announcements.

Parents increasingly interact with schools through digital communication platforms that provide access to attendance reports, examination results, disciplinary records, fee payment information, and school activities. Such interactions strengthen school-community relationships and promote participatory educational governance. Cloud-based collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Google Workspace, and Zoom have also transformed internal organizational communication by supporting virtual meetings, collaborative document editing, online committee work, and remote administrative coordination. During emergency situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, digital communication systems enabled educational institutions to maintain administrative continuity despite restrictions on physical interactions.

Financial Administration

Financial administration is essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and effective utilization of educational resources. ICT has modernized financial management through computerized accounting systems, electronic budgeting, online payment platforms, inventory management software, procurement systems, and financial reporting applications. Computerized financial management systems automate budgeting, expenditure tracking, payroll processing, revenue collection, procurement documentation, asset management, and auditing procedures (Laudon & Laudon, 2022). Electronic payment systems have significantly reduced cash-based transactions, thereby minimizing financial fraud and improving institutional accountability. School fees, examination charges, salaries, and procurement payments can now be processed electronically through secure digital platforms.

Financial software generates real-time financial reports, enabling administrators to monitor budget implementation, expenditure patterns, outstanding liabilities, and resource allocation continuously. These capabilities support evidence-based financial planning and strengthen institutional governance. Digital inventory systems similarly facilitate efficient monitoring of educational resources, laboratory equipment, library materials, office supplies, and institutional assets while reducing losses resulting from poor documentation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) constitute essential components of educational quality assurance and institutional accountability. ICT has significantly strengthened monitoring processes through digital dashboards, electronic reporting systems, performance management platforms, and data visualization technologies. Administrators utilize ICT to monitor student attendance, academic performance, teacher productivity, curriculum implementation, financial

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expenditure, infrastructure utilization, and programme outcomes.

Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) provide comprehensive institutional datasets that facilitate continuous evaluation of educational performance at school, district, and national levels (UNESCO, 2023). Digital monitoring systems generate performance indicators and automated reports that enable administrators to identify emerging challenges, evaluate interventions, and implement timely corrective actions. Furthermore, mobile technologies facilitate field monitoring by enabling inspectors and supervisors to collect institutional information electronically during school visits, thereby improving the reliability and timeliness of monitoring activities.

The application of ICT in school administration has fundamentally transformed the management of educational institutions by enhancing efficiency, accountability, transparency, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making. Digital technologies have improved the administration of student records, personnel management, institutional communication, financial operations, scheduling, monitoring and evaluation, and strategic planning while reducing administrative workload and increasing organizational effectiveness.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence on the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in school administration has expanded considerably over the past two decades. Rather than presenting studies chronologically, the literature may be understood through broad thematic patterns that emerge across different geographical contexts. These themes include the influence of ICT on administrative efficiency, communication and collaboration, records management, financial administration, decision-making, accountability, and institutional effectiveness. While developed countries have generally reported positive outcomes owing to advanced technological infrastructure and supportive policy environments, empirical evidence from African countries reveals both remarkable progress and persistent structural challenges. Consequently, the empirical literature demonstrates that the effectiveness of ICT in school administration depends not merely on the availability of technology but also on leadership competence, organizational readiness, policy implementation, digital literacy, and infrastructural support.

Empirical studies conducted in Europe consistently demonstrate that ICT integration has significantly transformed educational administration through automation, improved communication, enhanced accountability, and data-driven decision-making. Rather than functioning merely as technological tools, digital systems have become integral components of educational governance and institutional management. Researchers generally agree that schools equipped with integrated management information systems exhibit greater administrative efficiency, transparency, and

responsiveness than institutions relying primarily on manual administrative processes (European Commission, 2023). Across European countries, school information management systems have become central to administrative operations. Electronic platforms are widely used for student enrolment, attendance monitoring, personnel management, budgeting, scheduling, performance evaluation, and communication with parents and educational authorities. These systems enable administrators to access real-time institutional data, thereby improving planning and resource allocation. Studies conducted in the United Kingdom, Finland, the Netherlands, and Germany indicate that digital administration has substantially reduced bureaucratic delays while increasing the accuracy of institutional records (OECD, 2023). Research in Scandinavian countries further illustrates the importance of leadership in successful ICT integration. Although schools possess sophisticated technological infrastructure, administrators who demonstrate transformational leadership and digital competence are significantly more effective in implementing ICT initiatives than those lacking technological confidence. Consequently, leadership quality rather than technology availability alone has emerged as a strong predictor of administrative effectiveness (European Schoolnet, 2022).

Empirical evidence from Africa presents a more heterogeneous picture of ICT integration in school administration. While many countries have adopted national digital education policies and invested in technological infrastructure, implementation remains uneven because of infrastructural deficits, inadequate funding, limited technical expertise, unreliable electricity supply, and insufficient institutional support. Nevertheless, African scholarship increasingly demonstrates that schools capable of effectively integrating ICT experience measurable improvements in administrative effectiveness. South African research provides some of the strongest empirical evidence on ICT utilization within the African continent. Following substantial governmental investment in educational technology, many schools have adopted computerized administrative systems for student information management, financial administration, communication, and institutional planning. Studies consistently report positive associations between ICT integration and administrative productivity, particularly in urban schools possessing adequate technological infrastructure (Department of Basic Education South Africa, 2022). Researchers nevertheless observe significant disparities between urban and rural institutions. Schools located in economically disadvantaged communities often experience inadequate internet connectivity, insufficient hardware, limited technical support, and shortages of digitally competent personnel. Consequently, while ICT possesses considerable transformative potential, its benefits remain unevenly distributed (Mlitwa & Van Belle, 2018).

The empirical literature demonstrates substantial agreement that ICT

positively influences school administrative effectiveness. Across developed and developing countries, researchers consistently report improvements in student records management, communication, financial administration, personnel management, planning, monitoring, and organizational decision-making. Electronic management information systems reduce administrative workload, improve data accuracy, facilitate rapid information retrieval, strengthen accountability, and enhance institutional transparency (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2023).

Another area of agreement concerns the importance of leadership and human capacity. Empirical studies consistently indicate that successful ICT integration depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on administrators' digital competence, organizational commitment, supportive institutional culture, and continuous professional development. Schools possessing similar technological resources often experience different implementation outcomes because of variations in leadership quality and organizational readiness (Fullan, 2016). Despite these broad areas of consensus, contradictions remain within the literature. Some studies report strong positive relationships between ICT integration and administrative effectiveness, whereas others find only moderate or context-dependent effects. These inconsistencies are frequently attributed to differences in infrastructure quality, funding, institutional leadership, socioeconomic conditions, government policies, and users' technological competence. Moreover, while developed countries generally report mature ICT ecosystems supporting administrative innovation, evidence from many African countries reflects continuing infrastructural and institutional constraints.

Important knowledge gaps remain. Much of the existing literature focuses primarily on ICT availability or usage rather than the quality, intensity, and effectiveness of ICT integration within administrative processes. Comparative studies examining multiple dimensions of administrative effectiveness simultaneously remain relatively scarce, particularly within developing countries. Furthermore, limited empirical attention has been devoted to emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, predictive analytics, and big data in school administration, especially in African educational contexts. There is also a need for context-specific studies that examine how institutional culture, leadership practices, policy implementation, and infrastructural conditions interact to influence ICT integration and administrative outcomes. Overall, the empirical evidence suggests that ICT possesses considerable potential to transform school administration by improving efficiency, accountability, communication, and evidence-based decision-making. However, realizing these benefits requires more than technological investment; it demands sustained policy commitment, institutional readiness, leadership capacity, professional development, reliable infrastructure, and continuous

evaluation. These unresolved issues provide a strong justification for further empirical investigation into the relationship between ICT integration and administrative effectiveness in educational institutions.

Challenges of ICT Integration

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school administration has transformed educational management by enhancing efficiency, communication, record management, financial accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. Nevertheless, the realization of these benefits depends largely on the existence of an enabling environment characterized by adequate infrastructure, competent personnel, supportive policies, reliable electricity, sustainable funding, and effective institutional leadership. Although many governments have adopted ICT policies aimed at digitizing educational administration, the implementation of these policies has been uneven, particularly in developing countries where institutional, economic, technological, and human resource constraints continue to impede successful ICT integration (OECD, 2023). Research consistently indicates that technological innovations alone cannot improve administrative effectiveness unless accompanied by organizational readiness and institutional support (Fullan, 2016). Numerous empirical studies have therefore identified several recurring challenges that hinder the effective adoption and utilization of ICT in school administration. These include inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient funding, poor internet connectivity, low digital literacy among school personnel, and resistance to organizational change, cybersecurity threats, weak policy implementation, and unreliable electricity supply. These challenges often interact, creating a cycle that limits the effectiveness and sustainability of ICT initiatives within educational institutions. The availability of adequate ICT infrastructure constitutes one of the most important prerequisites for successful technology integration in school administration. ICT infrastructure encompasses computer hardware, software applications, communication networks, internet facilities, servers, data storage systems, power backup equipment, and technical support services necessary for effective digital administration (Laudon & Laudon, 2022).

Financial resources are fundamental to the acquisition, implementation, maintenance, and sustainability of ICT systems in educational institutions. ICT integration requires substantial investment in hardware procurement, software licensing, internet subscriptions, technical support services, cybersecurity infrastructure, staff training, and periodic equipment replacement. Inadequate funding remains one of the most frequently cited obstacles to ICT integration in school administration, particularly in developing economies where educational budgets are often constrained. Limited financial allocations compel schools to prioritize essential operational expenditures over technological investments, resulting in outdated equipment, insufficient

software, and delayed implementation of ICT initiatives (OECD, 2023).

Reliable internet connectivity is essential for contemporary school administration because most administrative applications including cloud computing, online admissions, electronic communication, financial management systems, virtual meetings, and educational management information systems depend upon stable internet access. Despite substantial improvements in global internet penetration, many educational institutions continue to experience slow bandwidth, unstable connections, limited network coverage, and high internet costs. These challenges significantly reduce administrators' ability to utilize cloud-based applications, communicate effectively with stakeholders, and access online institutional resources (International Telecommunication Union, 2023).

The successful integration of ICT depends not only on technological availability but also on the digital competence of users. Digital literacy refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required to utilize digital technologies effectively, safely, and responsibly (UNESCO, 2023). Numerous studies indicate that inadequate ICT skills among school administrators, teachers, and support staff constitute a major obstacle to successful ICT implementation. Individuals lacking digital competence often experience anxiety, reduced confidence, and reluctance to utilize computerized administrative systems (Venkatesh *et al.,* 2012). Digital illiteracy affects multiple administrative functions, including electronic record management, spreadsheet analysis, database utilization, online communication, financial software operation, cloud computing, and data analytics. Consequently, sophisticated ICT systems frequently remain underutilized despite significant financial investment.

The literature demonstrates that the successful integration of ICT into school administration is influenced by a complex interaction of technological, financial, organizational, human, and policy-related factors. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, poor internet connectivity, digital illiteracy, resistance to change, cybersecurity threats, policy implementation gaps, and unreliable electricity supply significantly constrain the realization of ICT's transformative potential. These barriers are particularly pronounced in developing countries, where structural and institutional limitations often impede effective technology adoption. Importantly, these challenges should not be viewed as isolated problems but as interconnected factors that collectively influence administrative effectiveness. Addressing them requires coordinated action involving governments, educational authorities, school leaders, development partners, and the private sector. Strategic investment in ICT infrastructure, sustained funding, continuous professional development, strengthened cybersecurity, effective policy implementation, expanded broadband access, and reliable electricity supply are essential for

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creating digitally resilient educational institutions capable of achieving improved administrative efficiency, accountability, transparency, and service delivery.

Emerging Trends in ICT Integration for School Administration

The rapid evolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) continues to reshape educational administration beyond the traditional use of computers, internet services, and management information systems. The emergence of intelligent digital technologies has transformed how educational institutions plan, manage resources, communicate with stakeholders, monitor performance, and make strategic decisions. These emerging technologies are increasingly characterized by automation, interconnectedness, predictive capabilities, and data-driven decision-making, thereby redefining the roles and responsibilities of school administrators in the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2023). The educational landscape is witnessing a paradigm shift from simple computerization of administrative processes to digitally intelligent educational ecosystems that integrate artificial intelligence, cloud computing, Internet of Things (IoT), learning analytics, blockchain technology, and smart educational infrastructures. These technologies facilitate real-time information management, improve organizational efficiency, enhance institutional transparency, support personalized decision-making, and strengthen educational governance (OECD, 2023). Consequently, contemporary school leaders are expected to possess not only managerial competencies but also digital leadership skills capable of navigating increasingly complex technological environments.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents one of the most transformative innovations in educational administration. AI refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that traditionally require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, problem-solving, prediction, language processing, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Unlike conventional software that follows predetermined instructions, AI systems analyze large volumes of data, identify patterns, generate predictions, and continuously improve through machine learning algorithms. Within school administration, AI is increasingly employed to automate routine administrative tasks, improve institutional planning, support decision-making, and optimize resource management. AI-powered systems can process admissions, manage student records, monitor attendance, schedule classes, allocate teaching workloads, generate administrative reports, and forecast enrolment trends with remarkable speed and accuracy (Holmes *et al.*, 2022). One important application of AI is predictive analytics. By analyzing historical student data, attendance records, academic performance, and behavioural indicators, AI systems can identify students at risk of academic failure or dropping out, thereby enabling administrators to implement timely

interventions. Similarly, AI supports financial planning by forecasting budgetary requirements and resource utilization based on historical expenditure patterns.

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to an interconnected network of physical devices embedded with sensors, communication technologies, and software that enable them to collect, exchange, and analyse data automatically through the internet (Atzori, Iera, & Morabito, 2017). IoT extends digital connectivity beyond computers to include everyday objects capable of communicating with one another in real time. In school administration, IoT technologies support intelligent management of educational facilities through automated monitoring of classrooms, laboratories, libraries, security systems, transportation, and energy consumption. Smart sensors can monitor classroom occupancy, environmental conditions, electricity usage, water consumption, and equipment utilization, thereby enabling administrators to optimize institutional resources and reduce operational costs. IoT also enhances school security through intelligent surveillance systems, biometric access control, smart identification cards, and automated visitor management systems. Administrators can monitor school premises remotely, receive instant alerts regarding security breaches, and respond rapidly to emergencies.

Cloud computing has emerged as one of the most influential technologies supporting educational administration. It refers to the delivery of computing resources including software, storage, databases, servers, networking, and processing power through internet-based platforms rather than local institutional infrastructure (Mell & Grance, 2011). Cloud computing has transformed school administration by enabling institutions to store, manage, and access administrative information from any location with internet connectivity. Administrators no longer depend solely on physical servers or paper-based records; instead, institutional data are securely maintained within cloud environments that support collaboration, scalability, and business continuity. Cloud-based School Management Systems integrate numerous administrative functions, including admissions, student records, personnel management, payroll administration, financial accounting, examination processing, communication, inventory management, and reporting. Because multiple users can access the same database simultaneously, collaboration among administrators, teachers, and support staff is substantially improved.

Emerging technologies are fundamentally transforming the landscape of school administration by shifting institutional management from traditional administrative practices to intelligent, data-driven, and interconnected digital ecosystems. Artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, learning analytics, blockchain technology, digital leadership, and smart schools collectively represent the next phase of educational transformation. These innovations enhance administrative

efficiency, improve decision-making, strengthen accountability, promote institutional transparency, and support evidence-based governance. However, the successful integration of these technologies extends beyond technological acquisition. It requires visionary leadership, adequate infrastructure, continuous professional development, effective cybersecurity frameworks, supportive policy environments, and ethical governance of educational data. As educational systems continue to embrace digital transformation, school administrators must develop the competencies necessary to harness these emerging technologies while addressing the accompanying challenges of equity, privacy, sustainability, and responsible innovation. Institutions capable of integrating these trends strategically will be better positioned to deliver effective, resilient, and future-oriented educational administration.

Conclusion

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school administration has emerged as one of the most transformative developments in contemporary educational management. As educational institutions respond to the increasing demands of globalization, digitalization, accountability, and knowledge-driven economies, ICT has become indispensable for improving administrative efficiency, organizational effectiveness, and the overall quality of educational governance. This review has demonstrated that ICT is no longer merely a technological innovation but a strategic resource that supports effective planning, communication, decision-making, monitoring, financial management, personnel administration, and institutional accountability. The conceptual analysis established that ICT encompasses a broad spectrum of digital technologies including computer systems, communication networks; cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and digital management platforms that facilitate the collection, processing, storage, dissemination, and utilization of information within educational organizations. ICT integration extends beyond the simple acquisition of technological devices to include the systematic incorporation of digital technologies into administrative structures, organizational processes, institutional culture, and strategic leadership. Consequently, effective ICT integration requires technological infrastructure, competent personnel, supportive organizational environments, and enabling public policies.

The review further revealed that school administration has evolved considerably from traditional bureaucratic management toward data-driven, technology-enabled, and collaborative governance. Contemporary educational administrators are increasingly expected to function as digital leaders capable of utilizing technological innovations to improve institutional effectiveness, enhance communication among stakeholders, strengthen transparency, and promote evidence-based decision-making. Administrative effectiveness is therefore no longer measured solely by operational efficiency but also by the

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capacity of educational leaders to leverage ICT for continuous institutional improvement, innovation, and accountability.

The theoretical perspectives examined in this article including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) provide complementary explanations for understanding ICT adoption within educational organizations. Collectively, these theories demonstrate that successful ICT integration depends on users' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, organizational support, leadership commitment, facilitating conditions, and the broader diffusion of innovation within educational systems. The theories further suggest that technology adoption is influenced not only by technical characteristics but also by social, organizational, behavioural, and contextual factors.

Importantly, the review indicates that technology alone does not guarantee improved administrative performance. Organizational effectiveness depends on the interaction between technological resources, leadership competence, institutional readiness, professional development, organizational culture, and stakeholder commitment. Schools with similar technological resources often achieve different outcomes because of variations in leadership practices, strategic vision, digital competence, and institutional support systems. Consequently, investments in technological infrastructure must be accompanied by sustained investments in human capacity development, organizational learning, policy implementation, and institutional governance. The findings of this review carry important implications for educational policy and practice. Governments should strengthen investments in digital infrastructure, broadband connectivity, cybersecurity, reliable electricity, and sustainable funding mechanisms while ensuring equitable access to ICT resources across urban and rural schools. School administrators should embrace digital leadership by promoting organizational innovation, continuous professional development, evidence-based management, and collaborative institutional cultures. Teacher education institutions should redesign their curricula to prepare future educational leaders with competencies in digital administration, data analytics, artificial intelligence, and educational technology management. Likewise, ICT developers should design user-centred, secure, interoperable, and contextually appropriate technological solutions capable of addressing the unique needs of educational institutions, particularly within resource-constrained environments. Development partners should continue supporting national digital transformation initiatives through technical assistance, capacity building, infrastructure development, research collaboration, and knowledge exchange.

As educational systems continue to adapt to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the rapidly evolving digital society, ICT will remain central to the modernization of

educational administration. Future research should move beyond examining the availability of ICT resources to investigating how emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, blockchain, and smart educational ecosystems can be strategically integrated to improve educational leadership, organizational performance, policy implementation, and sustainable educational development. Such research will contribute to the development of more resilient, inclusive, innovative, and technologically responsive educational institutions capable of meeting the complex challenges of twenty-first-century education.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Theoretical Article

Open Access

Guidance and Counselling as a Pedagogical Tool for Developing Entrepreneurial Acumen in Nigerian Youths

Abstract

Nigeria is facing a contradictory crisis where growing graduate unemployment coincides with an entrepreneurship education curriculum mandated in all tertiary institutions. The study suggested that the missing link in entrepreneurship education is not the information, but rather the students' psychological and emotional unpreparedness. Drawing on recent empirical evidence and theoretical insights from counselling psychology, this paper maintained that guidance and counselling techniques, particularly personal and social counselling, career guidance, and solution-focused coaching, provides a pedagogical link between entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial action. The study made specific curriculum revision proposals, such as the inclusion of counselling-led experiential modules, counsellor training in entrepreneurial psychology, and the construction of school-based entrepreneurship clinics. It concluded that without incorporating guidance and counselling. into the implementation architecture of entrepreneurship education curriculum, Nigeria risks sustaining a curriculum that would inform students on entrepreneurship rather than transform them into entrepreneurs to drive the economy.

Keywords: Guidance and counselling, entrepreneurship education, youth unemployment, curriculum review, Nigerian tertiary institutions, entrepreneurial acumen.

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Date Received: 08th July, 2026

Date Accepted: 11th August, 2026

Introduction

Every year, Nigerian tertiary institutions release hundreds of thousands of graduates into an economy that simply cannot absorb them. The National Bureau of Statistics regularly reports youth unemployment figures that would be considered a national emergency in any developed economy. In response, successive governments have embraced entrepreneurship education as a policy panacea. Since the early 2000s, entrepreneurship education has been made compulsory across Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, with the explicit goal of producing job creators rather than job seekers (Ayo-Sobowale & Oyeyemi, 2024).

A systematic review of Nigerian entrepreneurship education research concluded that while the curriculum exists on paper, significant gaps persist between academic instruction and practical implementation, particularly in the development of operational efficiency and financial decision-making skills (Itar & Akinbamilowo, 2025). In other words, students are receiving instruction about entrepreneurship without acquiring the psychological and behavioural capacities to actually become entrepreneurial. A research on

entrepreneurship education management in Enugu State revealed significant implementation gaps, including outdated curricular approaches and insufficient practical engagement, which undermine students' ability to translate knowledge into entrepreneurial action (Chukwu & Eze, 2021). The failure of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is not solely a curriculum issue. It is a problem with student readiness, which falls squarely under the purview of guidance and counselling.

In Nigerian educational settings, guidance and counselling. have traditionally been limited to crisis intervention, dealing with disciplinary concerns, career confusion, or examination anxiety. However, new research indicates that when used appropriately, counselling. techniques would cultivate exactly the qualities that characterize entrepreneurial success, self-efficacy, resilience, creative problem-solving, and the ability to endure ambiguity (Hapsari *et al.,* 2025). Guidance and counselling must thus be fundamentally repositioned from the periphery of Nigerian education to the core of entrepreneurial pedagogy.

The Entrepreneurship Education Landscape in Nigeria

To grasp what is missing, there must the recognition of what has been accomplished. Since the implementation of mandatory entrepreneurship courses, Nigerian tertiary institutions have graduated students who have at least been exposed to business plan drafting, basic financial literacy, and case studies of successful Nigerian entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship education has had a significant favourable impact on students' inclinations to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours (Itar & Akinbamilowo, 2025). Students who complete these programmes express a deeper understanding of self-employment as a career route.

A study of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ogun State revealed that business acumen had significant beneficial effects on entrepreneurial performance. This simply prove that business knowledge significantly boosts business performance, and researchers are 95% certain that this is not a coincidence. In plain terms, if you learn how to run a business well, you are far more likely to succeed. Innovation and business acumen collectively showed a substantial cumulative relationship with entrepreneurial success. This prove that combining innovation with business knowledge creates a very strong formula for entrepreneurial success, and researchers are confident this is a real effect. A great idea alone is not enough, you also need to know how to run a business. (Adebayo *et al.,* 2025). This demonstrates that the capacities that entrepreneurship education aims to create have a genuine impact on real-world business outcomes.

According to research on curriculum development in Nigerian universities, while graduates have strong cognitive and theoretical knowledge, they consistently lack the applied competencies required for innovation and entrepreneurship, resulting in a significant gap between what is taught

in classrooms and what is required for real-world business creation (Metuonu *et al.,* 2025). Perhaps most crucially, entrepreneurial education in Nigeria remains mostly cognitive, focusing on what students should know rather than who they should become. This is where guidance and counselling techniques come into play.

The Role of Guidance and Counselling Beyond Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is more than just understanding how to create a business strategy or to calculate profit margins, but it is about who a person evolves into over a period of time. A study of small business owners in Lagos State revealed that creativity and entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly improve innovation, adaptability, and business profitability, whereas personal initiative and risk-taking propensity contribute to long-term performance (Osuolale *et al.,* 2025). None of these characteristics can be imparted to pupils through a lecture or learned from a textbook, they must be developed from the inside out, through honest reflection, hands-on learning that may include failure, and, most crucially, the consistent support of someone who believes in them before they believe in themselves.

Guidance and counselling techniques are uniquely positioned to cultivate these dispositions. A study conducted in Bauchi State, Nigeria, found that counselling approaches had a significant influence on senior secondary school students' skills acquisition, with clear implications for entrepreneurial development (Danladi *et al.,* 2025). The counselling interaction characterised by active listening, goal-setting, and the co-construction of action plans, proved more effective than didactic instruction alone in helping students translate knowledge into practical competence.

A study on personal and social guidance programmes for junior high school students in Indonesia found that such programmes could systematically foster social entrepreneurship by mapping students' personal and social problems, identifying their strengths, and providing targeted assistance according to individual characteristics (Hapsari *et al.,* 2025). The researchers developed a framework centred on social values, community environment, innovation, and economic activities. The implication is clear, counselling techniques can be structured to produce entrepreneurial outcomes.

"What do you know about business?" is the question posed by traditional entrepreneurship education. "What are your fears about failure?" is a question posed by guidance and counselling. What financial tales do you tell yourself? What kind of assistance are you in need of to start? These are fundamental questions in entrepreneurship, not incidental. Among the most powerful obstacles to entrepreneurial activity are poor self-efficacy, fear of failure, and the internalized notion that business is "not for people like me." These obstacles are directly addressed by counselling.

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Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)

Social Cognitive Theory, developed by Albert Bandura, posits that human functioning is the product of a dynamic and reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behavioural patterns, and environmental influences. This triadic reciprocal determinism suggests that individuals are not merely products of their environment but also active agents who can influence their circumstances through their actions and beliefs. Central to the theory is the concept of self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. Self-efficacy influences the choices people make, the effort they expend, and their persistence in the face of obstacles.

Bandura also emphasised observational learning, whereby individuals acquire new behaviours and attitudes by observing others, particularly those they perceive as role models. This learning process involves four key components: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Additionally, the theory highlights the role of self-regulation, the capacity to set goals, monitor progress, and adjust behaviour in pursuit of desired outcomes. These mechanisms collectively explain how individuals develop the psychological and behavioural capacities necessary for successful functioning in various domains, including entrepreneurship.

Social Cognitive Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding the central argument of this paper, that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has failed to produce entrepreneurs because it has neglected the psychological and emotional dimensions of entrepreneurial development. The theory explains the gap between entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial action through several interconnected mechanisms. The theory illuminates why students who complete entrepreneurship courses may still fail to launch businesses. Self-efficacy is a critical determinant of whether individuals will translate knowledge into action. Students may possess business knowledge but lack the confidence in their ability to successfully navigate the uncertainties of starting and running a business. As the paper notes, "students are receiving instruction about entrepreneurship without acquiring the psychological and behavioural capacities to actually become entrepreneurial." Self-efficacy beliefs, according to Bandura, are developed through four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Traditional entrepreneurship education relies almost exclusively on cognitive instruction, which provides information but does not systematically build self-efficacy through the other three sources. The theory also explains the importance of role models and observational learning in entrepreneurial development. The paper highlights that entrepreneurship is "about who a

person evolves into," requiring qualities such as resilience, creativity, and tolerance for ambiguity that cannot be taught through lectures alone. Observational learning, facilitated by counsellors and coaches who model entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour, would provide students with vicarious experiences of success, strengthening their beliefs in their own capabilities. The paper's proposal for counsellor-led "coaching developing potential, rather than treating disorder" aligns with Bandura's emphasis on modelling and guided mastery.

Learning from Practice

The best counseling for entrepreneurs might be more like coaching than formal treatment. Practical insights are provided by a recent coaching project with youth ventures in the Benin Republic. According to the coach, the best tactics were to guide instead than provide solutions, engage in active listening, and remain humble and curious when faced with new obstacles (Africa Career Networks, 2025). Notably, the businesses that prospered had CEOs who showed flexibility, tenacity, and a strong sense of community commitment, qualities that counseling may methodically cultivate.

This proposes a concept for Nigerian educational settings where counsellors should act as coaches developing potential, rather than as therapists addressing disorder. The counsellor takes on the role of a reflective partner who assists students in recognizing their entrepreneurial talents, facing their limiting beliefs, and creating practical strategies that connect classroom instruction with practical application.

Implications for Curriculum Review

The Nigerian educational curriculum must be reviewed in at least four distinct ways in order to incorporate guidance and counseling into entrepreneurship education:

1. Entrepreneurship education needs to be rethought as a series that includes a required diagnostic phase lead by counsellors. Students should undergo systematic career and personal-social counselling prior to receiving technical business training. This counselling is intended to evaluate their entrepreneurial aptitude, pinpoint their individual talents, and address psychological obstacles to firm development. Individualized development plans that guide later instruction would be produced during this time. Such diagnostic techniques have been demonstrated to detect individual social issues that would otherwise prevent the development of new skills (Hapsari *et al.*, 2025; Danladi *et al.*, 2025).

2. Basic coaching and counselling skills must be taught to entrepreneurship instructors. The way business educators currently teach entrepreneurship without receiving psychological training is inadequate. A curriculum revision should require entrepreneurial educators to

obtain certification in motivational interviewing, solution-focused coaching, or similar counselling techniques.

3. Assessment models need to incorporate behavioural and dispositional outcomes in addition to cognitive testing. The effectiveness of comprehensive evaluation methods, such as the Kirkpatrick model, in gauging the acquisition of entrepreneurial abilities has been shown in recent research conducted in Nigerian polytechnics (Abdulkadir *et al.*, 2025). These models can be modified to assess outcomes connected to counselling: Do the pupil exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy? Decreased anxiety about failing? Increased readiness to accept uncertainty when making business decisions? These are quantifiable constructs that need to be assessed methodically.

4. Each tertiary institution should set up an Enterprise Clinic staffed by trained counsellors. This clinic would offer ongoing support to students at every stage of their entrepreneurial journey, from idea generation to business launch to post-failure recovery. The clinic would also function as a research center for understanding the psychological aspects of Nigerian entrepreneurship, creating context-specific insights that could be used to drive future curriculum development.

Challenges and Cautions

Any curriculum reform proposal must consider the challenges of implementation. Nigeria's higher institutions are underfunded and understaffed with counsellor-to-student ratios that are already woefully inadequate for basic mental health requirements. Adding entrepreneurship-related counselling obligations to already overworked counsellors is unrealistic without major investment.

This paper consequently advocates a staggered adoption, beginning with counsellor training programmes at federal institutions and eventually expanding to polytechnics and colleges of education, as proposed by feasibility studies on entrepreneurial curriculum reforms. In addition, cultural issues must be considered as Nigerian students may be hesitant to seek counselling because of stigma or cultural ideas regarding mental health. Entrepreneurship counselling must thus be portrayed positively, as coaching for success rather than treatment for issues, and incorporated into existing institutions (such as mandated entrepreneurship courses) rather than marketed as a distinct, optional service.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Nigeria has invested two decades developing its entrepreneurship education infrastructure. It has developed curricula, trained educators, and implemented mandatory courses. However, the unemployment crisis persists since the curriculum mainly emphasizes the cognitive aspect of entrepreneurship, ignoring the

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psychological. Guidance and counselling provide a path ahead, not as a replacement for business education, but as a pedagogical framework that makes business education more practical. The implications for curriculum review are evident and suggestedthus:

1. The National University Commission should embed counselling at every stage of entrepreneurship education, from diagnostic intake through skills development to post-graduation support.
2. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should mandate all tertiary educators across every discipline, including arts, sciences, social sciences, engineering, and vocational studies to undergo compulsory retraining on how to infuse entrepreneurial thinking, skills, and values into their lecture delivery. This retraining should shift the focus of entrepreneurship education from cognitive knowledge alone to also addressing who students must become as entrepreneurial individuals.
3. Tertiary institutions should establish Entrepreneurship Education Resource Centres staffed with trained counsellors and entrepreneurship educators who provide ongoing support to lecturers implementing entrepreneurial approaches in their classrooms.
4. Funding should be allocated by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) specifically for the design, delivery, and evaluation of these retraining programmes across federal, state, and private institutions.

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Citation: Inuaeyen, Isaac N. & Akpabio, Victor U. "Guidance and Counselling as a Pedagogical Tool for Developing Entrepreneurial Acumen in Nigerian Youths". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp21-28.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

A Hermeneutic Critique of Modern Oncology: Towards an Afro-Regenerative Approach to Cancer Care

Abstract

Modern oncology has transformed cancer diagnosis and treatment through molecular pathology, precision diagnostics, targeted therapy, immunotherapy and evidence-based protocols. These advances remain indispensable, especially in a world where cancer continues to be a leading cause of mortality and where the burden is rising unequally across regions. However, the same biomedical orientation that makes oncology scientifically powerful can also narrow the meaning of illness to cellular abnormality, tumour response and survival metrics. This study offered a hermeneutic critique of modern oncology by examining the ontological and epistemological assumptions that shape contemporary cancer care. Drawing on philosophical hermeneutics, medical anthropology and African relational ontology, it argued that cancer is not only a biological event but also a disruption of meaning, identity, temporality, family life and communal belonging. In response, the study proposed an Afro-regenerative framework of cancer care. This framework does not reject biomedical oncology or romanticize African communal life. Rather, it re-situated evidence-based treatment within a broader account of the person as embodied, interpretive and relational. Afro-regenerative care therefore understands healing as biological treatment together with the restoration of existential coherence, psychosocial support, relational recognition and meaningful participation in life. The study contributed conceptually to philosophy of medicine, global oncology and intercultural healthcare by expanding the horizon of cancer care beyond disease eradication alone.

Keywords: Modern oncology, African relational ontology, Afro-regenerative care, cancer, healing, psychosocial oncology.

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Date Received: 21st July, 2026

Date Accepted: 14th August, 2026

Introduction

Through advances in molecular biology, imaging, pathology, surgery, radiotherapy, systemic therapy, immunotherapy and precision oncology, cancer has increasingly become a disease that can be classified, staged, targeted and, in some cases, cured or converted into a manageable chronic condition. Contemporary cancer control is also a public health urgency. Global estimates for 2022 reported nearly 20 million new cancer cases and 9.7 million cancer deaths, while current WHO reporting continues to emphasize cancer as a leading cause of death, with large disparities in diagnosis, treatment, palliative care and survival across countries (Bray *et al.*, 2024; World Health Organization, 2026). In sub-Saharan Africa, the burden is especially urgent because late presentation, weak screening systems, limited radiotherapy access, fragile pathology infrastructure and high out-of-pocket costs continue to

shape outcomes (Ngwa *et al*., 2022). The success of modern oncology depends partly on reduction. Cancer is translated into cellular, genetic, immunological and molecular mechanisms that can be observed, measured and therapeutically targeted. The contemporary language of malignancy is therefore a language of mutation, proliferation, immune evasion, angiogenesis, metastasis, tumour microenvironment and treatment resistance (Hanahan, 2022). Precision oncology further intensifies this orientation by using tumour biomarkers and molecular events to select treatments most likely to benefit particular patients (Repetto *et al*., 2024). This scientific narrowing is not a weakness in itself. But the very basis of oncology's diagnostic reliability and therapeutic power.

However, a central philosophical question remains: does the biomedical intelligibility of cancer exhaust the human meaning of cancer illness? The answer defended in this study is no. Cancer is never experienced only as cellular pathology. It is also lived as fear, uncertainty, stigma, altered embodiment, disrupted family roles, financial pressure, changed temporality and possible loss of social identity. Recent global oncology literature increasingly acknowledges this human deficit. Psychosocial distress remains widely unmet in cancer care (Bergerot *et al*., 2024), anxiety and depression require systematic assessment and management in survivorship (Andersen *et al*., 2023), and palliative care is now recommended as an integrated component of oncology rather than an end-of-life afterthought (Sanders *et al*., 2024). The 2025 Lancet Oncology Commission on the human crisis in cancer similarly argues that biomedical progress has not been matched by sufficient attention to meaning, connection and human-centred care (Rodin *et al*., 2025).

This paper therefore develops a hermeneutic critique of modern oncology and proposes an Afro-regenerative approach to cancer care with particular attention to Igbo conceptual resources associated with igwebuike thought and complementary ontology. African philosophical traditions frequently emphasize relationality as constitutive of personhood where being is understood not as isolated individuality but as fundamentally embedded within networks of relationship and interdependence (Mbiti 1969). In Igbo philosophical discourse, thinkers such as Innocent Asouzu have articulated complementary ontologies in which reality is understood as a network of mutual dependence, while scholars associated with Igwebuike philosophy, including Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, develop notions of relational existence in which being is intelligible through interconnectedness rather than isolated substance. More so, hermeneutics is employed in this study because illness is not merely an object to be explained; it is also a reality interpreted by patients, families and clinicians within concrete worlds of meaning. African relational ontology is used because many African philosophical traditions understand personhood as constituted through

relation, reciprocity and communal embeddedness.

The paper therefore argues that these relational philosophical resources enable a re-conceptualization of cancer care that extends beyond the limits of biomedical reductionism. It proposes an Afro-regenerative approach to cancer care understood not as a rejection of biomedical oncology, but as a broader interpretive framework in which healing includes biological treatment as well as the restoration of relational integrity, existential meaning and communal belonging. Its distinctiveness lies in treating these dimensions not as adjuncts to treatment but as constitutive dimensions of healing itself. Afro-regeneration, in this sense, means a shift from disease-centered intervention to a more comprehensive understanding of healing as the restoration of disrupted human worlds.

The Reductionist Achievement and Limit of Modern Oncology

Modern oncology became powerful by relocating the explanation of cancer from the whole person to increasingly precise biological levels. The historical movement from gross tumour observation to cellular pathology, histopathology and molecular oncology made cancer clinically actionable. Through this movement, malignant disease became describable in terms of abnormal cell growth, genetic alteration, dysregulated signalling, immune escape and metastatic spread. The scientific value of this approach is clear. It permits classification, comparison, prediction and intervention. Staging systems, histological grading, molecular testing, tumour boards and randomized trials all depend on translating complex human conditions into categories that can guide treatment.

Surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, endocrine therapy, targeted agents, immune checkpoint inhibitors, cellular therapies and molecularly selected regimens have changed the prognosis of many cancers. The updated hallmarks of cancer demonstrate the richness of molecular oncology by showing that tumours acquire complex biological capacities, including sustained proliferative signalling, resistance to cell death, genome instability, inflammation, phenotypic plasticity, non-mutational epigenetic reprogramming, microbiome interactions and immune modulation (Hanahan, 2022). Recent precision oncology reviews show continuing advances in predictive biomarkers, tumour-agnostic therapies, rational drug design and combination strategies (Repetto *et al.*, 2024). These developments confirm that reductionist methods can generate life-saving knowledge.

Scientific medicine must isolate variables in order to measure them. It must abstract the diseased body from the fullness of the patient's life-world in order to produce stable diagnostic and therapeutic categories. This abstraction is methodologically necessary, but it becomes philosophically inadequate when it is mistaken for the whole reality of illness. It is within this context that Engel's critique of biomedical reductionism becomes significant. Engel (1977) argues that the dominant

biomedical model tends to isolate biological mechanisms from psychological and social dimensions, thereby producing an incomplete account of illness. The central argument of Engel is that the biomedical model leaves no room within its framework for the social, psychological and behavioral dimensions of illness, thereby producing an incomplete account of human health (Engel 1977). His bio-psychosocial model does not reject biological explanation but challenges its exclusivity as the dominant interpretive framework in medicine. Similarly, Kleinman (1988) distinguishes between "disease," understood as biomedical malfunction, and "illness," understood as the lived experience of suffering. For him, "disease" refers to the clinician's account of patho-physiological malfunction, whereas "illness" refers to the patient's lived experience of symptoms and the disruption of everyday life. This distinction reveals that biomedical success in explaining disease does not automatically account for the existential reality of illness as it is lived by patients.

From this perspective, the patient in modern oncology is primarily encountered as a site of biological intervention. Even in increasingly patient-centered models of care, the dominant logic of treatment remains oriented toward measurable biological outcomes such as tumor regression, progression-free survival, and overall survival rates. While psychosocial support and narrative approaches have been incorporated into oncology practice (Charon 2006; Holland and Breitbart 2010), they often function as adjuncts rather than as constitutive elements of how disease itself is defined and understood.

Modern oncology is successful precisely because it narrows its field of vision to biological mechanisms, yet this narrowing simultaneously limits the extent to which illness can be understood as a lived, relational and existential phenomenon. The clarity gained through reduction is therefore accompanied by a necessary abstraction from the broader human world in which illness is experienced. This tension is not accidental but intrinsic to the general epistemic architecture of biomedical science. The conditions that make cancer scientifically intelligible also delimit what can be meaningfully expressed within its framework. It is precisely this productive but limiting structure that prepares the ground for a hermeneutic and relational reconsideration of cancer care in subsequent sections.

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The result is a structural paradox. Modern oncology is successful precisely because it narrows its field of vision to biological mechanisms, yet this narrowing simultaneously limits the extent to which illness can be understood as a lived, relational and existential phenomenon. The clarity gained through reduction is therefore accompanied by a necessary abstraction from the broader human world in which illness is experienced. This tension is not accidental but intrinsic to the general epistemic architecture of biomedical science. The conditions that make cancer scientifically intelligible also delimit what can be meaningfully expressed within its framework. It is precisely this productive but limiting structure that prepares the ground for a hermeneutic and relational reconsideration of cancer care in subsequent sections.

Hermeneutic and the Lived Meaning of Cancer

A hermeneutic critique begins from the claim that human illness is interpreted before it is clinically managed. Diagnosis, prognosis and treatment are never neutral facts floating outside meaning. They enter a patient's world and reorganize how that person understands the body, the future, relationships and mortality. Gadamer's philosophy of health is useful here because it rejects the idea that health can be exhausted by technical measurement. Health is partly silent because it is the unforced capacity to participate in the world; illness becomes visible when that participation is disturbed (Gadamer, 1996). Cancer therefore changes not only cells but also the patient's way of being-in-the-world.

Medical anthropology strengthens this insight. Good argues that medicine is itself a cultural system of meaning, not merely a neutral mirror of biology (Good, 1994). Clinical terms such as stage, grade, remission, relapse, metastasis and prognosis do not only

describe disease; they structure the patient's imagination of possibility and risk. A phrase such as "stage four" immediately reorganizes time, family conversation, spiritual reflection and practical planning. The language of oncology may therefore comfort, terrify, clarify or alienate depending on how it is communicated and interpreted. Narrative medicine responds to this problem by restoring attention to patients' stories. Charon argues that clinical care requires narrative competence: the ability to recognize, absorb, interpret and be moved by the stories of illness (Charon, 2006). This is especially important in cancer, where the patient must often live through repeated tests, uncertain results, treatment toxicities and ambiguous futures. However, narrative attention alone is not sufficient if the healthcare system remains organized around throughput, specialization and biological metrics. Recent work on the human crisis in cancer argues that many patients experience oncology systems as technically advanced but relationally thin, with emotional, existential and social distress treated as peripheral rather than central to care (Rodin *et al*., 2025).

Hermeneutics therefore does not deny biomedical knowledge rather, it asks what biomedical knowledge leaves uninterpreted. It reminds oncology that the patient's body is not an object detached from a world. The body is the medium through which one works, prays, eats, loves, cares, worships, participates and hopes. When cancer disrupts the body, it disrupts the world mediated through the body. A hermeneutic approach consequently shifts the question from "What tumour does this patient have?" to "What human world has this tumour disrupted, and how should care respond?"

African Relational Ontology and the Meaning of Healing

African relational ontology deepens the hermeneutic critique by offering a philosophical account of personhood as fundamentally relational. Although African traditions are diverse and should not be treated as a single uniform worldview, many African philosophical accounts emphasize interdependence, reciprocity and communal participation. Mbiti's well-known formulation that the individual exists within the community expresses one version of this insight (Mbiti, 1969). Ubuntu philosophy similarly presents personhood as realized through relations of mutual recognition and humane participation (Ramose, 1999; Metz, 2011). In this view, the self is not an isolated substance that later enters society. The self is formed, sustained and interpreted through relation.

Igbo relational thought provides a further resource. Kanu's articulation of igwebuike presents being as strength-in-togetherness, where existence becomes intelligible through plurality, complementarity and mutual dependence (Kanu, 2015, 2016). Rather than treating beings as self-contained entities, igwebuike advances the view that intelligibility emerges through relational participation. The concept therefore functions not merely as a

social principle but as a metaphysical account of being itself. Within this framework, isolation represents an abstraction from the relational conditions that make existence meaningful and coherent. It follows that any attempt to understand a person in complete isolation from others produces an incomplete account of the person's ontological status, since being is always already shared, relational and interdependent.

According to Asouzu (2007), reality is structured through mutual dependence such that no entity possesses complete intelligibility in isolation from the wider network of relations within which it exists. His notion of "complementary reflection" challenges all forms of epistemic absolutism by insisting that knowledge remains partial when detached from the totality of relational contexts that sustain meaning. Complementary reflection therefore functions as a critical methodology for overcoming reductionism because it requires that any assertion about reality be tested against its relational contexts and complementary perspectives. In this regard, knowledge is always partial when it abstracts from the network of interdependence that sustains existence. Within the context of cancer care, this implies that biomedical interpretation of cancer remains incomplete when isolated from the relational and existential dimensions of the patient's experience. Complementary ontology therefore rejects fragmentation as both an epistemic and ontological

Generally, therefore, Ubuntu philosophy, igwebuike thought, and complementary ontology establish a coherent theoretical framework grounded in relational metaphysics. Across these traditions, existence is understood as fundamentally interconnected, personhood as relationally constituted, and meaning as emergent within networks of mutual dependence. Within the context of cancer care, this implies that the cancer patient is not adequately understood as an isolated biological unit but as a relational being whose condition affects and is affected by multiple layers of social and existential relations. This relational understanding clarifies the difference between cure and healing. Cure refers to the biological control, elimination or stabilization of disease. Healing refers to the restoration of wholeness, dignity, meaning and relational participation. The distinction is not an argument against cure. In fact, cure remains a vital dimension of healing because embodied persons need effective biological treatment. The point is that cure does not exhaust healing. A patient may be clinically disease-free but remain socially stigmatized, emotionally fragmented or existentially displaced. Another patient may not be curable but may still experience healing through pain relief, family presence, reconciliation, spiritual support and the restoration of dignity.

African relational ontology also helps correct the individualism sometimes embedded in biomedical care. Cancer decisions are often framed as choices made by an autonomous patient standing apart from communal life. In many African contexts, however, illness

is interpreted and managed through family systems, religious communities, economic networks and social obligations. Ignoring those networks can weaken adherence, communication, trust and dignity. At the same time, an Afro-regenerative approach must not romanticize community. Communities can also stigmatize, silence, exploit or exclude the sick. A critical relational ontology therefore values community not because every communal practice is good, but because human beings are in fact relationally constituted. Good care must strengthen life-giving relations while resisting relations that deepen suffering.

Towards an Afro-Regenerative Framework of Cancer Care

Afro-regenerative care is proposed here as an interpretive and ontological framework for cancer care. It is not an alternative medicine, a rejection of oncology, or a call to replace evidence-based treatment with cultural symbolism. Rather, it is a framework that re-situates biomedical oncology within a broader understanding of the human person. The term "regenerative" refers to the restoration of disrupted human worlds: the patient's biological functioning where possible, but also identity, agency, meaning, relational belonging and practical participation. The framework has five interrelated commitments. First, it affirms biomedical excellence. Surgery, radiotherapy, systemic therapy, immunotherapy, pathology, genomics, palliative medicine and supportive care are essential. Afro-regenerative care would be ethically unacceptable if it weakened access to evidence-based diagnosis and treatment. In African settings, this means strengthening cancer registries, early diagnosis, pathology, radiotherapy, drug availability, pain control, financial protection and equitable referral systems, all of which remain major priorities in sub-Saharan Africa (Ngwa *et al.*, 2022; World Health Organization, 2026).

Second, it interprets the patient as an embodied relational person, simultaneously biological, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and economic. This does not mean that all dimensions are identical. It means that they are co-present in the experience of illness. Treatment planning should therefore ask about family structure, caregiving capacity, cultural concerns, work disruption, stigma, transport, cost, religious needs and fears about death or recurrence. Such questions are not ornamental; they shape whether treatment is understandable, bearable and sustainable.

Third, Afro-regenerative care treats psychosocial and palliative support as constitutive, not peripheral. Current ASCO guidance recommends integration of palliative care into oncology for patients with advanced cancer, while psychosocial oncology literature documents persistent unmet emotional and social needs globally (Sanders *et al.*, 2024; Bergerot *et al.*, 2024). Supportive care also emphasizes symptom control, rehabilitation, survivorship support and whole-person care across the cancer journey (Scotté *et al.*, 2023). These developments are

consistent with an Afro-regenerative view because they recognize that treatment must attend to suffering, not merely tumour biology.

Fourth, the framework gives moral importance to interpretation and communication. Cancer diagnosis should not be delivered as information alone but delivered as a human encounter. Clinicians must explain disease and treatment in language that patients and families can understand, while also listening to how patients interpret the diagnosis within their own moral, religious and cultural worlds. This requires neither surrendering scientific accuracy nor endorsing harmful beliefs. It requires dialogical care: correction where necessary, empathy always, and attention to the patient's horizon of meaning.

Fifth, Afro-regenerative care defines therapeutic success more broadly. In addition to tumour control and survival, success includes reduced suffering, preserved dignity, restored agency, family inclusion, spiritual support where desired, social reintegration and survivorship meaning. These outcomes may require multidisciplinary collaboration involving oncologists, nurses, psycho-oncologists, social workers, palliative care specialists, chaplains, community health workers, patient navigators and family caregivers. In low-resource settings, the model also requires practical adaptation rather than expensive imitation of high-income oncology systems. Community-based navigation, culturally competent counselling, survivorship groups, home-based palliative support and faith-community partnerships may become important, provided they are linked to evidence-based medical care.

Reframing the Subject of Oncology

The major contribution of Afro-regenerative care is not the addition of culture to oncology but the reframing of the subject of oncology. The subject of care is a person whose biological condition is inseparable from a lived world. This reframing has practical and philosophical consequences. Philosophically, it challenges the assumption that psychological, social and spiritual issues are secondary "add-ons" to a primarily biological disease. While biological pathology remains central, the patient's suffering is not reducible to pathology. Fear, stigma, loss of meaning, dependency, financial distress and relational isolation are not merely emotional reactions around the disease; they are part of how the disease is lived. The human crisis in cancer care therefore emerges when systems measure success by technical performance while leaving these dimensions structurally under-addressed (Rodin *et al*., 2025).

Practically, this reframing supports integrated pathways. Distress screening should not be a luxury service. It should be part of routine cancer care, especially at diagnosis, treatment transition, recurrence, survivorship and palliative phases (Andersen *et al*., 2023; Bergerot *et al*., 2024). Palliative care should not be delayed until active treatment has failed; it should accompany disease-directed care where appropriate (Sanders *et al*., 2024). Patient navigation should not

only move patients through appointments; it should help them negotiate information, cost, family communication, stigma and continuity. In African contexts, such navigation must be culturally aware and resource-sensitive.

The Afro-regenerative framework also has implications for research because global oncology research often prioritizes molecular innovation, drug development and survival endpoints. These remain essential, but they should be complemented by studies of patient experience, cultural interpretation, family caregiving, financial toxicity, palliative access, spiritual distress, survivorship and community-based support. In African contexts, research should avoid importing Euro-American patient-centred models without examining local kinship systems, religious interpretations, traditional explanatory frameworks, health-system constraints and political economy. The goal is not to exoticize African cancer care but to produce conceptually and practically adequate care for African patients.

Nevertheless, the model has limits because it is conceptual rather than clinical, and therefore requires empirical testing in oncology settings. Second, African relational philosophy is internally diverse, so no single model can represent all African communities. Third, relational care may be difficult in overcrowded, underfunded health systems where clinicians lack time and resources. Fourth, community involvement can be harmful if it reinforces stigma or suppresses patient voice. These limits show that Afro-regenerative care must be implemented critically, ethically and contextually.

Conclusion

This study has developed a hermeneutic critique of modern oncology in order to clarify both its scientific achievements and its ontological limitations. Modern oncology has transformed cancer care through advances in molecular biology, diagnostic precision and evidence-based therapeutic protocols. These advances have made cancer increasingly manageable as a biological condition through standardized staging, targeted therapies and survival-focused treatment strategies. Its success lies in its methodological reduction of cancer to biological mechanisms, which enables clinical control, classification and intervention with unprecedented effectiveness. This reduction, however, also narrows the interpretive horizon through which illness is understood, privileging biological explanation over the broader existential and relational dimensions of human experience. In cancer care, this is reflected in the dominance of tumour-centered metrics such as response rates and survival curves, which may not fully capture the patient's overall experience of illness and recovery.

Hermeneutic philosophy demonstrates that illness cannot be fully understood as a purely biological event because human beings encounter it within horizons of meaning, embodiment, temporality, and social existence. Medical anthropology reinforces this claim by distinguishing between disease

as biological pathology and illness as lived experience, showing that biomedical categories do not exhaust the reality of suffering. Within oncology, this distinction becomes evident when clinical remission does not necessarily correspond to full restoration of the existential stability of the patient or their sense of identity after cancer treatment. These insights reveal that modern oncology, while scientifically indispensable, remains interpretively incomplete. African relational ontology deepens this critique by offering a conception of personhood grounded in interdependence rather than isolated individuality. Within Ubuntu philosophy, Igbo relational thought, and complementary ontology, human existence is understood as constituted through relations of mutual dependence and communal embeddedness. From this perspective, illness is not only a biological disruption but also a disturbance in relational coherence, affecting identity, belonging, as well as existential orientation.

On this foundation, the study proposes an Afro-regenerative approach to cancer care as an interpretive framework that integrates biomedical effectiveness with a broader understanding of healing. Afro-regenerative care does not reject modern oncology or propose an alternative clinical system. Rather, it maintains that oncology remains indispensable for managing biological disease, while arguing that effective oncological practice also requires patient's existential orientation and capacity for meaningful life after diagnosis and treatment. In this way, it re-situates biomedical intervention within a wider ontology of the human person in which cure refers to biological stabilization, while healing refers to the restoration of existential and relational wholeness. This distinction allows for a more comprehensive understanding of therapeutic success that includes but is not limited to biological outcomes.

The contribution of this study is therefore conceptual rather than clinical. It reframes oncology not as insufficient in its scientific domain, but as limited when considered as a total account of human healing. The paper, by integrating hermeneutic philosophy, medical anthropology, and African relational ontology, argues that cancer care must be understood as addressing both biological disease and disrupted human worlds of meaning and relation. This expanded horizon does not diminish biomedical science. Instead, it situates it within a richer account of what it means to care for a human being. As such, the article advances the claim that healing in cancer care involves more than survival or disease control. It involves the restoration of a livable human world in which persons can again participate meaningfully in relationships, identity, and existence.

In this sense, Afro-regenerative care articulates a broader vision of medicine in which scientific precision and relational meaning are not opposed, but jointly constitutive of genuine care. Afro-regenerative model of cancer care is, thus, an integrated ontological model of care in which cancer treatment, interpretation of illness and restoration of the person are treated as co-

constitutive dimensions of one therapeutic process. It affirms biomedical oncology as indispensable for the control of disease, while also holding that genuine healing involves the reconstruction of meaning, agency and relational existence after the disruption of cancer. The aim is not to weaken oncology's scientific foundations but to deepen its human horizon. Cancer care becomes most adequate when it treats the tumour without losing sight of the person, and when it pursues survival without neglecting the restoration of a livable human world.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

A Critical Examination of the Attitude of the Nigerian Police Force Towards the Public in Wukari Taraba State

Abstract

This study critically examined the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force towards the public in Wukari, Taraba State. It focused on police-public interactions, factors influencing police attitudes, and their implication on public trust. A convergent mixed-methods case study design was adopted for this study. The quantitative aspect of the study involved distributing structured questionnaires to one hundred and twenty (120) community members who had prior interactions with the police. In the qualitative component, fifteen (15) respondents were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation. While thematic analysis was done for the qualitative data. The study found that the public had negative perceptions about the attitudes of the police in Wukari, Taraba State, towards the community. Ordinary members of the public gave a mean score of 2.28 on police's level of respect and approachability, professionalism, fairness, integrity, responsiveness, and willingness to take responsibility for their actions and accept training. However, the public showed a positive attitude towards ethical reforms, accountability, and police training with a mean score of 4.06. The study also found that the public expressed a low level of trust in the police with a mean score of 2.87. The qualitative analysis also revealed that the public viewed the police as being disrespectful, corrupt, extortionate, and lacking accountability and responsible use of authority. The study concluded that negative police attitudes reduced public confidence and trust in the police and affected police-community relationships. The study recommended increased ethical training, leadership, and police accountability to enhance professionalism and public trust and police legitimacy in Wukari, Taraba State.

Keywords: Police attitude, Nigerian Police Force, police-public relations, public trust, procedural justice.

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Date Received: 14th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 18th August, 2026

Introduction

An effective and legitimate policing practice is essential and requires a good police–public relationship. The mainstay of public order, prevention of crime and law enforcement are the police institutions, but their effectiveness is linked to how officers with citizens. The principles of respect, fairness, professionalism, impartiality and responsiveness can help build trust and support from the community, but intimidation, corruption, discrimination and abuse of authority can undermine police legitimacy (Shipurut *et al*., 2025).

Literature on procedural justice indicates that citizens' perceptions of whether the actions of policing are legitimate is not only a function of the outcomes of those actions but of how they are performed. A sense of being treated with dignity, allowing citizens to voice their concerns, and a sense of how police decisions are made as neutral and trustworthy will make them more likely to accept the authority of police and cooperate with police (Tyler 2006, Bolger and Walters 2019). Conversely, lack of justice, respect, or arbitrary use of authority in institutions leads to loss of trust and the people tend not engage with institutions.

Corruption, accountability, professionalism, and police/community relations are all issues of importance that should be addressed, especially in Africa. Evidence from Ghana shows that public trust and cooperation with police officers are enhanced by their respect, impartiality, and accountability, while the opposite, i.e., corruption and abuse of power, reduce trust and cooperation with police officers (Tankebe and Fulzele 2023). However, the institutional and social contexts have to be taken into account, and police–public relations must be considered in national and local contexts.

Corruption, extortion, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and excessive use of force and lack of police accountability have given the Nigeria Police Force a bad name. These were evident during the 2020 #EndSARS protests when there was a widespread demand for police accountability and reform. Moreover, incidents of police abuse and predatory policing can also impact citizens' trust in police and citizens' willingness to cooperate with police (Akinlabi 2022). These problems indicate that institutional changes need to go hand in hand with attention to the daily actions and working ethos of the police.

However, recent research has revealed that lack of trust and confidence of the public in the police to be fair and non-corrupt is one of the factors that lowers the public's willingness to report crimes and is a challenge to police–community relations (Sabastine *et al*. 2025; Shipurut *et al*. 2025). These are excellent local studies, however they are often on particular behaviours of misbehaviour and not attitudes of the police towards the public. Evidence about the overall dimensions of respect, fairness, professionalism, integrity, responsiveness and responsible exercise of authority is limited from an empirical perspective.

This study aims at addressing this, it critically examines the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force towards the public of Wukari, Taraba State. It covers police attitudes, factors that influence attitudes, and how attitudes influence the level of trust and relations with the community. The study is useful in providing a context specific piece of evidence for the current discourse on Police Legitimacy, Ethics of policing and Police-Public Relations in Nigeria, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and the citizens' experience.

This study tackles the gap by critically analysing the attitude of the Nigerian

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Police Force to the public in Wukari, Taraba State. It explores the characteristics of police attitudes, conditions that shape those attitudes, and the impact of those attitudes on public confidence and police/community relations. The study brings some context-specific evidence to the general conversation about the legitimacy of the police, ethical policing and police–public relationship in Nigeria through the combination of quantitative data and narratives of citizen experience.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigeria Police Force is a very important agency that ensures public security, the maintenance of law and the security of the citizens. However, police–public relations are crucial for effective and legitimate policing. Corruption, extortion, intimidation, arbitrary exercise of authority and lack of accountability have all been areas of concern and have raised questions about the level of professional and ethical conduct expected of a public institution by the police. The ongoing concerns also raise doubts about the effectiveness of formal police reform to make real, tangible changes in how people experience policing in their daily lives.

Previous Nigerian studies have examined police legitimacy, procedural justice, corruption and the perceptions of public action by the police. Existing evidence, however, tends to be at the national or institutional level, and there is relatively little information regarding neighborhood-level aspects of police attitudes. Police favouritism and bribery have been noted in Wukari Local Government Area as some of the factors that discourage reporting of crime and hinder police–community cooperation according to recent studies (Shipurut *et al*. 2025; Sabastine *et al*. 2025). These studies are useful in the context of giving local evidence, however they are tightly focused on specific misconducts with limited of understanding of the broader issue of citizens' attitudes to the police.

This is a significant gap as citizens interact with the police on a daily basis and respect, fairness, professionalism, integrity, responsiveness and responsible exercise of authority is conveyed in these interactions. Negative experiences in these dimensions can erode public trust and hinder cooperation and positive experiences can foster perceptions of police legitimacy. However, there is little empirical evidence of the real lived experiences and interpretations of the public in Wukari of these dimensions.

The problem that this study sought to address therefore is the lack of knowledge of the general attitude of the police towards the citizens of Wukari area of Taraba state and the effect on the public's trust in the police and the public/police relationship. The study thus looks at the nature of police attitudes and what influences them, and why it matters for citizens' trust and engagement with the police.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force towards members of the

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public in Wukari, Taraba State. The specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the nature of police attitudes towards members of the public in Wukari, with particular attention to respect, fairness, professionalism, integrity, responsiveness, and responsible exercise of authority;

ii. Examine the institutional and ethical factors influencing police attitudes towards members of the public in Wukari, including accountability, ethical leadership, professional training, and value re-orientation; and

iii. Assess the implications of police attitudes for public trust and police–community relations in Wukari, Taraba State.

Literature Review

Attitude in Policing

Police attitude is the dispositions and behavioural tendencies that influence police work and police–public relations. It is seen in how officers treat citizens when responding to complaints, and how they talk to citizens. Attitude is crucial because people have attitudes towards police authority, and not only the attitudes of the decision makers, but their attitudes of the individual officers.

Literatures on procedural justice (Tyler 2006; Bolger and Walters 2019) is associated with citizens' acceptance of police authority and their perception of the police as fair, neutral, respectful and trustworthy. On the other hand, a perception of hostility, discrimination, corruption or arbitrary use of authority may decrease citizens' trust in police and cooperation with law enforcement agencies (Mazerolle *et al*. 2021).

One's personality is not the only determinant of attitudes. The organization, leadership, professional training, accountability, and working environment may have an impact on officers' perceptions and use of authority. Correlated with officers' attitudes towards misconduct, organizational justice and ethical climate demonstrates the impact of an organization's surroundings on the behaviors of the profession (Fridell, Maskaly, & Donner, 2021).

There have been widespread complaints of corruption, extortion, abuse of authority and lack of accountability by police officers in Nigeria, eroding the public confidence in the police (Akinlabi 2022). Perceptions of favoritism and bribery can also make it less likely for individuals to report crimes and deter police–community partnerships, as revealed by evidence from Wukari (Shipurut *et al*. 2025; Sabastine *et al*. 2025).

In this study, the concept of police attitude means how the police behave in their daily work and relations with the people, including respect, fairness, professionalism, integrity, responsiveness, communication and responsible use of authority.

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Police–Public Relations

Police–public relations are the character and quality of police–community relations. Such ties are not only related to crime control, but also to communication, cooperation, respect, responsiveness, and perceptions of the legitimacy of the police. The nature of these interactions is important because it is the subjective experience of police authority in the course of everyday interactions that can shape people's inclination to work with law enforcement authorities.

There is evidence in the literature that certain behaviours by police, including showing the respect and fairness to the citizen, can enhance citizens' trust in the police, while the opposite, such as perceptions of police corruption and intimidation, or unfairness, can undermine citizens' trust in the police (Tyler 2006; Mazerolle *et al*. 2021). The outcome of police actions thus not only influences police–public relations, but also the degree of fairness and professionalism in which police officers conduct themselves.

Rampant police impunity and corruption have also hindered relations between police and the citizens of Nigeria. Past incidents of police abuse and predatory practice can cause citizens not to trust the police and make them uncooperative with police officers as noted by Akinlabi (2022). Another potential disincentive to reporting crime and limiting police – community cooperation may be the perceived favouritism/bribery, Wukari finds (Shipurut *et al*. 2025; Sabastine *et al*. 2025).

The definition of police–public relations for this study is the quality of police–public interaction, which is the extent of communication, cooperation, respect and community engagement that is displayed. Positive interactions will be expected to enhance citizens willingness to cooperate with the public and enhance citizens' trust in the police while negative interactions will be expected to increase the likelihood that citizens do not have as much trust in the police and/or do not want to cooperate with the public.

Professionalism in Policing

Professionalism in policing means that the police is able to perform their work competently, ethically and legally. It's good practice, respect for human rights, integrity, accountability and responsible use of police powers. Professionalism, therefore, is a demonstration of an officer's ability to perform operational tasks as well as demonstrating discretion and interactions with citizens.

Professionalism is related to public perceptions of police legitimacy. Officers who are fair, honest, competent and respectful will build trust within the institution, but if officers are not fair, or are dishonest, incompetent, or disrespectful they will lose that trust. The organizational culture, ethical leadership, professional training and accountability mechanisms are key to formulating professional conduct (Fridell, Maskaly and Donner 2021).

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Nigeria has yet to overcome issues of corruption, police extortion, abuse of police powers and lack of police accountability. These difficulties can blame perceived police performance of citizens on police performance and vice versa (Akinlabi 2022). Wukari Police Studies of the last few years has also proved that the public is losing faith in and cooperation with the police because they are perceived to be favouring and bribing them (Shipurut *et al*, 2025; Sabastine *et al*, 2025).

Professionalism is used here to mean performing duties of the police efficiently, fairly, equitably and in ways that honor the rights and reasonable expectations of citizens. It is believed that this is one of the important aspects of attitude of the police and a precondition for having good relationship between police and people in Wukari in Taraba State.

Public Trust in the Police

Public trust in the police is the confidence of citizens in the integrity, fairness, competence and effectiveness of the police bodies. Trust in the police is the key to good policing because if they trust that the police will behave well and responsibly towards them, they will report crime, give information and cooperate with the police. Thus, it is closely tied with the legitimacy of the police and the police–public relations.

Literature on procedural justice shows that there are five factors that contribute to a sense of the rule of law: fair treatment, respectful interactions, neutrality, and trustworthy conduct (Tyler 2006; Mazerolle *et al*. 2021). Citizens can become disaffection towards police if they believe they are corrupt, that they are abusive, discriminatory or unaccountable. Conversely, ethical and professional conduct can help build perceptions of the legitimacy of law enforcement and the need for them to be cooperative.

In Nigeria, low trust in the police has been attributable to the corruption of the police officers. Akinlabi (2022) attributes lack of trust and cooperation with the police to police abuse and predatory practices. In the same vein, results indicate that when police are seen as being bribed and biased towards some individuals, it can lead to a drop in crime reporting rates and impact on police–community relations, as reported in Wukari (Shipurut *et al*., 2025; Sabastine *et al*., 2025).

Public trust is Public confidence in the Nigerian Police Force and their expectation that it will treat the law equally, respect the citizens' rights, be accountable and keep them safe. It has been studied as one of the predominant attitudes of police officers and as a police – public relations indicator in Wukari of Taraba state.

Police Accountability and Ethical Conduct

Police accountability and ethical conduct is the responsibility of police in the proper use of their authority within the framework of laws and professional regulations while respecting the rights of others. Police officers and agencies must be accountable for their actions and decisions and should act by ethical principles, including integrity,

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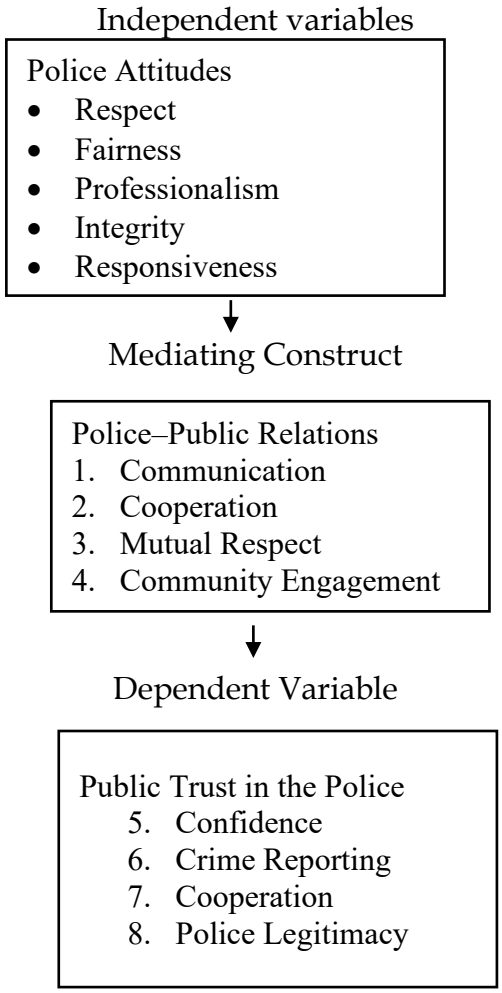
objectivity, fairness, and respect for human dignity. These concepts are critical in establishing essential safeguards against the abuse of power.

Police accountability entails not only sanctions but also effective systems of control, regulation, complaints, and civilian oversight, as well as principled management and leadership. It is a critical mechanism for preventing and reducing police misconduct and establishing trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. On the other hand, poor oversight and ineffective sanctions promote corruption, misuse of authority, and other misconduct.

While the Nigerian police force is being reformed, police corruption, unlawful arrests, extortion, and abuse of authority are still significant problems in the country (Akinlabi 2022). This issue significantly impacts the attitudes of the community toward the police and their willingness to cooperate with them. The procedural justice model emphasizes accountability to promote the perception of the police as an agency that respects and protects human rights since it makes the police appear as legitimate authorities (Tyler 2006).

In this study, police accountability and ethical conduct will be assessed as the extent to which police officers exercise their authority responsibly and adhere to professional rules and regulations while being answerable for their actions and decisions. Police accountability and ethical conduct are crucial factors in fostering positive police attitudes, improving police-community relations, and gaining public trust in police in Wukari, Taraba State.

Conceptual Model of the Study



Source: Author's Conceptualization (2026).

Empirical Review

Fridell *et al*., (2022) investigated how the relationship between organizational justice, ethical climate, and attitudes of police officers toward police misconduct in law enforcement agencies in the United States. The study was conducted using a quantitative cross sectional

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survey design with sworn police officers from various police departments who were analysed using multivariate statistical techniques. Amongst the findings it was found that officers who felt their organizations were fair, transparent and ethically supportive were significantly less inclined to be condoning or rationalizing misconduct or unethical behaviour by their colleagues. This highlights the need for organizational culture for professionalism and ethical policing. But the study only included the United States and self-reported data, which could have included social desirability bias. This paper studied reviewed work is relevant for the current study as it indicated that the attitudes of police officers are affected by organizational factors.

Li and Sun (2023) analyzed how police–citizen encounters relate to the public's perception of police legitimacy in the United States. The study employed a quantitative study design and data from 5201 civilians who were the subjects of police traffic or pedestrian stops recently. The results showed that citizens' sense of fairness and respect from the police, lack of bias, transparency and neutrality, but not the enforcement of outcome, were more influential in shaping their perception of the legitimacy of the police. The study revealed that "procedurally just policing" is a clear way to boost public trust and institutional legitimacy. Its studies, however, are limited to the U.S. context of policing and the research only took place on traffic and pedestrian stops. The study is relevant to the current study, as it is able to emphasize the significance of the attitude of the police and its impact on the public's trust. The study differs from the study of Li and Sun (2023) as they have taken into account the police attitude in the socio-cultural environment of Wukari in Taraba State.

Tankebe and Asif (2025) examined perceptions of police legitimacy, accountability and procedural justice among the public in Ghana. The researchers adopted quantitative survey design technique and bivariate analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the answers given by the respondents followed by multivariate regression. The results indicated that those who felt that police were respectful, fair, and responsible had more trust in police and were more willing to follow their instructions. Corruption, intimidation and abuse of authority, by contrast, had a negative effect on the legitimacy of the police and public trust. The study, however, was conducted in urban communities of Ghana, and only used quantitative data to explore deeper into the experiences of the participants. The study is relevant because it found that attitudes of the police are significant to the people's trust. The current study, unlike Tankebe and Asif (2025) uses a mixed method approach to investigate the attitudes of the police in the socio-cultural setting of Wukari in Taraba State.

In the study titled Police Favourability and its impact on crime reporting in Wukari Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria, Shipurut *et al.*, (2025)

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examined police favourability and its impact on crime reporting in the study area. The study's design was descriptive cross-sectional survey with 350 respondents randomly sampled from a population of 374,800 people from the Taro Yamane formula. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that overall the level of crime reported in Wukari was relatively low and that one of the factors that made citizens reluctant to report crime in the community was the impression that criminals are treated according to their wealth and influence in the community. The study recommended community policing, ethics and anti-bias training, and better accountability measures to help foster trust in the community. The study was however aimed at the problem of police favouritism and crime reporting in relation to the issue of police attitude towards the public at large was not explored. It is relevant to the present study because it provides empirical evidence of police attitudes in Wukari whereas the present study is broad based on attitudes among the police and its implications for police – public relations.

Sabastine *et al*. (2025) studied the impact of police bribery on crime reporting in Wukari local government area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive cross sectional survey design and the respondents for the study were 350 out of 374,800 of the population with the random sampling technique using the taro Yamane formula. Descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) were used to analyse the data. The results showed that police bribery had a significant negative impact on crime reporting as many of the respondents were apprehended that they might be asked to pay bribes or not be listened to by the police if they did not pay. The study revealed that bribery leads to loss of legitimacy, affects police–community relations and harms public trust in the police. It demanded more use of anti-corruption systems, community policing and independent reporting systems. But the study concentrated on issues of bribery and crime reporting and did not investigate general attitudes of the police. It is applicable in this study because it provides very clear evidence of how the practice of police officers impact the perceptions of the public and of police–public relations at a point of relevance in the study; Wukari.

Theoretical Framework

Procedural Justice Theory

Procedural Justice Theory is a conceptual framework introduced by Tom R. Tyler, 2006, about the factors and circumstances that determine people's assessment of legal authorities as fair in their use of authority and decision making. The theory challenges the idea that citizens' perception and evaluation of the police is based on its success in achieving desired outcomes. Rather, it implies that the process by which decisions are made and their implementation, is a critical component of citizens' acceptance of their decisions (Tyler 2006).

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One of the key ideas of the theory is that an individual's perception of police legitimacy is enhanced if they engage with law enforcement officers in a perceived manner of procedural fairness. Voice, neutrality, respect and trustworthiness are the four key elements. Voice gives citizens an opportunity to share and voice their situation and perspective. Neutrality should be grounded on the same and equal standards and it must not be based on personal interests or prejudice. Respect relates to the notion that citizens are treated with dignity and courtesy, and trustworthiness relates to the notion that authorities are concerned with citizens' welfare and are honest. (Tyler 2006) These are the factors that determine the citizens' perception of the legitimacy of the police power.

The theory also provides explanations as to the relationship between police behavior and public co-operation. Citizens who feel the police are fair and respectful are more likely to accept police decisions, obey and follow lawfully, report crimes, give information and cooperate in investigations. However, negative perceptions of legitimate authority, arising from disrespect, discrimination, corruption and arbitrary use of authority, can otherwise impact perceptions of legitimate authority and reduce cooperation (Bolger and Walters 2019; Mazerolle *et al*. 2021).

The linkage of police attitudes to public trust and police–community relationship is the important aspect of the present study under the framework of Procedural Justice Theory. The dimensions that are explored in this study are all direct concerns of citizens to the exercise of police power: responsiveness, communication, integrity, professionalism, fairness, respect, and responsible exercise of authority. Positive behaviour can then maintain a feeling of legitimate authority, and negative behaviours can result in disengagement and mistrust.

There are a few limitations to the theory, however. It emphasizes the citizen's perception of fairness, which may not fully reflect structural conditions, material discrepancies, organizational culture, corruption, or restrictions, among other factors that might affect the actions of the police. In addition, the concerns about substantive outcomes and/or institutional performance are not eliminated because of perceptions of procedural fairness. Some of these limitations exist, but the theory is applicable to the current study as it provides a framework for analysis of the impact of police behavior on citizens' perceptions of legitimacy, trust and cooperation.

Thus, the theoretical framework for this study is the Procedural Justice Theory which will provide a guide to the analysis in the understanding of how police officers in Wukari's attitude and behavior towards the public influences public trust and police–community relations.

Methodology

The design of this study was a convergent (mixed methods) case study, which was used for the critical

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examination of the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force to the public in Wukari, Taraba State. The mixed-methods approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods to give a holistic view of the attitudes of the police and the perception of the public. Data were collected using the quantitative component to gather quantitative data on the nature of interactions between police and the public and the qualitative component to collect qualitative data on participants' experiences and perspectives. This was the case study design as it allowed for the in-depth investigation of policing practices in the real-life context of Wukari (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The respondents of the study were members of the community who had previous contact with the Nigerian Police Force, Wukari. To ensure those who were selected would have a knowledge and experience with police and public interaction in the context of the project, the purposive sampling method was used. The participants were youth leaders, market leaders, business owners, religious leaders, civil society representatives, and other citizens who have interacted with the police before.

Data collection techniques used were structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. A total of 120 community members were administered with questionnaire and 15 purposively selected community members were interviewed using semi-structured interview method. The primary data was complemented by documentary data which included the Police Act 2020, official policy documents, and relevant scholarly publications. The data gathered from the quantitative approach of the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics which includes frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviations. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data, following Braun and Clarke's (2021) framework. The interpretation involved synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative results to give a holistic picture of the attitudes of the police officers towards the people of Wukari, Taraba state.

Results

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to community members in Wukari, Taraba State with previous contact with Nigerian Police Force. One hundred per cent of the 120 questionnaires were retrieved. The questionnaires were completely retrieved through direct administration of the researcher and the willingness of the respondents to participate the study. When the returned questionnaires were analysed, all were completed and suitable for analysis with a 100% usability rate. The high response rate and ease of usability of these responses served as a basis for analysing the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force to the public in Wukari, Taraba State and for drawing valid conclusions about the attitude of the police, the value reorientation and public confidence in the police.

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Police Attitudes

The first objective of this study was to examine the attitudes of officers of the Nigerian Police Force towards members of the public in Wukari, Taraba State. To achieve this, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements on a five-point Likert scale. Table 1 presents the findings.

Table 1: Community Members' Perceptions of Police Attitudes

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Police officers treat community members respectfully	2.48	1.21	Disagree
2	Police officers are approachable	2.35	1.18	Disagree
3	Police officers behave professionally	2.29	1.15	Disagree
4	Police officers are fair in dealing with citizens	2.18	1.12	Disagree
5	Police officers demonstrate integrity	2.06	1.08	Disagree
6	Police officers respond promptly to complaints	2.42	1.24	Disagree
7	Police officers communicate politely	2.33	1.19	Disagree
8	Police officers exercise their powers responsibly	2.11	1.14	Disagree

Source: Field Data, 2026

Table 1 shows a negative attitude of the police toward most respondents. The mean score for all of the eight indicators is below the level of positive perceptions with the lowest scores being for integrity (M = 2.06), responsible use of police powers (M = 2.11), and fairness (M = 2.18). Other negative scores were for professionalism, responsiveness, approachability, treatment with respect and communication. The results indicated that ethical, professional, and interpersonal issues of police conduct in Wukari are interrelated and varies, suggesting that the concern is not limited to just misconducts but rather, an overall deficiency in police–public relation.

Value Re-orientation

The second objective of this study was to identify the factors influencing the attitudes of the Nigerian Police Force towards the public in Wukari, Taraba State. To address this, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements concerning value re-orientation and ethical reform. Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Community Members' Perspectives on Value Re-orientation

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Police officers have become more ethical in recent years	2.56	1.23	Disagree
2	Ethics training can improve police behaviour	4.12	0.89	Agree
3	Police reforms should emphasize moral values	4.28	0.76	Strongly Agree
4	Ethical leadership will improve policing	4.35	0.72	Strongly Agree

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5	Police accountability should be strengthened	4.42	0.68	Strongly Agree
6	Officers should receive regular ethics training	4.18	0.84	Agree
7	Value re-orientation can reduce police misconduct	4.08	0.91	Agree
8	Ethical reforms are necessary within the Nigerian Police Force	4.45	0.65	Strongly Agree

Table 2 demonstrate that participants are unhappy with the current ethical behaviour of police officers, but that they strongly support change. Respondents rated police officers as less ethical (M = 2.56), but strongly believed ethics training, moral values, ethical leadership, increased accountability, and value re-orientation are all ways in which their conduct might be improved. Ethical changes in Nigerian Police Force (M = 4.45) received the most support. In general, the results indicate that the institutional and ethical changes are seen as essential to combat police misconduct and to improve police behaviour.

Public Trust

The third objective of this study was to assess the implications of police attitudes for public trust and police-community relations in Wukari, Taraba State. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements concerning trust and confidence in the Nigerian Police Force. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3: Community Members' Levels of Public Trust in the Police

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
17	I trust the Nigerian Police Force	2.32	1.20	Disagree
18	I am willing to cooperate with the police	3.85	1.02	Agree
19	The police protect citizens' rights	2.45	1.18	Disagree
20	The police enforce the law impartially	2.28	1.22	Disagree
21	The police are accountable for their actions	2.18	1.14	Disagree
22	I feel safe reporting crimes to the police	2.52	1.26	Disagree
23	Ethical policing strengthens community confidence	4.32	0.74	Strongly Agree
24	The police contribute positively to community safety	3.02	1.15	Undecided

Public confidence in police was generally low with respondents giving low scores to the Nigerian police force with 93% indicating lack of trust in police (M = 2.32). They also showed low confidence that police protect citizen's rights (M = 2.45), enforces laws without discrimination (M = 2.28) and accountability for their actions (M = 2.18). Many respondents indicated that they were not encouraged to report any crime to the police (M = 2.52). However, the police were willing to collaborate with the public (M = 3.85) and many respondents indicated that ethical police will increase public

confidence (M = 4.32). This implies that although the public lacks confidence in the police, they are however willing to collaborate with police when the police behave ethically thus restoring police legitimacy and improving police – community relationship.

Qualitative Findings

Fifteen community members were purposively selected for the semi structured interviews to gain in-depth understanding of the public experience of Nigerian Police Force in Wukari town, Taraba State. Six themes emerged from the thematic analysis: negative experiences with the police, perceived corruption and extortion, lack of accountability, professionalism and ethical conduct, community perceptions of police legitimacy, and suggestions for changing police attitudes and community trust.

Overall, participants frequently noted incidents of disrespect, intimidation, harassment and abuse of authority by the police. Many of the respondents commented on the unfair treatment they received during 'normal' contact with officers and that there were many times when they needed to pay unofficial fees to officers to provide services, or to carry out their duties. Victimisation was connected with the demand for 'transport money' before investigations could take place, which was also evidence to the public of the corruption and unethical behaviour of the police. These accounts are also supported by quantitative results, as the mean scores were low in relation to the professionalism and integrity of the police, fairness and treatment towards citizens.

The other recurring theme was the lack of accountability of the Nigerian Police Force. Participants felt police misconduct was not being meted out in a manner that was effective, and that officers were rarely punished for misconduct. The state of impunity therefore, many respondents felt that it facilitated the corruption, misuse of authority and inadequacies in providing public services.

But some good experiences were shared by some participants with the police, which did not lack professionalism, integrity and respect towards citizens. The few examples cited here demonstrate that it is possible to be an ethical officer if he or she upholds professional standards and procedural fairness; however, that is not always the case.

The interviews also revealed that the officers' negative attitude on citizens has had negative impact on their level of confidence and trust in the Nigerian Police Force. Many people do not report crime or cooperate with police due to fear of harassment, extortion and unfair treatment, participants said. To address these challenges, the following suggestions were offered, among others: Persist with ethics training, have more effective accountability, have effective community policing, have ethical leadership, have institutional reforms, and increase public awareness of citizens' rights. The qualitative results

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corroborate the quantitative results in that the positive attitude of the police towards the public through ethical and institutional changes is necessary for reestablishing public confidence and good relationship with the police in Wukari, Taraba State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that police officers' attitudes toward the public were predominantly negative with the scores obtained being low in respect, fairness, professionalism, integrity, responsiveness and responsible use of authority. The qualitative data also supported these findings, with many of the participants reporting experience of intimidation, discourtesy, extortion and abuse of power by the police. These findings agree with the results of Shipurut *et al*. (2025) which showed that negative behaviours of the police have a negative impact on trust and police–community relations. The findings are also consistent with the findings of the theory of Procedural Justice Theory (PJT) which states that fairness and treatment of people is an important factor that contributes to the legitimacy of police and their cooperation with the people they serve.

The study findings indicated that good ethics, accountability, ethics training and value reorientation are the effective methods that respondents strongly believed should be used to improve the behavior of police. Similarly, those interviewed identified the factors affecting police attitudes as corruption, lack of police accountability, poor supervision and police institution culture. The results are consistent with those of Fridell *et al*. (2022) and Tankebe and Asif (2025) who noted that ethical cultures in organisations and accountability systems foster professionalism and minimize police misconduct. The findings show that, in addition to the existing ethical and professional training, there is a need for institutional changes that seek to enhance police attitudes.

Overall, the study showed a negative attitude of the public towards the Nigerian Police Force, particularly when they believed that there was no ethical policing, while there was some degree of trust for the Nigerian Police Force when they believed the police is ethical. Interviewees also reported that, corruption, police unfairness and abuse of police personnel made it difficult to report crimes and reduced police legitimacy. The results support Li and Sun (2023) and Sabastine *et al*. (2025) results that found procedural justice in policing positively affects the public's trust and cooperation and negative police actions negatively affect trust and cooperation. It is therefore concluded that this study showed that the attitude of the police officers in Wukari, Taraba State can serve as a good tool for better police–community relations and regain public trust in Wukari, Taraba State.

Conclusion

The study critically analyzed the attitude of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) to the community of the public in Wukari, Taraba state. Results showed that overall, police attitudes are viewed as negative, especially with respect to

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respect, fairness, professionalism and accountability, which erodes public confidence and quality police–community relations. While there was a strong belief that the moral, accountable and ongoing professional development of officers could help to enhance policing, concern over corruption and abuse of authority are important issues. The study finds that the critical areas that need to be strengthened to improve police attitudes, restore public confidence and make the Nigerian Police Force more effective and legitimate are the areas of strengthening of ethical standards, institutional accountability and strengthening of community oriented policing.

Recommendations

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

1. The Nigerian Police Force should organize regular training and retraining programmes on professionalism, human rights, procedural justice, and effective communication to promote respectful, fair, and ethical interactions with members of the public.
2. The Police Service Commission and the leadership of the Nigerian Police Force should strengthen internal accountability, ethical leadership, and disciplinary mechanisms while improving officers' welfare and working conditions to discourage corruption, extortion, and abuse of authority.
3. the Nigerian Police Force should institutionalize community policing through regular stakeholder meetings, town hall engagements, and collaborative security initiatives that encourage dialogue, mutual respect, and public participation in crime prevention.

Acknowledgement: Tetfund Nigeria is here acknowledged for its intervention that made this research possible.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Counselling Needs of Employees in Selected Organizations in Lagos State

Abstract

Employee counselling has become an important Human Resources strategy for attracting and retaining top talent and enhancing workforce quality. In today's fast-paced corporate environment, stress affects nearly every organization and employee. This study assessed the counselling needs of employees in various firms across three local governments in Lagos, using descriptive statistics with a sample of 50 employees. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Findings indicated that high physical workload and repetitive tasks are the most significant stressors, affecting 21.6 percent of respondents. Counselling related to mental and emotional health, time management, and workload allocation was identified as the highest need, with over 70 percent of employees expressing interest. For personal and family needs, work-life balance strategies had the greatest impact, cited by 45.1 percent of participants. The study recommended that organizations address these stressors by providing professional counselling services for mental, emotional, personal, and family concerns. Additionally, the implementation of structured benefits such as employee assistance programs (EAPs) was advocated.

Keywords: Employee counselling, integrative theory, employee assistance programme, workshops.

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Date Received: 12th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 19th August, 2026

Introduction

Workplace counselling serves as an essential strategic tool for talent management and performance enhancement. As occupational stress remains a near-universal driver of workplace inefficiency, providing psychological intervention bas become imperative for modern organisation.The employees can be stressed, depressed, suffering from too much anxiety arising out of workplace related issues like managing deadlines, meeting targets, lack of time to fulfill personal and family commitments, or bereaved and disturbed due to some personal problems (Ismail, 2008).

Employees often lose their emotional balance in executing their assignments and jobs, and hence commit decisional errors. Helping them to be rational by clarifying their way of thinking, puts them back into the realities and enables them to achieve the results.Workers are human beings and at every moment of their life they face these realities since they cannot run away from them. Consequently, employees need to be assisted, when they are besieged with multifarious challenges which emanate

from personal, social, emotional, domestic and educational issues (Nyutu,P.N. 2007).. These issues interfere with the individual's ability to cope and function under normal circumstances. If these challenges are not resolved, he or she may be unable to adjust academically, socially and emotionally.

Counselling is related to educational and vocational guidance but it also deals with emotional disturbance and behavior problems as well as total wellbeing of the individual. Counselling are needs of an individual that call for gratification in order to ensure appropriate resolution of his/her problems which he/she confronts in daily life experiences so as to guarantee personal and job satisfaction (Purwanto, 2021). Counselling needs are more personal and intimate to specific individuals and their satisfaction may be essential for the individual's further involvement in various activities and events (Nayak & Rao, 2004).

It is widely accepted that individuals need counselling support. In regards to workers, helping them to identify and meet their counselling needs at various phases of life, is essential for optimal performance and efficiency in carrying out their counselling functions as well as fulfilling the demands of employment, marital and social obligations.

Workplace psychiatry is an important factor in building a healthy organizational environment. The pressures to succeed, conflicts that might occur with one's superior or co-workers, and personal problems that inhibit performance can become overbearing for some individuals. Furthermore, the rise of social media has introduced new risks, such as employees using these platforms to bully or target their colleagues. This adds another layer of complexity and underscores why workplace counseling is essential to an organization's success.

Statement of the Problem

Individuals try to handle their daily challenges which may stem from their personal, emotional, academic, social needs at various stages of life. This calls for a continuous needs assessment with respect to guidance and counselling programmes that are congruent to their needs. While colleague seem capable to offer advice in regard to work–related, personal, social, emotional, and family issues, they may not have the absolute skills necessary to offer counselling to handle the challenges emanating from the needs of workers as they try to make preferences regarding various trade–offs between career pursuit and family satisfaction. Therefore, there is the need to cater for the wellbeing of the employees that care so much about the welfare of their clients.

Hypotheses

iv. H_0: There is no significant counselling needs of employees in selected organizational institutions in Lagos state

v. H_1: There is significant counselling needs of employees in selected organizational institutions in Lagos state

Gap in the Literature

This section identifies areas for improvement which will be covered in this literature, based on theoretical, empirical and conceptual reviews of previous research. The following inadequacies have been observed:

Contemporary literature is heavily skewed toward large scale multinational corporations in western developed economies. Consequently, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence evaluating how structured employee counselling functions within small to medium enterprises across various industry.

The links between organizational counselling policies and specific occupational triggers remains under-theorized.

The absence of a unified theory that systematically describes the underlying factors responsible for employees' workplace behaviour and performance.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Counselling is a form of professional "talk therapy" where a trained therapist or expert listens to an individual, couple, or family to help them navigate life challenges, emotional distress, or psychological issues (Sakar, 2025). It provides a confidential, non-judgmental space to gain new perspectives and develop practical coping strategies (Mohar, 2021).

Counselling Methods by Approach

Directive Counselling: The counsellor takes charge, gives clear advice, and tells the employee what steps to take. Best for quick fixes or urgent rule issues.

Non-Directive Counselling: The counsellor listens closely without judging or giving orders. This helps workers talk through feelings and find their own answers.

Participative Counselling: A shared process where the worker and counsellor talk equally to build a practical fix together.

An employee is an individual hired by an organization or person to perform specific tasks or services. In exchange for their labor, employees receive agreed-upon compensation—such as a salary, hourly wages, or commissions—and are typically subject to their employer's direction and control regarding how the work is completed.

Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Integrative theory

It was in 1972 that Richard G. Erskine emerged as a foundational figure in the formal development of integrative psychotherapy. In 1972, as a professor at the University of Illinois, Erskine developed the initial concepts of integrative psychotherapy. The integrative model of counseling presented here contains supportive (alliance), behavioral (behavior), cognitive (cognitions), psychodynamic (dynamics) and existential elements (existentials) – therefore it can be called ABCDE model of counselling. It allows consideration of the client's current concerns and problems from different

and mutually complementary theoretical perspectives, and it provides for a comprehensive understanding of human experience, thinking, feeling and acting as well as for associated restrictions (Holm-Hadulla, Rainer Matthias *et al* 2011).

Empirical Review

Fungki Irmayanti *et al* (2022) assessed the effect of employee counselling approach in measuring employee loyalty. He concluded that work counselling has an effective influence on employee's loyalty.

Debra Chepchumba *et al* (2025) examined effect of employee counselling programs on employee performance of tea factories in Kericho County, Kenya. He indicated a positive and statistically significant effect that that employee counselling programmes have on employee performance.

Maletlatso Motsomotso (2025) examined the impact of work place counselling on employee performance. He affirmed that the workplace counselling positively affects employees through financial stability, reduced emotional disorder and so on.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study design. The population for this study was fifty employees from three local government in Lagos state namely Kosofe, Ajeromi and Eti-Osa. The sample for this study was selected by the use random sampling approach. A total of 50 employees consisting of 25 male and 25 female in order to avoid gender biasness. A combination of a structured questionnaire and a semi structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data and to best understand the counselling need of the employees in the workplace.

Result and Discussion

Table 1.0. Which of the following job factors contribute most to your stress?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High physical workload or repetitive tasks	11	21.6	22.0	22.0
	Noise, temperature, or working environment conditions	10	19.6	20.0	42.0
	Shift rotations or long working hours	9	17.6	18.0	60.0
	Machine safety concerns or workplace hazards	6	11.8	12.0	72.0
	Tight production deadlines / targets	4	7.8	8.0	80.0
	Lack of job security or career growth opportunities	2	3.9	4.0	84.0

Citation: Lisette, Opawoye F. ; Qudus, Lawal O. & Rashidat, Abubakar O."Counselling Needs of Employees in Selected Organizations in Lagos State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp59-65.

	Communication gaps with supervisors/management	1	2.0	2.0	86.0
	Interpersonal conflict with co-workers	7	13.7	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

Table 1.0 above shows the percentages of job stressors faced by the employees. The resulJt depicts that most stressors evaluated showed a considerable significance of factors contributing to the stress of workers with high repetitive task topping the list with 21.6 percent. This is indicated with the aid of graph in figure two (2).

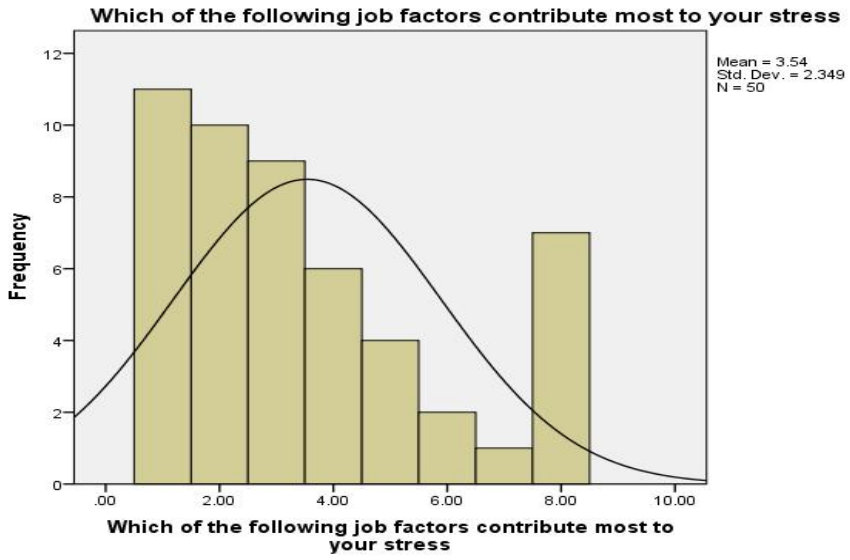


Table 2.0. professional counselling or training workshops need relating to mental and emotional health

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Time management and workload allocation	36	70.6	72.0	72.0
	Conflict resolution and communication skills	10	19.6	20.0	92.0
	Coping with shift work and fatigue management	4	7.8	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

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Table 2.0 above shows the percentages of professional counselling need relating to mental and emotional health by the employees. The result indicated that the most professional counselling need of employees is coping with Time management and workload allocation with 70.6 percent with other counselling needs are also significant.

Table 3.0 professional counselling or training workshops need relating to personal and family life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Work-life balance strategies	23	45.1	46.0	46.0
	Financial literacy and debt management	13	25.5	26.0	72.0
	Marital, family, or relationship guidance	9	17.6	18.0	90.0
	Substance abuse or addiction support	5	9.8	10.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

Table 2.0 above shows the percentages of professional counselling need relating to personal and family life by the employees. The result indicated that the most professional counselling need of employees is coping with Work-life balance strategies with 45.1 percent with other counselling needs are also significant.

Summary of findings

The study established that understanding employees' counselling needs and providing professional or workshop training on those identified needs will help achieve maximum returns in employees' performance in the organisation. Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between employee counselling programmes and employee performance (Archmedes & Dr Weldon, 2022).

The study identified several stressors, including high physical workload, repetitive tasks, and challenging working conditions, that contribute significantly to employee stress. Proper management of these stressors is essential to maintain employee well-being and productivity.

The study tested various professional training programmes with participating employees. Counselling and training workshops focused on mental and emotional health were identified as important needs. Time management and workload allocation were the most requested topics, cited by 70.6 percent of employees, while other training needs also showed significant relevance.

Also, professional counselling or training workshops related to personal and family life showed a significant

level of need among employees having Work-life balance strategies, with a significant percentage of 45.1 percent with others showing some level of relevance to this study.

Recommendations

This study recommended that organizations should manage the stressors identified in this research to help reduce the psychological stress experienced by employees, such as work overload and long working hours. These stressors may be more prevalent in some firms than others. Effectively managing them can help maximize employee productivity by promoting psychological well-being.

It is also recommended that employers establish a functioning counselling department that handles some of the counselling needs shown in this study and beyond, ranging from personal, mental, and family needs, which is lacking in most organizations today as noted by (Aluede, McEachern & Kenny, 2005) and (Nayak, 2007).

This study also suggested that employers enact the National Mental Health Act 2023, which protects workers from discrimination and unlawful termination based on mental health conditions. Employers are also encouraged to provide counseling support through structured benefits, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs).

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Citation: Lisette, Opawoye F. ; Qudus, Lawal O. & Rashidat, Abubakar O."Counselling Needs of Employees in Selected Organizations in Lagos State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp59-65.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Theoretical Article

Open Access

The Impact of Blockchain Technology on Entrepreneurial Transparency, Trust, and Global Trade Expansion

Abstract

Global entrepreneurship depends on trust and transparency to sustain commercial relationships stretching across borders, while conventional record-keeping systems have struggled to keep pace with the speed and scale of modern trade. This study examined the impact of blockchain technology on entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and the expansion of global trade, with particular attention to how distributed ledger systems reshape the way entrepreneurs verify transactions and manage supply chains. The central problem addressed was that despite growing enthusiasm for blockchain adoption, existing literature remained fragmented. They treat transparency, trust, and trade expansion as isolated outcomes rather than interconnected effects of a single technological shift. This is particularly within resource-constrained entrepreneurial ecosystems in developing economies. Guided by the Integrative Trust Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, they explain how perceived trustworthiness and usability shape entrepreneurs' willingness to adopt new technologies, with the study adopting a qualitative systematic literature review design. Secondary data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and policy documents published between 2017 and 2025, screened using the PRISMA 2020 protocol and analyzed through thematic content analysis. Findings revealed that blockchain's immutable and decentralized ledger structure strengthened entrepreneurial trust by reducing information asymmetry between trading partners, while also shortening trade settlement times and lowering documentation costs that had traditionally depended on multiple intermediaries. The study concluded that blockchain's greatest contribution to global trade expansion lies not merely in its technical architecture but in its capacity to substitute algorithmic trust for institutional trust in environments where formal institutions remain weak.

Keywords: Blockchain technology, entrepreneurial transparency, trust, global trade expansion, decentralized ledger.

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Date Received: 07th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 21st August, 2026

Introduction

Commerce has always rested on some mechanism of trust between parties who exchange goods, services, or capital without complete knowledge of one another's intentions. From medieval merchant guilds that used reputational sanctions to modern banks that verify

creditworthiness, every trading system has needed a way to convince strangers that a promise will be kept. In the twenty-first century, this age-old problem has taken on a distinctly digital character as entrepreneurs increasingly transact with partners, suppliers, and customers they may never meet in person, often across several time zones and regulatory jurisdictions. Blockchain technology has emerged into this landscape as a proposed solution, offering a way to record and verify transactions without depending on a single trusted intermediary such as a bank, notary, or government registry.

At the center of blockchain's appeal is its capacity to alter how transparency and trust are produced within entrepreneurial relationships. Classical theories of trust describe it as a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on expectations about that party's ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer *et al*., 1995). Blockchain intervenes in this equation by making transaction histories visible, time-stamped, and resistant to unilateral alteration, so that entrepreneurs no longer need to rely solely on a counterpart's reputation or a third party's certification to feel secure in a deal. Iansiti and Lakhani (2017) describe blockchain as a foundational technology capable of reordering how contracts, records, and transactions are created and verified, comparable in significance to the early internet protocols that transformed global communication. For small entrepreneurs who often lack the bargaining power to demand costly third-party audits, this shift toward algorithmically verified transparency represents a potentially significant leveling of the playing field.

Beyond individual transactions, blockchain's implications extend into the architecture of global trade itself. Ganne (2018) argues that blockchain holds the potential to reduce the friction embedded in cross-border commerce, where paper-based documentation, multiple intermediaries, and jurisdictional inconsistencies have long inflated costs and delayed shipments. Chang *et al*. (2020) similarly note that blockchain-enabled supply chain systems can enhance traceability and streamline customs procedures, allowing entrepreneurs, particularly small and medium-sized exporters, to participate in international markets that were previously accessible mainly to large multinational firms with the resources to absorb high compliance costs. This suggests that blockchain's value to global trade expansion lies less in any single feature and more in its ability to compress the distance, both informational and procedural, that separates trading partners situated in different economies.

In many developing economies, and particularly across Africa, small and medium enterprises account for the overwhelming majority of business activity and employment, yet they continue to face constrained access to the infrastructure, capital, and digital literacy needed to adopt blockchain-based systems (Onileowo & Merlinda, 2024). Frizzo-Barker *et al*. (2020) similarly observe that while blockchain

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research has expanded rapidly across business disciplines, much of the empirical evidence remains concentrated in developed-economy contexts, leaving open questions about how the technology performs where institutional and infrastructural conditions differ sharply from those in which it was originally conceived. This gap between blockchain's theoretical promise and its practical diffusion is precisely where the present study situates its inquiry.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

i. Examine how blockchain technology influences transparency in entrepreneurial transactions and record-keeping.

ii. Assess the role of blockchain technology in building and sustaining trust between entrepreneurs and their trading partners.

iii. Analyze the contribution of blockchain technology to the expansion of global trade opportunities for entrepreneurs, particularly in developing economies.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the research asks:

i. In what ways does blockchain technology influence transparency in entrepreneurial transactions and record-keeping?

ii. How does blockchain technology contribute to building and sustaining trust between entrepreneurs and their trading partners?

iii. What contribution does blockchain technology make to the expansion of global trade opportunities for entrepreneurs, particularly in developing economies?

Statement of the Problem

Blockchain research has expanded rapidly, existing studies largely examine its effects on transparency, trust, and trade expansion as separate issues across different disciplinary contexts, limiting an integrated understanding of their interrelationships (Chen & Bellavitis, 2020; Frizzo-Barker *et al.*, 2020). This fragmentation is particularly problematic for entrepreneurs, who simultaneously consider whether blockchain can improve transaction transparency, strengthen trust with unfamiliar business partners, and facilitate access to international markets. Moreover, evidence from developing economies remains limited, with African SMEs facing infrastructural and regulatory constraints that are often overlooked in literature dominated by developed-market contexts (Onileowo & Merlinda, 2024). Consequently, there is a need for an integrated and context-sensitive understanding of how blockchain technology simultaneously influences transparency, trust formation, and trade expansion among entrepreneurs, particularly those operating in resource-constrained developing economies.

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Literature Review

The growing body of scholarship on blockchain technology has expanded considerably since the original Bitcoin white paper introduced the concept of a peer-to-peer electronic ledger free of centralized control (Nakamoto, 2008). Since then, scholarly attention has moved from a narrow focus on cryptocurrency toward broader applications across business, trade, and entrepreneurship. This section reviews literature published largely between 2017 and 2025 on blockchain's relationship to entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and global trade expansion, synthesizing key contributions while highlighting where consensus remains incomplete.

Scholars examining blockchain's contribution to transparency consistently point to its architecture as the central explanatory factor. Iansiti and Lakhani (2017) describe blockchain as an open, distributed ledger capable of recording transactions in a manner that is both permanent and efficient, removing the need for entrepreneurs to depend on intermediaries to certify that a transaction occurred as claimed. Rijal and Saranani (2023) extend this argument into the economic domain more broadly, finding that blockchain's decentralized structure enhances transparency by ensuring that no single actor can unilaterally alter transaction records, a feature they link to improved public and institutional trust in economic systems. Frizzo-Barker *et al*. (2020), in a systematic review of blockchain business research, similarly note that transparency-related benefits appear across nearly every industry examined, from finance to supply chain management, though they caution that much of this evidence remains conceptual or based on early-stage pilots rather than mature, longitudinal implementation.

The trust dimension of blockchain research draws heavily on established organizational trust theory while extending it into a technological register. Mayer *et al*. (1995) conceptualize trust as a function of a trustee's perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity, a framework that predates blockchain but has proven adaptable to explaining why entrepreneurs might extend trust to counterparties they have never met, provided the underlying verification system is perceived as competent and impartial. Building on this logic, subsequent blockchain-specific scholarship argues that the technology substitutes what might be called algorithmic trust for interpersonal or institutional trust, allowing transacting parties to rely on cryptographic verification rather than on reputation alone. Chen and Bellavitis (2020) observe that decentralized finance platforms built on blockchain rails have begun to demonstrate how this algorithmic trust can support lending, payments, and investment activities that previously required banks or other regulated intermediaries to vouch for counterparty reliability.

A related stream of literature examines how blockchain reshapes entrepreneurial finance, an area closely

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tied to both trust and transparency. Fisch (2019) documents the rise of initial coin offerings as a blockchain-enabled financing mechanism that allows entrepreneurs to raise capital directly from a global pool of investors without the intermediation of venture capital firms or investment banks. Chen (2018) argues that blockchain tokens carry the potential to democratize entrepreneurship by lowering the capital barriers that have historically excluded founders without access to traditional financial networks, though he also acknowledges that this democratization has been uneven, benefiting technically sophisticated founders more than those in under-resourced regions. Chen and Bellavitis (2020) reinforce this observation, noting that while decentralized finance promises broader financial inclusion, its actual reach remains constrained by digital infrastructure and regulatory uncertainty in many parts of the world.

Turning to global trade specifically, Ganne's (2018) study for the World Trade Organization remains among the most comprehensive assessments of blockchain's relevance to cross-border commerce. She finds that blockchain's transparent, decentralized, and immutable characteristics have attracted the interest of both private firms and governments seeking to streamline trade finance, customs procedures, and logistics documentation, though she cautions that realizing this potential depends on solving interoperability and legal recognition challenges that no single actor can resolve alone. Chang *et al*. (2020) provide a complementary synthesis focused on global supply chains, arguing that blockchain can enhance end-to-end visibility for supply chain stakeholders, including customs authorities, while noting that widescale deployment remains limited by fragmented standards across jurisdictions.

Literature focused specifically on developing economies, and Africa in particular, reveals both enthusiasm and caution. Onileowo and Merlinda (2024) find that small and medium enterprises, which account for a substantial share of African employment and gross domestic product, stand to benefit considerably from blockchain-enabled decentralized financial services and reduced transaction costs. However, they also identify persistent barriers, including limited digital infrastructure, low technical capacity, and inconsistent regulatory environments, that continue to slow adoption relative to more industrialized economies. This finding echoes a broader pattern in the literature which are that: technological capability alone does not guarantee entrepreneurial uptake, particularly where the surrounding institutional environment remains underdeveloped.

Studies addressing transparency tend to emphasize blockchain's technical architecture; studies addressing trust tend to draw on organizational or psychological theory; and studies addressing trade expansion tend to focus on logistics, customs, and finance. Few studies, however, explicitly connect these three strands to explain how they jointly shape entrepreneurial outcomes,

and fewer still examine this integration within the specific constraints faced by entrepreneurs in developing economies. This gap forms the basis for the theoretical and empirical approach adopted in the remainder of this study.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Integrative Trust Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model as its dual theoretical foundation. These frameworks help explain both why entrepreneurs come to trust blockchain-verified transactions and why the technology's adoption remains uneven across different entrepreneurial contexts.

The Integrative Trust Theory, developed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), holds that trust between parties is shaped by the trustor's perception of the trustee's ability, benevolence, and integrity, moderated by the trustor's own propensity to trust. Applied to blockchain, this framework suggests that entrepreneurs extend a form of trust not to an individual counterparty but to a verifiable system whose competence lies in its cryptographic accuracy, whose integrity lies in its immutability, and whose impartiality substitutes for the benevolence traditionally sought in a human trustee. This reframing helps explain why entrepreneurs who have never transacted with one another can still feel secure in an exchange once it is recorded on a shared, tamper-resistant ledger.

The Technology Acceptance Model, introduced by Davis (1989), complements this trust-based perspective by explaining adoption behavior in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Entrepreneurs are more likely to adopt blockchain-based systems when they believe the technology will improve their transaction outcomes and when the systems are not excessively difficult to learn or operate. This framework is particularly useful for understanding why blockchain adoption has been uneven across entrepreneurial ecosystems: even where trust in the technology's underlying architecture is high, low perceived ease of use, driven by limited digital infrastructure or technical literacy, can still suppress adoption. Taken together, the two frameworks offer a layered explanation in which trust addresses why entrepreneurs might want to use blockchain, while technology acceptance addresses whether the surrounding conditions make that use practically feasible.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on a systematic literature review approach, appropriate for synthesizing and critically interpreting existing knowledge on blockchain technology's impact on entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and global trade expansion. Rather than generating primary data, the research integrates conceptual, empirical, and policy-based evidence drawn from prior studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Data Sources

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The study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from reputable academic and institutional sources. Peer-reviewed journal articles were retrieved from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, while policy documents and contextual reports were sourced from institutional repositories such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank. The review concentrated on literature published between 2017 and 2025, a period marked by rapidly increasing scholarly and policy attention to blockchain applications in business, finance, and trade.

Search Strategy

A structured and systematic search strategy was developed to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies. Search terms were derived directly from the study's objectives and included keywords such as blockchain technology, entrepreneurial trust, transparency, global trade, decentralized ledger, and cross-border commerce, combined using Boolean operators. To enhance transparency and methodological rigor, the review process was guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework (Page *et al.*, 2021). Consistent with qualitative research traditions, PRISMA was employed not as a statistical meta-analytic tool but as a structured guide for documenting the identification, screening, and selection of relevant literature.

Stage	Description
Identification	Records identified through database and institutional searches
creening	Duplicates removed; titles and abstracts screened for relevance
ligibility	Full-text articles assessed against inclusion criteria
ncluded	Final set of studies included in qualitative synthesis

Following the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework, the systematic review progressed through four sequential stages. The initial database and institutional search yielded 386 records. After removing 54 duplicate records, 332 unique studies remained for screening. Title and abstract screening led to the exclusion of 198 records that lacked relevance to entrepreneurial transparency, trust, or trade expansion. Full-text assessment was conducted on 134 studies, resulting in the exclusion of 81 studies due to insufficient analytical depth or thematic mismatch. A final quality check led to the exclusion of 8 additional studies, leaving 45 studies for inclusion in the final qualitative synthesis.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before study selection to maintain analytical rigor. Studies were included if they explicitly examined blockchain technology in relation to transparency, trust, entrepreneurial finance, or cross-border trade, with priority given to peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and policy documents written in English. Studies were excluded if they lacked relevance to entrepreneurship or trade, were purely technical or opinion-based without analytical grounding, or appeared as duplicate records across databases.

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Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, a qualitative method well-suited for synthesizing findings across multiple textual sources. Each selected study was reviewed in detail and coded according to recurring themes related to blockchain-enabled transparency, trust formation, entrepreneurial finance, and trade facilitation. The identified themes were interpreted through the lenses of the Integrative Trust Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, enabling the study to move beyond descriptive summaries toward an integrated understanding of how trust and adoption dynamics interact within entrepreneurial systems.

Validity, Reliability, and Transparency

Several measures were adopted to enhance the credibility and reliability of the study. Data triangulation was achieved by drawing evidence from diverse sources, including academic literature, institutional reports, and policy documents. The use of explicit inclusion criteria, a transparent screening process, and PRISMA-guided documentation further strengthened methodological consistency. Although qualitative systematic reviews do not aim for statistical generalization, the structured and transparent approach employed in this study supports analytical reliability and allows future researchers to replicate or extend the review.

Ethical Considerations

Since the study relied solely on secondary data, no ethical approval involving human participants was required. Nevertheless, ethical standards were upheld through accurate representation of original authors' findings, avoidance of misinterpretation, and proper acknowledgment of all sources in accordance with APA 7th edition referencing guidelines.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are organized around four dominant themes that consistently appeared across the reviewed literature. These themes reflect how blockchain technology currently shapes entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and trade expansion, as well as the constraints that continue to shape its effectiveness.

Transparency Gains Are Real but Adoption Remains Selective

The reviewed studies consistently indicate that blockchain's decentralized and immutable ledger structure improves transparency in entrepreneurial transactions. Evidence across multiple sectors shows that once transaction data is recorded on a shared ledger, entrepreneurs and their trading partners gain access to a verifiable record that cannot be unilaterally altered, reducing opportunities for misrepresentation (Iansiti & Lakhani, 2017; Rijal & Saranani, 2023). However, the findings also reveal that this transparency benefit is not evenly distributed. Larger, export-oriented firms and those operating in more

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digitally mature economies adopt blockchain-based record-keeping more readily than small entrepreneurs, who often face barriers related to cost, technical capacity, and unfamiliarity with the technology. This confirms that blockchain contributes meaningfully to entrepreneurial transparency, directly addressing the first research question, while also showing that its benefits remain concentrated among better-resourced entrepreneurial segments rather than being widely diffused.

Algorithmic Trust Complements, but Does Not Fully Replace, Institutional Trust

A second finding concerns the way blockchain reshapes trust between entrepreneurs and their trading partners. The reviewed literature suggests that blockchain's cryptographic verification allows entrepreneurs to extend a qualified form of trust to counterparties they have never met, consistent with the ability, benevolence, and integrity dimensions outlined in the Integrative Trust Theory (Mayer *et al*., 1995). Chen and Bellavitis (2020) demonstrate that decentralized finance platforms have begun to substitute this algorithmic trust for the institutional trust traditionally supplied by banks and regulated intermediaries. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed also show that algorithmic trust alone rarely resolves disputes that fall outside the scope of the ledger itself, such as disagreements over product quality or contractual interpretation, meaning that entrepreneurs continue to rely on legal and institutional mechanisms alongside blockchain verification. This finding directly addresses the second research question, showing that blockchain strengthens trust primarily at the point of transaction verification while leaving broader institutional trust requirements largely intact.

Trade Facilitation Gains Are Concentrated Among Formal, Well-Resourced Firms

A third finding relates to blockchain's contribution to global trade expansion. The literature reviewed indicates that blockchain-enabled trade documentation and supply chain systems can shorten settlement times and reduce reliance on paper-based customs processes, supporting the argument that blockchain lowers the transactional friction associated with cross-border commerce (Ganne, 2018; Chang *et al*., 2020). These gains, however, appear most pronounced among firms with existing formal trade relationships and the technical capacity to integrate blockchain systems into established supply chains. Smaller entrepreneurs, particularly first-time exporters, are less able to capture these benefits without external support. This addresses the third research question by confirming that blockchain does expand global trade opportunities, though the scale of that expansion currently favors entrepreneurs already positioned within formal trade networks.

Infrastructural and Regulatory Barriers Constrain Access in Developing Economies

The synthesis of the reviewed studies reveals that blockchain's

transparency, trust, and trade-facilitation benefits are rarely realized in isolation from the broader institutional environment in which entrepreneurs operate. Onileowo and Merlinda (2024) find that limited digital infrastructure, low technical capacity, and inconsistent regulatory frameworks continue to constrain blockchain adoption among small and medium enterprises across Africa, despite the sector's substantial contribution to employment and economic output. Frizzo-Barker *et al.* (2020) similarly caution that much of the existing empirical evidence remains concentrated in developed-economy contexts, leaving the applicability of blockchain's benefits to resource-constrained settings only partially tested. This finding aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model, which predicts that low perceived ease of use, driven by infrastructural and regulatory constraints, suppresses adoption even where the perceived usefulness of blockchain is high. Taken together, this suggests that blockchain's contribution to entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and trade expansion is conditional on institutional readiness rather than being a function of the technology alone.

Conclusion

A visible insight to emerge from this study is that blockchain technology's contribution to entrepreneurship lies in its capacity to substitute algorithmic verification for institutional trust infrastructure that many entrepreneurial environments, particularly in developing economies, simply do not possess. Where formal institutions such as courts, credit bureaus, and trade certification bodies are weak or inconsistently enforced, a shared, tamper-resistant ledger can perform a functionally similar role, allowing strangers to transact with a reasonable expectation that the terms of their exchange will hold. This substitution effect, rather than any single technical feature of blockchain, is what gives the technology its distinctive relevance to entrepreneurial transparency, trust, and global trade expansion.

The evidence reviewed shows that algorithmic trust only translates into expanded trade access where entrepreneurs possess a baseline level of digital capability and where legal systems are willing to recognize blockchain-verified records as valid documentation. Absent these conditions, blockchain risks becoming a tool available mainly to entrepreneurs who are already well-positioned within formal trade networks, reproducing rather than closing the gap between resource-rich and resource-constrained entrepreneurial ecosystems. The future significance of blockchain for global entrepreneurship therefore depends less on further technical refinement of the technology itself and more on whether legal, regulatory, and infrastructural systems evolve to meet it.

Recommendations

International trade bodies, including the World Trade Organization and regional economic communities such as the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, should establish

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harmonized legal frameworks that formally recognize blockchain-verified trade documentation across member states. Without such recognition, entrepreneurs who adopt blockchain-based record-keeping gain little practical advantage when their documentation is not accepted by customs authorities or trading partners operating under different legal regimes. Harmonization would allow the transparency and trust benefits documented in this study to translate into genuine trade facilitation rather than remaining confined to isolated pilot projects.

National governments and central banks, particularly in developing economies, should invest in the digital infrastructure and regulatory sandboxes needed to support blockchain-based entrepreneurial finance and trade systems. This includes expanding reliable internet access, simplifying digital identity verification, and creating clear, predictable rules for blockchain-based transactions, so that small entrepreneurs are not left to navigate legal uncertainty alone. Regulatory clarity of this kind directly addresses the ease-of-use barrier identified through the Technology Acceptance Model as a key constraint on adoption.

Development finance institutions and regional development banks should design blended financing instruments, including low-interest technology adoption loans and shared infrastructure grants, specifically tailored to lower the cost of blockchain adoption for small and medium enterprises. Because the benefits of blockchain currently concentrate among larger, better-resourced firms, targeted financing that offsets the upfront cost of adoption for smaller entrepreneurs would help ensure that the technology's contribution to transparency, trust, and trade expansion reaches the entrepreneurial segments that stand to benefit most from it.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

Securing the Supply Chain: Local Grievance, Militancy, and Global Energy Security in Bonny, Nigeria, 1970–2015

Abstract

Bonny Island sits on the eastern edge of the Niger Delta. For more than three centuries it has been a hub of Atlantic and global trade. It was a leading port for the export of enslaved people in the eighteenth century, and a major palm oil trading post in the nineteenth. Since the mid-twentieth century it has been the chief outlet for Nigerian crude oil, and since 1999, for Nigerian liquefied natural gas. This article traces the modern history of conflict between Bonny's oil-producing communities and the multinational companies and Nigerian state that built this infrastructure, from 1970 to 2015. It argues that the island's central place in global energy supply gives this local history a direct bearing on international energy security. The article draws on oral testimony gathered in five Bonny communities, together with company records, human rights investigations, and press accounts from the period. It places Bonny's experience within a wider wave of confrontation that swept the Niger Delta from the late 1980s onward. Similar crises unfolded at Iko, Umuechem, Egi, Ogoniland, Kaiama, and Odi. The article then traces how local grievance escalated into direct action at Bonny itself. The most consequential episode was the 2001 occupation of Mobil's Bonny River Terminal. The article concludes that companies, the state, and communities have developed responses to this conflict over four decades. These include international frameworks such as the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. Yet these responses have addressed the conflict's symptoms more consistently than its underlying cause. That cause is the absence of development to match the wealth extracted from the ground.

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Date Received: 26th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 02nd September, 2026

Keywords: Niger Delta, Bonny, Nigeria, Oil history, Energy Security, Environmental history, Petro-violence.

Introduction

Nigeria's Niger Delta has been a center of Atlantic and global trade for over three centuries. Bonny Island sits on the delta's eastern flank. It was among the region's leading ports for the export of enslaved people in the eighteenth century. After Britain suppressed the transatlantic slave trade, Bonny became a major outlet for palm oil and palm kernels in the nineteenth century. Since the mid-twentieth century it has served as the principal shipping point for Nigerian crude oil, and since 1999, for Nigerian liquefied natural gas. By the early twenty-first century Nigeria ranked among the world's largest oil producers. It supplied a significant share of United States crude imports, much of it loaded from terminals on and around Bonny Island. The crude grade shipped there, Bonny

Light, serves as an international pricing benchmark for low-sulphur West African oil. Middle Eastern supply grew less stable through these same decades, and the Gulf of Guinea took on growing strategic weight as an alternative source of seaborne crude. Together these shifts gave Nigerian, and by extension Bonny's, output a significance in international energy planning that reached well beyond the country's own borders.

For much of the same period, Bonny's communities have been in recurring conflict with the oil companies operating on their land, and with the Nigerian state that licenses them. This conflict has produced a substantial body of scholarship. Most of it reads the conflict through the lens of environmental justice, human rights, or the political economy of what has become known, since Terry Lynn Karl's influential study, as the "resource curse." Kenneth Omeje's work on oil conflict and security in Nigeria, and Takena Tamuno's history of the Delta's "oil wars," place Bonny within a wider regional pattern of extraction without matching development. This scholarship has less often connected the same evidence to the history and theory of energy security, the study of how states and markets secure reliable access to the energy they depend on. This article makes that connection, using Bonny's experience between 1970 and 2015 as a case study.

The account that follows draws on oral testimony gathered from elders, women, and youth, and from oil-company staff, across five Bonny communities. These were Finima, Ayambo, Kuruma, Ayamina, and Orubiri. It also draws on a survey of 595 residents of those communities, set alongside company reporting, human rights investigations, and press coverage from the period. In this respect the article follows a method set by the classic historiography of the Delta's pre-oil city-states. That scholarship relied heavily on oral tradition recorded from chiefs, elders, and canoe-house heads, since written archives for the period were sparse.

What follows traces this history in five parts. The first sets out an interpretive framework. The second traces the making of Bonny as a node in global trade. The third follows the build-up of grievance under oil. The fourth compares this pattern with the wider wave of confrontation that swept the Niger Delta from the late 1980s. The fifth examines the crisis this produced at Bonny in 2001, along with the corporate, state, and community responses that Bonny's conflict has drawn out over four decades.

Historiography and an Interpretive Framework

Much of the scholarly literature on conflict in the Niger Delta follows Thomas Homer-Dixon's influential argument. Homer-Dixon held that environmental scarcity, meaning the depletion of renewable resources such as land, water, and fish stocks, combines with population pressure and weak institutions to produce group-identity conflict. Cyril Obi's work on the Delta

Citation: Amamkpa, Anthony W. "Securing the Supply Chain: Local Grievance, Militancy, and Global Energy Security in Bonny, Nigeria, 1970–2015". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp92-117.

offers an important corrective. Scarcity-based models, he argues, understate the structural, political-economy dimension of the region's conflicts. These conflicts turn less on the scarcity of oil than on the terms on which oil wealth is extracted and shared out. A related but distinct argument comes from Michael Watts's concept of "petro-violence." Watts claims that oil extraction tends to generate a recognizable pattern of violence wherever it occurs. That violence is rooted not in the resource's scarcity but in the political forms that extraction characteristically produces. These forms include weak regulatory states, absentee corporate power, and communities stripped of any claim over what lies beneath their own land. Read in these terms, Bonny's history looks less like a uniquely Nigerian problem than a local case of a pattern found wherever oil has been extracted from politically marginal communities, from the Niger Delta to the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Karl's account of the "paradox of plenty" supplies part of the explanation for why oil wealth so often fails to produce local development. Drawing on comparative evidence from Venezuela, Iran, and Nigeria, she argues that windfall oil revenues tend to weaken rather than strengthen the institutions of the states that receive them. Because oil rents flow directly to central governments rather than being generated through taxation of a broad productive economy, they loosen the accountability that normally binds a state to its citizens. They encourage short-term and often corrupt spending. They leave both the national economy and the communities nearest to extraction more vulnerable, not less, to the wealth passing through them. Nigeria's experience since the 1970s, and Bonny's within it, fits this pattern closely. The same decades that saw oil revenue rise to account for most of federal income also saw local infrastructure, health care, and education in oil-producing communities stagnate or fall behind the rest of the country.

The evidence assembled for this article, drawn from interviews conducted across Bonny's oil-producing communities, supports Obi's and Watts's structural readings over a narrowly Malthusian one. Informants did not describe conflict as a result of oil's presence as such, but of oil's presence without a matching flow of development to the communities that hosted it. This article follows the language of the underlying field research and calls this pattern a *developmental trap*. Extraction without development produces insecurity. Development produces security. Security, in turn, creates the conditions for lasting peace.

Historians and theorists of energy security have conventionally organized the field around four concerns. These are the availability of supply, the accessibility of the infrastructure and routes that carry it, its affordability, and, increasingly, its acceptability to the communities and publics affected by its production. Of these four, acceptability has usually

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been treated as an ethical or reputational matter, separate from the harder business of securing supply. Energy security scholarship has rarely engaged the Africanist historiography of the Delta in any sustained way, just as that historiography has rarely used the vocabulary of energy security. Bonny's history over the period examined here suggests that this mutual neglect understates the case. At Bonny, failures of acceptability were not merely accompanied by failures of availability and accessibility. They produced them, repeatedly and measurably.

Bonny in Nigerian and Atlantic History, c. 1500–1970

Bonny's own historical traditions trace its founding to a migration from the central Niger Delta, probably between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. A group led by two brothers, Opuamakuba and Kala-Beni, together with a kinsman remembered as Asimini, left the Kolokuma area amid internal conflict and moved south in stages. They paused in what became Ndoki country before settling finally on the site of what is now Bonny town. Kala-Beni, tradition holds, was a hunter who discovered the site and reported it to Opuamakuba as good land for settlement. The community they founded, Okoloama, gave its people the name Ibani, later rendered by Europeans as "Bonny." Its first crowned ruler, Asimini, was followed by a line of rulers known as Amayanabo, a title that endured into the era of Atlantic trade.

By the eighteenth century this settlement, favored by a natural, deep-water harbour on an eastern distributary of the Niger, had become one of the largest slave-exporting depots in West Africa. K. Onwuka Dike's classic history of the Delta's nineteenth-century trading states describes how Bonny's rulers, and above all the Pepple dynasty that dominated the town from the late eighteenth century, built their power on control of this trade with European ships. In a single year, 1790, an estimated twenty thousand people, most of them Igbo and other hinterland groups funneled down the Niger's tributaries, were shipped from Bonny to the Americas. The "canoe house," a trading and political institution that combined elements of lineage, corporation, and small military unit, organized this commerce, and the commerce that replaced it after abolition.

Bonny's commercial dominance did not go uncontested. Jones's study of the Oil Rivers states traces a persistent rivalry with the neighbouring trading state of New Calabar, and, from the 1870s, with the breakaway state of Opobo, for control of the hinterland trade routes feeding the coast. European traders and, increasingly, British consular officials became parties to these rivalries. They extracted a series of commercial treaties from Bonny's kings across the middle decades of the nineteenth century that progressively formalized British claims over the terms of trade. The 1836 and 1850 treaties between Britain and the kings of Bonny, renegotiated and expanded through the following decades, illustrate a pattern that would recur, in different form, a century later. Outside powers secured

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preferential access to a valuable commodity through agreements negotiated with a narrow slice of local authority, and the legitimacy and terms of those agreements remained sources of dispute within Bonny itself.

Britain's suppression of the transatlantic slave trade, enforced with increasing determination through the 1830s and 1840s, did not diminish Bonny's commercial importance so much as redirect it. The same canoe houses that had supplied captives turned to the export of palm oil and palm kernels. Bonny remained, through the middle decades of the nineteenth century, one of the principal "oil rivers" ports from which the region as a whole took its European name. The transition was not without its own conflicts. A civil war within Bonny in 1869–70 drove one faction, led by a trader remembered as Jaja, to found a rival trading state at Opobo. Jaja went on to become one of the most formidable indigenous rulers in the Delta before his exile by the British in 1887. His career illustrates both the profitability of the palm oil trade and the volatility of the political order built upon it. Bonny's commercial primacy waned gradually thereafter, particularly after 1916, when the opening of Port Harcourt as a railway terminus thirty-five miles upstream diverted much of the Delta's trade.

Oil returned Bonny to prominence in the second half of the twentieth century, for much the same reason that had made it valuable for the slave trade and the palm oil trade alike. It had a deep, sheltered harbour close to the Atlantic. Since 1961 the island has served as the Niger Delta's chief oil-shipping point. In 1964 its harbour was further deepened to accommodate larger tankers. A further transformation followed the incorporation of Nigeria LNG in 1989. Construction of a liquefaction plant at Finima, on Bonny Island, began in 1996, and the first two production trains came onstream in 1999 and 2000, with additional trains following in 2002, 2005, 2006, and 2007. By the early 2010s the plant, jointly owned by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and by Shell, Total, and Eni, supplied a meaningful share of the world's liquefied natural gas. Bonny Light crude had by then become a reference grade for African crude more broadly.

Bonny's history, in other words, is not a story of oil's arrival in an otherwise unconnected place. It is the latest chapter in a much longer history. Bonny has long served as critical infrastructure for whatever commodity the Atlantic economy most wanted from the Niger Delta at a given moment, whether captive people, palm produce, crude oil, or liquefied gas. What changed with oil was not Bonny's structural position but the scale of the wealth passing through it, and the distance between that wealth and the people living alongside its point of export.

Oil, Grievance, and the Making of a Developmental Trap, 1970–2000

The same decades that saw Bonny's oil and gas infrastructure expand also saw the build-up of

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grievance in the communities that hosted it. Pipeline spills and leakages affected farmland, fishing grounds, and drinking water. Gas flaring and the construction of canals and causeways that altered local hydrology were also recurring complaints across Bonny's communities, echoing a pattern documented across the wider Niger Delta. Failures of pipeline maintenance periodically produced fire disasters. Among the incidents most often cited by Delta residents of the period were pipeline fires at Egborode and Jesse, in Delta State, in 1998 and 2000, and at Onicha-Amiyi Uhu, in Abia State, in 2003. Each of these fires killed scores of people who were scavenging leaking fuel. Years later, the United Nations Environment Programme conducted an independent scientific assessment of contamination in neighbouring Ogoniland. It found soil pollution with hydrocarbons to a depth of several metres. It also found drinking water contaminated with benzene at levels hundreds of times above World Health Organization guidelines. This scale of environmental damage matched what Bonny's communities had long reported of their own experience. Compensation and benefit-sharing arrangements, communities said, had not kept pace with either the environmental cost of extraction or its profitability.

Gas flaring compounded the damage caused by spills and formed a grievance in its own right. Nigeria's military government outlawed the practice by regulation in 1984, but oil companies continued for decades to flare the gas produced alongside crude rather than invest in re-injection or capture technology, on the grounds that flaring remained the cheaper option. Independent estimates in the 2000s put the volume of gas flared in the Niger Delta at some 2.5 billion cubic feet a year. This represented a loss to the Nigerian treasury estimated in the billions of dollars in forgone revenue, and it was a source of chronic respiratory and other health complaints among communities living near flare sites, including in Bonny. Successive government deadlines for ending the practice came and went through the 2000s without full compliance. Officials attributed the shortfall in part to the cost of the necessary infrastructure, and in part to joint-venture funding arrangements that left the state itself, as part-owner of the ventures in question, financially responsible for much of the investment required.

The scale of environmental damage across the Delta, of which Bonny's own experience formed a part, is documented in the region's own development literature. The United Nations Development Programme's Niger Delta Human Development Report recorded more than 6,800 oil spills across the region between 1976 and 2001 alone, with a cumulative loss of approximately three million barrels of oil into the environment. Government officials periodically acknowledged the scale of the problem while disputing its cause. Nigeria's Ministry of Environment reported 3,203 recorded spillage incidents between 2006 and 2010, attributing under a quarter of these to equipment failure or corrosion

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and nearly half to sabotage and vandalism. Communities in Bonny and elsewhere in the Delta consistently disputed this distribution. They argued that companies had strong financial incentives to categorize spills as sabotage, since Nigerian law relieved companies of compensation obligations for spills attributable to third-party interference.

Grievance was compounded, in Bonny's case, by disputes over the local institutions meant to channel whatever benefits oil brought to communities. Finima's chieftaincy dispute is illustrative. Two rival claimants to the paramount chieftaincy of Finima, the position through which compensation from Mobil was negotiated and disbursed, contested the position from 1970, and the dispute turned violent in the 1990s. Human Rights Watch investigators later documented how one claimant's supporters brought in the Mobile Police to intimidate rivals. They also documented how a sum of more than three million dollars, paid by Mobil into an account for the "Brown family," became the subject of years of unresolved dispute over who was entitled to disburse it. Because "host community" status, and the employment, contracts, and development projects that came with it, hinged on which claimant was recognized, this governance dispute determined in practice whether compensation defused local grievance or inflamed it. Human Rights Watch, reporting on Nigeria in the early 2000s, found little evidence that the country's return to civilian rule in 1999 had yet produced what could be called a democratic dividend for communities like Finima.

Patterns of Confrontation: Comparative Crises across the Delta, 1987–1999

Bonny's experience did not unfold in isolation. Between the late 1980s and the end of the 1990s, a sequence of confrontations took place across the wider Niger Delta. These confrontations established the pattern that Bonny's own crisis would follow in 2001. They also set expectations, on the part of companies, the state, and communities alike, that shaped how each side responded when the crisis came.

The first widely reported clash between a multinational oil company and a host community took place at Iko, in Akwa Ibom State, on 7 July 1987. Youths occupied a Shell flow station for three days, protesting the closure of fishing creeks, the health hazards of gas flaring, and the absence of local employment. Shell's response was to call in the riot police, whose operation destroyed some forty houses and left many villagers destitute. A second, deadlier clash followed in August 1995, when the Mobile Police burned houses in Iko and killed a schoolteacher. The community's subsequent efforts to secure compensation from Shell were unsuccessful, and no member of the security forces was prosecuted for either episode.

Three years after Iko, in July 1990, a similar pattern played out at Umuechem, in the Etche area. A Shell

manager's written request for police protection against a peaceful community protest led to a Mobile Police assault that killed approximately eighty people, including the community's traditional ruler, and destroyed some five hundred houses. Neither the state nor Shell offered compensation to survivors, many of whom took refuge in the surrounding bush for months. A visiting observer described the town in the assault's aftermath as resembling a battlefield, its streets littered with corpses, an image that would recur, on a still larger scale, at Odi nine years later.

A comparable clash occurred at Egi, in Bayelsa State, involving the French company Elf. A dispute in early 1995 escalated into the killing of a policeman sent to recover stolen equipment. The police reprisal that followed left an unknown but substantial number of residents dead and prompted a contemporary journalist to describe the town as reduced to a "ghost town."

The most internationally consequential of these confrontations involved the Ogoni people and Shell. Ogoni communities organized from 1990 under the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by the writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. They mounted a sustained, largely non-violent campaign against Shell's operations. The campaign prompted the company's withdrawal from Ogoniland by January 1993. The response of the Nigerian state, under the military government of General Sani Abacha, was severe. Following the killing of four Ogoni chiefs in May 1994, Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP leaders were tried by a military tribunal and executed in November 1995. The act drew international condemnation and, within days, Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth. The execution reshaped the political economy of protest across the Delta. Where communities had previously petitioned and demonstrated with some expectation that the state might respond, Ogoni's fate suggested that non-violent methods carried little protection. That lesson fed directly into the more confrontational tactics of the following decade, including occupation, hostage-taking, and pipeline vandalism, Bonny's own crisis of 2001 among them. Long afterward, the United Nations Environment Programme's independent assessment of Ogoniland would confirm the material basis of the community's original grievance. It documented soil and groundwater contamination whose remediation, the report estimated, would take up to three decades and cost in excess of one billion dollars.

The clearest statement of the more assertive politics that followed came from the Ijaw Youth Council, formed at a conference of some five thousand youths representing more than forty Ijaw clans at Kaiama, in Bayelsa State, on 11 December 1998. The resulting Kaiama Declaration asserted Ijaw communities' ownership of the land and resources of Ijaw territory, and repudiated federal petroleum legislation enacted without community consent. It called on "all oil companies' staff and

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contractors" to withdraw from Ijaw territories by 30 December 1998, pending resolution of the question of resource control. When the deadline passed without such a withdrawal, Nigerian troops occupied several Ijaw towns. More than thirty youths were reported killed. This security response, as at Umuechem and Iko before it, did more to radicalize than to pacify the movement it targeted. It fed directly into the militant groups that would dominate the following decade, first the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force, and from it, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.

The bloodiest of these confrontations came at Odi, in Bayelsa State, in November 1999, less than a year into Nigeria's return to civilian government under President Olusegun Obasanjo. A group of policemen sent to the town in connection with the deaths of oil-company contractors were killed. In response, the federal government deployed troops who razed most of the town, leaving an estimated fifty thousand people displaced and only a handful of buildings standing. Coming so soon after the promise of civilian rule, the invasion confirmed for many Delta communities that a change of government in Abuja had done little to change the character of the state's engagement with the region. This was the same absence of a democratic dividend that Human Rights Watch would document for Rivers State barely two years later.

By the time youths occupied Mobil's Bonny River Terminal in June 2001, then, the script was in a sense already written. On the community side there was a repertoire of occupation and direct action inherited from Iko, Ogoni, and Kaiama. On the state's side there was a reflexive reliance on the Mobile Police that had already proved counter-productive at Umuechem and Odi. What was specific to Bonny was not the form the crisis took, but the particular local dispute, over the Finima chieftaincy and the compensation it controlled, which gave it its immediate cause.

The 2001 Bonny River Terminal Crisis and the Wider Insurgency

This accumulated grievance found direct expression in June 2001, when youths from Finima occupied Mobil's Bonny River Terminal for three days. They beat company employees and vandalized equipment, and asserted that compensation for the community's earlier relocation had been both inadequate and paid to the wrong claimants in the chieftaincy dispute. Mobil's production fell by more than 650,000 barrels a day for the duration of the occupation, and the company was forced to declare force majeure on its supply contracts. This was a direct, measurable link between an unresolved local dispute and an interruption to Nigeria's oil exports. The episode was not isolated. Shell's own reporting for 2001 recorded 245 community disturbances across its Niger Delta operations, against 244 the year before, and forty-five hostage-taking incidents, alongside production losses running into the millions of barrels.

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Bonny's crisis unfolded, moreover, against the backdrop of a Delta-wide insurgency that gathered force through the middle of the decade. Militant groups attacked pipelines and installations, took foreign oil workers hostage, and forced the shutting-in of dozens of on and offshore fields, including Shell's Bonga field. Among these groups was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, which had emerged from the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force. By one contemporary estimate, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and its joint-venture partners lost tens of billions of dollars to the insurgency between 2006 and 2009, and several hundred expatriate workers were kidnapped over the same period. Separately, pipeline vandalism across the country produced more than sixteen thousand recorded breaks between 2000 and 2010, with losses reported in the hundreds of billions of naira.

Underpinning much of this violence was a thriving illicit economy in stolen crude oil, often described by analysts as "bunkering." Armed groups, sometimes with the reported complicity of security personnel and oil-company staff, tapped pipelines and loaded stolen crude onto barges and tankers for sale on regional and international markets. Contemporary estimates placed the volume of oil stolen in this way at tens of thousands of barrels a day, worth several million dollars daily at prevailing prices. This shadow economy gave militancy a self-sustaining financial base independent of any single grievance or negotiation. It complicated efforts by both companies and the state to resolve the underlying conflict through compensation or dialogue alone.

Some de-escalation followed the presidential amnesty programme announced in 2009, under which thousands of militants surrendered weapons in exchange for cash stipends and training. The arrangement produced several years of relative calm and a significant recovery in Nigerian oil output. Renewed militant activity within a few years, however, suggested that the amnesty had addressed only the insurgency's immediate symptom, armed mobilization, without resolving the developmental grievance that had produced it in the first place. This was a pattern consistent with Bonny's own experience over the preceding three decades.

Because Bonny Light functioned as an international benchmark grade, disruption to loading at Bonny carried a transmission channel into global markets that a purely domestic disruption elsewhere in Nigeria would not. Interruptions to a benchmark cargo affected the reference price used for a wider basket of comparable crudes, not Nigeria's export volume alone. A dispute over compensation in a single Bonny community, in other words, sat unusually close to the mechanism by which international oil was priced.

Responses in Historical Perspective: Corporations, the State, and the Communities

Shell's response to the international scrutiny that followed the 1995 execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa set the

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pattern that other companies in the Delta would follow. In March 1997 the company adopted a new Statement of General Business Principles, committing it, among other things, to give proper regard to health, safety, and the environment. It subsequently built a dedicated community-development unit within its Nigerian subsidiary, and began publishing an annual account of its Niger Delta operations, *People and the Environment*, from the late 1990s onward. By 2001 that unit was spending approximately fifty-two million dollars a year on community development across the Delta. Yet an evaluation commissioned by Shell itself found fewer than a third of 408 funded projects fully successful, and Bonny's communities in this study consistently described such spending as inadequate to what had been extracted. As Bronwen Manby argued at the time, the responsibility of oil multinationals operating in a weak-governance setting like Nigeria's extended beyond compliance with local law, to the human rights conditions their own operations helped create. This was a standard that Human Rights Watch's investigations of the same period applied directly to Shell's and Mobil's conduct in the Delta. Read historically, corporate community-relations spending functioned less as a resolution of Bonny's underlying grievance than as an ongoing premium paid against the risk of its recurrence.

Not every company followed the same course, and by the late 2000s the roster of firms operating in the Delta had itself diversified. Chinese state-owned companies, in particular, which by then held stakes in several Nigerian blocks, published far less detailed community-relations reporting on their Nigerian operations than Shell, Chevron, or ExxonMobil did. They tended to concentrate their published sustainability disclosures on domestic Chinese projects and to say comparatively little about the Delta specifically, a gap noted by scholars working on the broader comparative political economy of extractive investment across the Global South. This uneven disclosure across companies operating in the same communities made it harder, for both researchers and communities themselves, to assess which firms were meeting even the modest standards Shell and its peers had, however imperfectly, come to publish.

Part of the corporate response operated at the level of international soft governance rather than local spending. In 2000, several parties came together to establish the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. These included the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, a group of oil and mining companies led by Shell, BP, Chevron, and Texaco, and human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. These were a set of non-binding guidelines governing how extractive companies should engage public and private security forces without becoming complicit in abuses. Shell and the other companies operating in Bonny were, at least nominally, bound by these principles by the early 2000s. Yet the persistence of Mobile

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Police abuses in Finima during exactly this period tells a different story. These abuses occurred at a company facility, guarded by state security forces the company helped fund, and implicated in the intimidation of one side of a local chieftaincy dispute. They illustrate the gap between international commitments of this kind and their enforcement on the ground, a gap that recurs throughout the history traced in this article.

The Nigerian state's characteristic response was militarized protection of infrastructure. Mobile Police and army or navy detachments were posted to company facilities, paid for in practice by the companies themselves, and reinforced periodically by larger federal operations. The precedents, as the previous section showed, were not encouraging. The security responses at Umuechem in 1990 and Odi in 1999 had already demonstrated that heavy security responses tended to generate new grievance rather than resolve old grievance. Bonny's own experience with the Mobile Police in Finima, in the early 2000s, repeated rather than corrected this lesson.

The Nigerian government's structural response took two main forms. The first was the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission in 2000, as a successor to the earlier and widely criticized Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission. The second was periodic revision of the federal revenue-allocation formula. Together these represented an attempt to address the developmental deficit directly, rather than merely policing its consequences. Communities and independent analysts alike criticized the allocation formula for failing to reflect the fact that the Delta generated over eighty per cent of national resource revenue. By the mid-2000s the region's human development indicators continued to lag national averages despite its oil wealth. An SPDC-commissioned baseline study reached a conclusion that anticipated much of the later literature. It found that access to the benefits of oil production, not the mere fact of extraction, was the central trigger of conflict. This was true both between companies and communities, and between communities themselves.

What is most striking, set against this record, is what Bonny's communities themselves identified, when interviewed directly, as the changes that would actually stabilize their relationship with the oil industry. These were withdrawal of the military, more consistent employment, a sustained company presence, education and skills training, and functioning partnerships with both company and government built on genuine communication and visible infrastructure. This was, in effect, a locally generated diagnosis of what four decades of corporate and state policy had not yet supplied. It is striking how little of it appears, even now, in the formal record of how oil companies and the Nigerian state have planned for security in the Delta.

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Conclusion

Bonny Island's history over the centuries touched on here, and the four and a half decades examined in detail, sits at the intersection of two bodies of scholarship that have rarely been read together. These are the history of conflict in the Niger Delta, and the study of energy security. Read together, they suggest a single underlying pattern, visible across all three of the island's great commercial eras: slaves, palm oil, and hydrocarbons alike. In a community whose land and waters have supplied, in turn, enslaved people, palm oil, crude oil, and liquefied natural gas to the wider world, security has followed development rather than preceding it. Its absence has produced consequences that reached well beyond Bonny's shoreline. A three-day occupation once cut Mobil's output by two-thirds. An insurgency later cost Nigeria's national oil company tens of billions of dollars over just a few years in the late 2000s. The Voluntary Principles of 2000, the Niger Delta Development Commission of the same year, and the presidential amnesty of 2009 were each different in kind. But each represented an acknowledgment that the earlier approach had failed on its own terms. That earlier approach had treated unrest primarily as a security problem to be policed. Each nonetheless left the underlying developmental deficit largely intact, and each was followed, within a few years, by some recurrence of the very unrest it had been designed to end.

This is a single, historically bounded case. The wider relevance of the pattern traced here deserves testing against other extractive communities. Iko, Umuechem, Egi, Ogoni, and Odi all suggest that Bonny's experience is not unique. The pattern also deserves testing against comparable oil and gas-producing regions elsewhere. What Bonny's history does establish is that the pattern is not speculative. It has already produced measurable interruptions to a benchmark international crude stream and to a facility that supplies a meaningful share of the world's liquefied natural gas. For historians of the Niger Delta, this suggests that the region's local conflicts deserve to be read as part of the global history of energy, not merely as its domestic footnote. For students of energy security, it suggests that the security of a supply chain may be inseparable from the history of the communities through which it runs.

None of this is to suggest that Bonny's history offers a simple lesson easily applied elsewhere. The specific shape of grievance traced here, a contested chieftaincy, a particular relocation agreement, a particular set of Mobile Police officers billeted in a particular town hall, is irreducibly local. It is the product of decisions and disputes that a purely structural account of "petro-violence" or the "resource curse" can describe only in outline. What the structural literature and the local record agree on, however, is the direction of causation. It is not conflict that causes underdevelopment. It is underdevelopment, amid plenty, that

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causes conflict. In a community like Bonny, the old formulation still holds. Development brings security, and security, in the end, brings peace.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria

Abstract

Banditry have in most recent times in Niger State become a major hindrance to the socio-economic development especially in rural communities which intensifies poverty and affect rural infrastructural development. The study investigated banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state, Nigeria. The state fragility theory by Robert I. Rotberg was adopted to explain the pattern and magnitude of banditry and its attendant effects on poverty and infrastructural development. The study subscribed to primary sources of data collection where self-administered questionnaire buttressed with secondary source dominate the instruments for data collection while descriptive statistics was utilized as techniques for data analysis. Deducing from the data generated, the study discovered that bandits in Niger State heavily rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape and they often carry out their attacks more frequently during dry seasons when access roads are usable. It was further found that banditry operations in Niger State results in high rate of displacement as well as increase in poverty headcount ratio in Niger State's rural communities of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai which are considered the hotspots of banditry operations in Niger state. It concluded that the crisis of banditry threatens every sphere of socio-economic development indices and if security is not assured, myriad of challenges which affects the people's socio-economic development will arise. In concordance to the above findings, the study recommended that Federal Government of Nigeria and Niger State Government should jointly work assiduously towards intensifying anti-banditry security operations especially during dry seasons in order to nip in the bud all forms of operational nature of banditry as well as to pave way for socio-economic development in the state. Furthermore, there is need for grassroots inclusive poverty alleviation programme to enhance infrastructural development in the rural areas affected by banditry in Niger state.

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Date Received: 15th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 09th September, 2026

Keywords: Bandits, Niger, Poverty, Infrastructure, Development.

Introduction

Banditry, as widely understood in contemporary security discourse, refers to violent acts carried out by armed non-state actors operating outside legal frameworks to exert control or extract resources. It includes armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, livestock theft, and destruction of farmlands, often perpetrated in rural or semi-urban areas where state presence is weak. Historically considered a form of localised criminality, banditry has evolved into a more organized and militarized activity, increasingly overlapping with insurgency and terrorism (Hoffman and Burch, 2016). Additionally, modern manifestations of banditry disrupt social stability and hinder access to markets, educational

facilities, and healthcare services, particularly in developing regions (Ero and Ndung'u, 2021). Previous research has shown that such violent acts not only inflict physical harm but also drive mass displacement, increase food insecurity, and deter domestic and foreign investment (LeBas, 2020). In many regions of the world, particularly in parts of Latin America, Central Africa, and South Asia, banditry has disrupted transport routes, paralysed agricultural activities, and fostered illicit economies (Gutiérrez Sanín, 2019). These outcomes erode institutional trust and reduce the capacity of government institutions to implement public programmes (de Vries and Schomerus, 2022). As such, there is growing scholarly consensus that persistent banditry significantly undermines the conditions necessary for sustained economic development.

Insecurity in the form of organised banditry has been found to severely undermine economic development, both theoretically and empirically. Economic theories posit that secure environments are essential for attracting investment, ensuring stable production systems, and enabling efficient labor allocation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2016). Empirical studies further reveal that persistent violence deteriorates infrastructure, escalates public expenditure on security, and erodes investor confidence (Arezki and Bruckner, 2018; Kimenyi *et al*., 2019). In regions experiencing recurrent bandit attacks, such as rural communities and semi-urban settlements, agricultural productivity declines significantly as farmers abandon their fields (Justino, 2021). It has also been found that industrial growth slows due to looted supply chains and disrupted logistics (Arias & Restrepo, 2018). In addition, labour displacement reduces productivity while stalling market activities (Fengler *et al*., 2020). As governments are compelled to reallocate fiscal resources to counterinsurgency operations, investments in public services decline, causing long-term developmental setbacks (Kishi & Raleigh, 2019). Banditry, therefore, not only endangers lives but also deepens poverty, increases inequality, and reverses gains in national development trajectories.

The economic implications of banditry have been profound, ranging from the destruction of productive infrastructure to the displacement of communities and obstruction of trade. As observed in regions of Central Asia and the Sahel, continuous attacks on transport systems and agricultural hubs have severely undermined market access and food security (Aliyev, 2016; Shurson, 2022). These disruptions not only destabilise local economies but also erode investor confidence and halt long-term development initiatives.

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed a distressing transformation of banditry from isolated rural crimes into a pervasive national development threat, especially across the North West and North Central regions. Initially characterised by cattle rustling and farm invasions, banditry has evolved into large-scale armed violence, mass abductions, and coordinated attacks on

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villages and transportation routes (Okoli & Ugwu, 2022). This escalation has severely impacted agricultural production, with farming activities in Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, and Katsina states frequently disrupted, leading to widespread food insecurity and internal displacement.

Niger State which is the focus of this study and it has recorded a significant rise in incidents of abduction, particularly of school children and rural dwellers, which has led to the closure of over 400 schools between 2020 and 2023 (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). The notorious abduction of 136 pupils from the Salihu Tanko Islamiyya School in Tegina in 2021 remains a stark indicator of the insecurity crisis. Armed groups operating from dense forest reserves such as the Allawa and Kamuku forests have also capitalised on weak surveillance and poor law enforcement in border areas with Kaduna and Zamfara (Usman & Okoli, 2020). Reports from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2022) indicate that more than 20,000 people were displaced in Niger State between 2021 and 2022 due to armed violence. Banditry-related kidnappings and cattle rustling have surged, with over 500 abduction incidents reported in Shiroro LGA alone within a span of 18 months (Amzat & Abubakar, 2023). Rural markets have shut down due to insecurity, school closures have disrupted learning in more than 300 public schools in affected LGAs, and road transport networks in hinterland communities are now unsafe for movement (Olaniyan, Adebayo, & Musa, 2024).

It is against this backdrop of problem that this study is positioned systematically investigating the way and manner banditry dynamics has socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In Niger State, the persistent escalation of banditry has disrupted the state's economic progression by threatening its key development sectors and aggravating poverty. Attacks on farming communities have forced thousands to abandon agricultural activities, resulting in sharp declines in food production, rising inflation, and deepening food insecurity, with cereal production alone dropping by 27 per cent between 2018 and 2022 (NBS, 2023). Educational and healthcare services have equally been targeted, leading to school closures and the destruction of health facilities, thereby worsening human capital development. Similarly, the threat of violence has deterred private sector investors and stalled infrastructure and tourism projects across affected areas. These disruptions have weakened the state's ability to generate revenue internally, as evidenced by a reported 35 per cent decline in IGR across banditry-affected local governments between 2019 and 2023 (Niger State Internal Revenue Service, 2024).

Consequently, the inability of local governments in Niger State to finance

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counter-banditry interventions further deepens insecurity, creating a recurring cycle of economic stagnation and social dislocation. Empirical accounts from Adamu and Ibrahim (2018), Bello et al. (2020), and Lawal and Gimba (2023) underscore the correlation between rural violence and economic decline across Northern Nigeria, affirming that prolonged insecurity severely undercuts productivity, employment, and state resilience.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill that critical void by systematically analysing how banditry alters the state's economic development trajectory. By so doing, it intends to contribute robust knowledge that informs context-responsive as well as multi-sectoral policy approaches for rebuilding economic viability and reinforcing peace in affected communities in Niger State.

Research Questions

It is against the backdrop of the problem, the study has attempted to pose the following questions:

5. What is the nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State?
6. What are the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria. Whereas the specific objectives of the study are to examine:

i. The nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State.
ii. The socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State.

Research Propositions

i. The nature and trend of banditry has been worrisome with devastating effect on economic development in Niger State.
ii. Banditry has devastating socio-economic consequences on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State.

Conceptual Review

Banditry

The concept of banditry has been examined from different perspectives by scholars, researchers and governments. Extant literature on the nature and incidence of banditry has yielded a number of thematic perspectives. Foremost among these perspectives is the narrative that situates the phenomenon as a necessary complication of farmer-herder crisis in a volatile security context characterised by the declining state's capacity to govern (n & Tar, 2008). The second perspective characterises the occurrence as a disguised terrorism that bears the trappings of neo-jihadism (IEP, 2015).

According to Shalangwa (2013) banditry is the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group,

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whether or not premeditated, using weapons of offence or defense, especially in semi-organised groups for the purpose of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are usually perceived as outlaws, desperate and lawless marauders who do not have a definite residence or destination but roam around the forest and mountains to avoid being identified, detected and arrested.

Development

Development as a concept has myriad of definitions. For Rodney (1972), it is a many-sided process. At the level of individual it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. One thing which could be deduced from this definition is that development goes beyond economic growth and man is at the center of development. In order words, development is about the improvement of people's lives and not solely about increment in things.

In his contributions to the debate on the meaning of development, Dudley Seers (1969) observed that the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt, there has been period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development, even if per capital income doubled. Seers' definition is important for the understanding of development because it is concerned with the improvement in the living condition of the people. The implication of his argument is that the economy could grow without development.

Economic Development

Economic development has been defined in different ways and as such, it is difficult to choose any single definition which may be regarded as entirely satisfactory. However, below are a few of the different definitions of economic development. Jhingan (2007), defines development as economic growth plus change. The author sees development as being related to qualitative changes in economic wants, goods, incentives, institutions, productivity and knowledge or upward movement of the entire social system. This definition sees development as growth and qualitative changes in the entire social system. This means development brings about desirable changes that improve the lives of the people.

According to Kindleberger (1965), it implies both more output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced and distributed. In same vein, Friedman and Hansen (1972), defined it as an innovative process leading to the structural transformation of social system. Innovation and transformation

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of social system are the key points in this definition. The definitions above imply that development is about growth and change.

Poverty

Poverty is a complicated social problem. Because poverty can take many various forms, there is no one definition for it. As a result, poverty is more acknowledged than defined (Aboyade, 1995). Nonetheless, poverty is described by a number of writers and organizations. According to the UN (UN 2015), poverty is defined as the absence of a means of subsistence, the prevalence of hunger, malnutrition, social exclusion, marginalization, and segregation, as well as the lack of access to basic amenities such adequate health and education and decision-making. Goulden & D'Arcy (2014:3) define poverty as a situation in which a person's resources, especially their material resources, are insufficient to meet their basic needs, such as social engagement. Lack of resources, unmet needs, and inadequacy are the hallmarks of poverty.

According to Ahmed, Muhammad, and Ibrahim (2019), while defining poverty, it is necessary to consider the various variables associated with the term "poor." Because, at both the individual and national levels, the concept of poverty is defined in terms of the concerns, causes, and repercussions that surround it. However, it was described as a condition characterized by a lack of sufficient income to meet some of the most basic human needs, such as access to food, drinkable water, clothing, sanitation, and housing, among others.

Despite the diverse issue of defining poverty, most researchers view the term in terms of income and include it in their definition. Arose from the idea that income is easily related with comprehending the poor condition, and income has both economic and social implications.

Rural Development

Rural development is a means of bringing about enduring changes in the structure of the rural sector in a manner that productivity and output are increased, the technology and techniques of production are radically revolutionized with enhanced standard of living (Izeogu, 1987; Nkorn, 2000). The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 1972) defined rural development as "The outcome of a series of qualitative and quantitative changes occurring among rural population". It is a process "by which a set of technical, social, cultural and institutional measures are implemented, for the inhabitants of rural areas with the aim of improving socio- economic conditions of rural populace (ECA 1972). From the foregoing therefore, rural development constitutes a development effort to raise the level of awareness and living conditions of rural dwellers. Thus rural development encompasses radical improvement in social relationship governing land tenure, access to land, technology, labour, physical

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infrastructures, access to services and political organization of society.

Infrastructural Development

According to the oxford dictionary, Infrastructure is defined as a network of roads, railways, ports, airports, water ways and telecommunications. This has been taken to include the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities for example, buildings, roads, and power supplies, which are necessary or needed for the functioning of a country or society properly. To Mawere & Mubaya (2019), infrastructural development refers to the process of constructing, maintaining, and improving physical structures and facilities that support economic activities, social well-being, and sustainable development within a region or country. They emphasize the importance of infrastructure in enhancing connectivity, promoting industrialization, and improving living standards for the population. In a study by Ghebreyesus & Gebreegziabher (2018), infrastructural development is defined as the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of physical assets such as roads, bridges, water supply systems, and energy networks to support economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. They highlight the role of infrastructure in creating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, and improving overall quality of life.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Nature and Trend of Banditry and Economic Development in Niger State.

Mohammed, Liman, Yusuf, and Oyinloye (2023), in their study on armed banditry's nature and character on human security in Niger state, Nigeria utilized mixed method of data collection and content method of analysis. The Queer Ladder Theory was adopted. The study revealed that armed banditry in Niger State is not ideologically driven but sheer means of material and financial acquisitions through outlawry. While the character of banditry is executed through violence and weapon amassment of which porous border and neighbouring State mining activities serve as a purveyor. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others that tackling corruption at all tiers of government could mitigate the get-rich-quick syndrome, as tackling corruption could lead to equitable distribution of wealth. The study also recommended among others that government reinforce the country's border patrol system, particularly against gun-running and illegal immigrants whose activities aggravate banditry in the Niger State. The reviewed study used Niger as a case study in investigating banditry with focus on human security. The current study aimed at interrogating banditry in Niger state with a departure on the second variable whose direction is economic development.

Symon, John, and Joshia (2024), Genesis and Evolution of the Bandit Economy in Baringo Lowland, Kenya. The study employed in-depth interviews with elders, youths and organized focus group discussions in Loruk, Mukutani

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and Kinyach areas of the lowland which is the theatre of constant attack and counter attacks by the Pokot, Tugen and Il Chamus communities. The oral evidence complements archival and documented evidence. The data was qualitatively analysed and Human Needs Theory was adopted for this study. The study revealed that the socio-economic factors contributed to the bandit economy in the lowland from 1900. They include: increased population, demands for bride wealth payment, pressure to prove their masculinity after initiation, and infiltration of small arms. These were noted as the main factors that have continued to fuel banditry. The study, recommended among others a paradigm shift in social economic culturalisation and government, Non-Government and other development partners to focus on engaging the local communities and creating alternative sources of livelihoods that will combat the banditry menace.

The study by Symon, John, and Joshia (2024), is limited to the genesis and evolution of the bandit economy in Baringo Lowland, Kenya. The difference is that this study seeks to ascertain the extent which banditry has affected the economy of Niger State. By so doing, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of banditry and economic development.

Rufus & Ogbe (2025), did a study on the rise of banditry in northwest Nigeria: examining the security implications and pathways to stability. The study utilized qualitative and thematic method of data collection and analysis respectively. Findings of the study revealed that the weakening of state authority and poor law enforcement have further exacerbated the problem, allowing armed groups to operate with impunity. The security implications are profound, ranging from violent attacks on villages and kidnappings for ransom to the displacement of thousands of people, creating a humanitarian crisis. The study advocated for holistic approach, combining security measures with long-term investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure to address the root causes of violence. Ultimately, the study argued that a comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy is key to mitigating the threat of banditry and restoring peace and security in Northwest Nigeria. This study centered on interrogating data on the rise of banditry in northwest thereby neglecting north-central whose state is the focus of this study. Hence the need to interrogate the rise of banditry in Niger state.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Banditry on Poverty Levels and Rural infrastructural development in Niger State

Abdussalam, Olayiwola, and Akinniyi-Duyile (2022), investigated the impact of banditry on rural development in Kaduna State (2016-2021). The study employed a mixed-method approach. Hence, primary data were sourced from questionnaires, while secondary data were from journal publications, periodic reports, and newspapers. Simple percentage tables and Linear regression

was used in analysing responses generated from the primary source. Content analysis was used in analysing secondary sources. The study revealed that banditry significantly impacts rural development in Kaduna State. The study, therefore, recommended that there is a need to tackle the ongoing banditry and kidnapping activities in Kaduna State. Also, the rural economy has been significantly impacted due to the suspension of weekly markets and attacks on farmers. There is a need to provide better security for farmers and the local communities. Basic social amenities and unemployment should be tackled holistically. Banditry is becoming a severe problem in Nigeria due to massive unemployment, weak security, poverty, and the porousness of the country's borders.

This study has three gaps identified by the researcher which are; geographically, the study focused on Kaduna state, temporally, it focus only covered the period 2016-2021, and contextually it limited its focus on rural development. In bridging such gaps, the current study will be conducted in Niger State with special focus on the period between 2015 to 2025 and will contextually looked into socio-economic effects of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state which is a clear departure from the standpoint of the reviewed study.

In the same vein, Mohammed, Umar, Olaleye, Pelemo, Ahmad, Mohammed, and Umar (2021) conducted a study on the effects of banditry on income and livelihoods of yam marketers in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 197 of yam marketers. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and interview scheduled. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequency, count and mean), multiple regression and livelihoods status index. The results revealed that majority of respondents were male with long year of experience in yam marketing. The coefficient of low participation on weekly contribution (Adashi) (1.9823.93) was negatively significant at 10% level of probability. Also, 84.8% of the respondents in the study area were of very low livelihood status. Displacement of yam marketers from their native markets to nearby markets (x =2.42) and rising of the price of yam stead (x =2.20) were the major constraints faced by yam marketers. It was recommended that yam marketers should diversify into other income generating activities in order to improve their livelihood status and government should collaborate with village heads for provision of security for yam marketers. This study is conducted in Niger state but limited to Shiroro local government and yam farmers alone whereas the current study will explore local governments in the three senatorial districts in order to gather opinion from them on the impact of banditry on economic development and not yam farmers alone who are just a fraction of the economy.

Chemase & Muhindi (2024), carried out a study on banditry's implications on socio-economic development in Baringo

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South Sub-County, Kenya. In this study, purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used. The sample size was 364 residents. Mixed research methods of quantitative and qualitative were used in the study, with instruments for data collection being closed-ended question questionnaires and open-ended structured interview schedules. The study found that banditry negatively affects the average income levels of locals through its outstanding effects on aspects such as poverty, destruction of business activities, displacements from homes, creating an unfavorable climate for investors, unemployment, and professionals' avoidance of banditry-prone areas due to insecurity. Further, the findings of this study demonstrated that banditry has notable implications on literacy levels through its serious impact on the closure of schools, instilling fear in learners and teachers besides being one of the causes of school dropouts. The study recommended among others that the national government should, therefore, ensure that full disarmament operations target all banditry-affected areas. The study was conducted in Baringo South Sub-County, Kenya whereas the current study will be conducted in Niger state, Nigeria.

Ojetola, Akpaneno and Ayuba (2023), investigated banditry and income-generation activities of rural women in Katsina State, Nigeria. The study was investigated using survey design approach. Multistage sampling technique was adopted to select 558 respondents. Data on respondents' socio-economic characteristics, banditry forms, income-generation activities, causes and effect of banditry were collected using structured interview schedule. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, Chi-square, PPMC and ANOVA were employed in data analysis. Results indicate that majority had mean age of 37 years, household size of 9 people and less or equal #154877.20 annual income. Gun shooting, theft and burglary, cattle rustling and kidnapping were most frequent forms of banditry. Livestock farming/poultry, trading, food processing, and crop farming were major income-generation activities while connivance of bandits with locals, weak security architecture and extreme poverty were main causes. Level of effect across the state was high as gathering non-fish aquatic products, processing of fish, pot making, basket making, and crop farming activities were greatly reduced. PPMC result shows that household size significantly correlated with level of effect in the state ($r = 0.093$, $p = 0.029$) and in Batsari ($r = 0.146$, $p = 0.047$) LGA. Also, educational status ($\chi 2 = 12.511$, $p = 0.006$) showed significant association with level of effect. The test of difference using ANOVA showed that effect level was higher in Batsari (mean = 52.44) than in Safana (mean = 51.11) and Jibiya (mean = 51.11) LGAs. The study recommended among others that rural women should initiate a collaborative effort with other community members to expose those that connive with bandits to perpetrate the heinous acts. The study limited its

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focus on rural women in Katsina state thereby making it a gender based study and the current study will encompasses both genders affected by banditry in Niger state.

Theoretical Framework

State Fragility Theory

The State Fragility Theory was originally advanced by Robert I. Rotberg in 2003 and gained wider attention through subsequent contributions by scholars such as Call (2008) and Carment, Prest, and Samy (2010), who developed systematic frameworks for measuring and understanding fragility. These scholars built upon the foundational premise that fragile states are characterised by an inability to deliver core public goods, maintain legitimate authority, or manage internal conflict. According to the theory, fragility arises when institutions are weak, governance structures are ineffective, and security is compromised, resulting in conditions that enable violence and undermine development (Call 2011, 304). Scholars such as Menkhaus (2014) and Stewart and Brown (2017) expanded the theory's scope by examining how political exclusion, historical marginalisation, and chronic insecurity deepen state fragility in Africa and beyond.

At the heart of the State Fragility Theory lie key assumptions that help to interpret recurring governance failures and persistent insecurity. First, fragile states often lack monopoly over the legitimate use of force, allowing armed non-state actors to operate freely. Second, they struggle to provide basic services, including security, healthcare, education, and economic infrastructure, thus weakening citizen trust. Third, their legitimacy is often contested, either due to corrupt leadership, exclusionary politics, or dysfunctional institutions. Fourth, fragility is considered both a cause and consequence of violent conflict, often creating cycles of instability. Lastly, weak governance impedes sustainable economic growth by deterring investment, disrupting markets, and heightening social tensions (Carment et al. 2013, 695). It could be surmised from the foregoing that the inability of fragile states to control ungoverned spaces enables the rise of criminal enterprises, including armed banditry, especially in regions with porous borders and high poverty rates, such as parts of northern Nigeria.

Furthermore, this theory provides a clear linkage between fragility and insecurity, illustrating how the absence of effective governance structures fuels violence and economic regression. In the African context, countries such as South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and parts of Nigeria exhibit patterns of fragility that correlate with frequent armed attacks, banditry, and displacement (Bertocchi and Guerzoni 2017, 211). As highlighted by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED, 2024), Niger State has experienced more than 950 reported violent events involving bandits since 2015, with over 6,300 fatalities and thousands displaced. Such threats disrupt agricultural productivity, reduce

human capital development, and deter both foreign and local investment. Thus, curtailing banditry becomes imperative for fostering inclusive development. The connection between state fragility and economic underperformance is further demonstrated by the African Development Bank (2023), which ranks fragile states as having average GDP growth rates of 2.4 per cent, well below the continental average of 3.8 per cent.

Nonetheless, the State Fragility Theory has received considerable scholarly criticisms. First, critics such as Chandler (2010) as well as Englebert & Tull (2019) argued that the theory tends to universalise Western state-building templates, ignoring local governance norms and adaptive resilience mechanisms. Second, some contend that the theory risks oversimplifying complex socio-political contexts by reducing them to indicators of failure, without acknowledging the agency of communities operating within fragile systems. In addition, scholars such as Olaniyan (2020) and Ezeoha (2019) argue that while fragility is evident in conflict-prone areas, localised governance structures often sustain basic order and economic activity. Likewise, Meagher (2021) notes that applying fragility labels can justify external intervention and mask the underlying economic policies that exacerbate inequality and exclusion. However, such criticisms do not diminish the explanatory value of the theory in regions where the state's inability to control violence correlates with pervasive poverty and halted economic progress.

Pertinently, the State Fragility Theory is especially relevant in assessing the impact of banditry on economic development in Niger State, where bandit groups exploit weak security structures to extort farmers, kidnap travelers, and destroy livelihoods. Local economic activities such as farming, trading, and education have been significantly disrupted, particularly in Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya LGAs, where frequent attacks have forced the closure of over 300 schools and displacement of more than 50,000 residents. Thus, the inability of formal institutions to guarantee security reinforces informal coping mechanisms, including community vigilantes and ransom payments. These developments underscore the suitability of the State Fragility Theory for this study, as it helps in unpacking how institutional weakness fuels insecurity and, in turn, hampers economic growth. The theory also provides an analytical framework for assessing how governance failures at both state and federal levels have allowed banditry to thrive, making it apt for evaluating conditions between 2015 and 2024.

Furthermore, the theory aligns with the application of the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) for measuring economic development and institutional performance. Indicators such as control of corruption, government effectiveness, and rule of law are critical for assessing whether states can address insecurity

and foster investment. In the case of Niger State, where state capacity remains low, the indicators reflect how weak governance exacerbates conflict and stalls development. Between 2015 and 2023, Nigeria's WGI rankings in these areas have shown persistent stagnation, reflecting the difficulties in curbing insecurity and achieving inclusive growth. The theory is, therefore, adopted for this study to critically evaluate how fragility in governance has shaped the trends in banditry and economic development in Niger State from 2015 to 2024, offering a structured approach to examine the intersections of insecurity, institutional weakness, and economic stagnation.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed-method research design. The targeted population of the study is 103,712 which comprises of individuals drawn from both civil and military institutions actively involved in addressing banditry, as well as agencies responsible for coordinating economic development in Niger State. Additionally, traditional institutions and community-based organisations in selected high-risk LGAs, namely: Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai; form a vital part of the population. These groups were carefully chosen because they are positioned at the intersection of security response, community engagement, and socio-economic planning, offering crucial perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. Yammane's (1967) statistical formula was employed to reduced the population of the study to a manageable standard of 400.

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are oral interview questionnaires and secondary sources. Stratified and Random Sampling Techniques were used in selecting the respondents among different categories for the administration of questionnaire. This study made use of tables and charts as platforms to present the research data and also analyze the data collected from the field on the subject matter using simple percentage and graphs as the case may be for the descriptive analysis. The version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 367 copies were retrieved. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 367 retrieved copies of questionnaire. The pattern of presentation was based on the objectives of the study using frequency table (frequency, count and percentage) as well as chats. The discussion of findings then followed**.** This was supported with information from extant literature.

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Analysis on Banditry Dynamics and Its Socio-Economic Effects on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State, Nigeria.

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria. The responses were guided by the research questions and objectives and presented in Figures and Tables.

Nature and Trend of Banditry and Economic Development in Niger State.

The first research question examined the nature and trend of banditry and economic development in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at table 1-3 below.

Table 1: Respondent View on Determining Whether the Following Statements Describe the Operational Nature of Banditry in Niger State since 2015.

Statement	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
Armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts.	87	23.7	194	52.9	23	6.3	43	11.7	20	5.4
Bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape.	75	20.4	224	61.0	15	4.1	39	10.6	14	3.8
There has been an observable increase in locally recruited youths into bandit groups.	56	15.3	48	13.1	50	13.6	135	36.8	78	21.3
Host communities are sometimes coerced into offering temporary shelter or supplies.	87	23.7	115	31.3	23	6.3	85	23.2	57	15.5
Ransom collection after abductions funds further operations.	75	20.4	197	53.7	23	6.3	38	10.4	34	9.3
Bandit attacks are more frequent during dry seasons when access roads are usable.	105	28.6	188	51.2	17	4.6	25	6.8	32	8.7
Bandits often operate in loose networks without a	47	12.8	62	16.9	28	7.6	143	39.0	87	23.7

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central command.										
Banditry thrives in districts with limited presence of security infrastructure.	142	38.7	178	48.5	5	1.4	22	6.0	20	5.4

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in Table 1, majority of respondents (76.6 per cent) cumulatively agreed that one of the operational nature of banditry in Niger state since 2015 is that the armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts. This aligns with recent observations that "ungoverned spaces" and remote areas with limited state presence allow organized armed groups to expand their territorial reach significantly (ACAPS, 2025). While 81.4 per cent noted that bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape a tactic confirmed by reports describing these groups as "highly mobile, armed, and largely forest-based units" that utilize motorbikes for quick-strike maneuvers (UNIDIR, 2024). In addition, the analysis shows that 58.1 per cent of the respondents cumulatively disagreed with the assertion that there has been an observable increase in locally recruited youths into bandit groups. This "intelligence gathering" by local collaborators is a noted challenge, complicating military efforts to neutralize bandit cells (Izom & Iliyasu, 2024). This implies that, bandits do not recruit from the local youths. However, some of the youths sometimes act as informant in aiding the bandits to carry-out their activities with ease. 55 per cent of the respondents cumulatively observed that the host communities are sometimes coerced into offering temporary shelter or supplies to bandits in order to protect their lives and safeguard their communities from incessant bandit attack, while 74.1 per cent cumulatively view the nature of banditry in Niger state from the standpoint that ransom collection after abductions funds further operations.

Also, the analysis depicts that bandit attacks are more frequent during dry seasons when access roads are usable as affirmed by 79.8 per cent of respondents. Ongoing security monitoring confirms that dry season conditions facilitate the movement of armed groups, whereas the rainy season often restricts their mobility to specific forest corridors (FEWS NET, 2026). While 62.7 per cent cumulatively disagreed with the assertion that bandits often operate in loose networks without a central command. This implies that bandits operates with central command thereby making their activities somewhat organized and coordinated. A significant 87.2 per cent of respondents observed that banditry in Niger state thrives in districts with limited presence of security infrastructure. Research supports this, noting that while groups may seem fragmented, they often operate under hierarchies based on "bandit capital," such as access to weapons and followers (DIIS, 2024). This lack of a "robust and

coordinated security framework" in rura spaces into safe havens for criminal gangs Niger State has turned vast ungoverne (IJSMPCR, 2026).

Table 2: Respondents Rating of the Following Indicators of Economic Development in their Area of Niger State amidst Banditry Attacks from 2015 to 2025.

Indicator	Significantly Improved	%	Improved	%	No Change	%	Declined	%	Significantly Declined	%
Employment-to-population ratio across rural communities	36	9.8	58	15.8	123	33.5	87	23.7	63	17.2
Access to road networks and transportation in rural LGAs	32	8.7	73	19.9	59	16.1	108	29.4	95	25.9
Access to education and vocational training for young people	31	8.4	49	13.4	85	23.2	138	37.6	64	17.4
Availability of local health services	46	12.5	82	22.3	135	36.8	68	18.5	36	9.8
Reduction in household poverty levels based on visible livelihoods improvement	38	10.4	36	9.8	87	23.7	93	25.3	113	30.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in Table 2 above, a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 40.9 per cent noted that employment-to-population ratio across rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state has significantly declined. However, a cumulative 33.5 per cent of respondents opined that employment-to-population ratio across rural communities bedeviled by banditry in Niger state, Nigeria has not change despite the bandits' mayhem; 55.3 per cent cumulatively indicated that access to road networks and transportation in rural LGAs affected by banditry in Niger State has significantly declined; while 55.0 per cent cumulatively noted that access to education and vocational training for young people has equally significantly declined.

On the other hand, 34.8 per cent of the respondents cumulatively opined that despite bandits' attacks in rural areas in Niger state, the availability of local health services has significantly improved. However, 36.8 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the posed question by asserting that there has been no recorded change in the availability of local health services in Niger state. Hence the need for government to be proactive in providing

necessary health care facilities in rural area in order to upgrade the standard of livin of the people and boost economi development in Niger state. Table 2 als reveals a high number of respondents (56. percent) emphasizing that there is n reduction in household poverty level based on visible livelihoods improvemen in Niger state due banditry operations i the rural areas.

It could be deduced from the analysis tha the socio-economic development indicator amidst banditry attacks in Niger state fron 2015 to 2024 are generally perceived to b unsatisfactory and significantly declinin in all dimension. This underscores th need for the FGN and Niger stat government to address the challenges o poverty and rural infrastructura development posed by banditry in order t boost the socio-economic development o Niger state towards enhancing security o lives and properties against banditry.

Richard (2024) noted in line with the forgo analysis that the economic repercussions kidnapping and banditry which are loss livelihood and investments, affect the hur security of individuals and communities Niger State which has a long-term effects s as increased security measures restrictions on daily activities that affects overall socio-economic development individuals and communities in Niger Stat

In a similar vein, recent economi assessments emphasize that Nigeria' persistent youth unemployment whic climbed to an estimated 14.2% in late 2025 among those aged 15–24 under the revised labor force framework (National Bureau of Statistics, 2025) acts as a primary driver for regional insecurity. The UNDP Nigeria Security Report (2026) further asserts that this "economic exclusion" has created a desperate labor pool for criminal franchises, where the lack of formal jobs directly correlates with the surge in banditry and kidnapping in the North Central zone. Consequently, without targeted intervention in 2026, the high rate of "NEET" youths (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) in states like Niger will continue to provide a steady supply of recruits for organized armed groups (World Bank, 2026).

The World Bank (2025) warns that this "youth bulge," characterized by millions of young Nigerians trapped in the informal economy or without prospects, has created a fertile ground for "situational criminality" including banditry and kidnapping. In Niger State specifically, the absence of viable livelihoods has fostered a "political economy of violence" where disillusioned youths are increasingly susceptible to recruitment as foot soldiers, informants, or logistical aides (Danjuma & Caleb, 2025). Consequently, if the underlying economic disenfranchisement is not addressed, the security vacuum in Niger State will continue to offer an enabling environment for the forced or voluntary integration of vulnerable youths into organized bandit groups (ActionAid Nigeria, 2026).

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Table 3: Respondents Opinion on the Extent to Which the Following Economic Conditions Have Changed in Areas Affected by Recurring Bandit Attacks in Niger State between 2015 and 2025.

Statement	Greatly Increased	%	Increased	%	Remained the Same	%	Decreased	%	Greatly Decreased	%
Closure of local weekly markets and trade centers	104	28.3	175	47.7	33	9.0	29	7.9	26	7.1
Youth unemployment or withdrawal from productive engagement	97	26.4	141	38.4	46	12.5	45	12.3	38	10.4
Travel time and distance to access functional schools and clinics	133	36.2	169	46.0	23	6.3	28	7.6	14	3.8
Informal taxation or illegal levies imposed by non-state armed actors	176	48.0	137	37.3	23	6.3	20	5.4	11	3.0
Livelihood shifts from agriculture to unsafe or non-traditional survival means	135	36.8	158	43.1	34	9.3	25	6.8	15	4.1

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

The analysis on Table 3 above shows that majority of the respondents gave high ratings to all the posed indices or challenges. However, the three most highly rated of the five economic conditions that have changed in areas affected by recurring bandit attacks in Niger state between 2015 and 2024 include the following; informal taxation or illegal levies imposed by non-state armed actors (85.3 per cent), travel time and distance to access functional schools and clinics (82.2 per cent), livelihood shifts from agriculture to unsafe or non-traditional survival means (79.9 per cent). These economic conditions are considered to have significantly worsened as a result of banditry activities in Niger state, Nigeria.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Banditry on Poverty Levels and Rural Infrastructural Development in Niger State.

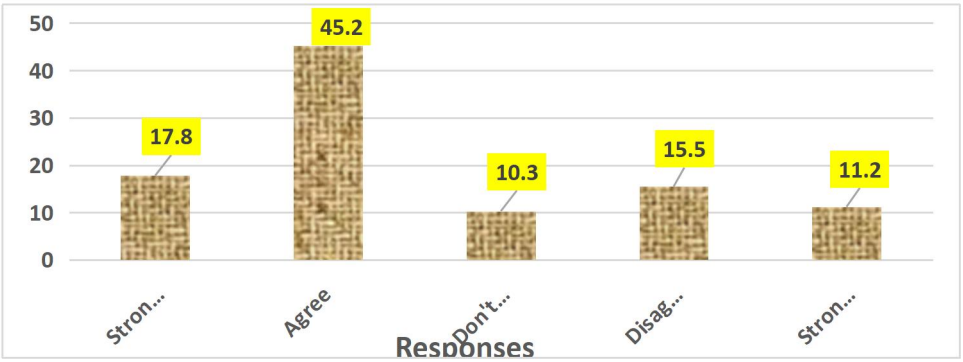
The second research question explored the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented from figure 1 to 2 and table 4 and 5 respectively.

Assessing Whether the High Rate of Displacement Due to Bandit Attacks Increased the Poverty Headcount Ratio in Niger State's Rural Communities.

The study sought the opinion of respondents on whether the high rate of

displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities. The responses are contained in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Respondents Assessment on Whether the High Rate of Displacement Due to Bandit Attacks Increased the Poverty Headcount Ratio in Niger State's Rural Communities.



Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

Figure1 depicts that a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 63 per cent hold the view that the high rate of displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities. This is more prevalent and glaring in rural areas of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai. In addition, a cumulative 26.7 per cent of respondents disagreed to the posed question. It is evident from the analysis that the recurring incidence of banditry in rural Niger State has resulted in wanton displacement of rural populace thereby exacerbating the poverty rate in the state and the country at large.

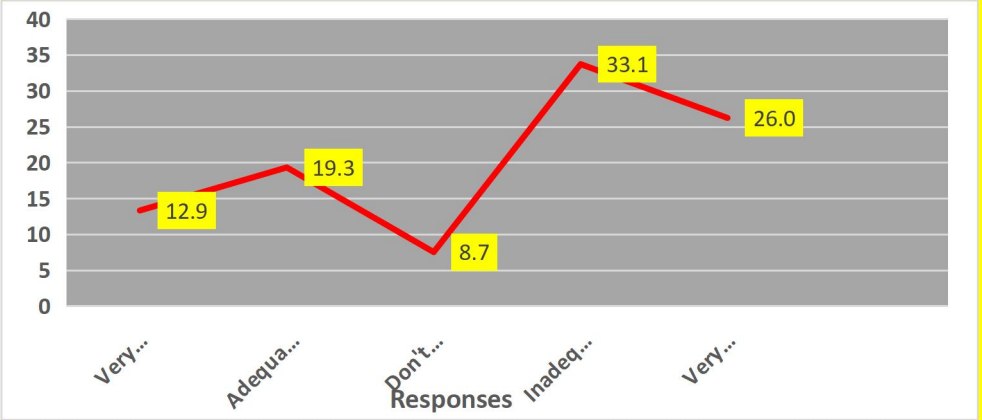
In line with the findings of the study, PwC Nigeria (2026) observes that poverty has reached a critical threshold, with the national poverty rate projected to climb to 62%, affecting approximately 141 million Nigerians. This systemic deprivation acts as a primary catalyst for insecurity; as noted by the World Bank (2025), when individuals face a total collapse of purchasing power and cannot meet basic nutritional needs, they are increasingly pushed toward the "illicit economy" as a survival strategy. This "poverty-insecurity nexus" has directly fueled the rising wave of banditry and kidnapping across the North Central region, where criminal activity is often a desperate response to chronic economic exclusion and the absence of viable livelihoods (UNDP, 2026).

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Describing the Adequacy of Existing Infrastructure in Conflict-Prone Areas of Niger State Affected by Banditry.

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of existing infrastructure like roads, power, and markets in conflict-prone areas of Niger state affected by banditry.

Figure 2: Respondents Opinion on Describing the Adequacy of Existing Infrastructure in Conflict-Prone Areas of Niger State Affected by Banditry.



Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

Figure 2 depicts that 217 (59.1 per cent respondents cumulatively opined that th current infrastructure like roads, powe and markets in conflict-prone areas c Niger state affected by banditry has bee inadequate in meeting the needs of th people in banditry affected areas in th state. In addition, a cumulative 118 (32. per cent) respondents indicated that th existing infrastructure in conflict-pron areas of Niger state affected by banditry ha been adequate in this regard.

In buttressing the above finding, the Nige State Ministry of Homeland Security (2025 and current sectoral analyses emphasiz that the persistent deficit in rural socia services and infrastructure remains th primary enabler of kidnapping an banditry. This is evidenced by the state' 2026 "Budget of Consolidation", which allocated over N761 billion (73.81% of the total budget) to capital projects specifically aimed at road construction, water supply, and electricity in underserved districts to eliminate the "ungoverned spaces" used as bandit enclaves (Niger State Government, 2026). Furthermore, UNICEF (2025) reports that in Niger State alone, approximately 71.7% of rural residents link the prevalence of kidnapping to the lack of secure social infrastructure, such as fenced schools and accessible healthcare. Consequently, there is an urgent need for the ongoing up-scaling of rural social services to bridge the "security-development gap," thereby reducing the economic vulnerability of the rural populace and curbing the recruitment potential of armed groups (Danjuma & Caleb, 2025; Bago, 2026).

Table 4: Assessing Whether the Following are Poverty-Related Consequences of Banditry in Niger State Rural Communities.

Consequences	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
Destruction of household income and savings	89	24.3	198	54.0	43	11.7	37	10.1
Increased cost of food and basic necessities	89	24.3	171	46.6	64	17.4	43	11.7
Worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty	87	23.7	185	50.4	63	17.2	32	8.7
Inaccessibility to health services due to insecurity	112	30.5	146	39.8	68	18.5	41	11.2
Overstretching of IDP camps and relief services	142	38.7	178	48.5	35	9.5	12	3.3
Loss of economic assets such as land and shops	126	34.3	165	45.0	42	11.4	34	9.3
Abandonment of housing and property	148	40.3	188	51.2	21	5.7	10	2.7
Increase in child labour and street begging	135	36.8	162	44.1	48	13.1	22	6.0

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

As highlighted in table 4, majority of respondents ranking 78.3 per cent were of the view that one of the poverty-related consequences of banditry in Niger state rural communities is destruction of household income and savings which arises as a result of bandits attacks on means of livelihood of the rural populace. On the other hand, 70.9 per cent noted that the consequences of banditry on rural communities in Niger state is increase in cost of food and basic necessities which is caused by the bandits nefarious activities that prevents the locals from farming for the fear of being kidnapped or killed. This without iota of doubt or contradiction has given rise to the cost of living in rural communities that were known to have cheap and affordable lifestyle prior to bandits operations in Niger state.

In addition, the analysis shows that 74.1 per cent of respondents indicated that the worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty is another consequences of banditry activities in Niger state rural communities, while 70.3 per cent rated the banditry related consequences in Niger state to be inaccessibility to health services due to insecurity. This is because bandits sometimes destroy the healthcare facilities and other infrastructures in the rural communities. Also, the analysis depicts that the current trend of bandits attacks in rural communities of Niger state results in overstretching of IDP camps and relief services due to displacements as affirmed by 87.2 per cent of respondents, while 79.3 per cent opined that Poverty-related consequences of banditry in Niger state rural communities include loss of economic assets such as land and shops.

Furthermore, 91.5 per cent of respondents rated the consequences of

banditry related activities in Niger state to be inextricably linked to abandonment of housing and property for the fear of loss of lives emanating from banditry attacks**.** More so, a significant 80.9 per cent of respondents indicated that banditry in rural communities of Niger state has gave rise to increase in child labour and street begging as a result of displacement and loss of means of livelihood orchestrated by banditry attacks.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the poverty related consequences of banditry in Niger state is overwhelming because it has defiled and retrogressed all the socio-economic indicators that would point towards development in the state.

Table 5: Respondents assessment of How Banditry has Severely Affected the Following Indicators of Economic Development in Niger State.

Indicator	Very Severe	%	Severe	%	Mild	%	Not at All	%
Employment-to-Population Ratio	155	42.2	111	30.2	58	15.8	43	11.7
Access to Basic Infrastructure (e.g., roads, electricity)	183	49.9	128	34.9	34	9.3	22	6.0
Investment Levels in Conflict-Affected LGAs	192	52.3	138	37.6	22	6.0	15	4.1
Education Access in Displacement-Affected Areas	143	39.0	135	36.8	69	18.8	20	5.4
Poverty Headcount Ratio	156	42.5	122	33.2	53	14.4	36	9.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, September, 2025.

The analysis on Table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents gave high ratings to most of the indices or affected economic indicators. In 2025, reports indicated that insecurity in the North Central region, including Niger State, led to a significant drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as the perceived corporate risk and the "cost of doing business" skyrocketed due to the need for private security and high insurance premiums (Gbenga, 2025). Investors have increasingly refrained from capital-intensive projects in Local Government Areas (LGAs) like Shiroro and Rafi, viewing them as "red zones" where asset protection cannot be guaranteed by the state (Mustapha, 2026).

Pertinently, 89.9 per cent of respondents each cumulatively affirmed that the investment levels in bandits conflict-affected LGAs in Niger state has been severely affected as investors lost confidence in the security of their investment thereby refrained from investing. Additionally, a cumulative 84.8 per cent of respondents gave a high rating to the assertion that access to basic infrastructure (such as roads and electricity) in rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state has been very severely affected thereby leading to a decline in standard of living among the rural populace. This aligns with the current "infrastructure-security gap." In 2025, bandit attacks on critical communal assets, including the burning of markets and destruction of rural electrification projects, were widely reported in districts such as Borgu and Rafi

(Champion Newspapers, 2026). This physical destruction has led to what researchers call "economic rural-stagnation," where the inability to transport agricultural produce to urban markets has caused a sharp decline in the standard of living for over 70% of the rural populace in the state (IOM, 2025).

More so, 75.8 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that education access in displacement-affected areas in Niger state. This is because so many school children have been abducted by bandits in Niger state and elsewhere thereby leading to the closure of schools for the safety of children and teachers in bandit affected areas in Niger state. This has tremendously hike the number of out-of-school children in the state. In line with the above finding, a major incident in November 2025 saw the kidnapping of approximately 315 students and 12 staff from St. Mary's Catholic School in Niger State, which remains one of the largest school abductions in recent years (ACAPS, 2026). Such incidents have forced the Niger State government to temporarily close over 400 schools across volatile LGAs as a precautionary measure (UNICEF, 2025). This has contributed to a "tremendous hike" in the number of out-of-school children, with current 2026 estimates indicating that thousands of learners in the state have been out of the classroom for more than two academic cycles due to the "kidnapping-for-ransom" industry (Al Jazeera, 2025; UNICEF, 2026).

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data collected in the course of the research on the socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State, Nigeria the following findings were arrived at:

i. Finding shows that the operational nature of banditry in Niger state since 2015 is that the armed groups often target rural and hard-to-reach districts, this is to enable them carryout their operations and go scot-free before the arrival of security personnel whom may likely annihilate them. Bandits rely on motorcycles for swift attacks and escape and they often carry out their attacks more frequently during dry seasons when access roads are usable. During raining seasons, the spate of attacks from bandits in rural communities in Niger state has been discovered to have reduced drastically. These actions by bandits in Niger state has affected and undermined and violated every socio-economic indicators of growth and development. Rural communities affected by banditry in Niger state have experienced closure of markets, imposition of illegal taxes on farmers which have made a lot of them to abandon their indigenous means of livelihood (farming) and venture into other areas of endeavors against their will. Therefore, Niger state government in collaboration with FGN must work assiduously in order to combat banditry, alleviate poverty and build infrastructure in rural communities.

ii. The findings of this study further revealed that the socio-economic consequences of banditry on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger State is that high

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rate of displacement due to bandit attacks increased the poverty headcount ratio in Niger state's rural communities of Munya, Mashegu, Magama, Paikoro, and Lapai which are considered the hotspots of banditry operations in Niger state. The consequences of unchecked banditry activities in Niger state are destruction of household income and savings, increase in cost of food and basic necessities, worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty, overstretching of IDP camps and relief services, abandonment of housing and property. These compounding issues resulted in the loss of investment opportunities in banditry affected areas and worsening of poverty headcount ratio. These are indeed substantial problems which collective efforts of governments, nongovernmental organization and individual philanthropy have not adequately addressed.

Conclusion

The study is an examination of banditry dynamics and its socio-economic effects on poverty levels and rural infrastructural development in Niger state, Nigeria. The crisis of banditry is a big challenge in Niger state's effort at enhancing socio-economic development in bandit affected areas in the state. It is evident that the crisis of banditry threatens every sphere of socio-economic development indices and if security is not assured, myriad of challenges which affects the people's socio-economic development will arise. The absence of infrastructural development in Niger state has continue to undermine the economic development of the state. It is therefore the duty of the government at both state and federal level to combat banditry and make the rural populace feel more secured and boost the overall economy of the state. Hence for Niger state to fully attain high level of socio-economic development, the government must take into recognition the challenges of poverty and infrastructural development posed by banditry. There is an emerging understanding that states will not be secured and cannot be secured until the people feel secured as well. The study found out among others that the frequency and trends of banditry attacks has undermined the socio-economic development of Niger state which has resulted in the destruction of household income and savings, increase in cost of food and basic necessities, worsening of youth and female-headed household poverty, overstretching of IDP camps and relief services as well as abandonment of housing and property.

Recommendations

i. There is need for the FGN in collaboration with Niger state government to be proactive in intensifying anti-banditry security operations especially during dry seasons in order to nip in the bud all forms of operational nature of banditry as well as to pave way for socio-economic development in the state.

ii. Government should introduce grassroots inclusive poverty alleviation programme and enhance infrastructural development in the rural areas affected by banditry in Niger state. This would enable them to recover the socio-economic loss that has been recorder as a result of

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banditry operations over a decade in th state.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

Indigenous Framework for Peace, Security, and Sustainable Development through Biblical Theology and African Traditional Religion

Abstract

This paper develops an indigenous framework for peace, security, and sustainable development in Africa by reading biblical theology and African Traditional Religion (ATR) together as compatible traditions rather than treating one as a foreign import layered over the other. Drawing on scholarship published between 2021 and 2026, much of it written by African theologians and social scientists from within the communities they study, the paper argued that both traditions ground peace in restored relationship rather than the mere absence of violence, ground security in the wellbeing of the whole community rather than in state protection alone, and ground development in stewardship rather than extraction. It examined what each tradition specifically contributes: biblical theology's covenant accountability and prophetic critique of injustice, and ATR's practiced vocabulary of communal obligation, oath, and land-based responsibility. From this comparison it proposed a framework built from principles both traditions already hold, rather than principles imported from outside either. The paper closed by outlining what such a framework would require of religious leaders, policymakers, and development practitioners working in African, and especially Nigerian, contexts, where both traditions continue to shape everyday moral reasoning whether or not policy documents acknowledge it.

Keywords: Biblical Theology, African Traditional Religion, Peace, Security, Sustainable Development, Ubuntu.

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Date Received: 28th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 05th September, 2026

Introduction

Peacebuilding, security policy, and development planning in Africa are, more often than official language admits, religious undertakings. The people who carry them out have had their sense of a flourishing community shaped as much by Sunday sermons and traditional proverbs as by any secular training in conflict resolution or economics. Yet the frameworks these fields actually use tend to treat religion, where they notice it at all, as a variable to be managed, a source of conflict to be defused, or a stakeholder group to be consulted, not as a genuine source of theological and cosmological reasoning about what peace, security, and

development are for. This gap between how peacebuilding and development are practised and what actually motivates the communities they serve has real costs. Salifu's (2025) study of religion as a tool for conflict management and sustainable development in Nigeria found that religious ethical values, justice, tolerance, and patriotism, drawn from Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion alike, remain central to how ordinary Nigerians understand peaceful coexistence, even as formal peacebuilding institutions continue to treat religion as a complication rather than a resource. This paper addresses the underuse of biblical theology and African Traditional Religion, read together rather than as rivals, as sources for a framework of peace, security, and sustainable development genuinely rooted in how millions of Africans already reason about these questions.

Recent African scholarship has begun supplying the material such a framework needs, even though no one has yet assembled it into one. Opuni-Frimpong (2023) shows African theologians actively using scripture to confront corruption, injustice, and poverty in public life, arguing that biblical perspectives on justice and the common good are not private devotional matters but resources for public-policy engagement that Ghanaian church leaders have drawn on for decades. Mensah (2023) compares Psalm 40:7, 'thy law is within my heart,' with African indigenous sacred texts and shows that internalised moral law, obedience from conviction rather than external compulsion, is a shared concern of the Hebrew Psalter and African indigenous religious thought, not a uniquely biblical idea later imposed on African communities. Mokhutso's (2023, 2026) two studies of Christianity and African Traditional Religion, one on tension within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and the other on the deeper philosophical compatibility between the traditions, together show that the relationship between biblical theology and ATR is better understood as an unfinished conversation than a settled contest: real friction in institutional practice, but genuine convergence in underlying values. Nyawo (2023) demonstrates what this convergence looks like on the ground in Eswatini, where the Incwala ritual still functions as a resource for social cohesion that a purely biblical or purely secular development framework would miss.

None of this literature, strong as it is individually, assembles biblical theology and ATR's shared resources into a working framework for peace, security, and sustainable development together, the language in which African governments, regional bodies, and development agencies actually plan and budget. Opuni-Frimpong's work stays within Christian ethics; Mokhutso's stays at the level of theological comparison; Nyawo's Eswatini study, rich as it is, is a single case rather than a general

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framework; and Salifu gestures toward the practical synthesis this paper attempts without developing biblical theology and ATR's specific contributions in depth. This paper works in that open space. It moves from what each tradition brings to peace, security, and development on its own terms, to what becomes visible once the two are read together, to a set of framework principles that can inform how religious leaders, policymakers, and development practitioners work in African, and particularly Nigerian, contexts.

Definition of Terms

Peace, as used in this paper, means more than the absence of armed conflict. It means right relationship among persons, between persons and their environment, and, in both traditions examined here, between the community and the sacred order that sustains it (Mensah, 2023).

Security refers to a condition in which a community's members are protected from violence and want, and in which mechanisms exist to address grievance before it escalates into conflict. This paper treats security as resting on communal trust and legitimate authority, not on coercive capacity alone (Salifu, 2025).

Sustainable development denotes an approach to material and social progress that meets present needs without depleting the ecological, communal, and intergenerational relationships that future flourishing depends on. This definition was chosen because it fits both biblical stewardship language and ATR's own land-based ethic (Nyawo, 2023).

Biblical theology, as distinct from systematic or dogmatic theology, refers here to reading scripture's own theological themes, covenant, justice, shalom, stewardship, on their own terms and in their own historical development, rather than through a later doctrinal system imposed on the text (Holter, 2023).

African Traditional Religion, following usage elsewhere in this field, denotes the indigenous, largely oral spiritual and ethical systems practised across African societies, grounded in belief in a Supreme Being, veneration of ancestors, and the mediating role of divinities and ritual specialists (Sarbah & Adjei, 2024).

An indigenous framework, for this paper, means a set of guiding principles for practice built from resources already present in a community's own religious and cultural traditions, rather than principles developed elsewhere and adapted for local use (Mokhutso, 2026).

What Each Tradition Brings to the Question of Peace

Biblical theology's contribution to a framework of peace begins with the richness of its own vocabulary for the concept. Shalom, the Hebrew term usually translated 'peace,' carries a wholeness the English word rarely captures: bodily wellbeing, right relationship with neighbour, and right relationship with God, all at once. A

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community could not, on biblical terms, be at peace while its poor went hungry or its courts favoured the powerful, however quiet its streets. Opuni-Frimpong (2023) shows this vocabulary doing real work in contemporary African public life, where church leaders draw on biblical justice language to confront corruption and structural poverty, because shalom's wholeness makes silence about injustice theologically untenable, not merely politically inconvenient. This is peace as an achievement requiring active justice, not peace as a fragile absence of disturbance to be protected by staying quiet.

African Traditional Religion arrives at a similar destination through its own vocabulary, built less around a single key term than around a dense web of practices: oath, taboo, ancestral mediation, and communal ritual. Together these treat peace as inseparable from the health of the whole community, not as a private good an individual might secure alone. Mensah's (2023) comparison of Psalm 40:7 with African indigenous sacred texts is instructive here: it shows that internalised moral obligation, law written on the heart rather than merely imposed from without, works as a peace-sustaining mechanism in both traditions, restraining wrongdoing before it requires external correction. Nyawo's (2023) study of the Incwala ritual in Eswatini shows this internalisation working at communal scale: the ritual's annual renewal reaffirms bonds of obligation between the king, the ancestors, and the wider community, sustaining social cohesion year on year rather than merely responding to conflict once it has broken out.

Where the two traditions differ is less in what they mean by peace than in where each locates the authority responsible for sustaining it. Biblical theology roots that authority in a single covenanting deity whose character supplies a standard capable, in principle, of judging any king or nation, a universalising move visible in how biblical prophets could indict Israel's own leadership without appeal to any higher human court. Holter (2023) shows this universalising impulse was never meant to exclude African peoples, a point worth stressing given how often biblical theology has been received in Africa as an import rather than a genuinely inclusive resource. African Traditional Religion, by contrast, distributes the authority for peace across ancestors, territorial divinities, and living custodians, elders, diviners, traditional rulers, whose legitimacy is renewed through ongoing communal relationship rather than a single universal source. This gives ATR's peace mechanisms a local specificity that biblical theology's more universal claims sometimes lack, and gives biblical theology a cross-communal reach that ATR's locally rooted mechanisms sometimes struggle to achieve alone.

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Security as a Communal Achievement

Both traditions resist the modern assumption that security is primarily the state's business, something a government provides for citizens who otherwise wait to be protected. Salifu (2025) found that religious ethical values continue to shape how Nigerian communities manage insecurity locally, often filling gaps left by a state whose formal security apparatus cannot reach every farming community or urban neighbourhood. Salifu's use of Durkheimian functionalism underscores a point both biblical theology and ATR would recognise: a community's shared moral commitments do real security work, sometimes more effectively than formal policing. Mokhutso (2023) offers a useful caution, however: where Christian institutions have suppressed rather than engaged ATR's communal mechanisms, they have sometimes weakened the very communal trust security depends on, leaving a vacuum that neither imported church structure nor traditional authority alone has filled.

Ngwoke (2025) shows concretely what happens when this communal dimension of security is neglected in favour of purely institutional or purely spiritual responses. Nigerian Christians' engagement with corrupt and violent politics has often oscillated between withdrawal, treating public life as beyond redemption, and uncritical participation, baptising political ambition without theological scrutiny. Neither builds the sustained communal accountability that biblical prophetic tradition and ATR's oath-bound accountability structures actually require. Yusuf and Shittu's (2022) survey of ATR's conflict resolution mechanisms shows what that accountability looks like in practice: traditional processes for managing land disputes, succession conflicts, and interpersonal harm work because they treat security as inseparable from restoring the disputing parties' standing in the wider community, not as a technical problem solved once and set aside. Chlouba's (2024) continent-wide finding, that traditional institutions still shape ordinary citizens' democratic attitudes, for better and worse, confirms that this communal dimension of security is not a historical curiosity but a live, measurable feature of how Africans experience governance and protection today.

This evidence suggests that a genuinely indigenous security framework would need to treat the state's formal security apparatus as one layer within a larger structure, not as security's primary source, a structure that also includes the moral formation religious communities provide, the accountability traditional institutions exercise over their own members, and the communal trust both depend on and help sustain. Neither biblical theology nor African Traditional Religion imagines security as something government delivers to a passive citizenry; both imagine it as something a morally formed,

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mutually accountable community produces together, with formal authority playing a necessary but partial role.

Stewardship, Ubuntu, and the Land

Sustainable development, defined as this paper defines it, raises a question both biblical theology and African Traditional Religion have rich resources to answer: how should a community relate to land and material resources without treating either as simply available for extraction? Biblical theology's stewardship tradition, rooted in the creation narratives' language of humanity tending rather than merely possessing the earth, treats land as held in trust rather than owned outright. This has direct practical weight in agrarian contexts where land is the primary source of livelihood and, increasingly across Nigeria's Middle Belt and beyond, the primary source of violent conflict. Mensah's (2023) reading of internalised law in the Hebrew Psalter connects naturally to this stewardship tradition: a community that has genuinely internalised responsibility toward the land, rather than merely complying with external regulation, is far less likely to exhaust that land for short-term advantage.

Ubuntu supplies African Traditional Religion's own version of this stewardship instinct, extended beyond land to the whole web of communal and material relationship a person is born into. Mugumbate and colleagues' (2023) widely cited account of Ubuntu describes personhood as constituted through relationship across family, community, society, and spiritual dimensions at once. This makes it difficult, in principle, to pursue material development that damages one of those dimensions for gain in another, since the wellbeing Ubuntu cares about was never simply individual or material to begin with. Lunga and colleagues (2025) apply Ubuntu to disaster risk reduction and governance and show this stewardship logic working in genuinely contemporary policy: embedding Ubuntu's relational ethic into planning produces more resilient outcomes than frameworks that treat communities as passive recipients of development designed elsewhere.

Nyawo's (2023) Eswatini study brings these threads together concretely. Indigenous spirituality's role in peacebuilding and development cannot be separated from its role in regulating how a community relates to land, resource, and ritual time: the Incwala ritual's agricultural calendar embeds ecological restraint directly into the community's religious life, rather than treating environmental limits as an external constraint development must work around. Falola (2022) situates this ecological embeddedness within ATR's wider epistemology, arguing that the same cosmology which venerates ancestors and territorial divinities has always encoded real limits on how land may be used, and by whom, as a matter of religious obligation rather than

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optional environmental policy. Read alongside biblical stewardship theology, this suggests that a development framework drawing on both traditions would treat ecological restraint not as an add-on to growth but as a condition any genuinely sustainable development, in either tradition's terms, would have to meet from the outset.

Building the Framework

Reading biblical theology and African Traditional Religion together on peace, security, and development does not produce a single doctrine either tradition would fully own, but a set of shared principles that can anchor practical work without diluting either tradition into the other. The first principle is that peace requires justice, not merely quiet. This follows directly from shalom's wholeness and from ATR's insistence, visible across Yusuf and Shittu's (2022) survey of indigenous conflict resolution, that unresolved grievance, not surface calm, is what genuine peacebuilding must address. The second principle is that security is a communal achievement resting on moral formation and mutual accountability, not a service the state delivers alone. Salifu (2025) and Chlouba (2024) support this empirically; biblical prophetic tradition and ATR's oath-bound accountability structures support it theologically. The third principle is that development is stewardship rather than extraction, following from the convergence this paper has traced between biblical creation theology and Ubuntu's relational ontology, a convergence with direct implications for how land-based conflict, environmental policy, and resource governance should be approached in African contexts.

A fourth principle, less often stated but implicit throughout this scholarship, is that neither tradition should be treated as the other's junior partner. Mokhutso's (2023, 2026) paired studies caution against the institutional pattern in which Christian structures suppress or merely tolerate ATR instead of engaging it as a genuine interlocutor, a pattern that weakens the very communal trust this paper has argued security and development both depend on. A framework built on these four principles, justice-oriented peace, communally grounded security, stewardship-based development, and genuine mutual standing between the two traditions, would not require African governments or development agencies to become confessional in any narrow sense. But it would require them to stop treating religion as background noise to be managed, and start treating biblical theology and African Traditional Religion as what the evidence here suggests they already are for millions of Africans: working theories of what a flourishing community actually looks like.

Findings

Biblical theology and African Traditional Religion converge substantially on what

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peace, security, and development actually require: wholeness rather than mere calm, communal trust rather than coercive protection alone, and stewardship rather than extraction, even though each tradition expresses this convergence through its own vocabulary and mechanisms. Recent African scholarship, produced largely by theologians and social scientists writing from within the communities they study, has been building the individual pieces of a combined framework, biblical public theology, ATR's peacebuilding mechanisms, Ubuntu's relational ethic, without yet assembling those pieces into one working structure for peace, security, and development together. Security, on the evidence both traditions and recent empirical scholarship supply, functions largely as a communal rather than a purely state achievement: frameworks that treat religious and traditional institutions merely as stakeholders to consult, rather than as active sources of the moral formation and accountability security depends on, work with an incomplete picture. Development framed around stewardship rather than extraction finds strong, independently arrived-at support in both biblical creation theology and Ubuntu's relational ontology, suggesting this convergence is not coincidental but reflects a genuine shared insight about the relationship between community, land, and material flourishing. Finally, the institutional relationship between biblical theology and African Traditional Religion remains genuinely unsettled, with real documented tension in practice even where the two traditions converge philosophically. Any framework built on both must address that institutional tension directly, rather than assume philosophical convergence will resolve it on its own.

Conclusion

Ask a Nigerian pastor and a traditional priest, on the same afternoon, what peace actually requires of a community, and the two answers will rhyme rather more than either man expects. On the evidence gathered here, the pastor and the traditional priest are not describing two different destinations when they talk about what their community needs to flourish. They are describing the same destination in two different languages: biblical theology's shalom and its ethic of covenant accountability, and African Traditional Religion's dense communal vocabulary of oath, ancestor, and Ubuntu, both converging on peace as justice achieved rather than violence merely absent, security as a community's own moral achievement rather than a service delivered from outside, and development as stewardship of relationship and land rather than extraction from either. This convergence has been documented piece by piece across a growing body of recent African scholarship without yet being assembled into a single, usable framework, which is the gap this paper

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has tried to close. The framework proposed here does not ask either tradition to give up what makes it distinct, biblical theology's universalising prophetic claim or African Traditional Religion's rootedness in specific land, lineage, and ritual. It asks policymakers, religious leaders, and development practitioners to stop treating that distinctiveness as an obstacle to cooperation, and to start treating it as two genuinely complementary sets of resources for the same, still unfinished, work of building peaceful, secure, and sustainably developing African communities.

Recommendations

Turning this framework into practice will require deliberate effort in several directions at once:

1. Peacebuilding organisations and government agencies working on conflict resolution in Nigeria and comparable contexts should formally include both Christian and African Traditional Religion leadership structures as active partners in local peace processes, drawing on the communal accountability mechanisms Yusuf and Shittu (2022) and Salifu (2025) document, rather than treating religious actors as stakeholders consulted only after a secular process has already been designed.

2. Security policy at state and community level should invest deliberately in the moral formation and communal accountability structures both traditions supply, supporting the institutions, churches, mosques, councils of elders, that do this formation work, rather than measuring security investment solely in terms of policing and hardware.

3. Development agencies and land policymakers should adopt stewardship rather than extraction as an explicit planning principle, drawing on the convergence this paper has traced between biblical creation theology and Ubuntu's relational ethic, particularly in resource-conflict-prone regions where land is simultaneously livelihood, inheritance, and sacred trust.

4. Christian institutions operating in African contexts should take seriously Mokhutso's (2023) caution against treating African Traditional Religion as an obstacle to be overcome rather than a genuine theological interlocutor, since institutional tension between the two traditions actively undermines the communal trust that peace, security, and development all depend on.

5. Researchers should extend the comparative work this paper has begun, testing the proposed framework empirically in specific African contexts, since a framework built from principles shared across two traditions still needs the contextual grounding that only

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sustained, community-based research can supply.

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Citation: Adinoyi, Peter A. & Olusegun, Bukola C. "Indigenous Framework for Peace, Security, and Sustainable Development through Biblical Theology and African Traditional Religion". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp119-129.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Empirical Article

Open Access

Leveraging Social Support Networks in Enhancing Psychological Recovery After Conflict.

Abstract

Psychological recovery after conflict is often treated as an individual process of endurance, treatment or symptom reduction. Yet, such a view is incomplete because recovery also depends on whether survivors feel listened to, accepted, helped and emotionally protected by the people around them. This study examined the relationship between perceived social support and post-traumatic growth among 352 trauma-exposed adults in Maiduguri, Borno State. We used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design and included participants in the main analysis after they endorsed at least one conflict-related traumatic event. Perceived social support was assessed through family, friends and significant other support, while post-traumatic growth was assessed across relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change and appreciation of life. Results showed a strong positive relationship between perceived social support and post-traumatic growth, $r(350) = .726$, $p < .001$. Regression analysis further showed that perceived social support was a significant statistical predictor of post-traumatic growth and accounted for 52.8% of its variance. Because the study was cross-sectional, the findings are interpreted as evidence of association and prediction rather than causation. The article concludes that social support networks should be treated as recovery infrastructure, not merely as informal comfort, and that psychosocial interventions in Maiduguri and similar conflict-affected settings should strengthen family, peer, faith-based and community support systems alongside formal mental-health services.

Keywords: Perceived Social Support; Post-Traumatic Growth; Conflict Survivors; Psychological.

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Date Received: 30th August, 2026

Date Accepted: 08th September, 2026

Introduction

Conflict does not end psychologically when violence pauses because survivors may regain shelter, return to a community or resume daily activities while still carrying fear, grief, distrust and uncertainty about the future. In Maiduguri, Borno State, prolonged insurgency and displacement have made recovery a mental-health and social-development issue rather than only a humanitarian concern, especially as displacement reports continue to show that Borno remains affected by conflict, movement, return pressures and unmet recovery needs (Internal Displacement

Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2025; International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2025).

This article argues that post-conflict recovery should not be reduced to individual coping because a survivor's ability to rebuild meaning, restore confidence and imagine a future is often shaped by the quality of relationships around them. Perceived social support is therefore important because it captures whether survivors believe that family, friends and significant others are available, reliable and emotionally responsive (Zimet *et al.*, 1988).

The focus of the study is post-traumatic growth (PTG), understood as perceived positive psychological change after struggling with highly stressful experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). PTG does not mean that trauma is good or that suffering automatically produces strength; rather, it helps researchers examine whether survivors report renewed relationships, personal strength, spiritual change, appreciation of life and new possibilities after adversity. The study therefore asks whether a stronger sense of support is associated with stronger PTG among conflict survivors in Maiduguri.

Literature Review

The major debate in trauma recovery is whether healing should be viewed mainly as an internal psychological process or as a relational process. Symptom-centred models remain necessary because internally displaced and conflict-exposed populations in sub-Saharan Africa continue to show high levels of post-traumatic stress and related mental-health problems (Koshe *et al.*, 2023). However, a narrow focus on symptoms can miss the social conditions that make recovery possible, since survivors often process trauma through family reactions, community acceptance, practical help, religious meaning and the presence or absence of trustworthy listeners.

This is why perceived social support matters. Objective support refers to the actual presence of people or services, but perceived support refers to the survivor's belief that help is available and dependable. The distinction is critical after conflict because a survivor may be physically surrounded by relatives and still feel abandoned, blamed or unsafe, while another survivor may have fewer relationships but experience those relationships as deeply protective. In this sense, perceived support is not a minor emotional variable; it forms part of the survivor's psychological environment.

Ning *et al.* (2023), in a meta-analysis of 217 samples, found a medium positive relationship between social support and PTG, suggesting that support is not merely a comforting addition to recovery but a resource that helps trauma survivors reinterpret what has happened to them. Ma *et al.* (2022) reached a similar conclusion among breast cancer survivors, although the medical context means that their findings cannot be transferred uncritically to conflict-affected

populations. Wu (2024) strengthens the argument by showing that social support may promote PTG through meaning-related psychological pathways, which is especially relevant to conflict recovery because survivors often need to rebuild not only safety but also purpose.

Nigerian evidence points in a similar direction but remains thin. Ojo *et al.* (2023) found that perceived social support was positively related to PTG among internally displaced persons in Benue State, making their study contextually useful for understanding displacement and recovery within Nigeria. Olufadewa *et al.* (2022) add a more human dimension by showing that young internally displaced persons in Northern Nigeria described fear, depression and unmet support needs after terrorism-related trauma. Taken together, these studies show that the Nigerian context cannot be understood only through trauma exposure and pathology, although more focused quantitative evidence is still needed on how perceived support relates to positive adjustment after conflict.

At the same time, PTG should not be celebrated uncritically. Boals (2023) warns that self-reported growth may sometimes reflect coping narratives, cultural pressure or optimistic reinterpretation rather than deep transformation, and this criticism is important because conflict survivors may feel expected to appear strong even when distress remains. For this reason, the present study treats PTG as reported positive psychological adjustment, not as proof that pain has disappeared. The more balanced argument is that social support may be associated with stronger reported growth while distress and material hardship may still continue.

The study is guided by the stress-buffering model and the functional-descriptive model of PTG. Cohen and Wills (1985) explain that social support can protect well-being by increasing perceived resources and reducing the harmful effects of stress, while Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) frame PTG as a meaning-making process that may follow the struggle with trauma. Together, these frameworks suggest that survivors who feel supported may be better able to talk, reflect, receive validation and rebuild life meanings after conflict.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. This design was suitable because the study examined naturally occurring relationships between perceived social support and PTG at one point in time without manipulating participants' experiences. It allowed the study to determine whether survivors with stronger perceived support also reported higher PTG, although it did not allow causal conclusions about whether social support produced growth.

The initial dataset contained 408 questionnaire records collected from adults in Maiduguri, Borno State. Ten blank or substantially incomplete records were excluded, leaving 398 complete questionnaires. Among the complete

questionnaires, 46 participants did not endorse any traumatic event on the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire and were therefore excluded from the primary analyses because trauma exposure was an inclusion criterion. The final analytic sample consisted of 352 trauma-exposed adults.

Participants were eligible for inclusion if they were adults, resided in Maiduguri or its conflict-affected surroundings, provided usable questionnaire responses and endorsed at least one conflict-related traumatic event. Participants were excluded from the main analysis if their questionnaires were blank, substantially incomplete or did not indicate exposure to any of the traumatic events assessed. This selection process ensured that the study focused on survivors with direct or indirect exposure to conflict-related adversity rather than a general low-risk population.

Trauma exposure and trauma-related symptoms were assessed with the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire, a widely used measure of exposure to violent and potentially traumatic experiences (Mollica *et al.*, 1992). Perceived social support was measured with the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, which assesses support from family, friends and significant others (Zimet *et al.*, 1988). PTG was measured with the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory, which assesses perceived growth in relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change and appreciation of life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).

The instruments showed strong internal consistency in the present sample. Cronbach's alpha was .908 for the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire symptom items, .929 for the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and .930 for the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory. These values exceeded the conventional .70 threshold and supported the use of composite scores in the analyses.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to conflict-affected adults. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw without penalty. Ethical approval and research permission were obtained through the relevant institutional process before data collection, and informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout. Because the subject matter involved conflict-related trauma, participants were also informed about available psychosocial support where distress occurred during or after participation.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the sample and principal variables. Pearson correlation examined the relationship between perceived social support and PTG, while simple linear regression examined the extent to which perceived social support statistically accounted for variation in PTG.

Assumptions relevant to the analyses were checked before interpretation. The distributions of the main variables did not show severe univariate non-normality, scatterplots indicated a generally linear relationship, Cook's distance values did not suggest excessive influence, the Durbin-Watson values did not indicate serious residual autocorrelation, and sensitivity checks did not change the substantive conclusions. Age, gender, education, relationship status, employment status and trauma-event count were treated as important demographic and contextual variables for interpreting the findings.

Results

The results are presented to show whether a stronger sense of perceived support was associated with higher PTG among conflict survivors. Because the study was cross-sectional, all findings are interpreted as relationships observed within the sample, not as evidence that social support directly caused recovery.

Table 1

Screening stage	N	%
Records initially received	408	100.0
Blank or substantially incomplete records	10	2.5
Complete questionnaires	398	97.5
Complete cases without traumatic event	46	11.3
Final trauma-exposed analytic sample	352	86.3

Data Screening and Final Analytic Sample

Note. Only participants who endorsed at least one traumatic event were included in the primary analyses.

The final analytic sample contained 352 trauma-exposed adults. Participants reported cumulative trauma exposure, with the number of traumatic events ranging from 1 to 40, confirming that the study examined adjustment among survivors with substantial conflict-related exposure rather than a low-risk general population.

Table 2

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Age group	20s	30	8.5
	30s	89	25.3
	40s	117	33.2
	50s	105	29.8
	60s	11	3.1
Gender	Female	200	56.8
	Male	152	43.2
Relationship status	Married	213	60.5
	Not married/widowed/ separated/divorced	139	39.5
Employment status	Unemployed	342	97.2
	Employed	10	2.8

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Note. Percentages may not total exactly 100 because of rounding. Demographic variables were treated as contextual factors when interpreting the findings.

The demographic pattern is important because recovery did not occur in a socially neutral setting. Most participants were unemployed, and the sample included more women than men, meaning that the interpretation of social support and PTG must be located within wider conditions of economic vulnerability, gendered experience and prolonged exposure to conflict.

Table 3

Variable	N	M	SD	Median	Range
Number of traumatic events	352	17.30	12.15	13.50	0-40
Trauma symptom mean	352	2.51	0.49	2.50	1-4
Perceived social support	352	4.18	1.25	4.42	1-7
Post-traumatic growth	352	67.72	17.49	65.00	0-105

Descriptive Statistics for Principal Variables

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation.

The mean perceived social-support score was 4.18 on a 1-to-7 scale, while the mean PTG score was 67.72 on a possible range of 0 to 105. The trauma-symptom mean showed that participants continued to report trauma-related psychological experiences, indicating that growth existed alongside distress rather than replacing it.

Table 4

Scale and dimension	Items	Item mean	SD
Family support	4	4.23	1.29
Friends' support	4	4.15	1.39
Significant-other support	4	4.14	1.36
Relating to others	7	3.21	0.91
New possibilities	5	3.28	0.86
Personal strength	4	3.23	0.97
Spiritual change	2	3.28	1.12
Appreciation of life	3	3.13	1.00

Support and Growth Domain Scores

Note. MSPSS item means range from 1 to 7; PTGI item means range from 0 to 5.

Family support had the highest mean among the support domains, although support from friends and significant others was close. For PTG, new possibilities and spiritual change recorded the highest item means, suggesting that survivors' reported growth was expressed through future imagination and spiritual meaning as well as through interpersonal change.

Table 5

Variables	r	df	p	Interpretation
Perceived social support and PTG	.726	350	< .001	Strong positive relationship
Number of traumatic events and perceived social support	-.751	350	< .001	Strong negative relationship
Number of traumatic events and PTG	-.646	350	< .001	Strong negative relationship

Correlation between Perceived Social Support and PTG

Note. PTG = post-traumatic growth.

Perceived social support was strongly and positively related to PTG, $r(350) = .726$, $p < .001$. This means that survivors who felt more supported also reported higher growth after trauma. Trauma-event count was negatively related to perceived support and PTG, showing that heavier trauma exposure was associated with weaker support and lower growth within the sample.

Table 6

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI
Constant	25.415	2.234	--	11.38	< .001	[21.023, 29.808]
Perceived social support	10.132	0.512	.726	19.77	< .001	[9.124, 11.140]

Regression of Perceived Social Support on PTG

Note. $R = .726$; $R^2 = .528$; adjusted $R^2 = .526$; $F(1, 350) = 390.99$, $p < .001$.

Regression analysis showed that perceived social support was a significant statistical predictor of PTG and accounted for 52.8% of the variance. Each one-unit increase in perceived support was associated with an estimated 10.13-point increase in PTG. This provides strong empirical support for the article's argument that social support networks are central to recovery, while the cross-sectional design means that the result should be read as prediction and association rather than proof of cause and effect.

Discussion

The findings show that perceived social support is strongly associated with post-traumatic growth among conflict survivors in Maiduguri. This supports the argument that psychological recovery after conflict is relational because survivors who felt supported by family, friends and significant others were more likely to report growth in relationships, personal strength, spiritual life and new possibilities.

Citation: Nuria, Udensi C. "Leveraging Social Support Networks in Enhancing Psychological Recovery After Conflict.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp130-139.

This finding is consistent with Ning *et al.* (2023), who found a positive support-growth relationship across trauma populations. Ojo *et al.* (2023) reported a similar pattern among internally displaced persons in Nigeria, making the present Maiduguri evidence important because it comes from a large conflict-exposed sample and shows that perceived support accounted for more than half of the variance in PTG.

The result also challenges the assumption that recovery is mainly achieved through individual strength or formal treatment. Clinical services are important, but many survivors in conflict-affected settings rely first on relatives, friends, religious communities and trusted community members. These networks may provide emotional validation, practical assistance and a sense of belonging, especially in low-resource environments where formal mental-health services may be limited or difficult to access.

The negative relationship between trauma-event count and perceived support is equally important because it suggests that severe trauma exposure may damage the very support systems survivors need for recovery. Conflict separates families, destroys homes, weakens trust and disrupts community routines, so recovery programmes should not only treat individual distress; they should also rebuild social connection.

The cross-sectional nature of the study requires careful interpretation. The results do not prove that perceived social support caused PTG, and it is also possible that survivors who report higher PTG are more able to recognise, seek or maintain supportive relationships. Nevertheless, the strength of the association and the size of the regression effect justify social-support-centred interventions in conflict recovery programming, provided that such interventions are presented as evidence-informed rather than causally proven by this design.

Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that psychosocial interventions should deliberately strengthen support networks. Family psychoeducation can help relatives provide non-judgemental support, while peer groups can reduce isolation and allow survivors to share coping experiences. Faith and community leaders should also be trained in trauma-sensitive communication because many survivors seek help through religious and community channels. Humanitarian agencies should include social-support mapping in needs assessments so that isolated survivors can be identified early and linked to appropriate support.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has some limitations that should guide interpretation. First, the cross-sectional design means that the findings show prediction and association, not causation. Although perceived social support strongly predicted post-traumatic growth, the study cannot prove that support directly caused growth.

Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by memory, social desirability or participants' current emotional state. Third, PTG was measured as perceived growth; therefore, the results should be understood as survivors' reported positive adjustment rather than externally verified transformation.

Future research should use longitudinal designs to examine whether perceived social support continues to predict growth over time. Qualitative studies could also explore the specific forms of support that survivors consider most helpful, such as listening, practical help, prayer, financial assistance, safety information or community acceptance. Intervention studies are especially needed to test whether strengthening family, peer and faith-based support systems can improve psychological recovery among conflict survivors in Maiduguri and other affected settings.

Conclusion

This study examined whether perceived social support is associated with post-traumatic growth among conflict survivors in Maiduguri, Borno State. The findings showed a strong positive relationship between perceived social support and PTG, with support accounting for 52.8% of the variance in growth. The study concludes that social support networks are not secondary to psychological recovery; rather, they form part of the recovery process itself. For Maiduguri and similar conflict-affected settings, strengthening family, peer, faith-based and community support systems may be one of the most practical ways to enhance psychological recovery after conflict, although causal claims require longitudinal or intervention-based evidence.

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Citation: Nuria, Udensi C**.** "Leveraging Social Support Networks in Enhancing Psychological Recovery After Conflict.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp130-139.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

Trust in Leadership and the "Thirty Pieces of Silver" Syndrome in Nigerian Politics

Abstract

Trust in leadership with its culture of accountability, integrity, honesty, transparency, and other political virtues, is in constant struggle with the dominant politics that enthrones betrayal for selfish gain over national good. Consequent upon this ugly syndrome of betrayal, the nation has not only been affected politically, but, also, it has stunted the growth of the nation socially, economically, infrastructurally, and developmentally, leaving Nigeria on the verge of collapse as the resultant common good of leadership trust has been shortchanged with selfishness. The paper aimed to critically look into the political landscape of the Nigerian state which has thrown its principle of leadership trust into oblivion with a syndrome that characterized leadership at different levels, institutions, and agencies, as betrayers of some sort. To achieve this, the paper briefly made conceptual analysis of politics, leadership trust, and thirty pieces of silver. The paper evaluated Nigeria's leadership terrain, and detects that politics in Nigeria is at a crossroads. Through some glaring political scenarios, the paper observed that betrayal is commonplace among political actors and institutions such as the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), the Judiciary, and others that should by law preserve the national glory in the global stage. The paper argued that if this leadership unevenness is sustained and left unchecked, it will not only undermine Nigeria's leadership and political institutions, but, also, render the process of nation-building difficult, if not impossible. To avert this ugly situation, the paper recommended that Nigeria should strengthen its political institutions by implementing electoral reforms that promote accountability, fairness, and transparency.

Keywords: Politics, Leadership Trust, Thirty Pieces of Silver, Nigerian State.

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Date Received: 03rd September, 2026

Date Accepted: 10th September, 2026

Introduction

Escaping the grip of colonialism, it was in high expectations that Nigeria would be among the towering countries in politics and political leadership in the global stage. But, unfortunately, patriotism, commitment and accountability have appeared a mirage in the nation. this is due to the fact that the nation which was handed over to the indigenous leaders has experienced developmental setbacks in almost all facets of national live-wires

given that successive indigenous leaders in all levels of governance, have not shown altruistic responsibility in the exercise of their mandates. Leadership which ought to be trust-oriented and stewardship has lost its pristine pride of place as its expectations have been ambushed by the people at the helm. As it is in the nation today besieged by underdevelopment both in human and national growth, who would stop one from pointing accusing fingers to the political actors in the stage of politics? Since every wound points to the object that inflicted it, and every crime points to its perpetrators, therefore, any nation seeking a cure must first locate the cause of its afflictions.

It is unfortunate that over the years, Nigeria has not had a leader that respects his manifesto nor act true to his political promises. The nation is captured by political actors with plausible and enticing manifestoes accompanied with other humanitarian gestures of monetary and material inducing tokens just to have the mandate of the people. But, unfortunately, immediately they succeed in having their ways, the whole game changes. This is the case where the masses whose mandates were sought for, will turn back to beg these political actors to have a good living even in its minimal measure. The citizens do not receive only the opposite of what they voted for, but, they are also greeted with utmost abandonment by these leaders in exchange for their political allies, party members, foreign allies and other private agenda that matter most to them.

The questions that beg for answers are: how do we build leadership trust beyond silver? Does the betrayal experience in the hands of those at the helm worth it? Do political actors know that betrayal for personal benefits leaves the nation empty? Who can the citizens actually trust to lead? It is arguably that betrayal of trust in the nation's political space has caused more harm than good in the economic, socio-political, and developmental domains of national life, making Nigeria witness arid growth within and in the comity of nations. Since ignoring this ravaging syndrome will amount to living in perpetual denial, this paper considers it necessary to look into this cankerworm that has upturned the national expectations with the aim of exposing its heinous characteristics, and as well reveal its implications for national growth, human development, and political and economic stability.

Clarification of Concepts

For ease of understanding, this paper makes clarifications of the following concepts: Thirty Pieces of Silver, Politics, and Leadership Trust.

Thirty Pieces of Silver

Though idiomatic, this phrase originates from the biblical narrative (Matthew 26: 14 -16) which exposes how the biblical Judas Iscariot, one of the disciples, cheaply sold his master, Jesus Christ to the Jews for only 'thirty pieces of silver'.

The phrase, as symbolic as it is, portrays betrayal, often for individual gain. Put differently, it is anything given for a treacherous act. It implies an act carried not out of a sense of moral obligation, but for personal enrichment. From any angle this phrase is looked at, it symbolizes dishonor and disloyalty. Therefore, thirty pieces of silver as derived and used in this context, is a potent of betrayal and cost of personal gain over group or national loyalty and common good.

Politics

Politics for Adrian Leftwich (2015), is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of status or resources (p. 68) Unfortunately, the above definition lacks clarity being that politics is only concerned with the use of power, but, it does not clarify whether the power can be used at one's will and for selfish end or for the common good of the people. The Greek philosophers on the other hand considered politics as dealing with all the activities and affairs of the city state (polis). Politics, for them, is an all-inclusive term that makes no distinction between the state and the government. Politics, for them, is the total study of man, society, morality, state, and so on. In this sense, politics is not restricted to mere institution of governance, but, also, a mechanism for achieving societal goals. Hence, politics is a societal platform which advances the promotion of good living and orderliness for the purpose of achieving a healthy and sustainable society (Onyemachi, 2025, p.38).

Leadership Trust

Shoorman et al., as captured by Salman Sarwa et al. (2025), consider leadership trust as a foundational climate condition that shapes how employees experience fairness, support, and direction (p.138). Though the above definition appears to have an industrial background that pictures the employer and employees relationships, but the crux of the definition is that it brings out the characteristics of leadership trust. Effective leadership in every clime is characterized by trust, consistency, honesty, good judgment, positive relationship, empathy, and transparency. On a general sense, therefore, leadership trust is the confidence followers or groups have in their leader's character, competence, and consistency which foster a secured environment for higher performance. At its core, leadership trust is the belief and assurance members have in the integrity, ability and purpose of their leaders. It is built on the ability of leaders to create a trustworthy and reliable environment within their members. Leadership trust, therefore, implies credibility in one's actions, reliability on one's promises, integrity in one's adherence to moral principles and norms, and commitment in one's effort towards achieving the desired objectives of the group one is at its helm. This affirms Innocent Asouzu's (2003) position when he describes leadership as "the unification of all human interests towards

the determination of the destiny of the whole man" (p. 67). Hence, trust-based leadership plays a vital role in creating effective groups and achieving tangible results.

Nigeria's Political Landscape and the Question of Trust

In politics, trust within a group is not an optional approach, but an integral and pivotal one. It is a virtue that impacts practically all facets of a group functioning and success. In the political space, trust in leadership sets the direction for all decisions, and influences all actions to group and national challenges. It is disheartening that in all levels, Nigeria's way of politicking has lost the moral status of trust that gives hope and assures performance. Chris Ijiomah (2011) could be correct when he made the point that the leadership disappointments our people have suffered in the hands of almost all the creams of this population has in part been caused fundamentally by our leaders' insensitivity to the moral dimension of knowledge (p.62). Nigerian politics has less become a call to service and more about conquest whether by hook or crook. The most visible actors are politicians who are at the base level in the democratic process.

On the political party level which serves as the bedrock of leadership, no one can be trusted given the fact that little material enticement from opposing party can swift the loyalty of a flag bearer of a party. This is made manifest during elections that should supposedly produce credible leaders. Here, party representatives even at the heart of the voting exercise at the polling units go as far as compromising by bargaining with their opponents by way of monetizing the votes and shortchanging the results. One wonders if political parties which are the grass-root in politics fall short of trust, and carries this moral burden, what then do we expect from the elected individuals at the helm? This, points to the belief that no ideal leader can come from a party whose membership and structure has no moral footing. This informs the position of the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan when he said as recorded, that, Nigerian politics is about betrayals. Politicians in the country cannot be trusted (Ambali, 2025). He went further to say that, "You find it difficult to see somebody who will say the same thing in the morning and in the evening" (Adibe, 2025). In other words, Nigeria is dominated by betrayers in her political arena. If a one-time president, having piloted the national leadership would share his experience in politics publicly, it means that the nation's political climate is in a mess.

More disturbing to Nigerians is the deceptive slogan of our politicians that has blurred the moral compass of humanity. Political actors hold onto the expression that in politics 'there is no permanent friend, no permanent enemies, but only permanent interest'. And they hack on that deceptive expression to betray trust of moral standing. They

appear elusive of the fact that any interest that is devoid of a sound reasoning, moral footing, and in the interest of the common good, is a betrayal. The above political expression and trend has taken a worrisome dimension since 1999, when Nigeria returned to democratic rule (Kwen, 2025). There is no gainsaying the obvious that selfish interest is the main driver behind this unbridled betrayal among Nigerian politicians. It is in this light that Innocent Asouzu (2004) notes that humans are fundamentally beings who seek to satisfy their interests first because they have perceived this act as good in itself. In this case, all seek to acquire all good things for themselves and for themselves alone. It is for this reason also that they perceive their interests as fundamentally good even when such have lost credibility (p. 60); so much so that, inasmuch as their personal interest and egoistic impulse is met, they are ready to eat their vomit, betray their principals, and abandon a party with sound ideological leadership and policies. Rather than compete on ideas, political actors and jobbers invest in manipulating the electorate, institutions and systems. In regrettable cases, sometimes, some individuals whom the commoners believe and trust in their vocal approaches to condemning political ills, go on as well to betray the masses either through their unexpected silence over an anomaly or their sudden switch of allegiance because they have been bought over by those political actors, thereby, incapacitating their moral rectitude to condemn looming evils in the nation. Daniel Bwala and Reno Omokri among others, stand out according to public analyst as politicians that have eaten their vomits just for selfish end. Substantiating the above claim, Omokri, betrayed public trust when after branding the Tinubu administration as incompetent, and an administration that is bereft of morality, went back to serve as an Ambassador on the appointment by the same president he labeled a 'Drug Barron'. Bwala, on the other hand, as recorded, who was seen by the common masses and those affected by the activities of bandits and terrorists as speaking for them as well as condemning the leadership of President Ahmed Tinubu, ate his words when he denied claims that he previously accused the Nigerian president of creating a militia to influence the 2023 election (Arizia, 2026). Sometimes, one wonders the conscience that is guiding both these politicians at the helm and political jobbers. Just because of personal gratification, not only that the trust reposed in these elected and appointed political individuals is betrayed by them, but, also, the common good of the nation is sold out.

A searchlight to the institutions of Nigeria to include Independent National Electoral Commission, Judiciary, Security agencies, and others, captures these institutions as not being far from this ravaging syndrome. One wonders what is really happening in these institutions that should be the national pride of the nation and hope of the citizens. The relationship between these institutions and the public trust is a growing crisis of confidence. It

is sad that the question of trust is dead in these institutions. Very unfortunate that these institutions appear to have been bought over by political bigwigs in the nation, such that their actions, verdicts, operations are dictated by these actors in politics. These institutions are opportunistic that they serve the political actors just for personal gain at the expense of the trust citizens reposed in them. Their services and loyalty are geared towards the few individuals in power rather than the welfare of the nation. They have through their actions betrayed the hope of the common masses. Once adorned as the 'last hope of the common man', many citizens now feel they are increasingly catering for the political elites and wealthy individuals.

The Independent National Electoral Commission which cuts deep in Nigeria's political landscape has a fair share in this menace that has done more harm than good in the nation. In the social contract as it were, Nigerians trust that in matters of elections, votes will count, results will be accurately documented and announced, while winners will have their day, losers will be accepted; and INEC is supposedly to be the unbiased referee of the exercise. But the questions are: is INEC living up to expectations or has it broken the trust? Has INEC become the biggest threat to Nigeria's elections? When one considers allegations of election irregularities, perceived partnership within INEC commissions, post-election disputes, and so on, one would conclude that INEC's repeated failures in logistics and transparency, have branded them a symbol of betrayal of national trust. Consistent technical glitches that conveniently occur at critical moments during elections, have brewed suspicions about whether or not these failures are strategically orchestrated. INEC seems to have lost its institutional credibility, electoral integrity, as well as betrayed the trust reposed in them by the masses. This institution, as seen in the past decade has turned from being credible and unbiased umpire into a monument of national electoral saboteur that compromises credibility and integrity just for personal gain in the service of the political actors at the expense of the commoners.

In democracy, it is believed that elections which are the ultimate expressions of citizen's will, should be a sacred process where power is expected to flow from the ballot, and not from backroom bargains. Regrettably, in Nigeria, the electoral ideal is under siege. Whether by complicity, action or inaction, the activities of INEC have contributed to the erosion of public trust and electoral integrity. This is because when belief in an institution dies, turnout dies; and when turnout dies, democracy dies too. These days, Nigerian citizens as well as voters have lost hope in INEC. It is a traditional slogan in electoral process that votes count, but in the Nigeria of the present, votes do not count; and that being the case, elections in Nigeria become theatre. Victory as it were, is given to the highest bidder from among the contestants of party lineal. The

prestigious institution that conducts election in the nation has been hijacked by the political powers that be. The political actors are the ones influencing the actions and procedures of the institution so much so that with the cooperation of INEC, many skills, techniques, and logistics are deployed to give the desired results during elections. The constitutional independence of INEC seems to be only on paper because reality says otherwise. 'Independent', as ascribed to it by the constitution, is a misnomer if citizens have lost trust of its impartiality. In corroborating the above, Marcel Mbamalu (2026) concludes, that, "the final verdict is this: INEC is on trial. The Constitution gave INEC one job: free, fair, credible elections. The evidence says it's failing". (*Punch*, para. 21). One does not expect democracy to live when voters trust and expectations have been killed. It is against this misnomer that the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Joash Amupitan as recorded by Tony Akowe (2026), has warned staff of the Commission against manipulating election results and engaging in activities that will undermine the credibility of electoral process in the country (*The Nation*, para. 1). The Chairman's reaction stems from the prevalent act of indiscipline and mistrust that have characterized the Commission as its institutional integrity has been thrown overboard.

Judiciary which should ideally be the final arbiter of disputes, on the other hand, has not lived to their oath and national calling. Even when INEC would claim to have done a credible election, the courts decide the winners; and sometimes INEC gets blamed for court outcomes. Today, in the Judiciary for instance, there is deep frustration over unequal application of justice. While the poor masses get punished and face harsh sentences for minor offences they committed, High-profile political actors and public officials facing corruption or multi-billion-naira embezzlement charges receive lenient plea deals or minimal fines. The rule of law that should guide the nation is thrown over-board given the gross disregard for the court orders which diminishes the independent authority of the court and leaves the common citizens without protection. Hence, one country, two laws in operation in the Nigerian state. Aisha Yesufu as recorded by Joseph Atainyang (2025), corroborated this when she said that the Nigerian judiciary has become a plaything of corrupt politicians and no longer offers protection to the common man (*WatchmanPost,* para. 3). Uncharacteristically, "it is also becoming the norm in a good number of our states that judges dare not give judgments against the interests of their governors or states, irrespective of the position of the facts and law" (Onozure, 2022). If this is the case, then, the Judiciary has not only been compromised, but, also, captured by the politicians as governors and political elites now see themselves as the emperors of a sort, lords of the manor, and demi-gods over their respective chief judges

Citation: Onyemachi, Felix C. & Ichaba, Amos A. "Trust in Leadership and the "Thirty Pieces of Silver" Syndrome in Nigerian Politics.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp140-149.

Implications of Thirty Pieces of Silver in Nigerian Politics

Betrayal of trust, no doubt, hits national growth so hard. Political betrayal in particular has affected Nigerian leadership with its immediate consequences of erosion of trust in social capital. The core of social capital is people working together to achieve a common goal. But innovation is stalled in the nation's political space when people stop sharing ideas, partnering on projects, and voting during elections. The reason is that when trust is lost, public relationships become weaker. This manifests itself from the inner circle when party members stop cooperating with the party members at the helm. Expectantly, when the party representatives' activities are at variance with the parties laid down principles, ethics and rules, the party members withdraw their support for the actors, thereby, giving way to sabotage, destructive criticism, and mass defection from the party.

More so, the institutions that provide one service or the other, on the other hand, will be reluctant to cooperate with government. In this light for instance, Tax compliance will drop, regulations will be bypassed, and talented citizens will withdraw their services. When this is the case, institutions like schools, hospitals, judiciary, and other agencies that provide the basic services for national growth will suffer setbacks.

Furthermore, in the economic domain, it is a fact that trust is like grease for businesses, partnership, and diplomatic ties. Internally, when trust is lost in leadership, citizens find it hard to invest in their country or partner with their government; and that will make local entrepreneurs to stop expanding. Externally, foreign investors will not be willing to invest in a nation with a betrayal tag. It will not stop there. It will also affect the already existing foreign investors that have being with that nation to pull out. Countries with low trust in their leadership, face challenges of stunted growth and credibility. Hence, low trusting nations are more prone to making decisions that will lead them on the path to lower growth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper critically looks into the political landscape of Nigeria which has thrown its principle of leadership trust into oblivion with a syndrome that characterized leadership at different levels, institutions, and agencies, as betrayers of some sort. The paper achieves this by briefly making conceptual analysis of politics, leadership trust, and thirty pieces of silver. The paper, after evaluating Nigeria's leadership terrain, detects that politics in Nigeria is at a crossroads. Through some political scenarios, the paper observes that betrayal is commonplace among political actors and institutions to include Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), the Judiciary, and others that should by law preserve the national glory in the global stage. Leadership trust with its culture of accountability, integrity,

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honesty, transparency, and other political virtues, is in constant struggle with the dominant politics that enthrones betrayal for selfish gain over national good. Given this ugly syndrome of betrayal, the nation, has not only been affected politically, but, also, it has stunted the growth of the nation socially, economically, and developmentally, leaving Nigeria on the verge of collapse as the resultant common good of leadership trust has been shortchanged with selfishness. The paper without delay, argues that if this leadership unevenness is sustained and left unchecked, it will not only undermine Nigeria's leadership and political institutions, but also render the process of nation-building difficult, if not impossible.

Consequently, the following recommendations would help checkmate the anomaly in focus that is common place in Nigeria's political sphere towards a more service-oriented and people-centred politics, ultimately leading to a desired all-round growth and leadership:

i. Nigeria should strengthen its political institutions by implementing electoral reforms that promote fairness, accountability, and transparency.
ii. Elect as well as appoint leaders of integrity, uprightness, and unimpeachable purity of private life by conducting a thorough investigation of the past and present records of the candidates vying for any political office.
iii. By making politics less attractive to politicians through a reduction of the allure of wealth and power.
iv. Rebuild as well as redefine politics by constructing political parties that will endure beyond election cycles, outperform cynicism, and outlive ambition.

By addressing the already established political challenges and adhering to the recommendations, the Nigerian state can strengthen its political institutions, promote political stability and ensure that the desired people-centred and service-oriented politics in the desired leadership trust will promote the common good, and advance a culture of transparency, honesty, integrity, and accountability. This will foster an environment of trust, respect, cooperation, and unity, against betrayal with its attendant divisiveness, segregation and self-centredness that does not only impoverish the nation, but, also, breaks rather than make the nation (Onyemachi, 2026, p.32).

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Citation: Onyemachi, Felix C. & Ichaba, Amos A. "Trust in Leadership and the "Thirty Pieces of Silver" Syndrome in Nigerian Politics.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp140-149.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

Leon Kass's Conception of Human Dignity: An Integrated Philosophical Framework for Contemporary Bioethics

Abstract

The concept of human dignity has acquired renewed philosophical significance in the light of rapid developments in biotechnology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, reproductive medicine and end-of-life care. While such scientific innovations offer unprecedented benefits, they can provoke reductive interpretations of the human person, encouraging the view that human beings are primarily biological organisms or technological objects. This article examined Leon Kass's conception of human dignity as an integrated philosophical framework for engaging these contemporary bioethical challenges. Drawing upon philosophical analysis and critical evaluation, the study argued that Kass's conception of human dignity is grounded on the intrinsic nature of the human person and not on autonomy, utility or social recognition. Furthermore, Kass's bioethical vision incorporated philosophical anthropology, scientific reflection and moral reasoning as a way of defending the uniqueness of human life against technological reductionism. The article contended that Kass's concept offered an important corrective to the dominant bioethical theories which privilege the individual while neglecting the ontological and moral significance of human nature. Although some aspects of Kass's conservatism were open to philosophical criticism, the integrated approach he offers, proved to be a compelling framework for understanding human dignity in an age increasingly dominated by biomedical innovation and artificial intelligence. The study concluded that Kass's vision continues to make an important contribution to contemporary debates concerning personhood, medical ethics and the moral limits of biotechnology.

Keywords: Human dignity; Leon Kass; Bioethics; Philosophical anthropology; Biotechnology; Human nature; Medical ethics.

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Date Received: 03rd September, 2026

Date Accepted: 11th September, 2026

Introduction

The question of human dignity has become one of the defining philosophical concerns of the twenty-first century. Advances in biotechnology, genetic engineering, cloning, reproductive technologies, artificial intelligence and life-extension medicine have not only transformed healthcare, they have questioned the philosophical

understanding of what it means to be human. These developments have generated ethical questions concerning the limits of scientific intervention, the moral status of human life and the preservation of human identity in an increasingly technological world (Fukuyama, 2002; Sandel, 2007).

While the principle of human dignity occupies a central position in contemporary bioethics, there is considerable disagreement concerning its meaning and philosophical foundation. Kant (1997) grounds dignity in rational autonomy while Peter Singer (2011) argues that moral status depends primarily upon characteristics such as self-consciousness and the capacity to experience pleasure and pain. Other scholars approach dignity from a legal, theological, communitarian or rights-based perspective resulting in a plurality of interpretations which often lack philosophical integration. Consequently, the concept of human dignity continues to function as an important ethical idea but is conceptually contested (Sulmasy, 2007).

Among contemporary philosophers, Leon Kass offers one of the most comprehensive attempts at recovering a richer understanding of human dignity. Rejecting reductionist accounts of human beings as merely biological machines or objects of technological manipulation, Kass argues that the human person possesses an intrinsic worth grounded on human nature. For Kass (2002) the ethical evaluation of medicine cannot be separated from philosophical reflection on the nature and purpose of human existence. He therefore insists that bioethics must address not only questions of scientific possibility but also questions concerning the meaning of life, embodiment, mortality, family and moral responsibility.

Kass's philosophical project is significant because it integrates insights from classical philosophy, Aristotelian teleology, Judeo-Christian moral thought and contemporary biomedical ethics into a coherent account of human dignity. Rather than opposing scientific progress as such, Kass questions whether every technological possibility constitutes genuine human progress. As he observes, "the deepest ethical issues are raised not by what we can do but by what we should do" (Kass, 2002, p. 11). This distinction redirects bioethical reflection from technological capability to moral wisdom.

Despite the growing body of scholarship examining Kass's philosophy, much of it focuses on his anthropological, scientific or bioethical arguments separately. There is relatively little attention on explaining how these different dimensions work together as an integrated philosophical defense of human dignity. This article explores Leon Kass's vision by arguing that his conception of human dignity gains philosophical strength through the interaction between his understanding of human nature, his critique of

reductionism and his vision of medicine as a moral practice.

Leon Kass and the Philosophical Foundations of Human Dignity

Leon Kass's conception of human dignity draws from the belief that bioethical reflection must begin with a proper understanding of the human person. Unlike many contemporary bioethicists, who ground dignity primarily in autonomy, preferences or individual rights, Kass argues that human dignity is rooted in the intrinsic nature of the human being. For him, the ethical evaluation of medical practice is inseparable from philosophical anthropology as medicine ultimately concerns persons rather than merely biological organisms (Kass, 2002).

Kass's position reflects a revival of the classical philosophical tradition, particularly the Aristotelian understanding of human beings as rational, embodied and purposive creatures. Aristotle maintains that every being has a natural end (telos) and human flourishing (eudaimonia) consists in the excellent exercise of reason and virtue (Aristotle, 1999). Kass appropriates this teleological perspective by arguing that the human body is not merely biological matter but an integral component of personal identity. Consequently, any biomedical intervention that fundamentally alters or instrumentalizes human nature raises profound moral questions concerning human dignity.

The influence of the classical tradition is also evident in Kass's resistance to reductionism. Contemporary scientific culture often interprets human beings using genetic, neuroscience or evolutionary biology. While Kass acknowledges the remarkable achievements of modern science, he argues that scientific explanation fails to capture the meaning of human existence. As he observes, "human life has a dignity that transcends utility" (Kass, 2002, p. 18).

Kass's critique places him in dialogue with Immanuel Kant whose moral philosophy defines dignity as the incomparable worth possessed by every rational being. Kant famously argues that "everything has either a price or a dignity" and that humanity must always be treated as an end in itself rather than merely as a means (Kant, 1997, p. 42). While Kass agrees with Kant's objection to instrumentalization, he rejects locating dignity in rational autonomy. Instead, he contends that dignity belongs to the whole embodied person. Rationality is essential but cannot be stripped of embodiment, vulnerability, family relationships, mortality and the natural processes through which human life unfolds.

This broader understanding also distinguishes Kass from utilitarian approaches exemplified by Peter Singer. Singer (2011) argues that moral consideration depends primarily upon

capacities such as self-awareness, rationality and the ability to experience pleasure or suffering. Kass rejects this position as it undermines the equal worth of every human being. Human dignity, he argues, is not conferred by performance or capacity, but belongs to persons by virtue of their shared humanity. This position safeguards the moral standing of infants, persons living with profound disabilities and the elderly whose value cannot be measured by utility or productivity.

Martin Heidegger's philosophical anthropology also sheds light on Kass's position. Heidegger (1962) argues that authentic human existence cannot be understood through scientific objectification as the human being (Dasein) is fundamentally a being that interprets, questions and takes responsibility for its own existence. Kass similarly stresses that medicine must recognize patients not merely as biological organisms requiring technical intervention but as persons whose lives are shaped by meaning, relationships, hope, suffering and mortality.

Another salient feature of Kass's philosophy is his insistence that technological progress must always be subjected to ethical judgment. Contemporary societies often equate scientific innovation with moral advancement. Kass challenges this assumption by arguing that technological capability does not itself determine ethical legitimacy. Advances in cloning, enhancement technologies, genetic selection and artificial intelligence require philosophical evaluation as they have the potential to alter the very understanding of what it means to be human. consequently ethical reasoning must precede technological application rather than merely respond to it after implementation (Kass, 2002).

Kass's philosophical foundations reveal a comprehensive conception of human dignity rooted in human nature, embodiment, moral responsibility and the intrinsic worth of the person.

Human Nature, Biotechnology and the Defence of Human Dignity

At the heart of Leon Kass's bioethical philosophy lies the conviction that any discussion of biotechnology must begin with a proper understanding of human nature. Contemporary biomedical science has expanded humanity's capacity to manipulate life through genetic engineering, cloning, reproductive technologies, stem cell research, artificial intelligence and human enhancement. While such developments can yield significant therapeutic benefits, they also raise profound philosophical questions concerning the identity, purpose and dignity of the human person. Kass argues that the ethical significance of biotechnology cannot be determined solely by scientific success or technological efficiency but by the integrity of human nature and the moral meaning of human existence (Kass, 2002).

Citation:Tom Martin Effiong "Leon Kass's Conception of Human Dignity: An Integrated Philosophical Framework for Contemporary Bioethics.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp150-162.

One of Kass's most influential contributions to contemporary bioethics is his critique of human cloning. In Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity, he argues that cloning represents more than a new reproductive technique, it fundamentally alters the relationship between human procreation and human identity. According to Kass (2002) procreation has traditionally involved openness to novelty, unpredictability and the acceptance of children as gifts rather than products. Cloning introduces an unprecedented level of human control over biological inheritance and risks transforming children into objects of manufacture.

Consequently, Kass argues that the ethical problem of cloning goes beyond questions of safety or efficiency. The deeper concern is that cloning encourages an instrumental attitude towards human life by treating the child as a project shaped according to parental preference or technological specification. As Kass (2002) observes, "to turn procreation into manufacture is to do violence to the meaning of having children" (p. 117). His criticism is concerned with the preservation of the moral meaning of parenthood and the intrinsic worth of the human person.

Closely related to cloning is Kass's critique of genetic enhancement. While contemporary medicine rightly seeks to cure disease and relieve suffering, Kass differentiates between therapeutic interventions and enhancement technologies that are designed to improve normal human capacities. He argues that the pursuit of enhancement reflects an increasingly perfectionist culture that measures human value in terms of performance, productivity, intelligence or physical ability. Such assumptions gradually displace the language of dignity with the language of optimization encouraging societies to evaluate persons based on desirable characteristics rather than their intrinsic worth (Kass, 2002).

This concern echoes Francis Fukuyama's warning that biotechnology may undermine the stable conception of human nature upon which moral equality depends. Fukuyama (2002) argues that human nature constitutes "the sum of the behavior and characteristics that are typical of the human species" (p. 130). If biotechnology radically alters these defining characteristics, the philosophical foundations of universal human rights and equal dignity may become increasingly fragile. Kass shares this concern, maintaining that technological intervention must respect the natural integrity of the human person rather than redefine humanity according to scientific preference.

Jürgen Habermas similarly questions the ethical implications of genetically-enhanced beings. In The Future of Human Nature, Habermas (2003) argues that genetic design threatens the moral autonomy of future persons by introducing irreversible parental choices before individuals are capable of

participating in decisions affecting their own identities. Kass's analysis converges with Habermas's on this point, recognising that biotechnology is not ethically neutral as it reshapes the conditions under which human freedom and moral responsibility develop.

Michael Sandel also criticises enhancement technologies for encouraging the "drive to mastery". According to Sandel (2007) modern biotechnology tempts humanity to replace gratitude with control and humility with domination. This desire to master nature risks eroding virtues such as solidarity, humility and unconditional acceptance. Kass develops a similar argument by insisting that human beings should not aspire to complete mastery over life. The acceptance of human vulnerability, dependency and mortality is not a defect to be eradicated but an essential aspect of authentic human existence. Human dignity consists not in transcending humanity but in living responsibly within the limits of human nature.

Despite the philosophical force of Kass's critique his position has attracted substantial criticism. Julian Savulescu (2001) argues that if biotechnology can increase intelligence reduce disease or improve well-being parents may have a moral obligation to utilise such technologies for the benefit of future generations. Similarly, John Harris (2007) contends that enhancement represents an extension of humanity's long-standing effort to improve the quality of life through education, medicine and scientific progress. Consequently, opposition to enhancement may actually preserve preventable suffering and individual freedom.

Kass responds indirectly by questioning the assumptions underlying these enhancement arguments. For him, the central issue is not whether biotechnology can produce measurable improvements but whether such improvements preserve the moral meaning of being human. A society that evaluates persons primarily in terms of enhanced capacities will run the risk of creating new forms of inequality, discrimination and commodification. Human dignity becomes contingent upon biological performance rather than intrinsic worth. As such, Kass insists that ethical judgment must be grounded on an adequate philosophical understanding of the human person rather than on technological capability.

Ultimately, Kass's defence of human dignity is neither an outright rejection of biotechnology nor an unconditional acceptance of scientific innovation. It represents a call for ethical prudence grounded on philosophical reflection. Scientific progress must be ordered towards authentic human flourishing and not merely technological mastery for its own sake. By integrating philosophical anthropology, moral philosophy and bioethical analysis, Kass provides a framework through which contemporary

societies can evaluate biomedical innovations without undermining the intrinsic dignity of the human person..

Leon Kass's Bioethical Vision in Contemporary Medical Practice Essay

Leon Kass's contribution to contemporary bioethics goes beyond theoretical reflection on human dignity to present a practical moral vision that can guide medical decision-making. Unlike principlist approaches to medicine, which often prioritize autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019), Kass argues that sound medical ethics must first answer a more fundamental philosophical question: What is the human being whom medicine seeks to heal? Without an adequate understanding of the human person, ethical principles run the risk of becoming just procedural rules that detach from the moral purpose of medicine itself (Kass, 2002).

This vision is particularly significant in the context of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. Contemporary advocates for euthanasia defend these practices by citing individual freedom of choice. Competent patients have a right to decide the timing and manner of their death. While Kass acknowledges the importance of respecting personal freedom, he argues that autonomy cannot provide an adequate basis for medical ethics, and human dignity does not reside in self-interest but is inherent to the person irrespective of illness, disability, dependence, or proximity to death (Kass, 2002).

Legalizing euthanasia would transform medicine into determinism and undermine public trust in medicine while subtly redefining society's understanding of vulnerable persons (the elderly, the chronically ill, and the severely disabled). Consequently, Kass argues that compassion should be expressed not through the deliberate ending of life but through excellent palliative care and pain management.

A similar concern characterizes Kass's approach to reproductive medicine. Assisted reproductive technologies have given hope to countless couples facing infertility but redefine the moral significance of procreation. Kass distinguishes between medical interventions that restore natural reproductive functions and those that transform children into products of technological planning or consumer preference. According to Kass (2002), the ethical challenge resides not simply in the techniques but in the cultural assumptions they encourage concerning parenthood, family, and children.

Kass's defense of human dignity also has significant implications in emerging technologies involving artificial intelligence in healthcare. Machine-learning systems already assist physicians in diagnosis, prognosis, treatment planning, and clinical decision-making with remarkable accuracy. Kass would likely welcome these developments to

improve patient care. However, his philosophy warns against allowing technological efficiency to supplant human moral judgment, as clinical decisions often involve values, empathy, trust, and compassion that cannot be reduced to computational processes; the physician's responsibility extends beyond interpreting medical data to understanding the lived experience of the patient as a person.

Kass's bioethical vision has, however, not been without criticism. Peter Singer (2011) argues that ethical decisions should prioritize the reduction of suffering and the promotion of well-being, even if it runs counter to traditional conceptions of the sanctity or dignity of human life. Julian Savulescu (2001) similarly maintains that biotechnology creates moral obligations to develop future generations. The perspectives emphasize outcomes and individual choice but fail to recognize that ethical reasoning must be grounded in the preservation of the intrinsic worth of the human person. Medicine loses its moral identity as soon as efficiency, utility, or preference become more fundamental than respect for human dignity. Despite disagreements, Kass's philosophy offers a valuable contribution to contemporary bioethics: his work reminds both philosophers and healthcare professionals that medicine is ultimately concerned with persons rather than technology. Scientific innovation undoubtedly expands therapeutic possibilities, but it cannot eliminate the need for ethical reflection rooted in an adequate understanding of human nature. By combining philosophical anthropology, moral philosophy, and clinical ethics, Kass presents a vision that can guide medical practice without reducing the patient to biological data or technological possibility. In this respect, Kass's conception of human dignity is a vital resource for contemporary healthcare, particularly as it encounters increasingly complex ethical questions generated by biotechnology and artificial intelligence.

Critical Evaluation and Contemporary Relevance

Leon Kass's conception of human dignity presents one of the most philosophically sophisticated responses to the ethical challenges generated by contemporary biotechnology. Unlike approaches to biotechnology that reduce bioethics to questions of individual preferences or technological efficiency, Kass insists that ethical judgment must be grounded in an adequate understanding of the human person. His integration of philosophical anthropology, moral philosophy, and medical ethics provides a framework capable of addressing questions that purely scientific or legal analyses are unable to resolve. Consequently, Kass restores human dignity to the centre of bioethical reflection and challenges the assumption that technological progress necessarily constitutes moral progress (Kass, 2002).

One of the greatest strengths of Kass's philosophy is his rejection of

reductionism. Modern biomedical science has significantly increased humanity's ability to diagnose disease, manipulate genetic material, and extend life expectancy. Yet scientific explanation alone does not account for the moral realities of love, responsibility, freedom, suffering, hope, and meaning. Kass rightfully argues that these dimensions of human existence cannot be measured empirically because they belong to the lived experience of persons rather than to biological mechanisms. His philosophical anthropology thus protects bioethics from collapsing into scientism, where scientific capability becomes the sole criterion for ethical legitimacy.

Kass's understanding of embodiment is also a major contribution to contemporary philosophy. While many liberal bioethical theories identify dignity with rational autonomy, Kass argues that human dignity belongs to the whole embodied person. Human vulnerability, dependency, ageing, and mortality are necessary dimensions of human existence. This position resonates with phenomenological traditions represented by Martin Heidegger, who argues that authentic human existence cannot be understood apart from finitude and lived experience (Heidegger, 1962). Although Kass's argument is more explicitly rooted in moral philosophy than Heidegger's, both reject the reduction of humanity to scientific objectification.

Furthermore, Kass provides an important philosophical defence against the commodification of human life. Contemporary reproductive technologies, commercial surrogacy, genetic enhancement, and artificial intelligence increasingly encourage societies to measure persons according to their utility, productivity, or desirable characteristics. Kass shows that once human worth is measured in terms of measurable capacities, the equal dignity of all persons is placed at risk. His defense of intrinsic human worth is particularly relevant for protecting vulnerable populations, including unborn children, persons with profound disabilities, and the elderly, whose dignity cannot be determined by functional ability alone.

Nevertheless, Kass's philosophy is not without significant limitations. One recurring critic is the epistemic status of his famous appeal to the "wisdom of repugnance." Kass (1997) argues that feelings of moral revulsion toward practices such as human cloning may reveal important ethical truths even before rational analysis is complete. Although this insight draws attention to the moral significance of human intuition, critics question the reliability of emotional reactions to formulating public ethical reasoning. Habermas (2003) warns against allowing subjective moral sentiments to replace rational deliberation in democratic societies. While moral intuitions may initiate ethical reflection, they require philosophical justification if they are to guide public policy.

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Kass has also been criticized for giving insufficient attention to the value of individual autonomy. Contemporary bioethicists such as Beauchamp and Childress (2019) regard respect for autonomy as a foundational principle of medical ethics. Similarly, Singer (2011) argues that ethical choices should prioritize the interests and preferences of individuals capable of making informed decisions about their own lives. Kass, however, consistently subordinates autonomy to a broader conception of human flourishing grounded in human nature.

Despite these criticisms, Kass's integrated philosophy continues to be remarkably relevant in the twenty-first century. Emerging technologies such as CRISPR gene editing, synthetic biology, reproductive genome selection, transhumanist enhancement, and artificial intelligence increasingly blur the lines between therapy and enhancement. Ethical debates concerning these technologies cannot be resolved solely through scientific expertise because they concern fundamental questions of human identity, equality, and moral responsibility. Kass's insistence that bioethics must begin with philosophical anthropology is particularly valuable in this context.

The contemporary relevance of Kass's philosophy becomes even more apparent when examining non-Western philosophical traditions. African communitarian philosophers such as Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984) and John Mbiti (1969) similarly reject excessively individualistic accounts of personhood by emphasizing that persons achieve fulfilment within communities and relationships. Although Kass develops his position independently of African philosophy, both perspectives affirm that human dignity cannot be reduced to autonomy or biological capacity alone. This convergence highlights that Kass's conception of dignity has cross-cultural significance that could enrich global bioethical discourse.

The present study argues that Kass's greatest philosophical contribution lies not in defending particular bioethical positions but in providing an integrated method for ethical reflection. Existing scholarship has frequently examined Kass's anthropological, scientific, or bioethical writings separately. Compared to this, this study has shown that these dimensions derive their significance from being mutually reinforcing aspects of a single philosophical framework. His critique of reductionism, defence of embodied personhood, understanding of medicine as a moral practice, and concern for the ethical limits of biotechnology together constitute a coherent conception of human dignity that is capable of addressing many of the most pressing challenges confronting contemporary bioethics.

Accordingly, this article concludes that Leon Kass should not merely be seen as a conservative critic of biotechnology but

as a philosopher of human dignity whose work seeks to preserve the moral meaning of human existence in an age of unprecedented scientific power. While aspects of his philosophy remain open to criticism, his integrated approach provides a valuable foundation for future research on biotechnology, artificial intelligence, medical ethics, and the philosophical understanding of the human person.

Conclusion

This article has examined Leon Kass's conception of human dignity as an integrated philosophical framework for addressing the ethical challenges posed by contemporary biotechnology and medical practice. Against the background of rapid scientific advancement and increasing technological intervention in human life, Kass argues that bioethics cannot be adequately grounded in autonomy, utility, and scientific capability. Rather, ethical reflection must begin with a proper understanding of the human person as an embodied, rational, relational, and morally responsible being whose dignity is intrinsic and inviolable (Kass, 2002).

The analysis has shown that Kass's philosophy draws upon the classical tradition of philosophical anthropology while engaging contemporary debates concerning cloning, genetic enhancement, reproductive technologies, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and artificial intelligence. His rejection of reductionist accounts of human nature provides an important corrective to bioethical perspectives that evaluate persons primarily in terms of functional capacity, preference satisfaction, and technological optimization. By insisting that medicine is a moral practice ordered toward the flourishing of persons rather than simply managing biological processes, Kass restores human dignity to the centre of biomedical ethics.

A central contribution of this article has been to demonstrate that Kass's philosophical anthropology, scientific reflections, and bioethical analyses should not be interpreted as independent strands of thought but as mutually reinforcing dimensions. This integrated reading fills an important gap in the existing literature, which has often treated these aspects of Kass's work in isolation. Understanding their interrelationship reveals the coherence of Kass's philosophical project and highlights why his conception of human dignity continues to offer valuable insights for contemporary bioethical discourse.

At the same time, the article has acknowledged the criticisms of Kass's philosophy, particularly concerning his appeal to the "wisdom of repugnance" and his limited engagement with the role of autonomy in pluralistic societies. These criticisms demonstrate that Kass's position does not provide definitive answers to every bioethical dilemma. Nevertheless, they do not diminish the enduring significance of his central

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insight that scientific progress must be accountable to ethical principles grounded in an adequate understanding of human nature.

The increasing influence of artificial intelligence, genome editing, reproductive technologies, synthetic biology, and transhumanist aspirations ensures that debates concerning human dignity will become even more significant in the coming decades. Kass's philosophy reminds contemporary society that technological innovation should never overshadow the intrinsic worth of the human person. Scientific advancement is indisputably indispensable to modern medicine, but its ethical legitimacy ultimately depends upon whether it serves authentic human flourishing.

Future scholarship should extend Kass's conception of human dignity by examining its application within emerging fields such as artificial intelligence governance, digital medicine, precision genomics, and global bioethics. Comparative studies between Kass's philosophical anthropology and African communitarian conceptions of personhood, particularly those developed by John Mbiti and Ifeanyi Menkiti, may also contribute to a more profound intercultural understanding of human dignity and strengthen the foundations of bioethics. Such dialogue would demonstrate the continuing relevance of Kass's thought beyond its original intellectual context.

In conclusion, Leon Kass's conception of human dignity represents one of the most comprehensive philosophical responses to the moral challenges of contemporary biotechnology. Although aspects of his position invite critical debate, his integrated vision of the human person offers a compelling framework for preserving the ethical meaning of medicine and protecting the dignity of every human being in an age of unprecedented scientific and technological transformation.

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Citation:Tom Martin Effiong "Leon Kass's Conception of Human Dignity: An Integrated Philosophical Framework for Contemporary Bioethics.". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp150-162.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria

Abstract

The ongoing threat of border-crossing insurgencies around Lake Chad has forced neighboring countries to rethink their defense strategies and work closely together. This study looks at the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to see how well its organization and frontline operations actually perform in fighting insurgents in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study utilized Cooperative Security Theory (CST) to assess multilateral defense cooperation, and Regional Security Complex (RSC) Theory to analyze geopolitical security interdependencies within the sub-region. Employing a descriptive survey research design, data was gathered from a targeted sample of 370 respondents across defense, diplomatic, and academic institutions using questionnaires, oral interviews, and secondary data analyzed via SPSS 25 and qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed a severe structural disconnect between the MNJTF's idealized collaborative blueprint and its battlefield realities. While majority of the respondents acknowledge that the force's mandate is clearly defined, the centralized headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority. Under the lens of RSC and CST, this structural flaw manifests as command paralysis and institutional mistrust, prompting sector commanders to prioritize national directives over joint protocols. This dynamic fosters intelligence hoarding and slows critical response times. Furthermore, the lack of post-conflict policing capacities allows resilient insurgent cells to re-occupy cleared territories once frontline troops rotate out. The study concludes that the MNJTF's operational impact is tactically constrained by geopolitical shocks, mismatched procurement cycles, and donor dependence. It recommended a legal restructuring of the MNJTF to grant the Force Commander supranational operational authority and the permanent integration of multinational policing capacities to secure liberated zones.

Keywords: Institutional Architecture, MNJTF, Counter-Insurgency, Insurgency, Command Paralysis.

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Date Received: 13th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 19th September, 2026

Introduction

The persistence of transnational asymmetric warfare in Africa has shifted the contemporary security paradigm away from isolated, state-centric defense doctrines toward integrated regional security coalitions. In the Lake Chad Basin, the violent expansionism of Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād (Boko Haram) and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has caused severe human casualties and displaced millions across borders (Albert, 2023). Because these insurgent factions exploit porous borderlands, the remote islands of Lake Chad, and tactical safe havens to

evade unilateral military pursuits, sub-regional responses have become necessary. Consequently, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states and Benin Republic restructured the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2014, establishing an institutional mechanism to neutralize cross-border terrorism and restore state authority in North-Eastern Nigeria (Onuoha, Suleiman, and Mohammed, 2025).

At the center of this multilateral security approach is a critical relationship between the institutional architecture of the force and its resulting operational efficacy. The institutional architecture defined by a decentralized command structure split into four national sectors (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger) is designed to pool regional resources, synchronize military intelligence, and authorize cross-border hot-pursuit operations (Bala & Audu, 2024). Ideally, this structural design should achieve high operational efficacy by denying insurgents territorial sanctuary, cutting off their supply lines, and creating stable zones for civilian resettlement.

However, a severe disconnect persists between this organizational design and the operational realities on the ground. The nature and extent of this disconnect, and the specific structural flaws that underpin it, are set out in detail in the Statement of the Research Problem below.

Statement of the Research Problem

Despite frequent multinational campaigns and strategic tactical victories, a severe disconnect persists between the idealized blueprint of the MNJTF and the operational realities on the ground in North-Eastern Nigeria. The region remains highly vulnerable to protracted asymmetric warfare, characterized by frequent improvised explosive device (IED) attacks, targeted ambushes on military supply lines, and resilient rural predatory governance by insurgent cells (Global Terrorism Index, 2026). This ongoing insecurity continues to destabilize local communities and prevents millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning safely to their ancestral homes.

The core of this problem lies within structural vulnerabilities embedded deep inside the MNJTF's institutional architecture, which actively degrade its operational efficacy. The centralized force headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority. As a result, sector commanders regularly prioritize national military directives from their respective home capitals over joint operational protocols, resulting in tactical fragmentation and coordination delays (Idris & Usman, 2024). This command paralysis encourages institutional mistrust and intelligence hoarding, which slows down response times during high-stakes encounters. Furthermore, the alliance remains vulnerable to sudden

geopolitical shocks such as the recent operational shifts and diplomatic friction involving Niger Republic's contingent and suffers from mismatched equipment procurement cycles and heavy dependence on external donor funding (Omitola and Aghedo, 2023). Consequently, when joint campaigns successfully clear insurgent enclaves, the MNJTF lacks the integrated policing capacity and civilian holding architecture needed to secure those spaces, allowing decentralized cells to re-occupy them once frontline troops rotate out.

While existing scholarship extensively documents the historical evolution of Boko Haram and the broader humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, there is a distinct omission in the literature. Specifically, little is known about how the internal structural command dynamics, logistical dependencies, and shifting geopolitical cohesion of the MNJTF directly dictate its operational outcomes on the ground between 2013 and 2025.

This study directly addresses this empirical gap by critically analyzing how command paralysis, intelligence-sharing bottlenecks, and sub-regional diplomatic friction limit battlefield success. By examining these structural barriers, this seminar paper contributes to the fields of security studies and civil-military relations by providing an empirically grounded framework for reforming multilateral military interventions in Africa. Ultimately, these insights offer actionable, structural strategies for policy makers seeking to transform volatile borderlands into secure, stable environments.

Research Questions

i. What is the nature of Multinational Joint Task Force and counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria?
ii. To what extent do command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks within the Multinational Joint Task Force affect its operational efficacy in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria; whereas the specific objectives are:

i. To examine the nature of multinational joint task force and counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria.
ii. To assess the extent to which command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks affect the operational efficacy of the multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

Citation: Musa, Mohammed O.; Luka, Ruth C. & Abdul, Abdullahi M.. "Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria..". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp163-183.

Conceptual Review

Multilateral Relations

Multilateral relations refer to the diplomatic interactions and cooperative agreements established among three or more countries or international entities, often within the framework of international organizations, to address common issues, challenges, and interests on a global or regional scale. These relations are characterized by the principles of inclusivity, consensus-building, and the pursuit of shared goals through collective decision-making (Robert and Nye, 2001).

Weiss & Wilkinson (2014) considered multilateral relations as the system of interactions and collaborations that nations engage in within the context of international organizations, forums, and agreements. These interactions often involve political, economic, environmental, and security issues, with the goal of achieving collective solutions and promoting peace, stability, and development.

Paul and Frederking (2010) in their work "The Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World." provides a comprehensive overview of multilateral relations and international organizations, focusing on their roles in addressing global issues and challenges. These scholars sees multilateral relations encompass the complex web of interactions and negotiations among states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and intergovernmental institutions aimed at addressing transnational challenges and advancing common objectives. These relations involve a mix of formal treaties, informal dialogues, and consensus-building mechanisms, fostering a spirit of collaboration and compromise.

Terrorism

Terrorism as any violent reaction against an established social order. In this definition, terrorists are persons seeking the change in society and use violence as instruments to destroy the existing framework of society to establish a new, perhaps more favourable to them. Gurr (1988) further explained that terrorists are offshoots of the failure of the state to meet up with societal needs. He argued that human needs require satisfaction on a hierarchical basis. Indifference to such needs on the part of government normally leads actors into violence against the state. terrorism is relative to who is in power, who is defining it, and who has the power to label another a terrorist.

Terrorism is relative, whatever the existing government designates as terrorism is terrorism. It, therefore, could be a violent act against a specific target group, particularly civilians. In line with this, the United States Department of Defence in Laquer (2001) conceptualized terrorism as; "Unlawful use of force or violence against individuals or property

to coerce and intimidate governments to accept political, religious or ideological objectives.

Insurgency

The concept insurgency has been seen used differently in many literatures. However, the popular definition is one put forward by the United State as "the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region." Moreover, from its legal point of view, an insurgency is seen as a violent protest carried out by rebels against a constituted authority or state that has been recognized by the (United Nations, n.d) cited in (Gana, 2023). Ibiang (2018) have given more characterization of insurgency as a battle that it is usually the product of asymmetric conflict, where one party has an overwhelming force and incontestable physical influence and other instruments of coercion over the other.

Insurgency is the actions of an organized, often ideologically motivated group that seeks to effect or prevent political change of a governing authority within a region, and the actions focused on persuading or coercing the population through the use of violence and subversion (North Atlantic Treaty Organization NATO, 2011).

Counter-insurgency

Counter-insurgency is the opposite of insurgency frequently refers as an acronym COIN. By definition, Counter-insurgency is a combination of measures undertaken by legitimate government of a state or country to curb or suppress an insurgency taken up against it (Liolio, 2013). The U.S. COIN Guide (2009), defined COIN as a "comprehensive civilian-military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes." For Davidson (2016), it is "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency". And it requires a comprehensive assessment of the root causes, strategy and technique of the insurgents.

Similarly, NATO (2011) conceived it as set of political, economic, social, military, law enforcement, civil and psychological activities with the aim to defeat insurgency and address any core grievances. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents employ varied tactics and methods. These include political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure activities (ways), in an attempt to reach a favourable outcome (ends) and within the resources available, including time (means). If this broad array is generally categorized as political and military in nature, political considerations are of much greater importance than military considerations in a struggle for the consent of the population.

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Empirical Review of Related Literature

Godwin, Kelechi and Ularju (2024), carried out investigation on Volunteer Security Outfit and the Fight against Terrorism in Nigeria. The study employed a qualitative method and the Partnership Theory of Crime Prevention and Resistance Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. Findings of the study revealed that Civilian JTF activities have helped other government security agencies in coordinating and arresting key Boko Haram members in Borno State thereby becoming a fundamental component to assisting and winning the war against Boko Haram insurgency. The study therefore recommended that educating and sensitizing members of the community and CJTF to be alert to their patriotic duty of reporting crime and illegal entry of other nationals should be advocated and intensified by the Borno State government. The reviewed study focused on the volunteer security outfit and the fight against terrorism in Nigeria which is at variance with the current study that focused its lens on the role of multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Pius, Ndukwe and Akaba (2024), carried out a study on Libyan Conflict and Internationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region: The Case of Boko Haram Insurgency in North East, Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative method and employed a case study approach using primary and secondary data to explain transnationalization of terrorism in the Sahel Region. The study was anchored on the state fragility theory. Findings of the study revealed that Libyan conflict has destabilized the region with weapons trafficking which was developed there, and has also become a safe haven for jihadi groups threatening the entire peace of the Sahel Region. The study therefore recommended among others that, governments in the Sahel Region should diligently thwart the spread of weapons and eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations through concerted national, regional, and international cooperation to address the issue of weapons, fighter movements, human trafficking networks, and irregular migration. The study focused on the Libyan Conflict and Internationalization of Terrorism in the Sahel Region: The Case of Boko Haram Insurgency in North East, Nigeria. However, the current study tends to interrogate how joint security efforts have aided in mitigating consequences of the Libyan conflict in Nigeria's border, which is left unattended by the reviewed study.

Luka & Fidelia (2024), carried out study on Strategies Adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in The Fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria. Method of data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study is anchored on Regional Security

Complex Theory to clearly understand the interplay of national interests, rationality of states and the role of government in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Findings showed that aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria; inadequate strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force hampered the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria. The study recommended that Multinational Joint Task Force should urgently reinvigorate its strategies to cover addressing the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism. This would involve the governments of states that contributed troops to the MNJTF to ensure that issues of poverty, unemployment, religious fanaticism, and marginalization are adequately tackled in the country. The study focused on Strategies Adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria which is at variance with the current study that focused its lens on the role of multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Sam (2023), exploring mechanisms for holding non-state actors accountable in non-international armed conflicts: a case study of the Nigerian Boko Haram insurgency. This article scrutinizes the legal frameworks governing the accountability of non-state actors in non-international armed conflicts, with a specific focus on the Nigerian Boko Haram insurgency. It examines international laws pertaining to armed conflicts and counter-terrorism measures to assess the mechanisms available for addressing the challenges posed by such conflicts. Through a case study of the Boko Haram insurgency, the article explores the intricacies of holding non-state actors accountable within the Nigerian context, evaluating the efficacy of existing legal frameworks and policy responses. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, the article aims to deepen understanding of non-state actor regulation in armed conflicts and inform strategies for enhancing legal and policy responses to similar disputes globally. With a detailed analysis of the Boko Haram insurgency, including its actors, tactics, and policy responses, this article seeks to identify avenues for improving non-state actors' adherence to the laws of war by pinpointing gaps in applicable laws, implementation, and enforcement mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

Cooperative Security Theory

The Cooperative Security Theory (CST) was propounded by Immanuel Kant in the late 18th Century, but was modified in 2002 by three leading American Strategists; Ashton Carter, William Perry and John Steinbruner (Cohen & Mihalka,

2017). The CST connotes a security arrangement in which all States cooperate to provide security for all by the actions of all, against any state within the groups which might challenge the existing order by using force. This proposition contrasts with self-help strategies of engaging in war for purely immediate national interest. While CST approach is possible, several prerequisites such as efficient bilateral relations, have to be met for it to work (Yost, 2016).

In line with the doctrines of the CST, sovereign nations eager to maintain the status quo willingly cooperate, accepting a degree of vulnerability. In some cases, minor nations also accede to the interests of the higher contributing nations organising the cooperative security (Cohen & Mihalka, 2016). The CST framework is however achievable through the conduct of efficient bilateral relations (Yost, 2016). The bilateral relations architecture then becomes an arena for diplomacy, balance of power and exercise of soft power (Vetschera, 2015).

The CST not only guarantees cheaper security, but also may be the only practicable means of security for smaller nations against more powerful threatening neighbours. In addition, the cooperative security system such as the MNJTF of the LCBC and OPHK in NE Nigeria must also be proactive. Its members must be prepared to engage in collective diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military action in areas outside their common space which may threaten their welfare and stability. In the context of this study, CST provides a framework for developing strategies to combat the insurgency attacks/threats of BH and ISWAP insurgents within the NE Nigeria, which has a very expansive area of responsibility beyond the capability of Nigeria, as any single nation.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The targeted population of the study is 11,685 which include the Multinational Joint Task Force in Borno, Nigeria (Sector 3), National Security Adviser's Office (NSA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER), and Bingham University Department of Political Science. These organisations are selected because they are directly involved in issues related to counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria. Krejecie and Morgan statistical formula was employed to reduce the population of the study to a manageable standard of 370.

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The instruments that were used in collecting data for this study are questionnaires, oral interview and secondary sources. Stratified and random sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents among different categories for the administration of

questionnaire. For interview, purposive sampling technique was used. The sampling comprised of people with many similar characteristics such as deep knowledge on the subject of investigation, years of experience and age**.** This study made use of charts as a platform to present the research data and also analyze the data collected from the field on the subject matter using simple percentage as the case may be for the descriptive analysis**.** The version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25. Consistent with the descriptive survey design and the study's objectives, which sought to establish the pattern and extent of respondents' opinions rather than to test relationships between variables, descriptive statistics (frequencies, simple percentages, and charts) were considered the appropriate level of analysis. Inferential tests were therefore not applied. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

A total of 358 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 337 copies were retrieved, representing a response rate of approximately 94 per cent of distributed copies and 91 per cent of the originally calculated sample size of 370. This response rate is considered adequate for descriptive survey analysis, and the small shortfall relative to the Krejcie and Morgan sample size is not judged to introduce material non-response bias, given that retrieved copies were spread proportionately across the stratified categories of respondents. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 337 retrieved copies of questionnaire. The pattern of presentation was based on the objectives of the study using bar and pie chart. The discussion of findings then followed. Codes were created using letters and numbers to represent the information from interviews conducted with participants. Meaning that the research assigned a code to all the 12 participants interviewed; each participant was given a pseudonym, for example P1, standing for Participant 1 through P12, for Participant 12, to ensure they were shielded from any form of identification. This was supported with information from extant literature.

Analysis on Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on the institutional architecture and operational efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria. The responses were guided by the research questions and objectives and presented in Figures.

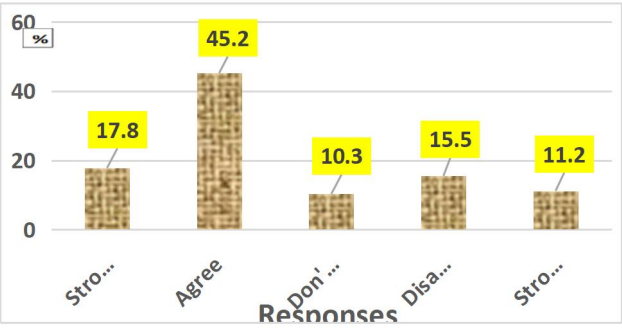
Nature of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and Counter-Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

The first objective of the study is to examine the nature of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and counter-insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria**.** To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at figure 1.1-1.3 below**.**

A. Assessing Whether or Not the Mandate and Operational Objectives of the MNJTF in Counter-Insurgency Operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are Clearly Defined and Well Understood.

The study sought the opinion of respondent on whether the mandate and operationa objectives of the MNJTF in counter insurgency operations in North-Easter Nigeria are clearly defined and wel understood. The responses are contained i figure 1 below.

Figure 1.1: Respondents Assessment o Whether the Mandate and Operationa Objectives of the MNJTF in Counte Insurgency Operations in North-Easter Nigeria are Clearly Defined and Wel Understood.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, 2026.

Figure1.1 depicts that a high number of respondents cumulatively ranking 63 per cent hold the view that indeed the mandate and operational objectives of the MNJTF in counter-insurgency operations in North-Eastern Nigeria are clearly defined and well understood by both the personnel deployed to the theater of operations and civilians alike. This is more prevalent and glaring in cordial civil military relations that ensured between the MNJTF personnel and host communities. In addition, a cumulative 26.7 per cent of respondents disagreed to the posed question.

In line with the above finding, a KII (11/05/26) with P4 in Baga revealed that:

> The Operational objectives and core mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is to help the member countries of the Lake Chad Basic Commission (LCBC) to combat the insurgents of Boko-Haram fighters and ISWAP afflicted groups and bring lasting peace to the crisis borne environments and also re-settle all displaced persons back to their communities particularly in the North East States of Nigeria where the activities of the insurgence originated after the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko- Haram founder.

In the same vein, a KII with P2 (14/05/26) at Abuja opined that:

> The MNJTF's core mandate is to combat Boko Haram and related terrorist

> groups, restore peace and stability in the Lake Chad Basin, and facilitate the return of displaced populations. Its objectives include neutralizing insurgent threats, securing borders, and supporting humanitarian operations.

In another interview with a Platoon Commander at MNJTF sector 3 Bag (11/05/26), he averred that:

> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is a regional military coalition comprising troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, tasked with combating the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgencies in the Lake Chad Basin. Authorized by the African Union, Its core mandate is to create safe and secure environment in areas affected by terrorism.

A Lt. Col. deployed at MNJTF sector 4 Codenamed P3 (12/05/26) posited in an interview that:

> The operational objectives and core mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) are to help the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to combat the insurgents of Boko-Haram fighters and ISWAP-afflicted groups and bring lasting peace to the crisis-borne environments, and also resettle all displaced persons back to their communities, particularly in the North East States of Nigeria, where the activities of the insurgency originated after the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the Boko Haram founder.

From a similar perspective, a KII with P12 revealed that:

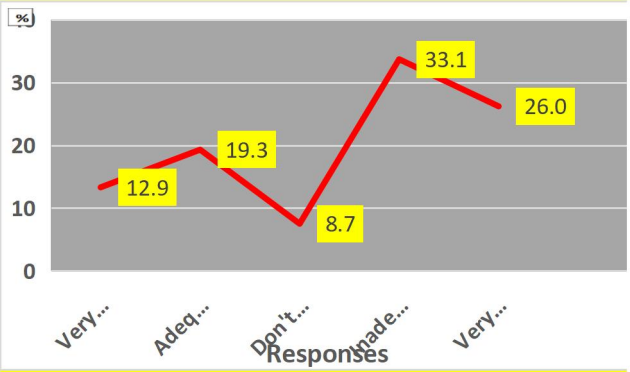
> The Multinational Joint Task Force is mandated to combat terrorism, insurgency, and cross-border crimes in the Lake Chad region, particularly against Boko Haram and ISWAP. Its operational objectives include coordinating military operations, enhancing regional security cooperation, protecting civilians, restoring state authority, facilitating humanitarian access, and creating conditions for long-term peace and stability in North-Eastern Nigeria.

It could be surmised from the analysis that the underlying operational clarity of the MNJTF's mandate is constantly strained by the evolving transnational boundaries of asymmetric warfare, where terrorist actors seamlessly cross borders while security architectures remain bound by geographic restrictions.

B. Ascertaining Whether or Not Multinational Joint Task Force Operations are characterized by Effective Joint Planning, Coordination, and Execution among the Participating Member States.

Another question posed to the respondents was to ascertain whether MNJTF operations are characterized by effective joint planning, coordination, and execution among the participating member states.

Figure 1.2: Respondents Opinion on Ascertaining Whether or Not Multinational Joint Task Force Operations are characterized by Effective Joint Planning Coordination, and Execution among the Participating Member States.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, 2026.

Figure 1.2 depicts that 217 (59.1 per cent respondents cumulatively opined that MNJTF operations are characterized by effective joint planning, coordination, and execution among the participating member states. In addition, a cumulative 118 (32.2 per cent) respondents disagreed with the posed question.

While alluding to the foregoing analysis, an interview with P1 (13/5/26) shows that:

> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) coordinates counter insurgency operations across member states through a decentralized, sector-based command structure and authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council. Oversight is provided politically by Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) while operational planning and execution are managed through a highly integrated regional frame work.

In the same vein, a KII (18/5/26) with P12 revealed that:

> Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency operations are jointly planned through coordinated intelligence sharing, strategic command structures, and regular consultations among member states. Participating countries synchronize troop deployments, logistics, surveillance, and tactical operations to improve border security, combat insurgents effectively, and enhance regional stability across the Lake Chad Basin.
>
> Further KII with P4 shows that The MNJTF counter-Insurgency operations are planned among the four troops contributing and Benin Republic. Each of these troops contributing countries and Benin Republic are organized into sectors; with Chad at Baga-Sola, Nigeria at Baga, Niger at Differ and Cameroun at Moura, Benin Republic is tasked to provide security for element of MNJTF in Chad and MNJTF Headquarters in Ndjamena Chad. They organized themselves and fight the insurgents simultaneously in the areas they operates (11/5/26).

In another interview with an administrative officer (AO) MNJTF, codenamed P4, he averred that:

> The MNJTF counter-insurgency operations are planned among the four troop-contributing countries and Benin Republic. Each of these troops contributing countries and Benin Republic are organized into sectors; with Chad at Baga-Sola, Nigeria at Baga, Niger at Differ and Cameroun at Moura, Benin Republic is tasked to provide

> security for element of MNJTF in Chad and MNJTF Headquarters in Ndjamena Chad. They organized themselves and fight the insurgents simultaneously in the areas they operates.

A KII (14/5/26) with P2 further revealed that:

> Operations are planned jointly under a centralized command headquartered in N'Djamena, Chad, with coordination among sector commands in member states (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Benin). Planning involves intelligence sharing, combined training, and synchronized operational timelines.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the structural splitting of the MNJTF into four distinct national sectors (Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger) introduces inherent national biases that actively sabotage unified, timely battlefield decisions. Recent studies validate this by illustrating how home-capital military directives (from Abuja, Yaoundé, or N'Djamena) regularly superseded centralized instructions from the Force Headquarters. According to Idris &Usman (2024), this command fragmentation is an institutional flaw where national sovereignty instincts impede the realization of a truly supranational operational protocol.

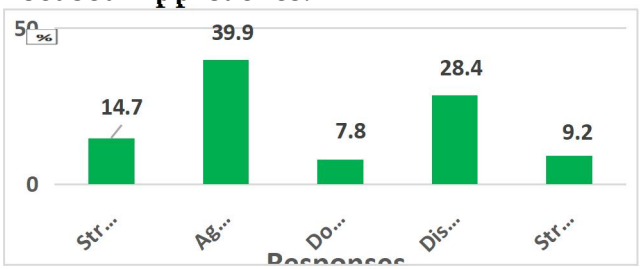
C. Determining Whether the Operational Strategies and Rules of Engagement Guiding Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Activities are Well Structured and Consistently Applied.

A question was posed to respondents to assess whether or not the operational strategies and rules of engagement guiding multinational joint task force counter-insurgency activities are well structured and consistently applied.

C. Evaluating Whether Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Operations Effectively Integrate Military Intelligence, and Civilian-Focused Approaches.

Another question was posed to the respondents to evaluate whether Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency operations effectively integrate military intelligence, and civilian-focused approaches.

Figure 1.3: Respondents View on Evaluating Whether Multinational Joint Task Force Counter-Insurgency Operations Effectively Integrate Military, Intelligence, and Civilian-Focused Approaches.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

Figure 1.3 shows that a high number of respondents cumulatively representing 54.6 per cent indicated that the Multinational Joint Task Force counter-insurgency

operations effectively integrate militar intelligence, and civilian-focused approache From another perspective, 39.6 per cent o respondents were of the view that there i absence of effectiveness in the integration o military, intelligence, and civilian-focuse approaches in Multinational Joint Task Forc counter-insurgency operations.

It could be inferred from the analysis that the structural cohesion of the MNJTF is highly fragile and vulnerable to regional political disruptions, such as coups, which can abruptly compromise entire operational sectors. This operational risk manifested acutely following the recent geopolitical shifts in the Sahel. Reports from Amani Africa (2025) and the African Union note that Niger's formal announcements regarding its operational position and subsequent diplomatic friction drastically weakened Sector 4 in Diffa, creating a dangerous security vacuum that insurgent factions exploited to rearm and launch fresh offensives.

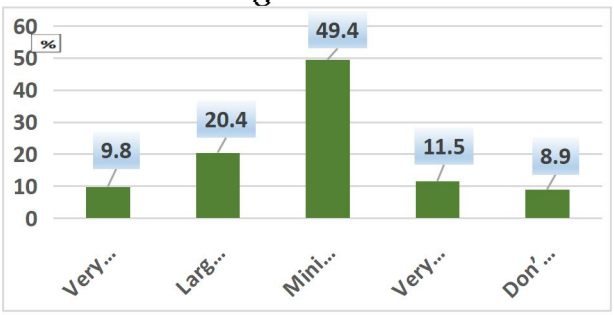
Command Fragmentation and Intelligence-Sharing Bottlenecks Affect the Operational Efficacy of the Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

The second research question explored the way and manner command fragmentation and intelligence-sharing bottlenecks affect the operational efficacy of the multinational joint task force in counter insurgency operations in North Eastern Nigeria. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented from figure 1.4 to 1.6.

A. Assessing whether the MNJTF has Significantly Contributed to the Reduction of Insurgent Attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Respondents were also asked to determine the extent to which the MNJTF has significantly contributed to the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Figure 1.4: Respondents' Views on Determining the Extent to Which the MNJTF has Significantly Contributed to the Reduction of Insurgent Attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

Figure 1.4 shows that 49.4 per cent of respondents were of the view that the MNJTF has significantly contributed to the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria to a minimal extent. In addition, 30.2 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that the MNJTF have meaningfully enhanced the reduction of insurgent attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria to a large extent.

It can be deduced from the forgoing finding that the formation and activities of MNJTF has significantly contributed in curtailing the escalation of Boko Haram activities in some of the affected areas of North Eastern Nigeria.

In tandem with the analysis and deductio above, the Chief of Personnel Managemen AHQ, (26/6/26), averred in a KII that:

> Before the establishment and operationalization of MNJTF, civilians were largely displaced, captured, kidnaped, killed, and raped in large numbers. But with the MNJTF, civilians are now being returned to communities in a more controlled manner and fashion. Police station are gradually been returned to communities in order to build confidence of the people, farming activities encouraged by giving out seedling and fertilizers. SIMIC activities done in order to encourage the greater return of civilians to their communities.

In another KII with P12 (18/5/26):

> The Multinational Joint Task Force has improved security in North-Eastern Nigeria through coordinated military offensives, intelligence sharing, and border surveillance. These efforts disrupted insurgent networks, reclaimed territories, reduced cross-border attacks, protected civilians, and enhanced regional cooperation against Boko Haram and affiliated extremist groups.

P1 further reiterated in a KII (13/5/26) that:

> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) improves security in North Eastern Nigeria by degrading Boko Haram and ISWAP capabilities, securing porous borders, and facilitating humanitarian access. Integrating troops from Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad, the force has achieved the following key milestone: Regional Encirclement and Operational push, Reduction in Fatalities, Mass surrenders and defection, Civilian Resettlement and Trade and Humanitarian Access.

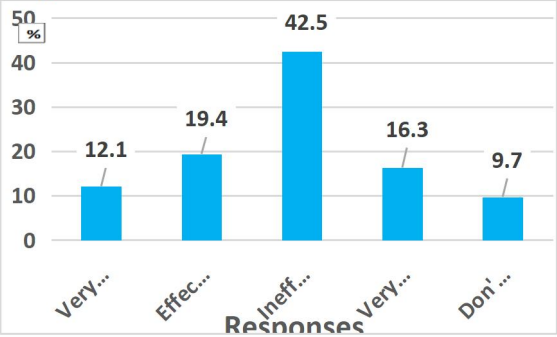
It could be deduced from the study that the operational pace of the MNJTF is heavily curtailed by asynchronous defense procurement cycles across member nations and a dangerous over-reliance on international third-party donor funding. Omitola & Aghedo (2023) observe that military alliances in the Lake Chad Basin face severe operational bottlenecks because member nations utilize mismatched equipment and rely on ad-hoc funding from partners like the European Union. This limits the long-term sustainability of multi-sector campaigns.

B. **Ascertaining Whether MNJTF Operations Have Been Effective in Disrupting Insurgent Networks, Logistics, and Cross-Border Movements.**

Respondents were further asked to rate the effectiveness of MNJTF operations in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements.

Citation: Musa, Mohammed O.; Luka, Ruth C. & Abdul, Abdullahi M.. "Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria..". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp163-183.

Figure 1.5: Respondents View on Ascertaining Whether MNJTF Operations Have Been Effective in Disrupting Insurgent Networks, Logistics, and Cross-Border Movements



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026).

As shown in Figure 1.6, a cumulative majority of respondents ranking 58.8 per cent opined that MNJTF operations has been ineffective in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements. In addition, 31.5 per cent of respondents cumulatively indicated that the MNJTF have exerted effective influence in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements.

In corroborating the foregoing, P1confirmed in a KII (13/5/26) that:

> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has been moderately to highly effective in neutralizing terrorist infrastructure, intercepting arms smugglers and severely degrading the operational capacity of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. However, its long-term impact is frequently undermined by porous borders, funding gaps and shifting geopolitical commitments among member states. The MNJTF has succeeded in Disrupting logistics and supply lines, restricting cross-border movement, defection and surrender.

The response from P7 and P12 (14/5/26) is in tandem with that of P1 where he reiterates that:

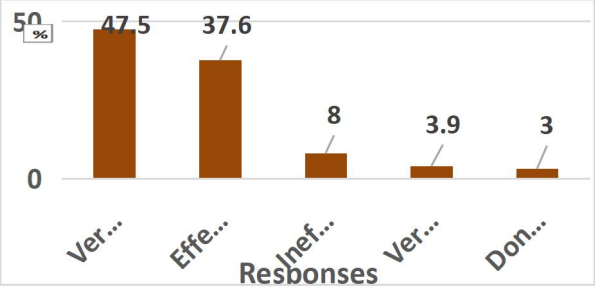
> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has been moderately effective in disrupting insurgent networks, logistics, and cross-border movements in North-Eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region. This is done by targeting camps, interdicting supply routes, and reducing cross-border mobility. However, porous borders, adaptive insurgent tactics, and limited surveillance capacity allow continued movement, regrouping, and logistical recovery in some remote areas.

It could be inferred that while the MNJTF has executed massive kinetic campaigns like *Operation Lake Sanity II*, its institutional apparatus has failed to match the technological leap made by insurgent cells. Recent field assessments show a qualitative capability leap by terror groups. Amani Africa (2025) documents that by 2024/2025, ISWAP increasingly deployed tactical surveillance drones, sophisticated propaganda machines, and advanced Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which accounted for nearly 60% of MNJTF casualties due to a lack of anti-drone jamming systems and advanced IED detectors.

C. Assessing Whether the Intelligence Sharing and Joint Operational Coordination among MNJTF Member States are Effective in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.

Another question was posed to assess whether the intelligence sharing and joint operational coordination among MNJTF member states are effective in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria.

Figure 1.6: Respondents Assessment of Whether the Intelligence Sharing and Joint Operational Coordination among MNJTF Member States are Effective in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria.



Source: Author's Field Survey, April, (2026)

Figure 1.6 depicts that a cumulative majority of respondents ranking 85.1 per cent were of the view that the intelligence sharing and joint operational coordination among MNJTF member states are effective in counter insurgency operations in north eastern Nigeria. This situation underscores the critical need for all the governments of the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC's) to ensure that the sharing of military intelligence and joint gathering of vital information are done with utmost sincerity. Doing so would significantly nip in the bud the menace of insurgency in North Eastern Nigeria.

In line with the forgoing finding, an interview with P1 (13/5/26) revealed that:

> The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is considered a moderately effective counter-insurgency force, notable for significantly degrading the operational capabilities of Boko Haram and ISWAP in the Lake Chad Basin. However, its successes are consistently undermined by structural, financial and operational challenges.

In an interview with the Commanding Officer (CO) codenamed P7, he affirmed that:

> The effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in achieving its counter-insurgency objectives can be assessed as partially effective. The force has recorded successes in weakening Boko Haram and ISWAP through joint military operations, intelligence sharing, and cross-border coordination.

It could be inferred that despite the military success of clearing insurgent enclaves, the failure to combine kinetic operations with sustainable civil-military holding strategies has prolonged the humanitarian crisis and slowed down the safe, permanent return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). While the

African Union Commission notes that thousands of IDPs have been facilitated to return to communities like Kukawa and Banki town, these communities receive little to no sustainable humanitarian or socio-economic assistance (Amani Africa, 2025). The structural failure to protect these livelihoods leaves resettled populations highly vulnerable to rural predatory governance (Global Terrorism Index, 2026).

Discussion of Findings

The core finding of this study centers on the deep structural divide between the idealized blueprint of the MNJTF and its actual operational efficacy on the battlefield. The institutional framework was designed to pool sub-regional resources, allow cross-border hot-pursuit operations, and deny terrorists safe havens. However, the finding that the Force Headquarters in N'Djamena lacks genuine supranational authority introduces a fatal flaw into the alliance: command paralysis. Because sector commanders answer directly to their home capitals, joint operations are frequently delayed by bureaucratic confirmation and tactical fragmentation.

This systemic flaw is worsened by intelligence hoarding. Instead of serving as an open, real-time repository for preemptive maneuvers, the Joint Intelligence Task Centre is restricted by institutional mistrust. This structural friction severely lowers response times, allowing groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP to exploit porous borderlands and remote islands. This finding aligns with the arguments of Idris and Usman (2024), who assert that geopolitical fractures and competing national interests consistently undermine the collective security architecture of the Lake Chad Basin.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that the MNJTF's operational model relies heavily on kinetic military actions without a matching post-conflict stabilization strategy. When major multi-sector operations clear insurgent camps, the force fails to establish a continuous, secure environment because it lacks integrated policing and civilian holding frameworks. This security vacuum allows decentralized insurgent cells to return, re-occupy territory, and continue their predatory governance and IED campaigns. The African Union (AU) (2025) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS, 2026) supports these findings, demonstrating that security cannot be sustained by military force alone. True regional stabilization requires a balanced approach that combines military action with civil-military operations, rule-of-law enforcement, and robust humanitarian support to permanently disrupt the cycle of violent extremism.

It should be acknowledged, however, that the call for a fully supranational Force Commander is not without difficulty. LCBC member states have historically been reluctant to cede national command authority over troops deployed on their

own sovereign territory, and some scholars argue that the MNJTF's national-sector structure, whatever its coordination costs, has been a necessary condition for member states' continued participation in the force at all. Any restructuring proposal must therefore weigh the operational benefits of centralized command against the political risk that greater supranational authority could reduce troop-contributing countries' willingness to remain in the coalition.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) represents an essential, logically sound regional security framework for the Lake Chad Basin, but its operational efficacy is severely limited by its institutional architecture. The combination of a decentralized command structure, national sovereignty constraints, intelligence-sharing bottlenecks, and vulnerability to geopolitical shocks turns what should be a unified military alliance into a fragmented coalition.

Furthermore, the lack of post-conflict policing capacities and long-term funding models prevents the force from turning short-term tactical successes into durable regional stability. If the structural flaws within its command and intelligence frameworks are left unaddressed, the MNJTF will remain trapped in a repetitive cycle of clearing territories only to see them re-occupied by resilient insurgent cells. This dynamic leaves North-Eastern Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin continuously vulnerable to protracted asymmetric warfare.

Recommendations

Based on the research objectives and findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

i. To resolve command paralysis and tactical fragmentation, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states must legally restructure the MNJTF's institutional architecture. This requires granting the centralized Force Commander in N'Djamena direct operational control and supranational authority over all four national sectors during active joint campaigns.

ii. To resolve intelligence hoarding, the Joint Intelligence Task Centre should be reformed into a genuinely shared, real-time repository, with standardized information-sharing protocols and confidence-building safeguards that reduce sector commanders' incentives to withhold intelligence from their counterparts.

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Citation: Musa, Mohammed O.; Luka, Ruth C. & Abdul, Abdullahi M.. "Institutional Architecture and Operational Efficacy of Multinational Joint Task Force in Counter Insurgency Operations in North Eastern Nigeria..". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp163-183.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Empirical Article

Open Access

Emotional Regulation Strategies And Decision Making Among Owners Of Small-Scale Businesses in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Abstract

This paper examined the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and decision making among owners of small-scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.. Consequently, two (2) specific objectives, two (2) research questions and two (2) null hypotheses were drawn to guide the study. Theoretical framework were drawn from decision science, emotion regulation, and small scale businesses, the study reviewed empirical findings linking cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression to decision making bothering on risk perception, opportunity recognition, resource allocation, and strategic persistence. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of all 7337 registered small scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. A sample size of 583 registered small scale business owners was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The researcher structured questionnaire titled "Emotional Regulation Strategies and Decision Making Questionnaire" (ERSDMQ) was developed and utilized for data analyses. Cronbach alpha formulae was used to determine a reliability of .91 which was deemed high for the study. The instrument was face validated by three (3) research experts in the Department of Business Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Pearson Product Moment Correction ® was used to answer the research questions and analyze the null hypotheses. The study showed a significant positive relationship between the emotional regulation strategies and decision making of small scale businesses in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. The study recommended that small scale businesses should employ psychologists to help in managing emotional imbalances that could lead to poor decision making of small scale businesses.

Keywords: Emotion regulation, decision making, small businesses, entrepreneurship, risk-taking, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, mindfulness.

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Date Received: 13th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 18th September, 2026

Introduction

Small-scale businesses (micro and small enterprises) are a major source of employment and innovation worldwide. Small-scale businesses (SSBs) are often defined by a limited number of employees, restricted capital, and concentrated managerial control which constitute a large portion of the global economy and are a primary engine of employment and innovation in many regions (Bassey & Akpan, 2026: Bassey & Ebieme, 2026: Bassey, 2026). Small scale

business owners oftentimes expresses emotions as business trends are known to be very volatile (Ido &Bassey, 2015a). For SSBs to be successful, decision making in SSBs must be unique, owners must act as both leader and operator, making frequent, high-stakes decisions under time pressure and with incomplete information. Emotional states of owners and managers play a critical role in shaping these decisions. Emotions can serve adaptive functions (e.g., signaling threats, motivating action) but can also bias cognition (e.g., risk perception, attention allocation). How business owners regulate emotions, either by altering the emotional response itself or by modulating expression may therefore have meaningful consequences for decision quality and business outcomes.

Consequently, emotions are normal part of the everyday lives of business owners. For some though, feeling these emotions can seem overwhelming, like an out-of-control roller coaster (Agbo,2019). Emotional regulation therefore is a term generally used to describe a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience(Akpan,2020). People unconsciously use emotional regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations many times throughout each day (Akpan,2024). Most business owners use a variety of emotional regulation strategies and are able to apply them to different situations in order to adapt to the demands of the environment and situations.

Based on the foregoing. Emotional regulation is defined by Bassey & Sampson (2024) as the ability to manage and respond to an emotional experience in a healthy, adaptive way. Rather than suppressing feelings, it involves recognizing intense emotions, understanding triggers, and utilizing self-soothing or cognitive techniques to maintain control and act constructively, even under pressure (Ido & Bassey, 2015a). According to Bassey *et al (*2024a), emotional regulation (ER) refers to attempts to influence emotions in ourselves or others. ER focuses on people's attempts to influence emotions, defined as time-limited, situationally bound, and valence (positive or negative) states. Compared with historical predecessors, ER is broader in that it is not limited to the down-regulation-of negative emotions (fear, anxiety, stress) but encompasses up- and down-regulation of positive and negative emotions in accordance with regulation-related goals. Whereas goal pursuit (and therefore ER) is often conscious and deliberate, it can also occur implicitly, outside conscious awareness (Ido & Bassey,2016a; Morinshka, *et al* (2011); Ebieme &Bassey,2026). Consequently, emotional regulation techniques can be viewed from two broad perspectives vis-à-vis cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.

Cognitive reappraisal is a potent emotional regulation technique which involves identifying and transforming

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negative thought patterns into more effective ones (James,2020). By altering how one perceive situations, one can dial down negative emotions, making it easier to address triggers with skill and maintain emotional balance(James,2020). Cognitive reappraisal is a strategy that interrupts the feedback loop between negative thoughts and overwhelming emotions (Kelvin,2022). Instead of reacting automatically to distressing feelings, this technique helps you take a step back and reinterpret the situation through a more balanced lens (Rossi,2022).

The process of cognitive reappraisal involves identifying distorted or unhelpful thoughts, challenging their accuracy, and replacing them with more constructive interpretations (Sampson,2024).. The usage of cognitive reappraisal allows business owners to implement and produce interpersonal behavior that is appropriately focused on social interaction and is perceived by the others as emotionally engaging and responsive (Mbamalu, 2019;Ukpa,2021). .

Another form of emotional regulation is the expressive suppression. At odds, expressive suppression comes relatively late in the emotion-generative process and principally modifies the behavioral aspect of the emotional responses, without reducing the subjective and physiological experience of negative emotion, which is not directly targeted by suppression and may thus continue to linger and accumulate unresolved. As expressive suppression comes late in the emotion-generative process, it requires the individual to effortfully manage emotional responses as they constantly occur (Bassey *et al.* (2024b). These repeated efforts deplete cognitive resources to the detriment of social performances and create a sense of discrepancy between inner experience and outer expression in the individual (Okoravo,2018)

Statement of the Problem

Small scale businesses are the nerve center of employment generation in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom state. Majority of school leavers earn their living either through engaging in or are employed by small scale businesses. This has a multiplier effect of boosting the economy and also ensuring employees' lead productive and comfortable lifestyle. It is quite disheartening to note that most small scale businesses do not live beyond their first year anniversary due to poor decision making by the owners. Most small scale businesses do not make use of reliable data in decision making (Ukana, 2026). Most of the poor decisions made by the owners of these businesses could be also as a result of poor cognitive processes (Bassey, 2026), due to applying poor techniques and the seeming lack of cognitive wherewithal to tackle the rigorous processes and

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solve immediate problems that may affect them. Most decisions taken by owners of small scale businesses lack logical dexterity and has resulted to low turnover, customers' dissatisfaction, low net profit and at times huge losses resulting to the death of these firms. Most owners of small scale businesses usually transfer aggressions from family and friends to customers which indicate that they have limited control of their emotions as at that time. This singular act can set the pace for withdrawal leading to low patronage and poor revenue generation. Owners and managers of such businesses routinely make high-stakes decisions under resource constraints, uncertain markets, and volatile emotional conditions. Emotion influences cognition and behavior and thus likely shapes business decision making (Ido & Bassey, 2016b). Moreover, searches on journals, online search engines, and libraries have shown that there exist limited literature on the subject matter of emotional regulation strategies and decision making of small scale businesses.

Moreover, the ways in which different emotional regulation strategies employed by small-business decision makers affect decision outcomes are under-explored.

Research Objective

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. Specifically, the study sought to determine the relationship between:

i. Cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.
ii. Expressive suppression strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study;

i. What is the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?
ii. What is the relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

i. There is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale

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business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

ii. There is no significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Theoretical Framework

Emotional Regulation: Strategies and Processes

Emotion regulation refers to processes by which individuals influence the onset, intensity, duration, and expression of their emotions (Ben, 2019). Key strategies include:

- Cognitive reappraisal: reframing a situation to change its emotional impact (antecedent-focused).
- Expressive suppression: inhibiting outward displays of emotion (response-focused).
- Mindfulness-based regulation: present-focused awareness and non-reactive acceptance.
- Problem-focused coping: active problem solving to modify the stressful situation.
- Avoidant coping: disengagement or denial.

Cognitive reappraisal generally yields better interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes (Francis, 2024). Suppression often reduces visible affect but increases physiological costs and impairs memory and social functioning.

Emotions and Decision Making

Emotion affects judgment via several mechanisms: affect-as-information (Camilus,2023; Daniel, 2025), mood-congruent processing, and influence on risk perception (Francis, 2024). Incidental emotions can alter preferences, while integral emotions tied to the decision context often provide useful signals. Emotion regulation changes the emotional experience and expression and thereby can alter the informational and motivational role emotions play in decisions.

Small-Business Decision Contexts

Small-business decision makers face constraints—limited time, capital, and access to expertise—making them reliant on heuristics and affective cues (Ben,2024). The owner's affective state can directly influence hiring, pricing, investment, and strategic pivoting. For example, fear may prompt conservative decisions while enthusiasm may promote opportunity pursuit (Ido & Bassey, 2016).

Research Methods

A correlational survey design was utilized for this study because the researcher was interested in establishing the relationship between the emotional regulation strategies and decision making by owners of small scale businesses in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The study was conducted in Uyo local government area

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of Akwa state. The population of the study consisted of all 7337 registered small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. A sample size of 583 registered small scale business owners was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The researcher structured questionnaire titled "Emotion Regulation Strategies and Decision Making Questionnaire "(ERSDMQ) was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The research instrument was divided into two parts;Parts A and B. Part A dealt with the bio data of the respondents, while Part B dealt with the sub variables of emotional regulation vis a vis cognitive reappraisal strategy which was differentiated as section 1 and expressive suppression as section 2. The items were measured using a five point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA)(5.0), Agreed (A)(4.0), Undecided (3.0)(U), Disagreed (D)(2.0) and Strongly Disagreed (D)(1.0). The instrument was face validated by three research experts from the department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science, University of Uyo.

Their comments, suggestions and criticisms were incorporated into the final draft. Cronbach alpha reliability formular was used to determine the reliability of the instrument with a high r value of .91 which was deemed high for the study. The researcher together with an assistant who was briefed, administered the instrument to the respondents. Thirty seven percent (37%) of the respondents got their instruments through their official mails and returned sane to the researcher's official mail. A return rate of 95% was achieved. Pearson Product Moment Correlation ® was used to analyze data for this study. In answering the research questions, r value of + or - 0.00 to + or - 0.49 were seen as having a weak relationship while items with an r value of + or – 0.50 to +- 1.00 were seen as having a strong relationship. The researcher ensured that the respondents remain unanimous and their permissions were sought after before engaging them. The researcher acknowledged all authors whose works formed the bulk of the literature utilized in the reference section.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between Cognitive Reappraisal and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX	Σxy	Σx^2	r	Decision
	Xy		Σy^2		
Cognitive reappraisal (x)	376		2916		
		1781		.98	
Decision making (y)	268		1786		Positive relations

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Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 1 has shown that the r cal value testing the relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area is 0.95. This value indicates that there exists a strong positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions 2

What is the relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between experience suppression and decision making of Small Scale Broads owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX Xy	Σxy	Σx^2 Σy^2	r	Decision
Expressive supportive (x)	279		1846		
		1811		.87	Positive relations
Decision making (y)	268		1786		

Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 2 has shown that the r cal value testing the relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners is 0.87. This value indicates that there exists a string positive relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between cognitive reappraisal and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX Xy	Σxy	Σx^2 Σy^2	r-cal.	r-crit.	Decision
Cognitive reappraisal (x)	376		291			
		179		.98	.48	5^x
Decision making (y)	268		1786			

5^x = significant at 0.05 level of significance

Data analysis on Table 3 had shown that the r cal value of 0.95 was higher than the r crit value of 0.49, degree of freedom of 581 and at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected thus, there exist a significant relationship between cognitive

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reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) testing the Relationship between Expressive Suppression and decision making of Small Scale business owns N = 583

Variable	ΣX Xy	Σxy	Σx^2 Σy^2	r-cal.	r-crit.	Deci
Expressive supportive (x)	279		1846			
		1811		.87	.49	5^x
Decision making (y)	268		1786			

5^x = significant at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field study (2026)

Data analysis on Table 4 has shown that the r cal value of 0.87 was higher than the r crit value of 0.49, degree of freedom of 381 and at 0.05 level with of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected thus there exist a significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

Cognitive Reappraisal Strategy and Decision Making

Data analyses on Tables 1 and 3 had indicated that there exist a strong significant and positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo Local government area of Akwa Ibom State. This findings showed that cognitive reappraisal strategy can help business owners make concrete decisions that can improve the fortunes of their small scale businesses. This findings is in consonance with Bassey (2026) who opined that cognitive optimization is a strategy for managing customers of the business. This goes to enable the business owner make informed decisions that are data driven and not out of emotion.

The findings of this study agrees with the findings of Bassey and Ebieme (2026) which opined that a business man with a reappraised cognitive strategy can win the customer base due to the strength of the decision

Expressive Suppression and Decision Making

Data analyses on Tables 2 and 4 had shown that there exist a strong significant and positive relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State. This finding showed that

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suppressing expressing negative emotions goes a long way in helping the business owners make informed decisions. This finding is supported by the findings of Ebieme and Bassey (2026) who opined that emotional intelligence helps business owners to make decisions that can help sustain small scale businesses.

Conclusion

The study was necessitated by the high failure rate of small scale businesses in Uyo due partly to poor business decision making accompanied by emotions instead of applying emotional regulation strategies to help them minimize emotions and maximize the utilization of accurate and precise data for such decision making. The study identified the emotional regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal strategy which involves a self-reappraisal of their cognition to minimize random decisions from emotions and optimize the utilization of data driven scientific data for core decision making and the expressive suppression as core strategy that can relate with decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa state.

Adopting a correlational survey design and using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation ® as the data analysis technique, the study found out that there is a positive significant relationship between cognitive reappraisal strategy and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State. The study also discovered that there exist a positive significant relationship between expressive suppression and decision making of small scale business owners in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached, the following are recommended:

i. Small scale business owners should as a matter of urgency learn to make business decisions by relying on reliable and valid data rather than resorting to emotions that can ruin their businesses
ii. Small scale business owners should as a matter of urgency employ professional psychologists to help counsel the owners whenever they encounter emotional issues
iii. Small scale business owners should endeavor to differentiate between logical decision and emotional decisions in order to boost the confidence of the customers.
iv. Small scale business owners should endeavor to upgrade their businesses through improved cognitive appraisal strategy.
v. The chambers of commerce should organize symposium, seminars and workshops on understanding

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emotional regulation which will help to improve decision making done by the business owners.

vi. The Counseling unit of the state ministry of education should organize a refresher course for owners of small scale businesses in Uyo.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

African Christianity at the Crossroads of Cultural Identity, Contextualization and Biblical Fidelity

Abstract

The encounter between Christianity and African culture produced one of the most enduring debates in contemporary African theology: whether the faith should be more fully Africanized in its cultural expression, or whether such Africanization risked compromising biblical fidelity. For much of its history on the continent, missionary Christianity communicated the gospel through European cultural forms, so that becoming Christian sometimes meant becoming culturally Western, and this confusion left many African converts alienated from their own heritage. Yet the opposite temptation, an uncritical retrieval of African Traditional Religion in the name of relevance, carried its own danger of syncretism. This tension framed the problem this study addressed: how Christianity might become genuinely African in cultural expression without ceasing to be authentically Christian in theological substance. Guided theoretically by the theology of translatability and inculturation associated with Lamin Sanneh, Aylward Shorter, and Kwame Bediako, and informed by Nigerian scholarship from Felix Enegho, Abiodun Ige, and Augustine Obaje and his collaborators, the study employed a qualitative, library-based method of textual and thematic analysis of theological literature. It found that neither wholesale Westernization nor uncritical Africanization offered an adequate model for African Christian identity; rather, a framework of critical inculturation, one that affirmed cultural values compatible with the gospel, transformed those that were ambiguous, and rejected those that contradicted Christian teaching, provided the more defensible path. The study recommended that African theologians, church leaders, and educators pursue this critical inculturation deliberately, engaging African cultural resources with genuine respect, submitting them to rigorous theological evaluation, and cultivating expressions of Christianity that remain recognizably African without ceasing to be recognizably Christian.

Keywords: African Christianity, Africanization, Christianization, African Traditional Religion, contextualization, inculturation, Pentecostalism.

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Date Received: 14th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 21st September, 2026

Introduction

Christianity's relationship with Africa is older than most people assume, and considerably more complicated than the popular image of nineteenth-century missionaries arriving on unfamiliar

shores. Long before European ships reached the West African coast, Christianity already had a home on the continent, and the New Testament itself is threaded with African names and places. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross of Jesus to Golgotha (Mark 15:21); an Ethiopian court official received instruction from Philip and was baptized on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26-39); and Lucius of Cyrene numbered among the prophets and teachers at Antioch (Acts 13:1). Africa was not a late arrival to the Christian story but a participant in it from the beginning.

Given this history, the pressing question is not whether Christianity belongs in Africa. It is what kind of Christianity Africans ought to practice, and how that Christianity should relate to the cultures in which it lives. This brings two related but distinct ideas into view: Africanizing Christianity and Christianizing Africa. The first refers to the process by which African believers interpret and organize their faith through the resources of their own cultures. The second refers, at its best, to the proclamation of the gospel within African societies, though it becomes distorted whenever it is quietly equated with Westernization, as though European habits were themselves the substance of the Christian message.

This paper argues that Christianity in Africa should be genuinely African in cultural expression without collapsing into a Christianized version of African Traditional Religion, and that it should equally resist being treated as though European or North American cultural forms were coextensive with the gospel itself. What is needed is a theology of critical inculturation: one that takes African culture seriously as a partner in theological reflection while submitting that culture to the transforming judgment of Scripture. The discussion that follows traces the historical relationship between Christianity and African culture, examines the resources and risks African Traditional Religion presents to Christian faith, and proposes critical inculturation as the framework best suited to holding cultural authenticity and biblical fidelity together.

Conceptual Foundations: Africanization, Christianization, and Inculturation

Africanization, understood carefully, is not an attempt to invent a new religion. It is the process through which Christian faith comes to be expressed through African languages, music, symbols, and social structures, so that the cultural embodiment of the gospel changes even as its substance does not. This matters because Christianity, from its very beginning, has never existed apart from culture. It was born within a Jewish milieu, grew within the Mediterranean world, and subsequently took Greek, Roman, European, Asian, and African forms in turn (Sanneh 4). Sanneh's concept of "translatability" captures this well: because the Christian message can be rendered into any vernacular without losing its force, no single culture can claim to possess the definitive or exclusive form of Christian faith (Sanneh

2). Shorter makes a similar point from a Catholic missiological perspective, arguing that inculturation is not a cosmetic adjustment to Christian practice but a genuine incarnation of the gospel within the thought-forms of a given people (Shorter 11-12).

The trouble begins when a particular cultural form becomes so tightly fused to Christianity that it is mistaken for divine revelation itself. European missionaries frequently opposed indigenous customs simply because those customs differed from European expectations, not because they contradicted anything in Scripture. Consequently, many African converts came to associate genuine conversion with cultural Europeanization, a confusion that Enegho's study of Roman Catholic inculturation in Nigeria identifies as one of the deepest wounds of the missionary encounter (Enegho, "Inculturation" 56). Christianization, by contrast, can be understood positively as the proclamation and lived embodiment of the gospel within African societies. It becomes distorted whenever it arrives bundled with the wholesale transplantation of foreign cultural values, as though accepting Christ required abandoning one's language and social patterns along with one's former beliefs. The task of contextual theology, then, is to distinguish what in Christianity is biblical revelation from what is merely cultural accretion, a distinction Robert Schreiter's account of "local theology" treats as the starting point of responsible contextual reflection (Schreiter 3).

Christianity in Africa: Historical Perspectives

The history of Christianity in Africa unsettles any notion that the faith is essentially European. Egypt became one of early Christianity's most important intellectual centers, and Alexandria developed into a hub of theological scholarship that shaped the wider Christian tradition. North Africa produced towering figures such as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine of Hippo, whose writings remain foundational to Western theology even though their authors were Africans. Ethiopia sustained an unbroken Christian tradition from antiquity into the modern era, one of the oldest continuous Christian communities anywhere in the world. Adamo's research on Africa and Africans within the New Testament reinforces this picture, showing how deeply African figures and geography are woven into the biblical narrative itself (Adamo 23). Isichei's comprehensive history of Christianity on the continent likewise demonstrates that African participation in the Christian story long predates the missionary movements of the modern era (Isichei 16).

None of this is meant to diminish the nineteenth-century missionary movement, which had an undeniable and, in many respects, constructive impact. Missionaries built schools, hospitals, and theological institutions across the continent, and their contribution to literacy and education deserves honest acknowledgment. The difficulty was that

missionary Christianity often traveled hand in hand with colonial structures and a European conception of civilization that treated Western dress and leadership models as though inseparable from the gospel itself. This produced a genuine theological problem: if Christianity is truly universal, why should an African have to become culturally European to be considered authentically Christian? The rise of African Independent Churches and, later, African Pentecostalism can be read as a direct response to this dilemma (Isichei 289; Kalu 5-6).

African Traditional Religion, Syncretism, and the Christian Encounter

African Traditional Religion is not a single, uniform system but a broad family of indigenous religious traditions that vary from one community to another. Despite this diversity, many of these traditions share concerns with a Supreme Being, lesser divinities, ancestors, ritual, and the relationship between the visible and invisible worlds. Mbiti's classic study of African religious thought observes that religion in this setting is rarely a separate compartment of life; it permeates politics, economics, and family relationships, so that the sacred and the ordinary are not easily pulled apart (Mbiti 3). Ige's research on the place of ancestors in African religious consciousness adds important texture here, showing that among peoples such as the Yoruba and the Igbo, ancestors are regarded as continuing members of the family whose presence still bears on questions of morality and identity (Ige, "Africa and the Africans" 14). Obaje and his collaborators similarly observe that modern African Christians frequently negotiate between an inherited cultural identity and the demands of Christian discipleship, a negotiation that should not automatically be read as hypocrisy but as evidence of an ongoing process of worldview transformation (Obaje et al. 45).

One of the most serious dangers this negotiation raises is syncretism, which occurs whenever incompatible religious commitments are fused together in ways that compromise Christian identity. The problem becomes visible, for instance, when believers depend simultaneously on Christ and on traditional religious specialists for healing, protection, or knowledge of the future. Such practices call for careful theological evaluation rather than blanket condemnation of African culture as a whole. African Christians can reasonably distinguish between practices that are morally neutral, values that enrich Christian discipleship, customs that require transformation, and beliefs that fundamentally contradict the Christian confession. Communal solidarity and hospitality toward strangers belong to the first category and can enrich Christian ethics considerably; allegiance to spiritual powers that compete with the worship of Christ belongs to the last, and here compromise is not an option.

Christology, in particular, must remain non-negotiable throughout this process. Africanization should never reduce Jesus

Christ to just another ancestor, healer, or spiritual intermediary among many, even as it insists, rightly, that Christ can and must be communicated through categories that Africans can understand (Stinton 132-33). The real question, as Diane Stinton's study of African Christology suggests, is not whether Christ may be expressed through African religious categories, but whether such expressions remain faithful to what Scripture actually says about him.

Christianity and Culture: Toward Critical Inculturation

Culture supplies the framework through which human beings interpret and organize their lives: language, symbols, customs, and moral expectation are all bound up in it. Because Christianity is always communicated through some cultural medium, there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a culture-free Christianity. Even church practices that Western Christians often assume to be universal have their own specific cultural histories. The problem is not that Christianity takes cultural form; it arises only when a particular cultural form is mistaken for the gospel itself. This is precisely the distinction Enegho's broader work on inculturation in the Nigerian setting insists upon: the gospel can engage culture without becoming captive to it, provided the church remains willing to ask hard questions about which of its practices are biblical and which are merely inherited habit (Enegho, "Inculturation" 61).

Contextualization, in this light, refers to the work of interpreting Christian faith in relation to a community's social and religious circumstances, while inculturation goes a step further, describing the process through which Christianity becomes genuinely rooted within a culture even as it transforms that culture from within. Culture supplies Christianity with language and symbols through which it can be understood, but the gospel, in turn, evaluates and reshapes the culture that receives it. The Gospel cannot affirm every traditional practice simply because it is African, nor reject every indigenous custom simply because it is unfamiliar to Western sensibilities; the operative principle must be critical transformation rather than uncritical acceptance or rejection. Gyekye's study of African cultural values is useful here, cataloguing the emphasis many African societies place on community, respect for elders, and the moral weight of family obligation (Gyekye 78); such values need not be rejected simply because they originate outside the biblical world, but can enrich Christian ethics once brought into honest conversation with Scripture. The same critical posture must be applied to Western culture, too: individualism and consumerism are not automatically Christian simply because they arose in societies that call themselves Christian. The gospel stands in judgment over both cultural systems, African and Western alike, which is precisely why Christianity can neither be reduced to African

tradition nor equated with European civilization.

African Pentecostalism and Contextual Christianity

African Pentecostalism represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary African Christianity, and Kalu's landmark study argues persuasively that its growth cannot be explained as a simple import from the West. Its emphasis on prayer, healing, prophecy, and vivid spiritual experience resonates naturally with dimensions of African religious consciousness that predate the missionary era, which is part of why the movement has taken root so quickly across the continent (Kalu 85). Enegho's comparative study of Roman Catholicism and Pentecostalism further highlights the tensions that have emerged around fundamentalism and religious freedom as this movement has grown (Enegho, "Roman Catholicism" 2). African Pentecostalism demonstrates something theologically important: that Christianity can become culturally meaningful without becoming culturally Western, since its indigenous leadership and distinctly African style of worship owe little to European precedent.

This does not mean Pentecostalism is beyond criticism. The commercialization of religion, an excessive emphasis on prosperity, and a tendency toward authoritarian leadership in some quarters raise legitimate concerns that deserve honest engagement rather than defensive dismissal. Africanization cannot be measured merely by numerical growth or the visibility of African leadership; it must also be measured by ethical seriousness and faithfulness to Christ. A congregation can be culturally African in every visible respect while remaining spiritually unhealthy, just as it can be numerically thriving while reproducing the very oppressive structures the gospel is meant to dismantle. The ultimate test is whether cultural authenticity is joined to genuine transformation of life.

Christianity, Social Transformation, and the Nigerian Context

Christianity in Africa cannot remain aloof from the concrete social realities its adherents face daily: poverty, corruption, insecurity, and the everyday indignities of poor governance. Ige's study of corruption in Nigerian public life offers a useful model here, arguing that the church's prophetic responsibility requires it to confront corruption directly rather than retreat into private piety while injustice goes unaddressed (Ige, "John the Baptist" 579). If Christianity is to be authentically African, in other words, it must speak to the suffering Africans actually experience rather than confine itself to abstract theological debate. This conviction runs directly against any theology content to treat worship and justice, or evangelism and social responsibility, as separate departments of Christian life; Enegho's missiological writing insists, rightly, that mission which ignores the material needs of the people it serves has already failed at something basic to the gospel it claims to proclaim (Enegho, "Inculturation" 64).

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The complexity of modern African identity compounds this challenge. Obaje and his collaborators observe that a contemporary African believer may hold together multiple, overlapping identities at once: African, Christian, professional, and thoroughly modern, shaped as much by global culture as by inherited tradition (Obaje et al. 47). Philip Jenkins's demographic account of global Christianity situates this Nigerian experience within a larger shift, noting that the center of gravity in world Christianity has already moved decisively toward the global South, of which Nigeria is one of the most consequential examples (Jenkins 2-3). Nigeria's own religious plurality illustrates just how contextualized Christianity there already is, yet this diversity has not resolved the country's deeper social challenges, and Nigerian Christianity's credibility will depend on whether it can demonstrate a transformed way of life rather than elaborate ceremony.

Toward a Theology of Critical Inculturation

Taken together, these considerations point toward critical inculturation as the most defensible framework for African Christian identity, describable through five interlocking movements: cultural understanding, in which African Christians genuinely understand their own traditions before engaging them theologically, since ignorance of culture makes meaningful reflection impossible (Ige, "Africa and the Africans" 15-16); biblical engagement, in which culture is placed in serious dialogue with Scripture rather than weaponized against it or allowed to override it; theological discernment, the disciplined work of distinguishing cultural forms that may be retained from commitments that cannot be reconciled with Christian confession; transformation, in which a practice that genuinely contradicts Christian teaching is changed or set aside, since cultural authenticity cannot override theological conviction; and creative reconstruction, the ongoing work of producing theological language, liturgy, and social engagement that are authentically African and genuinely Christian at once.

Schreiter's account of local theology supports this five-part structure well, since it insists that theology is never simply imported wholesale from elsewhere but is constructed, again and again, through the dynamic interaction of gospel, church, and culture in a particular place (Schreiter 16-17). Critical inculturation, understood this way, avoids both of the extremes that have haunted African Christian reflection: the outright rejection of African culture in the name of biblical purity, and the uncritical romanticizing of that culture in the name of relevance. It insists, instead, that African Christians can be both fully African and fully Christian, provided they are willing to do the patient, sometimes uncomfortable work that genuine inculturation requires.

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The Responsibility of African Theologians

African theologians and religious scholars carry a particular responsibility in this work, one that requires resisting two opposite forms of intellectual dependency. The first is dependence on Western theological categories as though they were the only legitimate lens for understanding Christianity, a habit of mind Bediako's landmark study traces to the earliest years of the missionary encounter and treats as an obstacle to mature African theological reflection (Bediako, Theology and Identity 64). The second is dependence on romanticized notions of African tradition, an equally serious temptation in which anything indigenous is assumed to be automatically compatible with Christian faith simply because it is indigenous. African theology, if it is to be taken seriously as theology rather than mere cultural apologetics, must be intellectually rigorous and self-critical in the face of both temptations.

Bediako's comparison between the identity questions facing early African theologians and those the second-century apologists faced within the Greco-Roman world is instructive here, since it suggests that the search for a genuinely African Christian identity belongs to the very heart of what it means to think theologically at all (Bediako, Theology and Identity 176). African scholarship should aim to do more than illustrate Western theology with African examples; it should generate its own theological questions while remaining in genuine conversation with the wider Christian tradition. When Christianity is presented as though European culture were the standard of Christian civilization, the results include cultural alienation and the quiet loss of legitimate identity. When Africanization is pursued without discernment, the results are no less troubling: syncretism, a diluted Christology, and a fragmented Christian witness.

Conclusion

The debate between Africanizing Christianity and Christianizing Africa should not be reduced to a forced choice between Africa and the Christian faith, because no such choice is theologically necessary. Christianity is already deeply rooted in African soil, and Africa has, in turn, contributed substantially to the wider history of the Christian faith, from the theological achievements of ancient Alexandria to the vitality of contemporary Pentecostal movements. The task facing African Christians today is not to prove that Christianity belongs in Africa, a case history has already settled, but to determine how that Christianity can be embodied faithfully within African cultures as they actually exist, with all their genuine strengths and ambiguities.

The record of missionary Christianity demonstrates the real dangers of confusing the gospel with a particular culture, however well-intentioned that confusion may have been. At the same

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time, the vitality of African Independent Churches and Pentecostal movements demonstrates the legitimate desire of African believers to worship God through their own languages and leadership rather than through borrowed forms. Africanization, for its part, still requires ongoing critical evaluation; not every traditional belief can be absorbed into Christian practice without careful scrutiny, and Ige's work on ancestral veneration and Enegho's sustained reflection on inculturation both make clear that this scrutiny is neither optional nor merely academic (Ige, "Africa and the Africans" 17-19; Enegho, "Inculturation" 65-66). Obaje and his collaborators likewise remind readers that modern African Christians inhabit a genuinely complex cultural and theological space that resists easy resolution (Obaje et al. 52).

The appropriate response, as this paper has argued throughout, is critical inculturation: a theology that insists Christianity must speak African languages, engage African questions, and respond honestly to African social realities, while African culture, in turn, remains open to the transforming judgment of Scripture. The goal is neither to make Christianity European nor to make it merely African, but to make it faithfully Christian within Africa. Africa does not need a Christianity that makes its people ashamed of their cultural identity, and it does not need a Christianity that baptizes every inherited practice without theological examination either. What it needs, and what critical inculturation attempts to offer, is a Christianity that is biblically faithful, culturally intelligible, and socially transformative all at once. That balance, difficult as it is to sustain, remains essential to the future credibility and vitality of African Christianity.

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Citation: Ige, Abiodun S. & Comfort, Olusegun B. "African Christianity at the Crossroads of Cultural Identity, Contextualization and Biblical Fidelity". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp195-204.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

An Examination of the Impact of Religious Leaders' as Social Media Influencers in Nigeria

Abstract

The growing influence of religious leaders as social media influencers is reshaping the dynamics of public opinion and behaviour, particularly in a digitally connected nation like Nigeria. Using socio-analytical and descriptive methods, the research investigated how social platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram, among others, have become vital tools for religious leaders to extend their reach beyond traditional congregational settings. Drawing on social influence theory, the study examined how religious leaders use content creation, interaction, and engagement strategies to build large and loyal audiences while shaping societal discourse. Key findings highlighted that religious leaders influence public opinion by combining religious and socio-political messaging, thus playing dual roles as spiritual mentors and cultural commentators. However, their online presence is not without challenges as issues of misinformation, ethical controversies, and audience manipulation raise concerns about the impact of their messages on a highly impressionable digital audience. The study identified gaps in current academic literature on the long-term effects of religious digital influence and cultural nuances in online engagement. The study recommended the need for ethical accountability among religious leaders, transparency and authenticity in monetization practices, media literacy programs, and further research into the intersection of digital religion and socio-political transformation. This study contributed to the broader understanding of how religion intersects with media and technology in shaping contemporary society, particularly within the Nigerian context.

Keywords: Social Media, Influencers, Religion, Religious Leaders, Nigeria.

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Date Received: 17th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 25th September, 2026

Introduction

In contemporary Nigeria, religion plays a pivotal role in shaping social, cultural, and political landscapes. The nation is deeply religious, with Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion being the dominant faiths, influencing not only personal beliefs but also public life and governance. Historically, religious leaders have held significant sway in guiding the moral and ethical compass of

their followers worldwide. Ojo notes that, "they serve as authoritative voices on matters ranging from spiritual guidance to social justice" (10). This means that the influence of religious leaders in Nigeria extends far beyond the confines of traditional worship spaces.

In recent years, the rapid growth of social media has provided a new avenue for religious leaders to extend their reach and impact. With over 33 million active social media users in Nigeria, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube have become essential spaces for communication, community building, and social influence (DataReportal 25). Unlike traditional media, social media offers a unique interactive environment where followers can engage directly with religious figures, whether by commenting on posts, participating in live streams, or sharing content. This shift according to Adesoji to digital platforms "has altered the dynamics of influence, enabling religious leaders to act as social media influencers who shape beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours across a vast audience" (19).

The growing presence of religious leaders on social media has led to an expanded role for these figures in Nigeria's public life. Their influence now spans a spectrum that includes not only spiritual guidance but also social and political commentary. "Religious leaders often address pressing social issues such as corruption, poverty, and governance, positioning themselves as moral voices in the national dialogue" (Ogunlade 71). By leveraging social media, they have gained the ability to quickly mobilise followers, promote charitable initiatives, and address societal concerns, all of which contribute to a heightened role in shaping public opinion and social values.

At the same time, the influence of religious leaders as social media figures is not without challenges. "There are risks associated with the spread of misinformation, potential conflicts between religious and secular views, and ethical questions about the responsibility of religious figures as public influencers" (Ejimabo 34). Additionally, social media can serve as an echo chamber, amplifying certain viewpoints and potentially polarizing audiences. Despite these challenges, the influence of religious leaders on social media in Nigeria remains a powerful force, highlighting the need to examine how their digital presence affects public opinion and societal change.

Who is a Social Media Influencer?

A social media influencer is a person who has a significant online presence and uses their social media platforms to shape public opinion, influence behaviour, and promote products or services. (Hennig-Thurau *et al*. 45). Social Media Influencers (SMI) are also known as YouTubers, bloggers, content creators or influencers, all of which are names for people who present and create content that has an impact on the audience. Accordingly, this paper defines Social Media Influencers

(SMI) can be defined as people who use social media to spread their ideas and opinions through text, video posts or live broadcasts, and they usually have followers who are positively or negatively affected by them.

Theoretical Frameworks

The influence of religious leaders on public opinion through social media can be explained through Social Influence Theory.

i. Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory (SIT) posits that "individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours are often shaped by the influence of others, particularly those in positions of authority or trust" (Kelman 52). Social influence theory explores how individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are affected by others. The origins of this theory date back to early social psychology studies, particularly during the mid-20th century. It builds upon foundational ideas of conformity, compliance, and obedience, drawing on the works of Kurt Lewin, Solomon Asch, and Stanley Milgram (Cialdini 22). These researchers studied how individuals adapt their behaviours in response to social pressures and authority figures.

Social Influence Theory (SIT) posits that human behaviour is shaped significantly by social contexts, emphasizing the adaptive nature of individuals in response to their environments. A foundational assumption is that behaviour is driven by the social context and the presence of others. Deutsch and Gerard argue that "individuals often adjust their actions to align with the expectations or behaviours of those around them, demonstrating the profound impact of the immediate social environment" (632). This assumption underscores the situational flexibility of human behaviour, suggesting that conformity and adaptation are central to social interactions. Another key assumption is the dual process of social influence: normative and informational. According to Asch, "Normative influence occurs when individuals conform to gain social acceptance or avoid rejection, while informational influence arises from the desire to align with what is perceived as correct or accurate" (41). For instance, in Asch's classic conformity experiments, participants often aligned their responses with group consensus even when it contradicted their own perceptions, highlighting the interplay between these two forms of influence. This duality reflects the complex motivations behind conformity, where both social approval and perceived accuracy drive behaviour.

Social Influence Theory (SIT) provides a valuable framework for analyzing how religious leaders shape public opinion and behaviour through social media platforms. The theory's foundational principles: normative influence, informational influence, and authority align closely with the dynamics of religious leadership in the digital age. Religious leaders utilize social media to create communities where followers feel

a strong need to conform to shared beliefs and practices. This aligns with normative influence, where according to Obadare, "individuals adopt behaviours or viewpoints to gain acceptance or avoid disapproval from a group" (56). For instance, Pastor Jerry Eze's New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations (NSPPD) exemplifies this phenomenon, as millions of followers participate in live prayer sessions and adopt practices encouraged by the online faith community. These digital spaces foster a sense of collective identity and belonging, amplifying the influence of religious leaders over their followers.

Informational influence, another key aspect of social influence theory, explains how people look to religious leaders for guidance, particularly in uncertain or complex situations. Religious leaders on social media often position themselves as trusted sources of wisdom and direction, interpreting events and offering solutions from a spiritual perspective. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, Adesoji notes that, "Nigerian religious leaders provided guidance on health protocols and vaccine hesitancy, influencing public behaviour in significant ways" (112). Their ability to provide clarity and reassurance during crises strengthens their followers' reliance on their teachings.

Religious leaders, as respected figures, wield considerable social influence, particularly in matters of morality and ethics. They use their influence to address critical social issues, such as poverty, violence, and corruption, often framing these issues within a religious context. This approach resonates deeply with followers, who view their guidance as spiritually and morally authoritative. Social influence theory helps explain how religious leaders not only guide personal beliefs but also shape collective behaviours and attitudes within Nigerian society (Ogunlade 73).

Social Media as a Platform for Religious Expression

In Nigeria, the popularity of social media has made it an essential tool for religious expression, with "many religious leaders actively maintaining online presences to engage their followers on both spiritual and social issues" (Adesoji 42). The interactive nature of social media also allows followers to participate in religious dialogues, ask questions, and receive immediate responses, which fosters a sense of community and belonging in the digital space. As Ogunlade observes, this form of engagement has made social media "an indispensable tool for religious leaders who seek to remain relevant in a digital age" (71).

The interplay between religion and media, particularly social media, has become increasingly significant in shaping societal dynamics. In Nigeria, a country where religion holds a profound influence on social, cultural, and political spheres, religious leaders wield considerable power. This power extends

beyond traditional religious settings, as many religious leaders have adapted to the digital age by establishing influential presences on social media platforms. This study examines the role of these religious leaders as influencers on social media and their subsequent impact on public opinion within the Nigerian context.

Content Creation and Engagement Strategies used by Religious leaders include, text, video, and images. The frequency and timing of posts are also crucial for maintaining engagement and relevance on social media. Studies suggest that consistent posting helps to keep followers engaged and enhances the visibility of religious leaders' content (DataReportal 22). By strategically timing posts, religious leaders can capture the attention of followers when they are most receptive, increasing the likelihood of engagement. Timing is also often affected by an algorithm depending on the platform that is being used. For example, it is believed that Facebook algorithms are favourable between 5am-6:30am in the morning and 6pm-8pm in the evening. Posts created during this timing often have more engagement than others.

Prominent Religious Leaders on Social Media

The concept of social media influencers typically pertains to individuals who have garnered a significant following online, allowing them to influence their audience's perceptions, behaviours, and decisions. In Nigeria, religious leaders have emerged as powerful social media influencers, leveraging their spiritual authority to engage with followers on digital platforms. This phenomenon is particularly noteworthy given the strong religious sentiments prevalent in the country, where religious leaders' opinions are often regarded as divine guidance. Religious leaders such as Jerry U. Eze, Angela Nwosu, Chris Oyakhilome and Sam Adeyemi, among others, have amassed large online followings, which they use to disseminate their teachings, promote religious values, and comment on contemporary issues. Their messages, often framed in religious language, can influence their followers' views on everything from personal conduct to national politics. Social media thus, "becomes a new pulpit from which these leaders preach, reaching millions in real-time and with unprecedented immediacy" (Olorunnisola and Douai 20). For the purpose of this research, the influence of two prominent religious leaders on Facebook will be studied.

i. Jerry Uchechukwu Eze

Pastor Jerry Uchechukwu Eze is the founder and lead pastor of Streams of Joy International, a vibrant Pentecostal church based in Nigeria. He is also known as the convener of the New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations (NSPPD), which has gained immense popularity both in Nigeria and globally through social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Launched as a daily prayer initiative, NSPPD has attracted millions

of participants who engage with the live broadcasts and recorded sessions, which feature prophetic declarations, testimonies, and fervent prayers (Obadare 120). Eze's ministry is characterized by dynamic preaching style, which combines biblical teachings with contemporary issues, appealing particularly to younger audiences. Pastor Eze is known for energetic presentations and the use of captivating visual and audio elements in broadcasts. This modern approach has not only expanded his reach but has also positioned him as a leading figure in the realm of digital ministry in Nigeria. He is popularly known for the saying, "What God cannot do, does not exist."

Pastor Eze's influence on his followers is profound, as evidenced by the extensive online community that has formed around the NSPPD. Ejimabo states that the "prayer sessions, which are held daily, create a sense of belonging and spiritual engagement among participants, often leading to personal testimonies of breakthroughs and miracles attributed to the prayers" (58). His use of social media to facilitate real-time interaction allows followers to share their experiences and testimonies, fostering a vibrant community of faith that transcends geographical boundaries.

Moreover, Eze's emphasis on prophetic declarations resonates deeply with many followers, who view him as a spiritual authority capable of interceding on their behalf. His teachings often emphasize faith, hope, and resilience in the face of life's challenges, appealing to those seeking solace and guidance during difficult times. This message is particularly poignant in a society like Nigeria, where socio-economic challenges are prevalent, and many individuals look to religion for hope and direction. The NSPPD initiative also serves as a platform for addressing contemporary social issues, including mental health and economic hardships, providing a holistic approach to spiritual care. His ministry illustrates what Campbell calls the "networked religious authority" model, where charisma is digitally mediated yet collectively affirmed (75). By actively engaging with his audience on these matters, Eze not only fulfills a pastoral role but also positions himself as a relevant voice in societal discourse, thereby enhancing his influence and authority.

Pastor Jerry Uchechukwu Eze exemplifies the impact of religious leaders as social media influencers in Nigeria. Through innovative use of digital platforms and engaging content, he has built a community that not only seeks spiritual guidance but also fosters a sense of belonging and support among its members. His ministry underscores the evolving landscape of religious leadership in the digital age, highlighting the profound influence these leaders have in shaping public opinion and personal faith.

Citation: Ekele, Blessing E.; Ige, Abiodun S. & Okpe, Nicholas O. "An Examination of the Impact of Religious Leaders' as Social Media Influencers in Nigeria". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp205-216.

ii. Angela Nwosu (Digital Ogbanje)

Angela Nwosu, popularly known as "Digital Ogbanje," has gained significant influence as a traditional religious influencer and spiritual advisor in Nigeria. With a unique blend of traditional spirituality and contemporary religious practice, she has cultivated a vast following on social media platform like Facebook. Nwosu's brand as the Digital Ogbanje is rooted in her ability to engage with followers on personal spiritual matters, often providing guidance and counseling through posts and videos.

Her influence stems from her approachability and relatability, which resonate particularly with younger audiences seeking spiritual guidance in a rapidly changing world. By addressing modern challenges faced by followers, such as mental health and relationship issues, Nwosu has positioned herself as a vital resource in their spiritual journeys. The use of vibrant visuals and engaging storytelling enhances her appeal, making her teachings accessible and relevant to a contemporary audience. Nwosu's influence as the Digital Ogbanje is indicative of the shift in how religious authority is perceived in the digital age. Her success underscores the potential of social media to empower non-traditional leaders who resonate with followers on personal and emotional levels. This reflects the broader trend of emerging religious figures leveraging social media to establish themselves as credible voices in spiritual discourse.

She is known for selling various spiritual bracelets, beads and fortified soaps or wash. Although these products are sold in exorbitant prices, Angela Nwosu's followers do not care so much about the prices; for them. According to followers' reviews on Nwosu's Facebook comment sections, "the reward from these products is far greater than the prices attached to them. The products are believed to attract wealthy spouses, secure great business opportunities, fight against evil spirits, "tie" ones' spouse as the case may be." Angela Nwosu lives in Dubai with her family and has a total of 3.6 million followers on Facebook.

Angela Nwosu exemplifies the role of traditional religious leaders in the digital age, leveraging social media to engage with her followers and address their spiritual and emotional needs. By blending traditional beliefs with contemporary issues, she has cultivated a loyal following that seeks her guidance and support. Her influence highlights the evolving landscape of religious leadership, where traditional practices are reimagined and revitalized through the power of social media.

Impact of Religious Leaders on Social Media

As respected figures with significant authority, religious leaders in Nigeria impact followers' perspectives on social, moral, and political issues, contributing

to both individual and collective behaviour changes.

i. Influence on Social and Political Views

Religious leaders in Nigeria often shape public opinion on social and political issues by sharing their perspectives on morality, ethics, and societal values. Given that Nigeria is a deeply religious society, religious leaders' opinions often carry more weight than those of political figures (Obadare 37). Ejimabo notes that, "when religious leaders speak out on issues such as corruption, poverty, or social justice, they can mobilise followers to support or oppose specific political movements, policies, or social trends" (41). Social media platforms amplify this influence by providing a direct line of communication between leaders and followers, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers and enabling leaders to share unfiltered messages. Religious leaders' commentary on social and political issues often frames these matters within a religious or moral context, which resonates with followers who view such issues through a spiritual lens (Adesoji 84). For instance, during elections as seen in the year 2023, some Nigerian religious leaders used social media to endorse candidates and advocated for political positions that align with their religious values, impacting public opinion and swaying voters.

ii. Shaping Moral and Ethical Behaviour

Beyond politics, religious leaders significantly influence followers' personal moral and ethical behaviour. By addressing topics such as honesty, generosity, and community responsibility, religious leaders provide guidance on personal conduct. Many followers view religious teachings as a blueprint for ethical living, and thus, Oguntola believes that "moral standards, promoted by religious leaders often translate into followers' day-to-day actions" (63). Social media allows leaders to reinforce these teachings regularly through posts, videos, and interactive content, keeping moral guidance in the forefront of followers' minds. Moreover, Cheong asserts that, "when religious leaders address controversial issues such as domestic violence, drug abuse, or sexual morality, their messages often lead to changes in attitudes and behaviours among their followers" (50). For example, religious leaders advocating against domestic violence have helped raise awareness and decrease societal acceptance of such behaviour in Nigeria, promoting respect and compassion within families and communities. Followers are not only influenced by the teachings but also feel a social pressure to conform to the moral standards promoted by their religious leaders, which according to Kelman, can "lead to substantial behavioural change' (58).

iii. Reinforcing Cultural and Religious Identity

Religious leaders also play a crucial role in strengthening cultural and religious identities, particularly in a pluralistic society like Nigeria where diverse ethnic and religious groups coexist. By sharing messages that emphasize the values, practices, and beliefs associated with their faith, religious leaders help followers maintain a strong sense of identity (Obadare 44). Social media enables leaders to regularly reinforce these aspects of identity through content that celebrates religious holidays, cultural practices, and shared history. Adesoji opines that, "this constant reinforcement helps followers feel connected to their faith and cultural heritage, despite modern pressures to secularize" (95). In addition, religious leaders often address issues that threaten cultural or religious values, such as globalization and westernization, encouraging followers to hold fast to traditional beliefs. This reinforces a collective identity among followers, uniting them in shared beliefs and practices. Such cohesion can have a stabilizing effect on communities, as members feel a sense of belonging and purpose tied to their religious identity (Ejimabo 45).

iv. Promoting Community Engagement and Social Welfare

A notable impact of religious leaders on behaviour is the ability to mobilise followers for community engagement and social welfare initiatives. Leaders frequently call on followers to participate in charitable activities, donate to causes, or volunteer in community programs, which promote social cohesion and support for those in need. This aspect of religious leadership fosters a spirit of altruism and solidarity among followers, encouraging them to contribute positively to society (Ogunlade 98). These efforts are enhanced by social media allowing leaders to quickly disseminate information about charitable campaigns, fundraisers, or volunteer opportunities. Oguntola noted that "when a religious leader promotes a cause, followers are more likely to participate, viewing it as a religious duty or a way to gain spiritual merit" (68). This type of engagement is crucial in Nigeria, where government resources for social welfare are often limited, and religious organizations fill essential gaps by providing healthcare, education, and financial support to disadvantaged communities (Cheong 57).

While the rise of religious leaders as social media influencers has brought new opportunities for outreach and community building, it has also introduced significant challenges and controversies. These issues range from questions about authenticity and commercialization to concerns about the potential for polarization and the spread of misinformation. In Nigeria, a deeply religious and diverse country, the intersection of social media and religion raises complex issues that affect both the leaders themselves and their followers.

Religious leaders face several interconnected challenges in their use of social media, including maintaining authenticity while navigating commercialization, as branding, self-promotion, advertisements, and monetization may create doubts about the sincerity of their spiritual messages (Campbell 64; Ejimabo 42). They also risk contributing to polarization and divisive rhetoric when addressing sensitive political, religious, ethnic, or social issues, as their influential messages can intensify existing tensions and intergroup divisions (Obadare 49; Olorunnisola and Douai 134; Adesoji 92). Another significant concern is the spread of misinformation, since followers may readily accept unverified claims from trusted religious figures, particularly on issues such as health, politics, and social events (Cheong 45; Ejimabo 56). Furthermore, social media exposes religious leaders to increased public scrutiny and loss of privacy, where personal actions, statements, or perceived inconsistencies with their teachings can attract criticism and damage their reputation (Ogunlade 85). Finally, leaders must continually balance their traditional spiritual and pastoral responsibilities with modern influencer expectations, including frequent posting, audience engagement, trend participation, and the adoption of contemporary communication styles, creating tension between religious authenticity and the demands of digital relevance (Cheong 52; Olorunnisola and Douai 137).

Conclusion

The influence of religious leaders as social media influencers in Nigeria represents both an opportunity and a challenge. On one hand, these leaders play a significant role in shaping public opinion and encouraging positive behaviours, such as community engagement and adherence to moral values. On the other hand, challenges such as misinformation, commercialization, and potential for societal polarization must be addressed to maximize the positive impact of their influence. Religious leaders have a unique position of authority and trust among their followers, which allows them to play a transformative role in both spiritual and societal matters. However, as Campbell observes, "the responsibilities associated with this influence are substantial, especially in a digital context where messages spread quickly and can have unintended consequences" (78). Therefore, religious leaders should approach social media with a sense of ethical responsibility, balancing traditional roles with the demands of digital interaction (Olorunnisola and Douai 138). The evolving role of religious leaders as influencers on social media in Nigeria calls for a thoughtful and strategic approach. By adopting practices that promote authenticity, inclusivity, and ethical engagement, religious leaders can strengthen their positive impact on society. As Nigeria continues to experience social and political challenges, religious leaders who use their platforms

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responsibly can contribute to national unity, foster understanding among diverse groups, and inspire ethical behaviour among their followers.

Recommendations

The increasing role of religious leaders as social media influencers in Nigeria calls for strategic approaches to harness their influence positively while addressing the challenges identified. Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are given:

- Promoting Digital Literacy and Responsibility among religious leaders: Courses on media and digital ethics should be included in the curricular of theological seminaries, Islamic schools and other training establishments. Many religious leaders currently engage digital platforms without adequate reflection on the ethical implications of online engagement. Scholarly engagement with digital religion can equip future religious leaders with the intellectual tools needed to navigate the complexities of online practices responsibly.
- Clear Ethical Guidelines for Social Media Activities: Religious bodies in Nigerian should develop written digital media codes of conduct covering religious statements, political statements, counseling, advertising and interaction of religious leaders with followers within digital spaces. Leaders of this association are to ensure that online communication reflects the same ethical standards as expected in physical interaction. This will help reduce manipulation, sensationalism and irresponsible use of religious authority.
- Balancing Content Between Spiritual and Societal Issues: While many followers expect guidance on spiritual and moral issues, leaders must be mindful when addressing social and political matters. By framing such topics within a context of tolerance and unity, leaders can foster understanding among different groups.
- Transparency and Authenticity in Monetization Practices: Given the ethical concerns around commercialization, religious leaders should be transparent about their monetization practices, if applicable, and avoid content that might appear overly commercial.
- Encouraging Interfaith and Community Engagement and Collaboration: Religious leaders can use their platforms to promote interfaith dialogue and encourage community service, both of which have the potential to strengthen social ties.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

A Freirean Approach to Governance as Praxis Via Interculturality, Shared Authority, and the Democratic Crisis in Africa

Abstract

Democratic governance in culturally plural societies confronts a paradox regarding the locus of the authority as it is presumed to belonging to 'the people'. Where cultural, linguistic, and religious differences mark the polity, who authorises whom and on what grounds becomes democracy's central problem. This paradox is particularly acute in Africa, where three decades of multiparty constitutionalism have produced elections without accountability, constitutions without constitutionalism, and states whose formal democratic architecture coexists with exclusion, predation, and civic abandonment. This paper argued that Paulo Freire's concept of praxis, the iterative unity of reflection and transformative action, offers a resource for considering how shared authority is generated rather than merely distributed. Reading Freire alongside intercultural philosophy, particularly the critique of monological reason, it develops the concept of dialogical authorization which is authority becoming shared through sustained, reciprocal, structurally egalitarian communicative practice. Three claims follow and they are: First, Freire's pedagogy is best understood as a theory of democratic authorisation, in which the capacity to name the world is inseparable from the capacity to govern it. Second, the 'banking' model has a precise institutional analogue in the technocratic postcolonial African state, explaining much of the continent's democratic deficit. Third, Freirean praxis supplies the missing generative dimension in deliberative and intercultural democracy, which specify conditions of legitimacy but not how the capacities for it are produced, still less under conditions of material scarcity and external dependency. The paper addressed objections concerning vanguardism, the romanticisation of the oppressed, inattention to institutional design, and the charge that Freire's Latin American framework travels poorly. It concluded that shared authority is not a constitutional artefact but an educational achievement, and that democratic consolidation in Africa depends less on electoral engineering than on cultivating conscientização.

Keywords: Praxis, interculturality, democratic governance, shared authority, conscientização, pluralism.

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Date Received: 27th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 28th September, 2026

Introduction

It is a common notion that the authority of democratic government primarily belongs to the governed, though the governed, in terms of culture, are not always homogeneous but heterogeneous. The vocabulary of popular sovereignty conceals this difficulty by positing a unified demos that exists prior to the institutions that claim to represent it. In societies shaped by histories of colonialism, internal migration, and the

ongoing politicisation of cultural difference, that imagined unity is precisely what cannot be assumed. Across Africa, this difficulty has assumed a distinctive and persistent dimension since the wave of democratisation that swept the continent between 1989 and 1995, most African states have adopted multiparty constitutions, regular elections, term limits, and formal bills of rights. Thus far, the results have been paradoxical: elections are held, but they frequently ratify rather than constrain power. As Fombad (2021) observes, "It is a paradox that the steady decline in the quality of African elections in the last decade has coincided with an increase in the number and frequency of elections on the continent" (p. 480). Constitutions are promulgated, but their provisions are often honoured in the breach rather than implemented in practice. Indeed, Fombad (2021) argues that "The non-implementation of constitutions lies at the heart of the failure of democracy and constitutionalism in Africa" (p. 491). Civil society may be vibrant and formally active; conversely, it often lacks sufficient institutional capacity to transform participation into meaningful constraints on state power. As Fombad further notes, the legislative and constitutional framework for sustainable democracy in Africa remains weak, while civil society is frequently "unable to mobilize to protect the laws, rules, and regulations that are in place" (2021, p. 463).

This paper approaches the African democratic crisis through an uncommon union, it reads Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2018), a text formed in the context of Brazilian literacy campaigns and the political struggles of Latin America, alongside the concerns of intercultural philosophy and African democratic theory. This combination is uncommon only at first glance, Freire's central preoccupation, how the dispossessed come to name their world, and how naming becomes a form of power, speaks directly to the problem of authority in pluralistic polities and to the specifically African experience of a postcolonial state that was *named* by others and that continues to be governed through logics inherited from that naming.

The concept that systematises this argument is shared authority By this is meant neither the delegation of authority by those who hold it nor the formal distribution of authority across institutional levels, but rather a condition in which authority is genuinely *co-authored*, that is, one in which those subject to decisions have participated in forming the premises on which those decisions rest. The argument of this essay is that shared authority, so understood, is neither a constitutional artefact nor a procedural guarantee, but an *achievement of praxis*: something that must be continually constituted, reconstituted, and sustained through practice. And it is an achievement that African polities have, for specific historical reasons, found extraordinarily difficult to realise.

Citation: Ojomah, Solomon O. "A Freirean Approach to Governance as Praxis Via Interculturality, Shared Authority, and the Democratic Crisis in Africa". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp217-234.

Freire provides the theoretical tool for the aforementioned claim, his notion of *praxis*, defined in the *Pedagogy* as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2018, p. 51), is simultaneously a theory of knowledge, a theory of learning, and an implicit theory of politics. The notion of *conscientização*, which Freire describes as the "deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence" (2018, p. 109), names the process by which subordinate groups develop the capacity to perceive the structures that constrain them and to act upon that perception. Both notions, the essay argues, have direct bearing on the question of how authority is constituted in democratic societies and on why it has so often failed to be constituted appropriately in Africa.

The argument proceeds sequentially in the following order; the first section situates Freire within intercultural philosophy and African democratic theory, the second re-establishes Freirean praxis as a theory of authorisation instead of instruction, the third develops the concept of dialogical authorisation and specifies the conditions under which it occurs. In the fourth order, it diagnoses the African democratic crisis through the lens of banking governance. The fifth order of the argument considers objections to the Freirean approach, including charges of vanguardism, romanticisation, and the inapplicability of a Latin American framework to African conditions. In the sixth order of the argument, it draws implications for constitutional design, civic education, and deliberative practice on the continent. While the seventh considers the Nigerian case in some detail, the eighth concludes the order of the arguments.

Freire in the History of Political Thought

Freire is predictably categorised as a philosopher of education, and his reception has accordingly been concentrated in the fields of pedagogy, adult literacy, and critical pedagogy. This categorisation, while it may seem accurate, is associated with certain limitations. It has meant that Freire's political theory, his account of how power is constituted, reproduced, and potentially transformed, has been read primarily through pedagogical lenses, with the result that its implications for governance have been underexplored (Mayo, 1995, p. 363). It is worth noting that the political character of pedagogy was emphasised by Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, education is presented in terms that are unambiguously political: it is either "an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system" or "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women "deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire, 2018, p. 34). The choice between these alternatives is not merely pedagogical in any narrow sense; it is also a decision about how authority is constituted and who participates in its constitution.

Freire's political thinking was developed within a particular historical context.

Freire's work in the Brazilian Northeast in the early 1960s, his involvement in the literacy campaigns of the João Goulart government, his imprisonment following the 1964 coup, and his subsequent exile, first in Bolivia, then in Chile, and later in the United States and Switzerland, gave his thought a concrete and often bitter edge (Gadotti, 1994, pp. 27–56). His philosophy was not elaborated in the seminar room but in conditions of political repression and exile. This trajectory has an African dimension that is often overlooked. Freire spent part of his exile working with liberation movements in Lusophone Africa, advising on literacy programmes in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe following their independence from Portugal. His *Pedagogy in Process* (1978) is a sustained reflection on this engagement and contains some of his most sober and self-critical writing, including his acknowledgement that pedagogical methods cannot simply be transplanted across contexts and that the material and political conditions of postcolonial Africa placed constraints on dialogical practice that his earlier work had not adequately recognised (Freire, 1978, pp. 14–37). The Africanisation of Freire is therefore not merely a speculative extension of his thought but also a return to a path that he himself had travelled.

Interculturality and the Politics of Naming

The question of naming is significant to both Freire and intercultural philosophy, and it is particularly relevant to the African political experience. In Freire's view, to name the world is to exercise a fundamental human capacity, while the denial of that capacity through the imposition of names by others constitutes a form of oppression. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he writes that "to exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it" (Freire, 2018, p. 88).

The African postcolonial condition was established through precisely such an imposition of names. Colonial map-making created borders that divided existing political communities; colonial rule transformed ethnic groups into fixed categories that had not always been clearly defined previously; and colonial education imposed new languages and ways of thinking that marginalised or displaced local ones. The independent African state inherited these categories and, in many cases, reproduced them, not necessarily because postcolonial elites wished to perpetuate colonial forms of knowledge, but because the apparatus of government had been constructed to operate through them (Mudimbe, 1988, pp. 1–23; Mamdani, 1996, pp. 16–39).

Intercultural philosophy approaches the question of naming from a different perspective. Wimmer's (2004, pp. 67–89) critique of monological reason focuses, among other things, on the problem of

naming itself: the manner in which one tradition may impose its categories and standards upon others, thereby determining what counts as right or wrong. Wimmer proposes the alternative of the polylogue, understood as a form of communication in which different traditions are able to articulate and interpret their own worlds (Wimmer, 2002, pp. 51–70). This idea shares important affinities with Freire's work, even though the two thinkers developed their respective approaches independently and appear to have had little direct engagement with one another. This convergence suggests that the problem of naming has both pedagogical and political dimensions and that these dimensions are inseparable.

Stripping a group of the power to name its own world constitutes a double deprivation: it is simultaneously an educational and a political loss. Conversely, building the capacity to name one's world, which is precisely one of the aims of Freirean literacy education, represents both an educational accomplishment and an act of political empowerment. In Africa, where the naming and categorisation of the polity constituted a foundational dimension of the postcolonial state, this convergence is not merely an abstraction. It describes the actual terrain upon which democratic authority must be constructed.

Democracy and the Question of Authority

Democratic theory has long framed authority as a question of legitimacy: power is authoritative when it rests on the consent of those who are subject to it. How that consent is produced and expressed, however, has been continually contested. Liberal theorists locate it in representation and elections; deliberative theorists in participation in reasoned public discourse; and participatory theorists in direct engagement with the decisions that shape one's life (Pateman, 1970, pp. 22–44; Habermas, 1996, pp. 287–328; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, pp. 1–28). Despite their differences, these accounts rest on a shared premise: a distributional view of authority. Authority is treated as a good to be allocated, something citizens either hold or delegate, and something institutions either concentrate or disperse. The governing questions therefore become how much authority exists, who holds it, and through which mechanisms it is exercised.

This paper proposes a different framing, it argues that authority is not only distributed but also generated. Authority is brought into being through processes that either produce it or fail to do so. The authority of a democratic decision does not hinge merely on whether the appropriate procedures have been observed; it also depends on whether those involved possess the capacity to participate meaningfully and whether the process itself produces the shared

understanding that legitimate authority requires. It is precisely this generative dimension that Freire's notion of praxis brings into view, and precisely the dimension that African democratisation, conceived largely as an exercise in institutional transfer, has too often overlooked.

Freirean Praxis as a Theory of Authorisation

Freire's concept of praxis is explicitly dialectical. Praxis is neither action alone nor reflection alone, but their unity: "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2018, p. 51). Each moment, considered in isolation, is deficient, action without reflection becomes mere activism, "action for action's sake", which Freire associates with a form of naïve and ultimately self-defeating politics. Reflection without action, by contrast, becomes mere verbalism that changes nothing (Freire, 2018, pp. 87–88).

The dialectical structure of praxis has significant implications for how authority is understood. Authority, understood through a Freirean conception of praxis, is not simply conferred through institutional fiat or procedural authorisation; it is continually constituted through the dialectical relationship between reflection and transformative action (Freire, 2018, p. 28). This constitutes a dynamic and provisional view of authority: it is perpetually in the making and can be undermined when the conditions that sustain it are withdrawn. Freire's insistence on the unity of reflection and action also entails a critique of certain forms of political participation. Consultative exercises in which citizens are invited to reflect on decisions that have already been taken, but are given no meaningful power to alter them, fail the test of praxis: they offer reflection without action. Referenda can fail in the opposite way when citizens are required to act without adequate opportunities for reflection, particularly when complex questions are reduced to binary choices under conditions of information asymmetry. Praxis demands that reflection and action be genuinely integrated, so that understanding shapes intervention and intervention, in turn, reshapes understanding. Hence, central to the legitimacy of authority is the principle of accountability.

Bratton and Mattes (2000) approach democratic accountability chiefly through the prism of popular attitudes rather than institutional design. Drawing on Afrobarometer surveys of more than ten thousand respondents across six African countries, they find that Africans overwhelmingly endorse democracy and reject authoritarian alternatives (Bratton & Mattes, 2000, p. 1), and that they conceive of democracy predominantly in procedural terms, civil liberties, participation in decision-making, and voting, rather than as socioeconomic transformation, with almost seven in ten positive definitions referring to political procedures (p. 3). Crucially, they argue that support for democracy rests on both

intrinsic and instrumental foundations: satisfaction with democracy declines when citizens are dissatisfied with the content and consequences of official economic policy (p. 23). From this, they draw an explicitly accountability-centred conclusion: while democracy "puts in place the procedures for holding state elites accountable", and responsive governments should prove "relatively more effective at alleviating equity concerns", the very survival of these infant democracies "requires that elected leaders attend closely to the popular demand for social justice" (p. 23). Accountability, on this account, is not exhausted by the holding of elections; it is sustained only where elected leaders remain responsive to citizens' substantive demands.

Conscientização and the Emergence of Political Capacity

The concept of *conscientização* is Freire's term for the process through which the oppressed develop critical awareness of their situation. The term is often translated as 'critical consciousness', but this translation loses something important. Conscientização is not a state but an activity; not a possession but a process. Freire describes it as the "deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence" (2018, p. 109), and elsewhere as the process through which human beings "not only make their presence felt in the world but become conscious of their presence" (Freire, 2018, p. 110).

Crucially, conscientização is not the achievement of individual enlightenment but the product of collective engagement. It arises through dialogue and through encounters with others who share one's circumstances but may perceive them differently. This is why culture circles, Freire's preferred pedagogical form, in which people come together to discuss issues arising from their own lives, are not merely one component of his approach but constitute its core. The circle is a space in which participants develop a shared understanding and, through that process, cultivate the capacity to work together towards common goals. The political implications are immediate, if conscientização is the process through which subordinate groups acquire the capacity to perceive and act upon their circumstances, then it is also the process through which they acquire the capacity to exercise authority. A group that understands its situation and acts upon it is already, in a meaningful sense, claiming authority over its own life. Shared authority in a democratic polity, on this view, presupposes a citizenry that has undergone something akin to conscientização and has developed the critical capacities that meaningful participation requires.

Citizens have frequently experienced the postcolonial state not as an extension of their collective agency but as an alien power, one that extracts, regulates, and disciplines without inviting participation. Institutions of African constitutionalism

may, on the surface, presuppose a citizenry ready to claim authority as a right, however such a disposition can emerge only from the political counterpart of the culture circle: spaces in which ordinary people interrogate the structures that govern their lives and discover, through dialogue, that those structures are neither natural nor immutable. Seen in this light, the continent's indigenous traditions, exemplified by the village assembly across several African societies, are not relics to be mourned but resources of precisely this kind.

Problematization and the Rejection of Deposits

Freire's critique of the banking model of education is well known, but comparatively little attention has been given to its broader implications. In the banking model, the educator 'deposits' knowledge in passive students, who receive, memorise, and reproduce it. The relationship is hierarchical, monological, and fundamentally anti-dialogical (Freire, 2018, pp. 72–75). Against this, Freire proposes problem-posing education, in which the object of study is not a fact to be transmitted but a problem to be posed, and in which the educator and the educated engage together in a process of inquiry.

The banking model's structure is not specific to education, it represents a general form of relationship characterised by a one-directional flow of authority from the active to the passive, from the knowing to the ignorant, and from the directing to the directed. Freire traces this structure through a series of binary oppositions that structure oppressive relations: the teacher knows, while the students do not; the teacher thinks, while the students are thought about; the teacher chooses, while the students comply; and the teacher acts, while the students have the illusion of acting through the teacher's action (Freire, 2018, pp. 73–74). What is significant for the present argument is that these binaries can be transposed almost directly into the register of governance.

Banking Governance and the Eclipse of Shared Authority in Africa

The argument now turns to the institutional form that Freire's banking model assumes when it leaves the classroom and enters the apparatus of the state. Banking governance may be understood as a mode of governing in which decision-making resembles the 'banking' model: authorities formulate and deposit solutions into a relatively passive public, which is expected primarily to receive, accept, and reproduce them rather than participate in their critical formulation (Freire, 2018, pp. 72–73). The logic has several recognisable features. The state, or the relevant agency, is conceived as the locus of knowledge and competence; citizens are conceived as recipients of policy, whose needs must be diagnosed by experts and whose compliance must be secured. Communication is predominantly one-directional: from the institution to the

public through announcements, campaigns, and propaganda. Feedback loops, where they exist, are designed to measure compliance rather than enable participation. Where consultation occurs, it typically takes place after the substance of the decision has already been determined.

This logic is not confined to authoritarian regimes, in many democratic states, it is a common way in which government agencies operate, especially in areas where specialised knowledge is regarded as particularly important, such as public health, infrastructure, monetary policy, and, more recently, climate policy. Even when a country as a whole is democratic, specific government departments can function in ways that are far from democratic. In Africa, however, banking governance has a particular genealogy that makes it especially tenacious. The bureaucratic apparatus of the postcolonial state was inherited, largely intact, from colonial administration. Colonial administration was not designed to be dialogical. It was designed to extract, regulate, and secure compliance. By construction, it was a system of rule in which the governed were objects rather than participants. Independence changed the personnel of that apparatus and, in some places, changed it only partially but it did not fundamentally alter its orientation. The state that took over the machinery of colonial administration inherited its operating logic along with it (Mamdani, 1996, pp. 37–61; Cooper, 2002, pp. 156–180).

The Structural Deficits of African Democracy

The colonial inheritance helps to explain several features of the African democratic crisis that purely institutional accounts struggle to comprehend. First is the coexistence of elections with low accountability. African elections have become increasingly regular, but regular electoral competition has not consistently produced alternation in power. Incumbency advantages remain substantial, while some presidents have sought to prolong their tenure through constitutional amendments, reinterpretations of term limits, and institutional mechanisms involving courts and other state bodies (Cheeseman, 2010, pp. 139–142; Tull & Simons, 2017, pp. 81–88). Where citizens experience the state as an external power rather than as an extension of their own agency, they may vote, but they are less likely to demand responsiveness. The banking relationship between ruler and ruled therefore persists beneath the democratic façade.

Second is the dominance of the 'big man' and patron–client politics. Where conscientização has not developed, political competition is organised around personalist patronage rather than issues or programmes. The citizen is addressed as a client who receives benefits rather than as a co-author who participates in decisions. This is banking governance in its most elaborate form: the patron 'knows', the client 'receives', and the illusion of participation is preserved

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through the ritual of the rally and the distribution of largesse (Chabal & Daloz, 1999, pp. 30–60).

Genuinely dialogical public spheres require, at a minimum, that participants can speak to one another across differences and that their claims be assessed on their merits. Where the state monopolises broadcasting, where opposition media are precarious, and where civil society derives its resources externally rather than from its own members, the conditions for dialogical authorisation are absent. Consultation replaces deliberation; the state's own account of the public interest stands in for a publicly reasoned one (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004, pp. 92–118).

Fourth is the recurrence of constitutional revision without constitutional deepening. African constitutions are frequently rewritten, so frequently that constitutional instability has been identified as a distinct pathology. However such rewriting typically involves elite negotiation under the shadow of the executive rather than a polylogical process. Constitutions are replaced, but constitutionalism does not necessarily take root. The constitutional order can therefore assume a 'banking' character when elites formulate constitutional arrangements and citizens are positioned primarily as passive recipients rather than as active co-authors of the authority under which they are governed (Ojukwu, 2016, p. 81; Prempeh, 2007, pp. 473–475).

Conscientização Interrupted

Banking governance has a specific effect on the development of political capacity. Where governance is conducted in the banking mode, citizens are denied the practice through which conscientização is achieved. They are not invited to problematise the issues that affect them; instead, they are presented with problems that have already been defined and solutions that have already been determined. The consequence is a kind of arrested development: citizens remain in the state of 'semi-intransitivity' that Freire describes as characteristic of those whose consciousness is dominated by a reality they perceive as immutable (Freire, 2018, pp. 105–107).

This diagnosis helps to explain an apparent paradox in African politics: the coexistence of democratic institutions with widespread civic disengagement and low political efficacy. Where engagement is not practised, the capacity for engagement fails to develop. When citizens are systematically addressed as recipients of policy rather than as its co-authors, they may reasonably conclude that their participation counts for nothing. Such a conclusion reflects not a deficiency of civic character but a rational response to the way institutions have been designed.

Expertise, Dependency, and the Denial of Authority

Banking governance often justifies itself by appealing to expertise. Complex problems, it is argued, require specialised

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knowledge; to insist on broad participation is to risk decisions that are uninformed or demagogic. The argument is not without force, and it would be a mistake to deny that expertise has a role in governance. Conversely, appeals to expertise can function as a denial of authority rather than as a specification of competence. There is a difference between saying that a particular technical determination requires specialised knowledge and saying that the entire framing of a policy problem is the exclusive province of experts.

In the African context, this distinction has an additional dimension: the expertise invoked is often external, derived from international financial institutions, donor agencies, and foreign consultants. Consequently, the denial of citizen authority is compounded by a denial of national authority. The structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, which reorganised African economies according to formulas negotiated between governments and lenders without meaningful public deliberation, remain a paradigmatic instance of banking governance on a continental scale (Mkandawire & Soludo, 1999, pp. 15–46).

Freire's account of dialogue offers a way of thinking about how this might be otherwise. In problem-posing education, the educator brings specialised knowledge to the dialogue but does not thereby monopolise it; the educator's knowledge becomes a resource for common inquiry rather than a deposit to be received. Translated into the sphere of governance, this suggests an ideal role for expertise. Whether domestic or foreign, expertise ought to function as an epistemic resource for democratic deliberation rather than as a substitute for democratic judgement. Its proper role is to inform citizens, clarify the range of available evidence and possibilities, and thereby enhance their capacity for reasoned collective judgement. This conception accords with Pearse's (2020) argument that the role of experts is "simply to inform and enlighten, to create conditions in which lay participants can improve their judgements" (p. 574).

Objections and Replies

The Vanguardism Objection

Freirean pedagogy has been criticised for harbouring a vanguardist logic. The charge, in its sharpest form, holds that the theory requires a revolutionary leadership that has achieved conscientização on behalf of the oppressed and that this leadership inevitably substitutes its own judgement for that of the people it claims to serve (Elias, 1994, pp. 97–120; Facundo, 1984, pp. 45–67). The charge is not baseless, since Freire's early work sometimes speaks of revolutionary leadership in terms that suggest a vanguard role. Nonetheless, his mature formulation of dialogue in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explicitly forecloses vanguardism. Dialogue, Freire insists, requires that revolutionary leadership "not consider itself the owner of the revolutionary process" but engage with the oppressed

as co-authors rather than as beneficiaries of liberation (Freire, 2018, pp. 128–130).

In Africa, the vanguardist temptation has been historically powerful. Former liberation movements have sometimes equated their historical legitimacy with popular will, resisting electoral defeat and political alternation. As Melber (2009) observes, liberation movements in government can come to regard themselves as having reached an "'end of history'", such that "any political alternative that does not emerge from within them will not be acceptable" (p. 453). More pointedly, he notes that former liberation movements may show "no inclination in any circumstances to vacate the centres of political power" even when an electorate votes for an alternative (p. 455). The Freirean framework supplies resources for resisting this temptation, and the route is precisely the one Freire insists upon: leadership must not consider itself the owner of the process. Liberation is not delivered; it is co-authored.

The Romanticisation Objection

A second objection holds that Freire romanticises the oppressed, treating 'the oppressed' as a unified and epistemically privileged subject. Critics have pointed out that the oppressed are not always virtuous, that oppression can produce complicity and cruelty, and that the category itself may conceal profound differences among those it encompasses (Weiler, 1991, pp. 44–72). Freire himself recognised this tension. He acknowledges that the oppressed can be 'hospitable' to the oppressor's consciousness and that they may internalise the logic of domination and reproduce it (Freire, 2018, pp. 45–48). His point is not that the oppressed are morally superior but that they occupy a distinctive *epistemic* position: their experience of domination gives them access to a dimension of reality that those who dominate may not easily perceive. This is a claim about situated knowledge, not about moral virtue.

The objection nonetheless has implications for democratic authorisation. If 'the people' do not constitute a unity, then shared authority cannot mean the unproblematic fusion of a single popular will. It means, rather, the ongoing negotiation of differences within the polity—a polylogue, in Wimmer's terms, rather than a monologue of the popular. Freirean dialogism, properly understood, is compatible with this more differentiated conception, since dialogue presupposes difference rather than unity. In Africa, where ethnicity, religion, language, and region intersect in endlessly varied ways, the multiplication of difference is not an anomaly but the baseline condition of political life.

The Institutional Neglect Objection

A third objection holds that Freire's framework is insufficiently attentive to institutional design. It offers a compelling account of dialogical practice but says little about the constitutional and administrative forms through which such practice might be sustained at scale. This

objection is fair as a description of Freire's own work, which is stronger on the pedagogy of transformation than on the architecture of transformed institutions. However, it is less an objection to the framework than a specification of what remains to be done. Freire supplies an account of how authority is generated; the institutional design literature supplies an account of how generative practices might be stabilised. The two are therefore complementary rather than competing. Africanists have contributed substantially to the second literature—on federalism, power-sharing, and consociationalism—but have drawn less extensively on the first. The generative dimension therefore remains the missing half.

The Transferability Objection

A fourth objection is significant because it concerns the application of Freire's thought to Africa. The objection holds that such an application risks committing a fallacy of faulty transfer: the act of transferring a conclusion or model from one context to another without establishing the relevant similarities between them. Freire's approach was developed in response to particular conditions in Latin America, including widespread underdevelopment, and therefore cannot simply be applied to African contexts without critical adaptation. This objection takes several forms. On the one hand, it points out that African societies are more varied and complex than the relatively specific Brazilian rural communities with which Freire initially worked. On the other hand, it argues that Freire's ideas were shaped in part by liberation theology, which is rooted in Christian thought, and that these ideas may not readily fit a region in which Islam and indigenous religions are as significant as Christianity. Furthermore, it has been argued that the concept of conscientização depends upon a particular conception of the human subject; one centred on an individual who is literate and oriented towards individual agency which may not be common or universal across all cultures.

These objections have some force, but Freire's later work, particularly *Pedagogy in Process* (1978), demonstrates a greater sensitivity to contextual difference. Reflecting on his work in Guinea-Bissau, Freire explicitly rejected the mechanical transplantation of pedagogical models, arguing that "experiments cannot be transplanted; they must be reinvented" (p. 5). He further insisted that experiences from one context must be "explained, discussed and critically understood" before being recreated in another (p. 65). Moreover, African intellectuals have undertaken considerable work of adaptation. The traditions of *ujamaa* in Tanzania, African socialism in its various forms, and the anti-colonial thought of Cabral, Nyerere, and Fanon have affinities with Freirean praxis that subsequent scholarship has developed productively (Cabral, 1979, pp. 119–152; Nyerere, 1968, pp. 1–20). Freire did not claim universality for his method; rather, he argued that it could be adapted to different contexts. The African

adaptations that already exist provide evidence that such adaptation is possible.

Implications for Africa

Constitutional Design and Constitutionalism

The argument has implications for how constitutions are created and, perhaps more importantly, how they are formed through participatory processes. If shared authority has its source in praxis, then moments of constitution-making are not merely occasions for writing down rules; they are opportunities to develop the capacities required for effective democratic governance. A constitution developed through meaningful citizen participation is more likely to acquire public ownership and legitimacy than one whose substance is determined primarily by political elites or technical experts (Negretto, 2020, p. 207). This is not a call for a permanent constitutional convention. Rather, it involves viewing constitution-making as a learning process in which participants develop the skills and dispositions necessary for the kind of democratic society that the new constitution is intended to establish.

The Freirean insight is that participation is not merely an opportunity to demonstrate what citizens already know; it is also a means of developing the capacities required for democratic self-government. In cases where African countries have adopted more participatory approaches, such as South Africa's constitutional consultations in the 1990s and some Nigerian National Conference processes, participation has contributed to broader public engagement with constitutional questions. Conversely, where such processes are absent, even constitutions that are formally enforceable may lack substantive public influence and meaning. The issue, therefore, is not simply whether a constitution contains appropriate institutional provisions but whether citizens have participated in the processes through which those provisions acquire democratic significance.

Civic Education

The argument also has implications for civic education. If democratic governance depends on citizens capable of dialogical authorisation, then the cultivation of those capacities is a public responsibility. Freire's culture circles offer one model: small groups organised around problems drawn from participants' own lives, in which the capacities to name, reflect, and act are developed through practice.

Contemporary civic education in much of Africa, by contrast, is often oriented towards the transmission of information: the content of constitutions, the mechanics of elections, and the history of institutions. This represents banking education applied to citizenship. It produces citizens who know about democracy without necessarily having practised it. A Freirean civic education would instead be organised around the practice of deliberation itself, treating the classroom, the school, and the community as sites in which shared

authority is rehearsed and developed. It would also engage seriously with the continent's own deliberative traditions rather than treating them merely as backward survivals of pre-modern politics.

Deliberative Practice

Finally, the argument suggests reforms to deliberative practice in governance. The four conditions of dialogical authorisation—reciprocity of speech and hearing, problematisation of the shared world, non-monopolisation of reason, and the unity of reflection and action—provide criteria for evaluating deliberative exercises.

Applied to common African practices, these criteria are demanding. A public hearing in which citizens are permitted three minutes to express pre-formed positions, after which officials withdraw to deliberate and decide, fails to satisfy the fourth condition. A consultation in which the framing of the problem is fixed in advance fails to satisfy the second. A deliberative forum conducted in a language that some participants do not command fails to satisfy the first. The criteria are therefore not satisfied by the mere existence of participatory mechanisms; they require attention to the quality of participation that those mechanisms enable.

The Nigerian Case

Nigeria offers an unusually demanding context for theories of democratic authority in Africa. Its deep ethno-linguistic, religious, and regional diversity is compounded by persistent horizontal inequalities (McCauley & Heffron, 2022, p. 1). The federal character principle represents one institutional response to this pluralism, seeking to ensure that public institutions reflect Nigeria's "linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity" (Adamolekun *et al*., 1991, p. 75).

These institutional arrangements demonstrate a desire to share political power, but they often operate through negotiations among relatively small groups of political elites rather than through sustained public deliberation. The distribution of federal positions takes account of different ethnic and regional groups but does not necessarily bring citizens together to deliberate on what those positions should accomplish or how office-holders should be held accountable. Rotational presidency arrangements may move political power among leaders from different regions without necessarily strengthening the public's capacity to scrutinise or constrain those leaders. Nigeria's federal system, therefore, does not fully constitute a conversation among multiple voices; rather, it often operates as a form of power-sharing organised around group representation, without generating the sustained deliberation required for shared authority.

The Freirean diagnosis suggests why this matters. Nigeria's recurrent crises of legitimacy, periodic waves of agitation for restructuring, ongoing insurgency in

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northern Nigeria, sectarian violence in the Middle Belt, and secessionist agitation in the Southeast should not be understood solely as failures of constitutional engineering. They can also be understood as symptoms of an underdeveloped conscientização: a citizenry that has frequently been governed through deposits rather than dialogue and that has consequently developed forms of political expression that bypass, rather than engage with, the institutions of the state.

What a Freirean approach would recommend is not necessarily a new constitution but a sustained practice of civic education and deliberative engagement at the local level, conducted in languages that citizens actually speak and addressing problems that they themselves identify. Nigeria's own traditions of village assembly, age-grade governance, and community meetings held under the tree constitute resources for precisely this kind of practice. The task, therefore, is not simply to import democracy but to recover and strengthen dialogical capacities that are already present and to build democratic institutions upon them.

Conclusion

This article has argued that Freire's concept of praxis offers a significant and underexploited resource for theorising democratic governance in culturally plural societies and that it speaks with particular force to the contemporary African democratic crisis. Its contribution is to provide a *generative* account of authority: an account of how authority comes to be shared through practice rather than merely how it is distributed through institutions.

The central concept developed here is dialogical authorisation. Shared authority, on this view, is not simply a constitutional artefact or a procedural guarantee. It is an achievement of praxis, produced through reciprocal communication in which participants retain the capacity to name, reflect, and act together. Four conditions have been specified: reciprocity of speech and hearing, problematisation of the shared world, the non-monopolisation of reason, and the unity of reflection and action.

These conditions are demanding, and their violation is common, not least in the bureaucratic forms of governance that Freire's critique of the banking model enables us to diagnose. The African postcolonial state inherited an apparatus of rule designed for compliance rather than dialogue, and that inheritance continues to shape relationships between governors and governed across the continent. Banking governance denies citizens the practice through which political capacity is developed, with the consequence that democratic institutions may coexist with civic incapacity. The remedy, therefore, is not simply more participation but better participation: participation structured in ways that develop the capacities it requires.

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The limitations of this argument should also be acknowledged. It is a work of theoretical synthesis and has not tested its claims against empirical cases in the detail that they would require. Whether dialogical authorisation can be realised at scale under conditions of severe inequality, cultural difference, and external dependency is a question that can be answered only through practice. The argument of this article is that the question is worth asking, that Freire supplies the conceptual vocabulary for asking it, and that the answer may be closer than some pessimistic assessments of the continent's democratic prospects suggest, in the continent's own traditions of deliberative engagement, which the crisis of the postcolonial state has obscured but not extinguished.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Digital Civic Education as a Strategy for Promoting Human Capital Development among Youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Abstract

This study examined digital civic education as a strategy for promoting human capital development among youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of youths residing in the study area, while data were collected using a researcher-developed Digital Civic Education and Human Capital Development Questionnaire (DCEHCDQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in Adult Education, Educational Technology, and Measurement and Evaluation, and a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. Data were collected and analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, with a criterion mean of 2.50 used for decision-making. The findings revealed that youths were exposed to digital civic education to a low extent, with a cluster mean of 1.62. The findings also showed that human capital was developed among the youths to a low extent, with a cluster mean of 1.88. The study concluded that youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area had limited exposure to digital civic education and reported a low extent of human capital development in areas such as digital competence, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, employability, entrepreneurship and innovation. The study recommended the strengthening of structured digital civic education and practical digital-skills programmes to enhance youths' digital competence, responsible civic participation, employability, entrepreneurship, critical thinking and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Digital civic education, human capital development, digital literacy, youths and adult education

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Date Received: 27th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 28th September, 2026

Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed how youths acquire knowledge, communicate, learn, work and participate in society. Digital platforms provide opportunities for information access, learning, collaboration and civic participation, but they also expose users to misinformation, privacy risks and irresponsible online behaviour. Consequently, digital citizenship education has become increasingly important in developing the

knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for responsible participation in digital society (Council of Europe, 2019; UNESCO, 2024). Digital civic education may therefore be understood as an educational process through which individuals acquire the competencies needed to access, evaluate and use digital information for civic awareness, communication, participation and responsible social interaction. It extends civic education into digital spaces by addressing digital rights and responsibilities, online communication, information evaluation, civic dialogue and ethical technology use (Ribble, 2015; Council of Europe, 2019).

The relevance of digital civic education is particularly evident among youths, who increasingly depend on digital technologies for education, communication, employment information and social participation. Nigerian literature has similarly highlighted the need to equip young people with competencies for safe, responsible and productive engagement with digital technologies (Nwachukwu & Vikoo, 2023; Apata et al., 2025). Such competencies include access to reliable civic information, participation in digital discussions, responsible online communication, understanding of digital rights and responsibilities, and critical evaluation of information (Council of Europe, 2019; Ribble, 2015). These competencies are important because meaningful digital participation requires more than access to devices; it requires the ability to use information critically, communicate effectively and participate responsibly.

Human capital development refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and capabilities that enhance individuals' productivity and their capacity to contribute to economic and social development. For youths, it includes knowledge and skills development, digital competence, employability, entrepreneurship and innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving and social competencies (World Bank, 2024, 2026). Education remains a major means of developing these capabilities because it enables individuals to acquire and apply knowledge and skills relevant to employment, productivity, innovation and lifelong learning (World Bank, 2026). Digital civic education may therefore provide an avenue through which youths develop transferable competencies that have value beyond civic participation.

The present study focuses on digital civic information, online civic learning resources, digital civic discussions, responsible digital communication, digital rights and responsibilities, and evaluation of civic information as dimensions of digital civic education. Human capital development is examined through knowledge and skills development, digital competence, employability skills, entrepreneurship and innovation, critical thinking and

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problem-solving, and civic-social competence. These dimensions are consistent with digital citizenship frameworks that emphasise digital literacy, communication, active participation, rights and responsibilities, privacy and information evaluation (Ribble, 2015; Council of Europe, 2019). They also reflect the broader understanding of human capital as a combination of knowledge, skills and capabilities that can improve individual and societal productivity (World Bank, 2026).

The study is anchored on Ribble's Digital Citizenship framework and Human Capital Theory. Ribble (2015) emphasises responsible, appropriate and productive use of digital technologies through competencies relating to digital literacy, communication, rights and responsibilities, safety and participation. Human Capital Theory, on the other hand, provides a basis for understanding knowledge and skills acquired through education as productive capacities that can improve individual and societal outcomes (World Bank, 2026). Together, the perspectives provide a basis for examining digital civic education and human capital development among youths.

Empirical studies indicate growing attention to digital citizenship and youth digital competence in Nigeria. Nwachukwu and Vikoo (2023) highlighted the need for digital citizenship education to prepare learners for responsible technology use, communication and collaboration, while Apata et al. (2025) identified digital literacy, ethical participation and institutional support as important elements of digital citizenship development. Ogunsola *et al.* (2026) further reported that digital access alone does not guarantee meaningful youth civic participation and emphasised the importance of digital skills and supportive institutional structures. However, these studies have not specifically examined the extent of digital civic education and human capital development among youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area. This geographical and empirical gap provides the basis for the present study.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing use of digital technologies among youths creates opportunities for learning, civic awareness, communication and skills development. However, access to digital platforms does not necessarily mean that young people possess the knowledge and competencies required to evaluate information, communicate responsibly, participate constructively in civic matters or convert digital experiences into productive skills.

In Nigeria, concerns about digital literacy, responsible online participation and institutional support continue to feature in the literature. At the same time, there is

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limited empirical evidence on the extent to which youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area are exposed to digital civic education and the extent of their human capital development.

The absence of such local evidence makes it difficult to determine the current situation and the areas requiring educational attention. The study therefore investigates the extent of digital civic education and human capital development among youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated digital civic education as a strategy for promoting human capital development among youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

i. the extent of digital civic education among youths in Ikot Ekpene L.GA
ii. the extent of human capital development among the youths in Ikot Ekpene L.GA

Research Questions

i. To what extent are youths exposed to digital civic education in Ikot Ekpene in Ikot Ekpene L.GA?

ii. To what extent is human capital developed among the youths in Ikot Ekpene in Ikot Ekpene L.GA?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was appropriate. The study was conducted in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, and the population comprised youths who met the specified age criteria and resided in the area. A sample 148 eligible youths was selected through multistage sampling, involving the selection of relevant communities and subsequently eligible youths from the selected communities. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Digital Civic Education and Human Capital Development Questionnaire (DCEHCDQ).

The instrument comprised three sections: Section A for demographic information, Section B for digital civic education, and Section C for human capital development. Items on digital civic education covered digital civic information, online civic learning resources, digital civic discussions, responsible digital communication, digital rights and responsibilities, and evaluation of civic information, while human capital development covered knowledge and skills development, digital competence, employability skills, entrepreneurship and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, and civic-social

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competence. The instrument used a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The criterion mean was 2.50, calculated as (4 + 3 + 2 + 1)/4; hence, mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated a high extent, while scores below 2.50 indicated a low extent.

Three experts in Adult Education, Educational Technology, and Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument for clarity, relevance and adequacy. Its reliability was established through a pilot study involving youths outside the study area, using Cronbach's alpha, and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The researcher, assisted by three briefed research assistants, administered and retrieved the questionnaires after obtaining the required permission and informed consent, while confidentiality and voluntary participation were maintained. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Frequency and percentage were used to summarise the respondents' demographic characteristics, while mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions. Decisions were based on the 2.50 criterion mean. Since the study was descriptive, no inferential test of relationship or causal effect was applied.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent are youths exposed to digital civic education in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Extent of Youths' Exposure to Digital Civic Education

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
1	I use digital platforms to obtain information about issues affecting my community.	1.12	.370	Low Extent
2	I access online materials to learn about my civic rights and responsibilities.	1.78	.428	Low Extent
3	I use social media and other digital platforms to discuss issues affecting my community.	1.58	.524	Low Extent
4	I participate in online discussions about public and community matters.	1.40	.502	Low Extent
5	I communicate respectfully with others when discussing civic issues online.	1.72	.483	Low Extent
6	I understand my rights and responsibilities when using digital platforms for civic activities.	1.89	.330	Low Extent
7	I take measures to protect my privacy when participating in online civic activities.	1.35	.508	Low Extent

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8	I check the reliability of civic information before sharing it online.	1.93	.310	Low Extent
	Digital platforms have increased my awareness of civic issues and community affairs.	1.81	.578	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	**1.62**	**.448**	**Low Extent**

Note: Criterion mean = 2.50.

Table 1 shows that the mean scores for the eight items ranged from 1.12 to 1.93, with a cluster mean of 1.62. Since the cluster mean of 1.62 is below the criterion mean of 2.50, the result indicates that youths were exposed to digital civic education to a low extent in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area. The highest mean score was recorded for checking the reliability of civic information before sharing it online (x = 1.93), followed by understanding rights and responsibilities when using digital platforms for civic activities (x = 1.89). The lowest mean score was recorded for using digital platforms to obtain information about issues affecting the community (x = 1.12). Other items, including accessing online materials on civic rights and responsibilities, participating in online civic discussions, communicating respectfully online and protecting privacy during online civic activities, also recorded mean scores below the criterion mean. The standard deviations ranged from 0.310 to 0.524, indicating relatively low to moderate variation in the respondents' responses. Therefore, the result indicates that youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area were exposed to digital civic education to a low extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent is human capital developed among the youths?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Extent of Human Capital Development among Youths

S/N	Item Statement	Mean (x)	SD	Remark
1	My knowledge and skills have improved through the use of digital learning resources.	2.07	1.013	Low Extent
2	I have developed skills for using digital technologies effectively.	1.69	.861	Low Extent
3	My ability to communicate and collaborate with others has improved through digital activities.	2.12	1.126	Low Extent
4	Digital learning has improved my ability to solve problems.	1.71	.879	Low Extent
5	I am better able to think critically about information obtained from digital sources.	1.80	.938	Low Extent
6	Digital learning has improved my ability to identify employment opportunities.	1.76	.872	Low Extent
7	I have acquired skills that can help me become self-employed or start a business.	2.03	1.079	Low Extent
8	Digital learning has improved my ability to generate and develop	1.82	.934	Low Extent

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	new ideas.			
	My use of digital resources has encouraged me to engage in lifelong learning.	1.90	1.149	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	**1.88**	**.983**	**Low Extent**

Note: Criterion mean = 2.50.

Table 2 shows that the mean scores for the eight items ranged from 1.69 to 2.12, with a cluster mean of 1.88. Since the cluster mean of 1.88 is below the criterion mean of 2.50, the result indicates that human capital was developed among the youths to a low extent. The highest mean score was recorded for improvement in the ability to communicate and collaborate through digital activities (x = 2.12), followed by improvement in knowledge and skills through digital learning resources (x = 2.07) and acquisition of skills that could support self-employment or starting a business (x = 2.03). The lowest mean score was recorded for the development of skills for using digital technologies effectively (x = 1.69). Other items relating to problem-solving, critical thinking, identification of employment opportunities and generation of new ideas also recorded mean scores below the criterion mean of 2.50. The standard deviations ranged from 0.861 to 1.126, indicating some variation in the respondents' responses. Therefore, the result indicates that human capital was developed among the youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area to a low extent.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that youths were exposed to digital civic education to a low extent in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area, as indicated by the cluster mean of 1.62, which was below the criterion mean of 2.50. The result suggests limited exposure to digital platforms for obtaining civic information, learning about civic rights and responsibilities, participating in online civic discussions, communicating responsibly, protecting privacy and evaluating civic information. This finding contrasts with the emphasis of the Council of Europe (2019), which identified digital citizenship competencies such as responsible participation, appropriate communication, awareness of rights and responsibilities, and critical engagement with digital information as important for effective participation in digital society. Similarly, UNESCO (2024) emphasised the need for learners to develop competencies for evaluating information, communicating responsibly and participating constructively in digital environments. The low extent observed in the present study therefore suggests that these competencies may not yet be sufficiently developed among the youths in the study area.

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The finding also revealed that human capital was developed among the youths to a low extent, with a cluster mean of 1.88, which was below the criterion mean of 2.50. The result indicates limited development in areas such as knowledge and skills acquisition, digital competence, communication and collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, employment awareness, entrepreneurship and innovation. This finding is noteworthy in relation to the World Bank's (2024, 2026) position that knowledge, skills and capabilities constitute important dimensions of human capital and contribute to productivity, employability and lifelong development. Similarly, Apata et al. (2025) emphasised the importance of digital literacy and responsible digital engagement in preparing individuals for productive participation in contemporary society. The low extent of human capital development found in the study suggests a need for greater educational attention to the development of practical digital and productive competencies among youths.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that youths in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area were exposed to digital civic education to a low extent. The youths reported limited engagement with digital platforms for civic information, online civic discussions, responsible digital communication, understanding of digital rights and responsibilities, privacy protection and evaluation of civic information. The study also concluded that human capital was developed among the youths to a low extent, particularly in relation to digital competence, knowledge and skills, communication and collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, employment awareness, entrepreneurship and innovation. The findings therefore indicate the need for increased educational attention to digital civic competencies and human-capital-related skills among youths in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

i. Adult education providers and community learning centres should strengthen digital civic education programmes for youths by providing structured learning opportunities on civic information, digital rights and responsibilities, responsible online communication, privacy protection and critical evaluation of digital information.

ii. Government agencies and youth-development organisations should expand practical digital-skills programmes that focus on digital competence, employability, entrepreneurship, problem-solving, critical thinking and innovation.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Review Article

Open Access

A Critical Study of Thomas Kuhn's History of Philosophy of Science

Abstract

The paper sets off with the study of the personality of Kuhn and how a physicist by profession became a philosopher, and a historian of philosophy of science. It further discussed some important concepts without which Kuhn's paradigmatic philosophy of science may be misunderstood. Amongst the Kuhnian concepts discussed are: pre-science, normal science, extraordinary science, paradigm shift, scientific revolution, disciplinary matrix, scientific community, incommensurability, and so on. The paper extended to the critical examination of Kuhn's magnum opus: *The Structure of Scientific Revolution (SSR)*, where, with his theory of scientific revolution, he debunked the prevailing positivist assertion that scientific change is necessarily progressive, and therefore, cumulative, objective and linear. By this, new truths are progressively added to the already existing one, in a continuous, unbroken manner. Contrarily, Kuhn replaced this positivist position with his idea of scientific revolution which presents a discontinuous version of scientific development such that the new scientific theory that emerges in the course of scientific revolution is totally different from the old one, leading to a paradigm shift. Despite the heavy scholarly attack on Kuhn's history of philosophy of science, the paper concluded that his unique idea of scientific revolution gives a good insight towards the perception or understanding of the nature of scientific development, and as such, his account of scientific revolution, which he articulated in his *SSR*, deserves commendations not only for presenting a new way of conceiving scientific development and/or progress, but above all, for bringing the final demise of logical positivism. The paper finally agreed with the camp that suggests the integration of both cumulative, linear and non-cumulative, non-linear elements in scientific development.

Keywords: Paradigm Shift, Scientific Revolution, Pre-Science, Normal Science, Incommensurability, Scientific Community, Disciplinary Matrix and Exemplar.

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Date Received: 27th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 28th September, 2026

Introduction

Of recent, I was asked to handle a course captioned: "Philosophy of Science," where amongst others, I was mandated to discuss with philosophy students, Thomas Kuhn's contributions to philosophy of science, with special reference to his *The Structure of Scientific*

Revolution (SSR). The implication is that this paper is didactic in nature. Consequently, it attempts to critically study Kuhn's history of philosophy of science with special attention to his *SSR*. However, before the critical examination of Kuhn's *SSR*, the author chose to elucidate some Kuhnian concepts without which Kuhn's paradigmatic philosophy of science may be misunderstood. For a better understanding of Kuhn's contributions to philosophy of science, the paper began with a concise biography of Thomas Samuel Kuhn.

During the course of this research, it was learnt that amongst Kuhn's major contributions to philosophy of science is his critique of the positivist position that scientific change is necessarily progressive, and therefore, cumulative, objective and linear. Conversely, Kuhn replaced this positivist position with his unique idea of scientific revolution which presents a discontinuous version of scientific development such that the new scientific theory that emerges in the course of scientific revolution is totally different from the old one. While for the positivists, new truths are progressively added to the already existing one, in a continuous, unbroken manner. Nevertheless, after a critical examination of Kuhn's history of philosophy of science, the author suggests the integration of both cumulative, linear and non-cumulative, non-linear elements in scientific development.

Life and Times of Thomas Samuel Kuhn

Thomas Samuel Kuhn, an American philosopher and historian of science, was born on 18th July, 1922 and died on 17th June, 1996. Although Kuhn wrote other works such as *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (1956), *The Essential Tension* (1977), *The Road Since Structure* (1977) which was written in response to criticisms attracted by his magnum opus: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (*SSR*) first published in 1962 and revised with a postscript in 1970. Of all his works, *SSR* was widely read and discussed (both within and outside of philosophical community) because it presented a view of science very different from those prevalent among philosophers and scientists. "Earlier views were that science is cumulative: scientists discover more and more truths about the world" (Musgrave, 1999, p. 300).

In other words, before the emergence of Kuhn in the arena of contemporary philosophy of science, it was dominantly held by the Logical Positivist that scientific development is a linear as well as continuous activity such that "a new scientific theory is nothing but an extension of the older one." Therefore, "the positivists asserts that a scientific change is necessarily progressive, and the path of scientific change is cumulative, objective and linear ... scientific progress was seen as the addition of new truths to the stock of old ones, or the increasing approximation of theories to the truth, or at least the correction of the past errors" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 86).

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Kuhn totally rejected this perspective and replaced it with his idea of scientific revolution which "presents a discontinuous version of scientific development such that the new scientific theory that emerges in the course of scientific revolution is totally different from the old one." It is important to underscore that because Kuhn was not only a philosopher of science; also, as a historian of science, he placed serious emphasis on the historical context of scientific discoveries (Anetoh, 2021, p. 1).

In fact, had Kuhn not written *SSR*, he would have only merited a minor footnote as a historian of science in the twentieth century. "Although Kuhn was the most influential philosopher of science of the twentieth century, his formal training was in physics and his next career turn was to the history of science. He was trained as a physicist, receiving a B. S. in 1943, an M. A. in 1946, and a Ph.D. in 1949 from Harvard in that discipline" (Ndianefoo, 2016, pp. 318-319).

Moreover, Ndianefoo (2016) continues, Kuhn's first teaching appointment at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1956 to 1964, and his second, at Princeton University, from 1964 to 1979, were in history departments and in the "history and philosophy of science" program, but not in philosophy. "Only when he moved to Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1979 did he became a member of a philosophy department. (though it was the Linguistics and Philosophy Department)." He was equally elected president of the Philosophy of Science Association in 1989, after having been a member of that association for only a few years (p. 319).

Also, "while Kuhn was still a graduate student, James Conant, a chemist who was then president of Harvard, ask him to assist in preparing a historically oriented physics course for non-science majors. In the process of preparing for this course, Kuhn, who had read little or no history of science previously, spent an extensive period of time reading Aristotle." He discovered that "Aristotle had known almost no mechanics, if one understands mechanics as the system discovered by Galileo, Newton, and others" (p. 323). The comments of Thomas and Suleiman (2019) on the academic background of Kuhn illustrated his career shift thus:

> Thomas Kuhn's major work (1970), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, is the first full published report on a project originally for several years, particularly since he was a postgraduate student in theoretical physics. It was a fortunate involvement with an experimental college course that treated physical science for the non-science students that exposed him to the history of science. To his utter surprise, that exposure to out-of-date scientific theory and practice radically undermined some of his basic conceptions about the nature of science and the reasons for its special success. This resulted in a drastic shift in Kuhn's career plans from physics to history of science, and then also, gradually from relatively

> straightforward historical problems to the more philosophical issues that had initially led him to history. (p.85)

Lastly, Obi-Okogbuo (2015) pointed out that Kuhn (a post-positivist) rejected the positivists' verification criterion and approached science not from philosophy or scientific methodology, but from history and sociology of science (p. 376). This can be noticed in the analogy Kuhn made between political revolutions and scientific revolutions:

> Political revolutions are inaugurated by a growing sense, often restricted to a segment of the political community, that existing institutions have ceased adequately to meet the problems posed by an environment that they have in part created. In much the same way, scientific revolutions are inaugurated by a growing sense, again often restricted by a narrow subdivision of the scientific community that an existing paradigm has ceased to function adequately in the exploration of an aspect of nature to which that paradigm itself had previously led the way. In both political and scientific development(,) the sense of malfunction that can lead to crisis is prerequisite to revolution. (Kuhn, as cited in Rosen, 2000, p. 503)

Having understood the person of Kuhn, time is ripe to have a closer look at some critical concepts without which Kuhn's paradigmatic philosophy may be misunderstood.

Key Concepts in Kuhn's Philosophy of Science

Some concepts are critical in the study of Kuhn's paradigmatic philosophy. They are: paradigm, disciplinary matrix, exemplar, paradigm shift, pre-paradigm science or pre-science, paradigm science or normal science, extraordinary science, scientific community, anomaly, revolution and scientific revolution, incommensurability, consensus, scientific development, and so on. These Kuhnian concepts deserves a closer look if one must understand Kuhn's paradigmatic philosophy of science. What is more, most of these concepts are interconnected.

Paradigm

According to Orman (2016), "paradigm" is a central concept in Thomas Kuhn's thought. Little wonder Kuhn was attacked heavily for giving different definitions of the term in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (*SSR*). Margret Masterman, in her article, "The Nature of Paradigm," identified no fewer than 21 possible meanings for a paradigm in *SSR*. For Masterman, as captured by Orman (2016), "existing multiple definitions of paradigm in *SSR* is really problematic" (p. 49). In his *Second Thoughts on Paradigms* (1974) and in the Postscript to the second edition of *SSR* (1970), Kuhn conceded that he had used "paradigm" too broadly.

Similarly, as recorded by Ndianefoo (2016), Masterman (1974) presented taxonomy of twenty-two distinguishable senses of the term (paradigm) in *SSR*. Kuhn may have disagreed with this. However, he was sufficiently persuaded

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by Masterman's critique and those of many other critics that clarification was necessary (Ndianefoo, 2016, p. 321). Thus, in the *Postscript*, Kuhn accepted to have used the word in two different ways: *Disciplinary Matrix* and *Exemplar*. Kuhn delineates paradigm as:

> The entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community (or) on the other hand it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle-solutions which (if) employed as modes or examples can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science. (Kuhn, 1970, p. 175 cited in Okogbuo, 2015, p. 377)

Therefore, "paradigm" signifies that scientific enterprise should not only be conceived as theories, but should equally involve such extraneous factors as beliefs, attitudes, procedures and techniques of a scientific community. In a clearer language, "a paradigm is a specific theoretical orientation that is based upon a particular epistemology and research methodology, reflective of a particular scientific community at a particular time in history. A paradigm constrains and directs the nature of type of research inquiries generated from the theoretical orientation, as well as provides the fundamental basis for evaluating the results of the generated research" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 94), or in the words of Orman (2016); a paradigm "also frames and directs the nature of the type of research inquiries generated from that theoretical orientation, as well as provides the fundamental basis for evaluating the results of the generated research" (p. 51).

Furthermore, a paradigm takes care of: what should be asked, what phenomena should be observed, and how the observations should be interpreted. Owing to the criticisms attracted by *SSR* (first edition), Khun after a deeper reflection, expressed in the *Postscript* to the second edition of *SSR*, a desire to replace the term "paradigm" with two new terms: "disciplinary matrix" and "exemplar."

Paradigm as Disciplinary Matrix

According to Ndianefoo (2016), Kuhn intends to include in a disciplinary matrix the following six elements: (i) equations or other symbolic representations, (ii) instruments, (iii) standards of accuracy and experimental repeatability, (iv) metaphysical assumptions, (v) the domain of inquiry, and (vi) exemplars (p. 322). In other words, a disciplinary matrix is the cluster of "an entire theoretical, methodological, and evaluative framework within which scientists conduct their research. This framework constitutes the basic assumptions of the discipline about how research in that discipline should be conducted as well as what constitutes a good scientific explanation." Paradigm in this first sense designates what the members of a certain scientific community have in common, i.e., "the whole of techniques, patents, and values shared by members of the community" (Orman, 2016, p. 49; Thomas

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& Suleiman, 2019, p. 88). In the words of Kuhn (1970) as recorded by Orman (2016):

> ... I suggest 'disciplinary matrix': 'disciplinary' because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline; 'matrix' because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification. All or most of the objects of group commitment that my original texts make paradigms, parts of paradigms, or paradigmatic are constituents of the disciplinary matrix, and as such, they form a whole and function together. (p.50)

Paradigm as Exemplar

In this second sense, as already observed, paradigm refers to a single element (exemplars) of a whole. Exemplars are concretes examples of "problem solutions." These examples provide guidance for future research. Also, these examples, says Ndianefoo (2016), are implicitly constrained by rules and are instances of a method, but neither the rules nor the method is explicit in them (p. 322). In other words, *normal science*, for Kuhn, is not guided by a coherent system of rules, on the contrary, "the rules can be derived from the paradigms, but the paradigms can guide the investigation also in the absence of rules." Orman (2016) writes: "The paradigm is in this sense, just an example, a single phenomenon, a singularity, which can be repeated and thus acquires the capability of tacitly modelling the behavior and the practice of scientists" (p. 50). Kuhn in his Postscript to *SSR* (second edition), refers to an achievement of this sort as an exemplar. For him;

Exemplars are "the concrete problem-solution that students encounter from the start of their scientific education, whether in laboratories, on examinations, or at the end chapters in science texts." Also, to be included as exemplars are "some of the technical problem-solutions found in the periodical literature that scientists encounter during their post-educational research careers and that also show them by example how their job is to be done" (p. 50). For the fact that *normal science* not only builds on exemplars, but is also built by exemplars, these exemplars are inculcated and transmitted by training young scientists with them. This enables them to solve scientific problems in ways analogous to those in the exemplars. *Scientific revolution* occurs when the existing exemplars are substituted with new ones – which also effects changes in the disciplinary matrix.

Scientific Community

It has been pointed out that these Kuhnian concepts under discussion are interrelated. For the fact that the nature of paradigm is intimately connected with the nature of scientific community, and to further clarify the notion of the former, the latter must be discussed. According to Kuhn, members of a scientific community are connected by common elements in their education and apprenticeship, and they regard themselves and are regarded by others as men responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals along the line of their discipline. For more clarity,

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Kuhn queries: "What do its members share that accounts for the relative unanimity of their professional judgments?" The answer to this Kuhnian query, of course, is paradigm or a set of paradigms. "Paradigm govern the shared community life and not the subject matter. Entrance into the scientific community requires acquisition of its lexicon" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 95).

In other words, a scientific community not only organizes science around a paradigm, it is composed of adherents to a paradigm, i.e., men and women who share a paradigm; persons who share one scientific specialty (Obi-Okogbuo, 2015, p. 377).

Pre-paradigm Science or Pre-science

This is said to be the period when a scientific community lacks a central paradigm, but from which as archetypal, a paradigm gradually begins to develop. During this period, scientists start from zero level and attempt to build a science from the scratch. "Because of the absence of paradigm to organize the data, all facts appear to be equally relevant. So, science begins from simple data collection with no real organizing principle or method. There is then a proliferation of facts and hence little progress in solving problems under these conditions because of the competition among the various schools" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 87). Kuhn concludes that this situation presents "something less than science" (Agbo, 2017; Kalman, 2016; Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 87).

Normal or Paradigm Science

Normal Science, according to Kuhn, is another key concept that closely relates and, in fact, almost synonymous with paradigm. It refers to the prevalent scientific activities of a scientific community. It is a science regime that answers their questions, solves their problems and dominates their attitudes. Normal Science is "research based upon one or more past scientific achievements; achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for all its further practice" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 10). Normal Science is a science conducted within an accomplished paradigm. "When observations or the results of research fails to conform to the paradigm, they are seen as the error of the researcher, rather than refuting the paradigm" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 88 & 89).

In other words, Normal Science is a particular point in time when a particular scientific community shares a paradigm. At this time, "the energies of the members of the community are expended to solving the puzzles defined by their paradigm. It follows that 'normal science' is puzzle-solution within the ambient of a paradigm," or in the words of Musgrave, 'normal science,' which as its name suggests, is the norm; it "is puzzle-solving under the aegis of an unquestionable paradigm" (p. 300; Obi-Okogbuo, 2015, pp. 377-78). On another note, Anetoh (2021) further states that Normal Science "has to do with the daily as well as dogmatic activities of scientists characterized by complete acceptance as

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well as fidelity to the prevailing paradigm (p. 1).

Anomaly

As time goes by, the number of unsolved puzzles accumulate to the extent that the confidence of the scientific community is eroded. This "surprise" or crisis of confidence is what Kuhn calls "anomaly" or "crisis state" or "scientific crisis." This is a situation that comes up when Normal Science or "paradigm" fails to account or solve most of the puzzles of a scientific community (Obi-Okogbuo, 2015, p. 378). Furthermore, anomaly violates the paradigm-induced expectation that govern Normal Science. "Anomalies are violations of paradigm expectations during the practice of normal science, and they can lead to unexpected discoveries. It must be noted that the detection of anomalies can only occur due to the background provided by a paradigm (Agbo, 2017; Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 94). Note that anomalies generate crisis for a paradigm.

Extraordinary (or Revolutionary) Science

When anomaly persists, scientists take different attitudes towards the current paradigm. They begin extraordinary research. This, according to Kuhn, is the period of "extraordinary or revolutionary science." During this period, alternative paradigms are canvassed. A new paradigm is inaugurated if one of the competing paradigms succeeds in solving the recalcitrant anomaly.

Paradigm Shift and Scientific Revolution

Scientific change, according to Bird (2012) takes the pattern of: normal science, crisis, extraordinary science, a new phase of normal science, etc. The shift from an earlier to a new paradigm is known as scientific revolution. Kuhn (1970) defines it as: "... those non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one" (p. 92). He cited examples with the transition from Ptolemaic/Aristotelian astronomy to Copernican revolution, and Newtonian mechanics to Einstein's. In other words, when anomalies arise and the existing paradigm fails to solve them, "then some individual(s) may step out of the paradigm, and propose some new principle or law. If the scientific community accepts the proposed change, the science experiences a revolution or paradigm shift, and the new science proceeds with/as a new paradigm" (Kalman, 2016 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p.94).

Incommensurability

Paradigms, according to Kuhn cannot be compared. They are incompatible and hence, incommensurable because each paradigm defines its own legitimate puzzles and what amounts to puzzle-solutions. What constitutes a puzzle in one paradigm may not be one in another paradigm. Simply put, after a scientific revolution, the old and the new scientists

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work in a different observational world. For instance, the terms used in Newtonian and Einsteinian mechanics may look alike, but they denote different concepts. Kuhn argues that the paradigms in these two systems are incommensurable. "It is not possible to understand one paradigm through the conceptual framework and terminology of another rival paradigm, because the reality of members of a scientific community is determined by the paradigm through which they view the world" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 94). Therefore, recognized in Kuhn's philosophy of science are: semantic, observational and methodological incommensurability.

Consensus

In order to establish a new paradigm, their must be community consensus, i.e., when most community members are convinced by the techniques of the argument and not simply by empirical evidence or logical analysis. In other words, "what explains the possibility of normal science is the existence of a certain consensus among the community of scientists. It is the consensus that breaks down during a crisis and which is reconstituted in the wake of a revolution" (Fleck in Agbo, 2017, p. 60 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 95). Again, "to accept the new paradigm, a community of practitioners must be convinced that there is no chance for the old paradigm to solve the anomalies" (Agbo, 2017; Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Thomas & Suleimam, 2019, p. 95).

Examination of Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolution*

Thomas Kuhn was a prolific writer. However, amongst his works, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (SSR)*, which has been recognized as his masterpiece, is widely read both within and without philosophical community. This research therefore concentrates more on this important but controversial work. The reason is partly because most (if not all) of his later works seems to be a reaction to the scholarly attack on *SSR*. The central thesis of *SSR*, says Ndianefoo (2016), "is that the development of natural sciences and their subfields proceed through alternations of two kinds of scientific development: normal and revolutionary science" (p. 319).

In his *SSR* Kuhn suggests that "science evolves when there is a consensus among scientists about basic ontological commitments, explanatory principles, general methodology, research priorities, and guidelines which should be followed, when scientists share paradigm" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 86). According to Kuhn, when scientists share a paradigm, they are said to be practising what is known as "normal science." However, "... real progress did not result from the puzzle-solving of normal science. Rather, true breakthroughs arise in a totally different way: where the discovery of anomalies leads scientists to question the paradigm, and this, in turn, leads to a scientific revolution that he termed paradigm shift" (Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 86). Precisely,

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> Kuhn claims that a science does not progress as a linear accumulation of new knowledge, but undergoes periodic revolutions called paradigm shifts. This happens whenever the fundamental assumptions of the paradigm become subject to widespread doubt, and there may be general consensus that a replacement must be found. (Kalman, 2016; Orman, 2016; and Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, p. 86).

Thus, scientific revolution occurs when scientists or a scientific community encounters anomalies that cannot be addressed by the generally accepted paradigm within which scientific progress has hitherto been made. Consequently, one among the competing approaches to resolving the anomaly or anomalies will eventually produce a solution that gains great loyalty in the scientific community owing to its universality and prospects for future research. The proponents of this solution regard it as a concrete, definitive scientific achievement that defines by example how future research in that discipline should be done. The result is that a new paradigm with new converts is formed. Intellectual battle ensues between followers of the new paradigm and the hold-outs of the old paradigm. Accordingly, progress of scientific change displays this pattern: normal science, crisis (from anomalies), extraordinary science, and a new phase of normal science (Orman, 2016; Kuhn, 1970 as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, pp. 86-87).

Again, the concept of scientific revolution, which Kuhn discussed in his *SSR*, is very significant in the history of philosophy of science. It brought about a perspective of scientific development which departs totally from logical positivists' cumulative version of scientific development, and a linear conception of scientific progress, which implicates a continuous addition of new ideas to the already existing one. This is because logical positivists watered-down the history of science in their conception of scientific development. That is to say, their approach to science is ahistorical. Whereas Kuhn's idea of scientific development is enshrined in his concept of scientific revolution which is historically oriented. Kuhn (in *SSR*) emphatically states that science develops through revolution which comes up after a long period of *normal science*.

Kuhn's delineation of scientific revolution deserves a closer look. He describes it above as "non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one." Here, some important terms must be explicated, namely: non-cumulative, developmental, and incompatible.

The term "non-cumulative," implies that the new scientific tradition that emerge after scientific revolution is not an extension of the old one. By the term, "developmental," Kuhn emphasizes that science develops through revolution. Hence, the transition from paradigm in crisis to a new one through revolution is

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the actual developmental pattern of science. The term "incompatible," entails that the new scientific tradition that emerges after scientific revolution is different from the old one (Anetoh, 2021, p. 4).

Kuhn, as earlier stated, compared scientific revolution with political revolution in his *SSR*. One can deduce from that comparison that in both political and scientific revolution, there are always cases of malfunctioning of the existing system or theory which has failed to adequately solve the problems posed by the political or scientific environment as the case may be. This malfunctional system triggers crisis which may result to revolution. While political revolutions change political institutions, and necessitate the partial relinquishment of one set of institutions in favour of another, scientific revolution, in a similar manner, changes the scientific conceptual worldview. As crisis weakens the role of political institutions, so it debilitates the role of scientific paradigms.

Also, as crisis deepens in the case of political revolution, many individuals sought to reconstruct the society via a new institutional framework. This polarizes the society – while one camp defends the old institution, the other camp seeks for a new one. This is equally applicable to scientific revolution. Revolutions play significant role in the evolution of political as well as scientific paradigms. Kuhn claims that both in political and scientific revolution, the assent of the relevant community as well as the techniques of persuasive argumentation play critical role in the choice of a new system or theory (Anetoh, 2021, pp. 4-5). Therefore, the transition from the scientific theory in crisis to a new and different one is regarded by Kuhn as scientific revolution. He gave instances with Copernican revolution, Newtonian revolution, Einsteinian revolution, among others. He clarifies further on these scientific revolutions:

> Each of them necessitates the community's rejection of one time-honoured scientific theory in favour of another incompatible with it. Each produced a consequent shift in the problems available for scientific scrutiny and in the standards by which the profession determined what should count as an admissible problem or as a problem-solution. And each transformed the scientific imagination in ways that we shall ultimately need to describe as a transformation of the world within which scientific work was done. Such changes, together with the controversies that almost always accompany them, are defining characteristics of scientific revolution. (as cited in Anetoh, 2021, p. 5)

Kuhn substantiated his claim with Copernican example. According to him, Nicholas Copernicus transferred to the Sun many astronomical functions attributed to the earth in Ptolemaic astronomy: Copernican revolution, therefore, "was a revolution in ideas, a transformation in man's conception of the universe and of his own relation to it." It transformed the way scientists conceive

the universe, and ushered in a new approach to astronomy, which is very different from Ptolemaic astronomy. Copernican revolution is "an epochal turning point in the intellectual development of western man." Revolution "always involves the rejection and replacement of a framework or some of its integral parts" (Kuhn as cited in Anetoh, 2021, p. 5). This kind of change characterizes scientific development. And the transition from one paradigm to another, one via scientific revolution, Kuhn insists, is not a cumulative process. Rather, scientific revolution reshapes the commitments of scientists.

The new paradigm that emerges after scientific revolution, according to Kuhn, must conflict with the old one. Not only that scientific revolution brings about conceptual transformation, it is difficult, says Kuhn, to see how new theories could arise without destructive changes in belief about nature. In other words, Kuhn argues in his *SSR* that the scientific paradigm that emerges after scientific revolution is both incompatible and incommensurable with the old one.

The above discourse points to the fact that scientific revolution, according to Kuhn, changes completely the scientific world-view of scientists within a scientific community. This implies that scientists see the world differently after scientific revolution. "Kuhn likens the perceptual transformation as well as the conversion experience of scientists after scientific revolution to 'gestalt switch,'" that is, a sudden change in world-view. He, once again, insists that scientific development cannot be cumulative, which implies that "One cannot describe the new theory in the vocabulary of the old one or vice versa." For example, the term "planet" was both used in Ptolemic astronomy and Copernican astronomy, but the term means different things in the two theories: "The planets revolve around the earth in Ptolemic astronomy, but in Copernican astronomy, they revolve around the sun" (Anetoh, 2021, p. 9).

In a similar case, after a serious reflection, Khun discovered that it is wrong to approach Aristotelian mechanics via Newtonian perspective. He noted that historians reading old scientific texts encounter passages that seem to make no sense; and he equally observed that apparent textual anomalies are products of misreading. The reason being that the "historian has been understanding words and phrases in the text as he or she would if they had occurred in contemporary discourse." Some interrelated terms are used differently (Kuhn, 2000, p. 59 as cited in Anetoh, 2021, p. 9). This points to what Kuhn calls incommensurability of scientific theories, which is also depicted in the transition from Aristotelian to Newtonian mechanics; and this sort of difference between Aristotelian and Newtonian mechanics characterizes revolutionary change; a change that also entails change in language. Thus, for Khun, revolution displaces some of the basic concepts in the existing scientific theory.

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Some Critical Remarks

Firstly, it must be said that *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (*SSR*) received both widespread praise and condemnation. Despite Thomas Kuhn's significant impact and contributions to the growth of knowledge in the area of philosophy of science and other disciplines via his ideas, especially his view on scientific revolution, which he discussed extensively in his *SSR*, some of his positions are highly controversial, and thus have been subjected to severe attack by scholars. Some of the criticisms were based on the weaknesses of Kuhn's arguments, while others were as a result of misconception and/or misinterpretation of his ideas. This section of the paper attempts a critical evaluation of Kuhn's philosophy of science.

In his earlier works, especially *The Copernican Revolution* (1956) and *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (*SSR*), Kuhn seems to be against the rationality, objectivity and progress of science. In fact, critics argue that his account of science made it neither rational nor objective. This is because he failed to give a rational account vis-a-vis the justification of theory-choice. His assertion that "there is no algorithm for theory choice," i.e., there is no step-by-step rule for theory (or paradigm) choice simply means that there is no step-by-step rule as regards the theory or paradigm to be accepted by the scientific community. The choice among the competing theories seems to be based on mob psychology, i.e., by a mere consensus. Kuhn's analogy or comparison between political and scientific revolution buttresses this point. This analogy betrays Kuhn's sociological account of science; where scientists in "normal science" adhere to conventional paradigm/theory without question. Agbo (2017) adds:

> Another weakness of Kuhn's philosophy of science is that he has been accused of introducing the duo of irrationalism and subjectivity in science: the analogy between scientific revolutions and political revolutions has tempted commentators to think of a scientific revolution as a thorough and radical break with the past whose outcome is determined by highly contingent factors that are equivalent of the revolutionary mob, propaganda, coercion and so on obtainable in political revolutions. Correspondingly, they think that while in normal science, what matters as a rational preference among competing theories is determined by reference to the paradigm, and in the revolution the absence of a paradigm means there will be no agreed standard of rationality. This is to say that scientific revolutions are irrational. (as cited in Thomas & Suleiman, 2019, pp. 89-90)

According to Kuhn, in the choice of one paradigm or theory over another, other psychological and sociological factors (like the biography and/or personality of the scientists, and not only the objective factors) should be considered; "... the acceptance or rejection of a new theory depends not only on 'scientific' factors

but also on social factors" (Ndianefoo, 2016, p. 331). In other words, Kuhn failed to rationally justify the preference of one paradigm over another. The preference, for Kuhn, is only based on the general acceptance of the scientific community. This psycho-sociological explanation differs from that of Paul Karl Feyerabend, "the self-styled anarchist non-rationalist, who denies that there is any such agreement of the scientific community" (Obi-Okogbuo, 2015, p. 379-380).

However, Alan Musgrave (1999) has a contrary opinion: "Many philosophers thought that Kuhn was impugning the rationality, objectivity and progress of science. In his later writings (especially the 'Postscript' to the second edition of his book) Kuhn tried to reassure them that this was not so" (p. 301). Again, Ndianefoo (2016) posits: "Probably(,) Kuhn's most important contribution was to bring both history of science and psychology into contact with philosophy of science." But for some, "Kuhn's use of history was frequently seen as dealing with the context of discovery and thus as irrelevant to philosophy of science" (p. 338).

Karl Popper (as recorded by Ndianefoo) criticized Kuhn's notion of normal science. For him, normal science is not science at all, because scientists under the conditions within normal science were only presupposing the cognitive elements of the disciplinary matrix and not testing them. However, in response, Kuhn affirmed the necessity of presuppositions for scientific progress; "Continual re-examination of what is taken as basic knowledge would impede the process of extending knowledge ... it was only through the vigorous pursuit of normal science that further revolutions could be achieved" (Ndianefoo, 2016, p. 328). Again, Ndianefoo (2016) observed that Kuhn's account made scientific activity of normal science uninteresting and routine;

> Although his use of the term 'puzzle solving' to describe normal-scientific activity may have made it sound more routine. Kuhn certainly did not think that normal science was uninteresting and routine. The phrase 'puzzle solving' may have been unfortunate, because it tends to suggest crossword puzzles or jigsaw puzzles, challenges that have been created by humans with explicit rules and a solution that is known in advance before the puzzle solvers enter the activity. In contrast, the 'puzzles' of normal science are posed by scientists, but the answers are not known by anyone in advance, and the rules for solution are given at best implicitly by previous exemplars. (p. 329)

Critics did not spare Kuhn's unique conception of scientific progress. His idea of non-linear, dichotomous or discontinuous progress via scientific revolution, though looks plausible, was severely criticized: his overemphasis on discontinuity undermines the impact or contribution of earlier theories/ideas over new ones.

Besides, his history of science is lopsided – it seems to be history of physical sciences alone, and not history of science

in general. Little wonder, he often cites examples with developments in the history of physical sciences, especially in the area of physics and astronomy. Kuhn's philosophy of science may, therefore, sound plausible when applied to physical sciences (chemistry, physics, astronomy), but not in other sciences like biology and social sciences. The reason being that while objects of study in the hard sciences are relatively fixed and much more stable and predictable, that of other sciences (like social sciences) are not. For instance, social sciences (such as: Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Anthropology, Psychology, and so on) deal on human behaviour which is very complex. In consonance with this argument, one can say that Kuhn's philosophy of science lacks universal application.

It is pertinent to underscore that Kuhn's idea of scientific development or progress is a direct offshoot of his concept of scientific revolution which necessitates non-cumulative as well as discontinuous fashion of scientific development. But in reality, all sciences do not operate in this manner. Example: while physical sciences like physics may adhere to the *non-cumulative*, *discontinuous* fashion, biology and social sciences may not strictly adhere to this fashion of *paradigm shift*. Social sciences often accept plurality of paradigms which exists side by side; and can even complement each other because of the complexity in the nature of their object of study.

On the question of incommensurability and incompatibility of paradigms or theories, social sciences, for instance, often synthesize concepts – that is, the old concepts are not totally discarded because they still remain valid for the new paradigm in explaining the new issues that the old paradigm could not explain; there is the possibility of combining different ideas into a complex whole. Also, because old concepts are not thrown away, social sciences (and biology) seem to adopt *paradigm progress* and not paradigm shift. Hence, progress in knowledge can be cumulative within social sciences. The implication is that in the progress of knowledge, there are both cumulative, linear and non-cumulative, non-linear elements. Thomas and Suleiman have this to say:

> Thomas Kuhn's paradigm shift thesis as advanced in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) has minimal theoretical accuracy for understanding what actually takes place in the process of the development of social scientific knowledge, although it provides an alternative way of theorising about the history of scientific development in the physical sciences. In the social sciences, there is a plurality of paradigms which social science students use singly or in combination; there is a synthesis of concepts; the acceptance of paradigm depends not on consensus, but on its theoretical relevance for understanding real social phenomena; and instead of a paradigm shift, there is what we call paradigm progress where concepts of previous/other paradigms are redefined and expanded to reflect current realities.... In a nutshell, the nature

> of the social science which is predicate on the nature of the objects of study, defy any and every theoretical absolutism, thereby giving room for intellectual innovations that accommodate both the plurality and syntheses of paradigms for better systematic analysis of social phenomena. (pp. 91-2)

Ndianefoo (2016), equally pinpointed an important oversimplification in Kuhn's *SSR*; where he adopted "the same vocabulary to describe the process of change in a scientific community and in an individual – both are characterized as 'Gestalt switches,' or instantaneous changes of perspective" (340).

Kuhn's idea (in his philosophy of science) says Orman (2016) was itself revolutionary in its time, as it caused a major change in the way academics perceive science. "Thus, it could be argued that it caused or was itself part of the paradigm shift in the history and sociology of science. However, Kuhn would not recognize such a paradigm shift in the social sciences, people can still use earlier ideas to discuss the history of science" (p. 50).

Furthermore, Kuhn seems to be an unsystematic and unstable thinker. This is owing to the modification and continuous reformation and even complete change of his original ideas. He states in his *Road Since Structure*; "If I were now rewriting 'The Structure of Scientific Revolution,' I would emphasize language change more and the normal/revolutionary distinction less" (Kuhn, 2000, p. 57 as cited in Anetoh, 2021, p.13). Again, Kuhn reported on a book in progress (which remained unfinished till his death):

> No longer do we hear of revolutions as paradigm change, certainly not in the sense of large paradigms. In fact, Kuhn preferred to speak of developmental episodes instead of revolutions. However, he does retain something of his original ideas of small paradigms, the concrete problem solutions that he had termed exemplars in the *Postscript* to SSR. Most revolutions, he tells us, are not major discontinuities in which a successor theory overturns and replaces its predecessor. (Orman, 2016, p. 51)

The reason for the above instability is alluded to the fact that Kuhn became a philosopher by accident. He was never thoroughly trained as a philosopher. Rather, he was a physicist by profession. However, "Thomas Kuhn, the author of *SSR*, is probably the best-known and most influential historian and philosopher of science of the last century" (Orman, 2016, p. 51). He has been commended for bringing about the final demise of logical positivism. In fact, his *SSR* "was one of the major final blows to the logical positivist program ..." (Ndianefoo, 2016, p. 346).

Conclusion

Despite the above avalanche of criticisms levelled on Kuhn's philosophy of science, his unique idea of scientific revolution, says Anetoh (2021), gives a good insight towards the perception or understanding of the nature of scientific development, and as such, his account of scientific

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revolution which he articulated in his *SSR*, deserves commendations, especially for presenting a new way of conceiving scientific development and/or progress (p. 1). Lastly, from the foregoing, it is most plausible to accept both cumulative, linear and non-cumulative, non-linear elements in scientific development, if knowledge must progress.

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Citation: Okpata, Benedict C .& Ebo, Henry O. "A Critical Study of Thomas Kuhn's History of Philosophy of Science". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp244-260.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Health-Seeking Behavior and Patterns of Traditional Medicine Patronage Among Breast Cancer Patients in Oyo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Globally, breast cancer accounted for an estimated 2.30 million new cases and 764,000 deaths in 2023, with Nigeria recording the highest incidence in West Africa at 50.5 per 100,000 women. Incidence figures alone conceal a quieter crisis: across Nigeria's underfunded, urban-centred healthcare system, where nearly 90% of treatment costs are paid out-of-pocket and a complete biomedical protocol can cost between ₦5 million and ₦40 million. Thus, a substantial number of patients abandon hospital oncology altogether in favour of Traditional Medicine Practitioners (TMPs). This study investigated the sociocultural, economic and psychological drivers behind this pattern of care-seeking among breast cancer patients in Ibadan and Iseyin, Oyo State. Drawing on Critical Medical Anthropology, Cultural Relativism and the Health Belief Model, the study adopted a qualitative ethnographic design involving twenty-five key informants with five purposively selected TMPs and twenty patients recruited through snowball sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and participant observation conducted in the Yoruba language and analysed thematically. Five interlocking drivers emerged and the are: catastrophic treatment costs precipitating financial defection; psychological resistance to mastectomy as a threat to bodily wholeness and womanhood; the visible toxicity of chemotherapy, including hair loss, and its social consequences; a cosmological understanding of the illness as *Afowofa*, an affliction of spiritual origin requiring ritual redress through practices such as *Ifa* divination and *ebo* alongside herbal treatment; and lay referral networks that circulate testimonies of recovery. These findings suggested that patronage of TMPs is not a failure of awareness but a structured, rational response to systemic constraint.

Keywords: Breast Cancer; Ethnomedicine; Health-Seeking Behavior; Traditional Medicine Practitioners; Cultural Relativis

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Date Received: 19th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 28th September, 2026

Introduction

Breast cancer remains one of the most prevalent cancers worldwide, with significant variation in incidence and mortality across regions and socioeconomic groups (GBD 2023 Breast Cancer Collaborators, 2026). In 2023, there were an estimated 2.30 million new

cases globally and approximately 764,000 deaths among females, with higher-income countries benefiting from advanced screening while low- and middle-income nations face rising incidence amid limited resources (Sun *et al*., 2017; Newman, 2022). Nigeria, the most populous country in Sub-Saharan Africa, reports an incidence rate of 50.5 per 100,000 women, the highest in West Africa (Azubuike *et al*., 2018; Agodirin *et al*., 2025) a burden further complicated by cultural attitudes toward health that shape prevention and treatment adherence across diverse populations (Wypych-Ślusarska *et al*., 2025; ecancer, 2026).

Nigeria's healthcare infrastructure is characterized by significant underfunding, centralized care in urban tertiary hospitals, and high treatment costs, producing considerable disparities in access and outcomes, particularly for rural patients. Approximately 90% of healthcare expenses are borne out-of-pocket, forcing many to delay or abandon necessary care (Ogunniyi *et al*., 2025; Wuraola *et al*., 2024). As a result, an overwhelming majority of Nigerian breast cancer patients delay clinical presentation or default entirely to alternative therapies, a pattern worsened by fear of invasive interventions such as mastectomy and the visible side effects of chemotherapy, which systematically push vulnerable individuals toward indigenous practitioners.

To date, public health literature lacks granular, ethnographically grounded insight into how these structural constraints manifest as alternative health choices. This study addresses that gap by investigating the sociocultural, economic, and psychological drivers that lead breast cancer patients to patronize Traditional Medicine Practitioners (TMPs) across Ibadan and Iseyin, Oyo State.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three complementary models, Critical Medical Anthropology, Cultural Relativism, and the Health Belief Model, to explain how money, culture, and personal belief jointly shape a patient's care-seeking journey.

Critical Medical Anthropology depicts how large-scale political and economic systems directly shape a person's health choices, framing such choices not as poor decisions but as responses to societal unfairness, or structural violence (Vukićević, 2024). In Nigeria, centralized orthodox cancer care and the absence of widespread health insurance force patients to pay nearly 90% of treatment costs out of pocket (Ogunniyi *et al*., 2025). CMA helps us see that walking away from hospital care is rarely simple preference; it is an act of economic survival forced by a system that makes modern healthcare unaffordable.

Cultural Relativism examines behavior through the lens of a person's own culture rather than outside standards (Renteln, 1988). While skipping hospital treatment might read as ignorance to a Western observer, within the traditional

Citation: Aina, Lawrence O. & Akinyemi, Bright B. "Health-Seeking Behavior and Patterns of Traditional Medicine Patronage Among Breast Cancer Patients in Oyo State, Nigeria". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp261-270.

Yoruba worldview illness such as breast cancer is rarely just a physical malfunction, it is often a spiritual or social issue, making traditional treatment a reasonable, internally logical response.

The Health Belief Model maps how a person's decision to seek care depends on perceived severity, expected benefits, and perceived barriers (Alyafei and Easton-Carr, 2024). In Nigeria's dual medical system, patients weigh the hospital's overwhelming costs, fear of mastectomy, and aggressive chemotherapy side effects against the flexible payments, non-invasive methods, and familiar cultural environment offered by traditional practitioners.

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling

This study used a qualitative ethnographic approach (Reeves *et al*., 2013), relying on immersive fieldwork rather than statistical measurement to capture the lived experiences and cultural perspectives of patients and healers. Fieldwork spanned two historic Oyo State cities: Ibadan, a major urban and peri-urban area where centralized biomedical cancer centers exist alongside longstanding traditional healing practitioners and herb markets; and Iseyin, a semi-urban and rural setting known for its preservation of ancestral Yoruba belief systems and generational healing families (Borokini and Lawal, 2014). Comparing the two allowed the study to examine how health choices vary with geographic location and proximity to modern hospitals.

Twenty-five key informants were recruited using two non-probability methods (Zrineh *et al*., 2026): purposive sampling selected five highly experienced TMPs specializing in breast tumors and severe inflammation, while snowball sampling, necessary given the private nature of cancer diagnoses and traditional treatment, identified twenty breast cancer patients through referrals from existing patients within the healing compounds.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and direct participant observation (Jamshed, 2014), including extended time inside the healing clinics observing herbal preparation and healer–patient interaction. Interviews focused on how patients discovered their illness, the financial challenges faced at modern hospitals, and their reasons for choosing traditional care. All interviews and observations were conducted in the Yoruba language to properly capture local expressions and spiritual concepts without loss of meaning. Recordings were transcribed verbatim in *Yoruba*, translated into English, and analyzed using thematic analysis (Jowsey *et al*., 2021), with key patient statements retained as direct quotes to preserve their voices.

Ethical Considerations

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Institutional approval was obtained before fieldwork began, and every participant gave informed consent, in writing or verbally, in their preferred Yoruba dialect. All real names were removed and replaced with anonymous labels (Informant I through Informant XXIV) throughout the paper.

Results

Theme 1: Structural Healthcare Expenses and Financial Defection

The gathered data show that direct healthcare expenses are the primary barrier forcing breast cancer patients to default from conventional cancer centers, with a complete biomedical protocol; screenings, biopsy, scans, chemotherapy cycles, surgery, and post-operative medication; costing between ₦5 million and ₦40 million.

Because roughly 90% of these costs are borne out-of-pocket, preliminary diagnostics alone often depleted patients' reserves before treatment began, encouraging defection to TMPs, who adjusted to community economic constraints by offering flexible pricing, including installment plans, post-recovery negotiation, or non-monetary trades.

The immediate financial constraints driving clinical default were recorded across patient accounts:

> "It was actually the money involved that made me to turn to herbal medicine. I went to the hospital but was driven away by the money that I was charged. Even the test to confirm it drained my finance seriously."
>
> **Informant X (Ibadan, Oyo State)**

Traditional practitioners confirmed that their pricing structures intentionally captured the populations economically abandoned by formal oncology centers:

> "The money paid was never as high as Western… sometimes a token of fifty thousand Naira were collected… the financial aspects of herbal medicines was so low and encouraging compared to the exorbitant and heavy financial aspects of Orthodox modern therapies."
>
> **Informant I (Egbeda, Oyo State)**

Theme 2: Psychological and Identity Resistance to Surgical Mastectomies

The data showed an acute psychological aversion to invasive hospital protocols, specifically surgical mastectomies. In the study areas, a woman's breast is tied directly to social identity, bodily completeness, and maternal role expectations. Consequently, clinical recommendations for surgical breast removal were experienced as an act of physical disfigurement and a loss of womanhood, creating intense social anxieties and causing individuals to leave conventional treatment pathways.

This resistance was heavily reinforced by circulating communal accounts claiming that surgical incisions destabilize latent tumors and accelerate immediate mortality. Healers actively utilized this

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fear by promising that their phytotherapeutic recipes possessed the specific capacity to safely dissolve or "melt away" internal malignant lumps without breaking or violating the skin surface.

This surgical aversion and subsequent clinical default are documented in the field interviews:

> "I went for a series of tests and eventually was told it was breast cancer and that I should come for surgery to get it removed, but I fear being cut… What made me go for herbal cancer treatment was because of the news I heard about the people who did cancer operations and still died, and I don't want to die."
>
> **Informant VII (Ibadan, Oyo State)**

Practitioners detailed how this specific fear directly redirected the flow of patients into traditional therapeutic compounds:

> "Many are afraid to go through the rigor of surgery, coupled with what the patients have seen and heard about those that made use of orthodox modern therapies."
>
> **Informant I (Egbeda, Oyo State)**

Theme 3: Clinical Toxicity and Visible Bodily Disfigurement

Patronage was also driven by the physical and social impact of chemotherapy toxicity: patients reported constant pain, exhaustion, gastrointestinal distress, and compromised fertility, while visible effects such as weight loss, skin darkening, and hair loss (*alopecia*) exposed their illness publicly and led to social isolation. TMPs addressed this by offering natural "blood builders" and "immune boosters" that let patients manage their condition privately, without losing their hair or communal routines.

The toll of clinical chemotherapy toxicity on a patient's physical appearance and social capital is illustrated in this account:

> "I went for the screen and it was discovered. So I submitted to chemotherapy straight. During this, the experience was not interesting at all and I could not endure it for my look was disfigured, I had pain regularly. The most painful aspect to me was the fact that I lost my beautiful hair and my social life was really impaired."
>
> **Informant IX (Ibadan, Oyo State)**

Theme 4: Cosmological Sickness Etiology and Ritual Requirements

A major cultural driver is the dual model of disease causation in the Yoruba worldview. Where biomedicine sees breast cancer strictly as a physical cellular growth (*kokoro*), the indigenous framework treats chronic or unresponsive illness as potentially originating in the metaphysical realm diagnosed as *Afowofa*, an ailment artificially sent via spiritual means (*owo aye*). Because the cause is seen as metaphysical, biomedical drugs are believed structurally unequipped to

resolve it, making traditional care; combining herbs with *Ifa* divination, *Ofo* (incantations), *Ebo* (cleansing sacrifices), and *Ipese* (appeasement offerings); a rational necessity.

This direct choice to follow internal religious convictions over biomedical explanations was explicitly documented:

> *"Igbagbo mi ko gba awon oogun oyinbo, nitori idi eyi nko ni gba iwosan nibe. (Translated:* "My faith does not rest on western medicine, so I will not receive their treatment.*")"*
>
> **Informant VI (Atiba, Oyo State)**

Theme 5: Lay Referral Networks and Experiential Social Capital

The final key driver is the influence of informal lay referral networks. Healthcare decisions in the study areas are rarely made in isolation; they are heavily guided by peer groups, family, faith communities, and workplace networks. When conventional treatment showed no improvement or hospital expenses became unmanageable, these networks presented peer survival testimonies that dismantled skepticism and catalyzed a shift toward traditional care.

The role of peer motivation and word-of-mouth validation, including within religious prayer houses and workplace networks, is detailed in this field transcript:

> "Actually, a friend of mine at my workplace equally encouraged me to embrace trado-medical and precisely this place, because she was once treated here. Her sporadic recovery motivated and made me give it a trial."
>
> **Informant XIV (Ojoo, Oyo State)**

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Together, these findings indicate that patronizing alternative healing spaces is a structured, strategic negotiation shaped by economic, cultural, and psychological variables rather than an arbitrary departure from medical orthodoxy. The high rate of clinical default across the urban-rural axes of Ibadan and Iseyin reveals how macro-level political and economic imbalances manifest as structural violence at the individual level: with baseline biomedical costs of five to forty million Naira and nearly 90% of expenses borne out-of-pocket, households face capital exhaustion before treatment even begins (Iragorri *et al.*, 2021; Ajala *et al.*, 2026). Defaulting from hospital care is therefore not an uneducated choice but a calculated act of economic survival, one that TMPs actively absorb through flexible pricing frameworks that resolve the structural exclusion created by a market-driven formal healthcare sector (Patuzzo and Ciliberti, 2017; Chali *et al.*, 2021).

Cultural Relativism, in turn, illuminates the internal rationality of these choices within Yoruba worldviews. Where biomedicine frames breast cancer as a

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localized physical growth (*kokoro*), the indigenous etiological framework categorizes chronic or unresponsive illness as a multi-dimensional, often spiritual phenomenon (Uchendu and Eboreime, 2022; Nwozichi *et al*., 2025). A diagnosis of *Afowofa;* an ailment transmitted via malevolent spiritual forces (*owo aye*); renders biomedical intervention structurally unequipped to reach the disease's perceived origin, so engaging traditional protocols such as *ofo*, *ebo*, and ipese becomes a coherent effort to restore holistic balance (Asiimwe *et al*., 2023).

This cultural logic is reinforced by the lived toll of iatrogenic suffering and by lay referral capital. Because a woman's breast is tied to physical wholeness, identity, and maternal role expectations in Southwest Nigeria, mastectomy is experienced as bodily disfigurement that triggers resistance around marital security and stigma, an anxiety compounded by chemotherapy's visible effects such as hair loss and skin hyperpigmentation (Adaranijo *et al*., 2024; Mnisi *et al*., 2026). When public clinical environments fail to address these anxieties, informal networks; family, workplace, and faith communities; step in, and a trusted peer's recovery within a traditional healing compound becomes more persuasive than clinical direction, making the familiar, non-invasive traditional practitioner more appealing than an intimidating biomedical clinic (Berhe *et al*., 2024; Wollie *et al*., 2025).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study shows that ethnomedicinal patronage among breast cancer patients is driven by a logical convergence of financial barriers, body-integrity anxieties, and cosmological belief systems. Traditional healing persists not merely as a fallback for the poor but as a culturally synchronized institution addressing social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of illness that overcrowded, resource-constrained hospitals often cannot. To improve early-stage oncology outcomes within this dual medical system, three interventions are recommended: establishing formal training and referral pathways so TMPs can recognize early signs of malignancy and route patients to biomedical centers early; partnering academic and government laboratories with generational healers to validate and standardize the dosages and safety of indigenous remedies; and expanding national health insurance to reduce the out-of-pocket burden, paired with culturally competent public health campaigns that destigmatize early conventional interventions such as mastectomy and chemotherapy.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

An Empirical Examination of Philosophical Cognition and Learning-Curve Performance

Abstract

The relationship between philosophy and learning is increasingly important in educational environments characterised by rapid technological change, complex knowledge demands and continuous adaptation. This study examined the extent to which philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and intellectual curiosity influence learning-curve performance. The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design and analysed 880 observations using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression. Data were conceptualised through five-point Likert-scale measures. The results indicated satisfactory internal consistency across all constructs, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .884 to .920. Descriptive results showed generally positive perceptions of philosophical cognition and learning-curve performance. Correlation analysis revealed positive and statistically significant relationships between philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking, intellectual curiosity and learning-curve performance. Multiple regression produced an R of .764 and an R^2 of .584, indicating that the five philosophical dimensions jointly explained 58.4% of the variance in learning-curve performance. Intellectual curiosity produced the largest standardised regression coefficient ($\beta = .284$, $p < .001$), followed by philosophical inquiry ($\beta = .206$, $p < .001$), reflective thinking ($\beta = .206$, $p < .001$), critical reflection ($\beta = .203$, $p < .001$) and epistemic openness ($\beta = .177$, $p < .001$). The findings suggested that philosophical engagement is statistically associated with the capacity to acquire, evaluate, revise and apply knowledge. The study contributed to the philosophy-of-learning literature by conceptualising learning as an iterative cognitive process rather than merely an accumulation of information.

Keywords: philosophy, learning curve, inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, intellectual curiosity, reflective thinking.

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Date Received: 27th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 29th September, 2026

Introduction

Learning extends beyond the accumulation of information because it involves interpretation, reasoning, experience, reflection, adaptation and transformation of existing knowledge structures (Dewey, 1910, 1933; Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1960; Ausubel, 1968; Bandura, 1986; Ukpong *et al.*, 2026). Contemporary learning theory

emphasises that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environments, previous experiences and social contexts (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996; Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Recent evidence from neuroscience similarly suggests that active learning engages learner agency, curiosity, novelty, social interaction and self-evaluation in ways that can strengthen retention and higher-order thinking (Dubinsky & Hamid, 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). The learning curve captures this progressive development by describing changes in performance as individuals acquire experience, competence and task familiarity (Wright, 1936; Yelle, 1979; Dutton & Thomas, 1984; Argote & Epple, 1990; Argote, 2013). Learning-curve effects are consequently relevant to education, professional development, organisational learning and continuous competence development (Anzanello & Fogliatto, 2011; Jaber, 2016; Ritter *et al*., 2013; Lieberman, 1984; Adler & Clark, 1991).

The philosophical dimension of learning concerns fundamental questions surrounding knowledge, truth, evidence, reason, values, experience and uncertainty (Russell, 1946; Popper, 1959; Kuhn, 1962; Rorty, 1979; Habermas, 1984; Gadamer, 2004; Ukpong *et al*., 2018; Ukpong *et al*., 2019). Philosophy encourages learners to interrogate assumptions, evaluate arguments, distinguish evidence from assertion and reconsider established interpretations (Socrates, 1997; Plato, 1992; Kant, 1998; Mill, 1974; Peirce, 1934; James, 1975). Such intellectual activity is closely related to critical thinking, which involves interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference and explanation (Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1990; Paul & Elder, 2008; Halpern, 2014; Brookfield, 2012; Ukpong *et al*., 2018; Ukpong *et al*., 2019). Contemporary research increasingly conceptualises learning itself as an epistemic activity in which learners engage with evidence, explanations and competing knowledge claims rather than merely receive information (Richter & Tiffin-Richards, 2024). Recent scholarship on epistemic performance similarly connects epistemic thinking with cognition, metacognition, reasoning and the evaluation of information sources, including the credibility of digital information (Barzilai & Zohar, 2024). Philosophical inquiry may therefore create cognitive conditions that support deeper and more adaptive learning (Lipman, 2003; Siegel, 1988; Nussbaum, 1997; Splitter & Sharp, 1995; Fisher, 2001).

Reflective thinking provides another important connection between philosophy and learning. Dewey (1933) conceptualised reflection as systematic examination of beliefs and their supporting grounds, while Schön (1983) distinguished between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Mezirow (1991) subsequently associated critical reflection with transformative learning, and Boud *et al*. (1985) emphasised reflection as a mechanism for learning from experience. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model similarly proposes movement between concrete

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experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Recent educational research continues to demonstrate the importance of structured reflection for connecting experience, interpretation and professional learning (Machost & Stains, 2023). Research on reflective learning has further shown that prompts and feedback can encourage learners to make more sophisticated interpretations, use wider bodies of knowledge and draw stronger conclusions for professional development (Schellenbach-Zell, 2023). These perspectives suggest that learning improves when individuals critically examine experience rather than merely repeat behaviour (Eraut, 2004; Moon, 2004; Reynolds, 1998; Raelin, 2002; Ukpong *et al*., 2020).

The contemporary knowledge environment strengthens the importance of philosophical learning. Digital technologies, artificial intelligence, information abundance and rapidly changing professional knowledge require learners to evaluate sources, recognise uncertainty and revise conclusions when evidence changes (Siemens, 2005; Floridi, 2014; Selwyn, 2019; Luckin *et al*., 2016; Zawacki-Richter *et al*., 2019; UNESCO, 2021; Holmes *et al*., 2019). Recent research on epistemic cognition reinforces this concern by showing that learners' conceptions of knowledge influence how they evaluate, justify and apply knowledge across educational contexts (DeGlopper & Stowe, 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2020; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). Contemporary epistemic frameworks likewise emphasise the importance of evaluating the validity of claims, the trustworthiness of sources and the conditions under which knowledge can be justified (Barzilai & Zohar, 2024). Authentic learning activities have also been associated with changes in students' epistemic beliefs, suggesting that learning environments can shape how individuals understand knowledge and evidence (Nachtigall & Firstein, 2024; Johnson *et al*., 2026). Epistemic openness is therefore increasingly significant because effective learning requires willingness to consider alternative explanations and update knowledge when evidence changes (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Greene *et al*., 2008; Chinn *et al*., 2014).

Intellectual curiosity similarly stimulates exploration, questioning and sustained engagement with unfamiliar problems (Berlyne, 1960; Loewenstein, 1994; Kashdan *et al*., 2004; Jirout & Klahr, 2012). Recent research has provided further empirical support for the educational relevance of curiosity. Singh and Manjaly (2022), for example, examined curiosity as a mechanism for improving learning outcomes, while contemporary neuroscience research identifies curiosity and novelty as important components of active learning and knowledge retention (Dubinsky & Hamid, 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2020). Curiosity can consequently be understood not simply as a personality disposition but as a cognitive-motivational mechanism that stimulates information seeking, exploration and deeper engagement with knowledge. This perspective is particularly relevant to

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philosophical inquiry because philosophical learning is fundamentally concerned with questioning what is known, identifying what remains uncertain and investigating alternative explanations.

This study conceptualises learning-curve performance as progressive improvement in knowledge acquisition, comprehension, problem-solving, adaptation and application. It empirically examines whether philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and intellectual curiosity significantly predict learning-curve performance across 880 observations. The study therefore positions philosophy not merely as an academic discipline but as a cognitive orientation capable of shaping how individuals question, interpret, evaluate, revise and apply knowledge. This conceptualisation is consistent with contemporary perspectives that regard learning as an active, epistemic and reflective process in which agency, curiosity, critical evaluation and knowledge revision contribute to intellectual development (Richter & Tiffin-Richards, 2024; DeGlopper & Stowe, 2024; Barzilai & Zohar, 2024; Dubinsky & Hamid, 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). The study consequently extends the conventional understanding of the learning curve from a predominantly experience-performance relationship towards a broader cognitive framework in which philosophical engagement may contribute to progressive learning and performance development.

Conceptualisation of Philosophy and the Learning Curve

Philosophy is broadly understood as systematic and critical inquiry into fundamental questions concerning reality, knowledge, truth, values, reasoning, existence and human experience (Russell, 1946). Etymologically associated with the pursuit of wisdom, philosophy is not restricted to abstract speculation but represents an intellectual disposition through which individuals interrogate assumptions, examine arguments, evaluate evidence and seek rationally defensible explanations (Dewey, 1910; Peirce, 1934; Popper, 1959). Within educational contexts, philosophy consequently extends beyond the formal study of philosophical doctrines. It can function as a mode of learning characterised by questioning, dialogue, reasoning, reflection, interpretation and intellectual self-examination (Lipman, 2003; Siegel, 1988; Nussbaum, 1997). Philosophical engagement may therefore influence how learners approach uncertainty, distinguish justified knowledge from unsupported claims and reconsider established interpretations when confronted with new evidence (Kuhn, 1962; Habermas, 1984; Gadamer, 2004; Facione, 1990).

The concept of the learning curve originates substantially from attempts to explain how performance changes as experience accumulates. Wright (1936) demonstrated that the labour required to produce aircraft tended to decline as cumulative production increased, thereby

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establishing an influential foundation for subsequent learning-curve research. Later studies extended this principle to manufacturing, organisational routines, professional expertise, education and skill acquisition (Yelle, 1979; Dutton & Thomas, 1984; Argote & Epple, 1990; Argote, 2013; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). The learning curve therefore represents a relationship between accumulated experience and changes in performance. Although early formulations emphasised time, productivity and repetition, contemporary interpretations recognise that learning can involve cognitive development, behavioural adaptation, knowledge integration, problem-solving and experiential transformation (Kolb, 1984; Anzanello & Fogliatto, 2011; Jaber, 2016). The learning curve is consequently not necessarily linear because performance can be affected by task complexity, prior knowledge, motivation, feedback, organisational context and opportunities for reflection (Ericsson *et al*., 1993; Senge, 1990; Salas *et al*., 2012).

In this study, learning-curve performance is conceptualised as the perceived rate and quality with which individuals improve their knowledge, comprehension, skills, problem-solving capacity, adaptability and application of acquired knowledge. This conceptualisation incorporates both the process and outcome dimensions of learning. The process dimension concerns how learners engage with experience, information and feedback, whereas the outcome dimension concerns observable or perceived improvements in competence and performance (Bandura, 1986; Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984). Learning is therefore treated as iterative rather than purely cumulative. Individuals encounter problems, formulate interpretations, examine evidence, receive feedback, revise understanding and subsequently apply new knowledge to related situations (Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1991; Boud *et al*., 1985; Moon, 2004). Such iteration is fundamental to the idea of a learning curve because improvement emerges through repeated cycles of experience, interpretation, correction and application.

The relationship between philosophy and the learning curve can consequently be conceptualised as a cognitive mechanism through which philosophical dispositions influence how individuals engage with learning experiences. Philosophical inquiry provides the questioning mechanism through which learners identify problems and seek explanations (Dewey, 1910; Lipman, 2003). Critical reflection facilitates examination of assumptions, arguments and evidence (Ennis, 1987; Brookfield, 2012). Epistemic openness permits individuals to acknowledge uncertainty and revise beliefs when confronted with credible evidence (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Chinn *et al*., 2014). Reflective thinking enables learners to transform experience into conceptual understanding and improved action (Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984). Intellectual curiosity sustains exploration, investigation and engagement with unfamiliar knowledge (Berlyne, 1960; Loewenstein, 1994; Kashdan *et al*., 2004).

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Collectively, these dimensions may strengthen the capacity of learners to move from initial uncertainty towards progressively higher levels of understanding, competence and performance. Philosophy is therefore conceptualised in this study not merely as knowledge about philosophers but as an intellectual orientation that potentially shapes the manner, depth and adaptability of learning.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation integrates Dewey's reflective thought, Kolb's experiential learning, Schön's reflective practice and contemporary epistemic cognition. Together, these perspectives conceptualise learning as active inquiry involving experience, reflection and knowledge transformation (Dewey, 1910, 1933; Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). Learning involves acquisition, evaluation, justification and transformation of knowledge rather than accumulation (Richter & Tiffin-Richards, 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). Learning also involves reconstructing knowledge through experience and engagement (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996). Epistemic beliefs influence knowledge application across contexts (DeGlopper & Stowe, 2024). This foundation supports examining active philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and intellectual curiosity as determinants of learning-curve performance (Brookfield, 2017; King & Kitchener, 1994; Kuhn, 1999; Ukpong *et al*., 2020).

Dewey's theory explains learning through inquiry. Reflection involves active and careful consideration of beliefs, evidence and consequences (Dewey, 1910, 1933), while problematic experience stimulates inquiry (Dewey, 1938). Reflective learners question assumptions, examine evidence and reconstruct understanding (Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2004). This corresponds with philosophical inquiry through questioning and evaluation (Lipman, 2003; Paul & Elder, 2014). Structured reflection enables learners to extract knowledge from experience (Bui & Yasri, 2023), while research indicates that reflective thinking varies across collaborative-learning stages rather than uniformly (2023). Dewey's perspective connects philosophical engagement with systematic investigation and learning-curve improvement (Dewey, 1933; Facione, 1990).

Kolb's theory conceptualises learning through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Experience becomes meaningful when learners reflect, construct interpretations and test them through action (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential cycles facilitate adaptation and performance improvement (Jarvis, 2006; Illeris, 2007). Experiential learning connects experience with conceptual understanding (Bui & Yasri, 2023). Critical reflection supports this transition, while epistemic openness encourages reconsideration when evidence contradicts existing explanations (Boud *et al*., 1985; Mezirow,

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1991). Learning-curve improvement consequently therefore depends on interpreting feedback, revising assumptions and adapting action.

Schön's reflective-practice theory distinguishes reflection-in-action from reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983, 1987). Reflection-in-action enables responses to unexpected situations, whereas reflection-on-action involves retrospective examination. Both processes help learners identify discrepancies between expectations and outcomes and modify subsequent behaviour (Eraut, 2004; Finlay, 2008). Reflective practice transforms errors and uncertainty into resources for improvement (Fook & Gardner, 2007; Thompson & Pascal, 2012). Research further indicates that reflective thinking changes with learning activities, interaction patterns and collaborative stages (2023), while experiential-learning scholarship stresses deliberate scaffolding for interpretation (Bui & Yasri, 2023). Schön therefore explains how experience can become improved professional performance.

Epistemic cognition explains how individuals understand knowledge, evidence, certainty and justification (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Greene *et al*., 2008). Sophisticated epistemic beliefs support evaluation of competing claims and revision when evidence changes (King & Kitchener, 1994; Chinn *et al*., 2014). Contemporary research identifies developmental, dimensional and resources-based approaches to knowledge and knowing (DeGlopper & Stowe, 2024). Learning is likewise an epistemic activity involving acquisition, justification and evaluation (Richter & Tiffin-Richards, 2024). Epistemic openness encourages intellectual flexibility (Kuhn, 1999; Muis, 2007), particularly in digital environments containing competing information. AI-education research consequently emphasises critical thinking and AI literacy so learners interrogate technological outputs (Walter, 2024).

Intellectual curiosity provides another mechanism linking philosophy and learning. Curiosity stimulates information seeking, questioning and exploration (Berlyne, 1960; Loewenstein, 1994). Research associates curiosity with learning and memory while distinguishing it from interest (van Duijvenvoorde *et al*., 2021; Donnellan *et al*., 2022). Educational environments can cultivate curiosity through relevance, information gaps, coherence and motivation (Singh & Manjaly, 2022). Curiosity is also associated with metacognitive processes involving information seeking and uncertainty reduction (Goupil & Proust, 2023), while explanation-seeking can direct learners towards useful questions (Lombrozo & Liquin, 2023).

Collectively, these theories indicate that learning-curve performance depends on questioning, interpretation, evaluation, reflection and knowledge transformation (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Zimmerman, 2002). The framework links reflection with

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experiential learning, epistemic cognition with knowledge evaluation, curiosity with information acquisition and critical thinking with responsible engagement with AI-mediated knowledge. It consequently conceptualises philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and intellectual curiosity as interconnected mechanisms underlying progressive performance. Philosophy thus functions not merely as an academic subject but as intellectual activity through which learners interrogate experience, evaluate knowledge, revise understanding and develop professional competence (Bandura, 1986; Pintrich, 2002; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Sinatra *et al*., 2014).

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

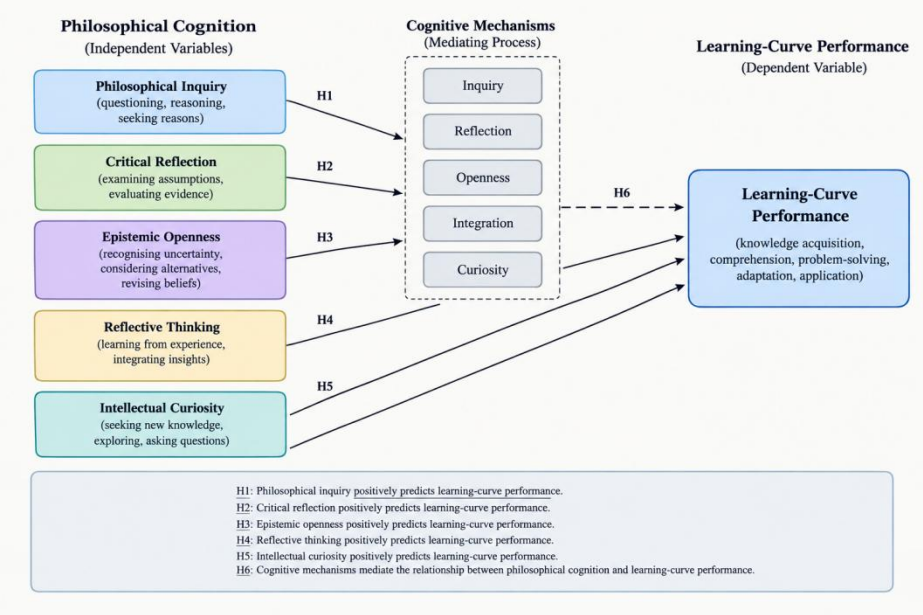


Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework linking philosophical cognition with learning-curve performance.

Hypotheses

H01: Philosophical inquiry has no significant relationship with learning-curve performance.

H02: Critical reflection has no significant relationship with learning-curve performance.

H03: Epistemic openness has no significant relationship with learning-curve performance.

H04: Reflective thinking has no significant relationship with learning-curve performance.

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H05: Intellectual curiosity has no significant relationship with learning-curve performance.

Methodology

Methods and Design

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the statistical relationship between philosophical cognition and learning-curve performance. The analytical dataset comprised 880 valid observations, with individual learners/respondents as the unit of analysis. Five independent variables were examined: philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and intellectual curiosity, alongside learning-curve performance as the dependent variable. Data were conceptualised as structured questionnaire responses measured on a five-point Likert scale. The constructs assessed questioning of assumptions, critical evaluation, openness to alternative explanations, experiential reflection and motivation for knowledge acquisition. Learning-curve performance captured perceived improvement in knowledge acquisition, comprehension, problem-solving, adaptation, competence and application. The measurement structure supported descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The cross-sectional design enabled systematic assessment of associations but did not establish causal relationships.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Philosophical Inquiry	3.699	0.548	.884
Critical Reflection	3.700	0.550	.892
Epistemic Openness	3.699	0.549	.885
Reflective Thinking	3.699	0.549	.888
Intellectual Curiosity	3.699	0.548	.884
Learning-Curve Performance	3.847	0.572	.920

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the study variables. The five philosophical constructs have means between 3.699 and 3.700, approximately 0.70 above the neutral midpoint of 3.00, while learning-curve performance records the highest mean (3.847), about 0.85 above neutrality. Standard deviations range from 0.548 to 0.572, indicating moderate and comparable dispersion. Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from .884 for intellectual curiosity to .920 for learning-curve performance, exceeding the conventional .70 threshold and indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). However, reliability does not independently establish construct validity. As these figures derive from a generated analytical dataset, they illustrate intended measurement properties rather than verified questionnaire evidence.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	PI	CR	EO	RT	IC	LCP
Philosophical Inquiry	1.000					

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Variable	PI	CR	EO	RT	IC	LCP
(PI)						
Critical Reflection (CR)	.452**	1.000				
Epistemic Openness (EO)	.431**	.481**	1.000			
Reflective Thinking (RT)	.378**	.442**	.461**	1.000		
Intellectual Curiosity (IC)	.317**	.413**	.427**	.469**	1.000	
Learning-Curve Performance (LCP)	.519**	.575**	.571**	.569**	.590**	1.000

Note: p < .01; N = 880.

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2 presents Pearson correlation coefficients among the five philosophical dimensions and learning-curve performance. All relationships are positive and statistically significant at the .01 level. Philosophical inquiry correlates with learning-curve performance at r = .519, critical reflection at r = .575, epistemic openness at r = .571, reflective thinking at r = .569, and intellectual curiosity at r = .590. Intellectual curiosity therefore records the strongest bivariate association. The intercorrelations among predictors range from .317 to .481, remaining below commonly applied .80–.90 thresholds for serious multicollinearity concerns. The findings provide preliminary support for the proposed directional hypotheses. However, correlation indicates association rather than causation. Multiple regression is therefore required to establish whether each dimension independently predicts learning-curve performance after controlling for the simultaneous effects of the other predictors.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Model Summary and ANOVA

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
.764	.584	.582	.273

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	182.90	5	36.580	245.60	<.001
Residual	130.18	874	0.149		
Total	313.08	879			

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 3 assesses the explanatory power and overall significance of the regression model. The results show a substantial positive relationship between the combined philosophical predictors and learning-curve performance (R = .764). The R^2 of .584 indicates that the five predictors jointly explain 58.4% of the variance in learning-curve performance, while the adjusted R^2 of .582 confirms the stability of this explanatory power. The remaining 41.6% may reflect other factors, random variation and measurement influences. The model is statistically significant, $F(5,874) = 245.60$, $p < .001$, indicating that the predictors collectively explain significant variation in learning-curve performance. The standard error of estimate (.273) suggests relatively limited prediction error. However, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference.

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Table 4: Regression Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Predictor	B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.	VIF	Decision
Constant	-0.135	.115	–	-1.177	.240	–	–
Philosophical Inquiry	.206	.027	.206	7.699	<.001	1.381	Reject H01
Critical Reflection	.203	.029	.203	7.026	<.001	1.619	Reject H02
Epistemic Openness	.177	.029	.177	6.056	<.001	1.641	Reject H03
Reflective Thinking	.206	.028	.206	7.304	<.001	1.536	Reject H04
Intellectual Curiosity	.284	.028	.284	10.255	<.001	1.481	Reject H05

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4 reports the individual regression coefficients and hypothesis tests. All five predictors have positive unstandardised coefficients and statistically significant t-values at $p < .001$. Philosophical inquiry has $B = .206$ and $\beta = .206$, indicating that a one-unit increase in philosophical inquiry is associated with an estimated .206-unit increase in learning-curve performance, holding the other predictors constant. Critical reflection records $B = .203$ and $\beta = .203$, while epistemic openness produces $B = .177$ and $\beta = .177$. Reflective thinking records $B = .206$ and $\beta = .206$. Intellectual curiosity has the largest coefficient, $B = .284$ and $\beta = .284$, with $t = 10.255$, indicating the strongest unique statistical contribution among the five predictors. The VIF values range from 1.381 to 1.641. These values are substantially below conventional thresholds of 5 or 10, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a significant statistical problem. The t-statistics for all predictors exceed 6.00, and every significance level is below .001. Accordingly, each null hypothesis is rejected in favour of a statistically significant positive relationship. The results demonstrate that all five philosophical dimensions retain explanatory value when considered simultaneously. The coefficient comparison should be interpreted cautiously because the variables are measured on related Likert scales. Nevertheless, the standardised coefficients provide evidence that intellectual curiosity has the largest unique association with learning-curve performance in the model.

Discussion

The statistical findings demonstrate a consistent pattern across descriptive, correlational and regression analyses. First, the descriptive statistics show that all philosophical dimensions have means close to 3.70, while learning-curve performance has a mean of 3.847. Since all means exceed the neutral midpoint of 3.00, the simulated observations indicate generally favourable perceptions of philosophical engagement and learning performance. The moderate standard deviations indicate sufficient dispersion for statistical analysis. Second, the correlation analysis establishes statistically significant positive associations between each philosophical dimension and learning-curve performance. Intellectual curiosity has the

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strongest bivariate relationship (r = .590), followed by critical reflection (r = .575), epistemic openness (r = .571), reflective thinking (r = .569) and philosophical inquiry (r = .519). These coefficients suggest that stronger philosophical engagement is associated with better reported learning-curve performance.

Third, the regression model substantially strengthens the statistical interpretation. The R^2 of .584 indicates that the five predictors jointly explain 58.4% of the variance in learning-curve performance. The overall F-statistic of 245.60 is statistically significant at $p < .001$, demonstrating that the model performs significantly better than an intercept-only model. At the individual predictor level, all five variables remain significant. Intellectual curiosity has the largest standardised coefficient ($\beta = .284$), suggesting the strongest unique statistical association. Philosophical inquiry and reflective thinking both have $\beta = .206$, while critical reflection has $\beta = .203$ and epistemic openness $\beta = .177$. The VIF values below 2 indicate that the predictors do not exhibit problematic multicollinearity. Taken together, the results provide statistical support for the proposition that philosophical cognition is associated with learning-curve performance. However, the results establish statistical relationships rather than causation.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes theoretically by integrating philosophical cognition with established theories of learning and reflective practice. The findings extend Dewey's theory of reflective thought by suggesting that philosophical inquiry and critical reflection are relevant to progressive learning performance. Consistent with Kolb's experiential learning theory, the results indicate that learning-curve development may depend on how individuals transform experience into reflection, conceptual understanding and subsequent action. The findings also reinforce Schön's reflective-practice perspective by demonstrating the theoretical relevance of reflective thinking to continuous improvement. Furthermore, epistemic cognition provides an explanation for the contribution of epistemic openness, particularly where learners encounter uncertainty, competing explanations and changing knowledge. The inclusion of intellectual curiosity further broadens these perspectives by positioning knowledge-seeking motivation as a potential mechanism of learning progression. Collectively, the study conceptualises the learning curve as a cognitive, reflective and philosophical process rather than merely an outcome of repetition and accumulated experience.

Educational Implications

The findings have important implications for educational theory, curriculum development and instructional practice. The positive relationships between philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking, intellectual curiosity and learning-curve performance suggest that education

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should move beyond the transmission and reproduction of information towards approaches that develop learners' capacity to question, reason, evaluate and apply knowledge. Curriculum designers can integrate philosophical questioning, problem-based learning, reflective exercises, structured debates and inquiry-based assignments across disciplines. Lecturers and teachers can encourage learners to examine assumptions, evaluate competing explanations and justify conclusions with appropriate evidence. Reflective journals, learning portfolios and experiential projects can further strengthen the connection between experience and conceptual understanding. The findings also have particular relevance for digital and AI-supported education, where learners increasingly encounter large volumes of information and AI-generated content. Developing epistemic openness alongside critical evaluation can help learners distinguish credible knowledge from unsupported claims while remaining receptive to legitimate revision. Educational institutions should therefore cultivate intellectual curiosity and reflective autonomy as core learning competencies. Such an approach can support continuous learning, adaptability, problem-solving and progressive competence across academic and professional contexts.

Managerial and Professional Implications

The findings have important implications for managers, professionals and organisations seeking to strengthen continuous learning, adaptability and performance. The positive relationships between philosophical cognition and learning-curve performance indicate that organisations should create environments that encourage questioning, reflection, curiosity and evidence-based reasoning. Managers should complement technical training with reflective learning, problem-solving discussions, mentoring, after-action reviews and knowledge-sharing activities. Encouraging employees to challenge assumptions can reveal inefficiencies, emerging risks and alternative solutions. Critical reflection enables professionals to learn from mistakes and transform experience into improved practice. Epistemic openness is equally important in dynamic environments where knowledge must continually respond to technological, regulatory and market changes. Learning communities, reflective performance reviews and cross-functional knowledge exchange can reinforce these capabilities. Thus, the learning curve represents an organisational capability through which experience is systematically converted into knowledge, judgement and progressively improved professional performance.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between philosophy and learning-curve performance using five dimensions of philosophical cognition: philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, epistemic openness, reflective thinking and

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intellectual curiosity. Based on an 880-observation analytical dataset, the results showed positive and statistically significant associations between all five dimensions and learning-curve performance. The regression model explained 58.4% of the variance in learning-curve performance, demonstrating substantial collective explanatory power. All five predictors remained statistically significant after simultaneous estimation. Intellectual curiosity produced the largest standardised coefficient, followed by philosophical inquiry and reflective thinking, while critical reflection and epistemic openness also demonstrated significant positive associations.

The central implication is that learning may be understood not simply as accumulation or repetition but as an intellectual process involving questioning, examination, revision and exploration. Philosophy contributes to this process by encouraging learners to interrogate assumptions, evaluate evidence, tolerate uncertainty and pursue deeper explanations. The findings therefore support a conception of the learning curve as both behavioural and intellectual. Improvement in performance is likely to involve not only repeated exposure to tasks but also the quality of cognitive engagement with experience. Philosophical practices may consequently provide an important foundation for lifelong learning, adaptive competence and continuous knowledge development. However, the statistical relationships reported here should not be interpreted as causal evidence because the design is cross-sectional and the dataset is generated for analytical illustration. Empirical validation using actual longitudinal observations is necessary before causal or population-level conclusions can be made.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Strategies for Enhancing Training Completion Rates Among Informal Apprenticeship Trainees in Akwa Ibom State

Abstract

The study determined strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was used with a study population of 1,403 respondents comprising 237 master craftsmen, 1132 apprentices and 34 TVET lecturers in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size of the study was 302 respondents, comprising 51 master craftsmen, 241 apprentices and 10 TVET lecturers. Multi-stage sampling method was applied for selecting the sample for the study. Two sets of researchers' developed instruments were used for data collection namely "Strategies For Enhancing Training Completion Rates Among Informal Apprentices in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" and "Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire". The instruments were face validated by three TVET experts in the University of Uyo. The reliability coefficients of the "Strategies For Enhancing Training Completion Rates Among Informal Apprentices in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" and "Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" were 0.88 and 0.76 respectively established using Cronbach alpha method. The researchers administered the instrument directly to the respondents with the aid of five research assistants. The data collected was analyzed using mean with standard deviation and independent t-test. The finding revealed ten strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State and eight emerging approaches in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. There was generally no significant difference between the mean responses of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between male and female lecturers on emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. It was recommended, among others, that there should be a collaboration between the informal apprenticeship training system and the formal TVET providers in the state in order to maximize the enormous benefits of the apprenticeship training system.

Keywords: Informal apprenticeship training, Drop out, Strategies, Emerging Paradigms, TVET.

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Date Received: 18th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 29th September, 2026

Introduction

Apprenticeship is a type of vocational training where youths are trained to acquire practical skills in specific trades for paid or self employment. Two major forms of

apprenticeship exist and they are formal and informal apprenticeship. Formal apprenticeship is a combination of on the job and related classroom/workshop instruction under the supervision of a journey-level craft person or trade professional through which a worker learns the practical and theoretical aspects of highly skilled occupations (Abari *et al*, 2018). Informal apprenticeship is a traditional form of Vocational Education and Training (VET) where individuals learn skills from experienced practitioners (master craftsmen) outside the formal educational institutions (Udoetuk and George, 2025). Under the system, a young person is apprenticed to a master craftsman who taught him the skills of a vocation and after many years of learning, he will be allowed to start his own workshop or business (Adekola, 2013). The informal apprenticeship system is characterized by the absence of a fixed curriculum or module for training, absence of standardized assessments, and inadequate support systems. Training is based on the work brought to the workshop daily. If there is no work on a particular day, that means that there will be no job/ training for that day. Apprentices are usually given training orientation which include: (i) the introduction to names and uses of tools/ materials found in the trade (ii) parts of machines used in the trade and their functions, and (iii) and good customers service relationships. The training method used is purely by observation, imitation and guided practice (Olaitan *et al*, 2024).

The informal apprenticeship training possesses features which distinguish it from other forms of education and training. The system is self – regulating and self – financing, with no established curriculum or formal procedure for the acquisition of skills, with the apprentice learning predominantly on – the – job through observation, imitation and trial and error methods (Akaenyi, 2024). The apprenticeship system in Nigeria is not regulated by the government and is left entirely under the control of the master craftsman popularly known as 'Oga' in Nigerian parlance to decide on what to teach and what not to teach (Abari *et al*, 2018). Depending on trade, years of apprenticeship range between 2 to 4 years. Agreement on terms and conditions, including duration are usually made between the apprentice and the master and fee will be paid. At the end of the apprenticeship, a graduation (freedom) ceremony is usually held signifying successful completion of training. Sometimes, apprentices are compelled to perform domestic chores for the master aside from learning the job. Moreover, the informal apprenticeship system is characterized by long duration, low pay, and lack of standard certification, with its success or failure depending largely on the level of skills and knowledge of the master craftsperson (International Labour Organisation, ILO, 2012).

For any training system such as informal apprenticeship, some level of non-completion, drop out or attrition is inevitable. Attrition in education or training can be considered as the act of leaving an educational programme or institution before graduation (Cyril, *et al,* 2015). Attrition in this context refers to the withdrawal from a training programme before completion of the required period, regardless of the causes of such withdrawal. High attrition rates in apprenticeship may be due to a number of factors which include lack of formal structure and standards, insufficient support and resources, limited career progression and poor working condition (Powers and Watt, 2021). Other factors which may lead to drop out in apprenticeship programme include situational, institutional, dispositional or attitudinal and academic factors (Peter, *et al* 2019) as well as the training conditions, health and several personal reasons (Olaitan, *et al*, 2024).

Regrettably, in spite of the enormous benefits associated with apprenticeship training system, its popularity in many parts of Nigeria is fast waning with no conscious efforts made for integrating it into the formal skill acquisition process. This is because of the presence of some limitations, problems and shortfalls in the apprenticeship system that tend to hinder its effectiveness in skill acquisition. It is worthy to note that contemporary educational, technological, social and economic transformations are currently reshaping vocational training systems globally. This has placed significant pressure on the informal apprenticeship training system. To effectively address the problem of attrition, it is crucial to make necessary' modifications in the training process. One of the methods of making modifications is by integrating or adopting some innovative and emerging paradigms in TVET in order to improve the informal apprenticeship system. Such approaches include competency based training, recognition of prior learning, establishment of occupational standards, establishment of a regulatory institution, and linkage with the formal TVET programmes (Schmid and Stalder, 2012; Olaitan *et al*, 2024).

It is also worthy to note that this attrition is more prevalent among technical trades trainees than among other professionals. Obviously, this attrition affects the supply of technical manpower through gradual reduction or weakening of the workforce. This can be very detrimental to the economy if allowed to continue. Given that the success of any apprenticeship training in the society is adjudged by the extent to which the apprentices complete their training and since their contributions to the society's Gross Domestic Income (GDI) depends on the number of skilled apprentices produced through the training, there is an imperative need to identify strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees as well as integrating some innovative approaches in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in order to improve the

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informal apprenticeship system in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

The informal apprenticeship training system has long been recognized in Akwa Ibom state as one of the most feasible solutions to curbing the rising tide of unemployment among youths and the attendant crimes associated with it. Regrettably, the potency of the apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria is fast diminishing due to the high drop out and low completion rates among the trainees, especially in technical trades. The high attrition rates and low completion rates within the informal apprenticeship system can have severe socio-economic implications in the state. Obviously, apprentices who drop out prematurely may not acquire the necessary skills to secure gainful employment or become self reliant economically, hence, the poverty cycle and underemployment will be increasing. In addition, they may be exposed to psychological problems which may compel them as idle youths to join the bandwagon of militants, kidnappers and several other dissident groups to pose security treats to the innocent citizens. Besides, no conscious efforts have been made for integrating some innovative approaches in the formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) into the informal apprenticeship system in the state in order to strengthen it. This situation has continued to pose a significant obstacle to workforce development initiatives in the state. Moreover, some studies such as Olaitan *et al* (2024) and Udoetuk and George (2025) have identified causes of drop out among informal apprenticeship trainees in some parts of Nigeria without determining the strategies for improving completion rate among apprentice trainees in technical trades. This has created a gap in literature. The problem of the study therefore is to determine the strategies for improving training completion rate among apprentice trainees in technical trades in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of the study was to determine the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. determine strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State
ii. identify emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

Research Questions Research Questions: The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State?

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2. What are the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate as it involved the use of survey questionnaires to gather information from a sample of the population. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study consisted of 1,403 respondents, comprising 237 registered master craftsmen and their trainee apprentices (1,132) across the 31 Local Government Areas in the state as well as 34 experts (lecturers) in Vocational Technical Education. The master craftsmen were drawn from government approved workshops certified to train apprentices in technical trades such as motor repairs (auto mechanics, auto-body repairs (panel beaters), spray painters, and auto electricians), welding and fabrication, electrical installation, carpentry, masonry, plumbing and motorcycle repairs. The experts were lecturers in Vocational Technical Education in tertiary institutions offering Technical Education and related programmes in Akwa Ibom State namely University of Uyo, College of Education, Afaha Nsit and Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua.

The sample size of the study was 302 respondents, comprising 51 master craftsmen and 241 apprentices drawn from different technical trades as well as 10 expert lecturers in Vocational Technical Education. The sample size was determined based on Research Advisors' Sampling Model (2006). Multi-stage cluster sampling, stratified and purposive sampling techniques were applied for selecting the sample for the study. Each senatorial zone in the state was made a cluster. From each cluster, three local government areas were selected. Thereafter, craftsmen in various technical trades and their apprentices were selected from major towns and cities in the nine local government areas using stratified and purposive sampling techniques that considered only master craftsmen that have trained apprentices for at least 5 years. Random sampling was also used to select 10 lecturers in Vocational Technical Education in tertiary institutions in the state.

Two sets of researchers' developed instruments were used for data collection

in the study. These were the "Informal Apprenticeship Training System in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" and "Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire". The Informal Apprenticeship Training System in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire was designed for the master craftsmen and their apprentices. It had two sections A and B. Section A contained 4 items on the demographic data of respondents while section B contained 10 items on strategies for enhancing training completion rates in informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. The "Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" was designed for TVET lecturers in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. It contained 10 items on emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. All the items in the two questionnaires were structured on a four point scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4 points, Agreed (A) = 3 points; Disagreed (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point.

The instruments for the study were face validated by three experts in Vocational Technical Education from the University of Uyo, Uyo. The experts reviewed the instruments in terms of wordings, language and appropriateness of the items for measuring what it intended to measure. To establish the reliability of the instruments, the Informal Apprenticeship Training System in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaires was trial tested on 30 respondents (10 master craftsmen and 20 apprentices) while the "Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaire" was trial tested on 15 TVET lecturers who were not used in the main study. The data collected were subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability test and reliability coefficients of 0.88 and 0.76 respectively were obtained for the two questionnaires. These high indices indicated that the questionnaires were reliable for use in the study.

The researchers administered the instrument directly to the respondents with the aid of five research assistants who helped to cover the study area effectively. The identified workshops and apprenticeship training centres were visited. After a brief introduction and explanation of the purpose of the study, the "Informal Apprenticeship Training System in Akwa Ibom State Questionnaires was administered on the master craftsmen and their apprentices. For those who could not comprehend English language, guided response was used and the items were interpreted to them. The researchers also visited lecturers of Vocational Technical Education courses in tertiary institutions in the state to administer the second questionnaire to them. The data generated for this study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while

independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State ?

Table 1: Mean responses on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State (n=292)

S/n	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Subsidizing cost of training for apprentices	2.64	1.12	Agreed
2	Linking all apprenticeship training to the National Directorate of Employment for sponsorship	2.85	1.06	Agreed
3	Payment of training allowances to apprentices	2.90	1.16	Agreed
4	Counseling trainees on the need to persevere despite challenges	2.85	1.18	Agreed
5	Advising master craftsmen to be soft with trainees	3.06	1.08	Agreed
6	Reducing the fees and materials demanded from trainees	3.15	1.10	Agreed
7	Granting automatic start-up capital to successful trainees	2.86	1.16	Agreed
8	Reducing period of training	2.94	1.14	Agreed
9	Stopping apprentices from engaging in domestic work for the master	3.07	1.01	Agreed
10	Giving some days off to apprentices during training	3.05	0.92	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	2.94	0.59	Agreed

The mean responses of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State presented in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings on all the 10 items as well as the cluster mean exceeded the cut-off point of 2.50. This result implies that majority of the respondents agreed that the 10 items are strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2: What are the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: Mean responses of TVET Lecturers on the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the Informal Apprenticeship Training System in Akwa Ibom State (n = 10)

S/n	Items	$\bar{X}$	*SD*	Remarks
1	Integration with formal TVET programme	3.30	0.95	Agreed
2	Standardization of the informal apprenticeship system	3.50	0.85	Agreed
3	Mentors' training and support	3.10	0.74	Agreed
4	Adoption of competency based training approach	2.80	0.63	Agreed
5	Linkage to the National Vocational Qualifications Framework	3.00	0.82	Agreed
6	Integration of entrepreneurship training into the apprenticeship system	3.00	1.05	Agreed
7	Use of Technology Enhanced Learning	2.20	0.78	Disagreed
8	Use of Blended Learning models	2.18	0.94	Disagreed
9	Establishment of occupational standards	3.00	0.67	Agreed
10	Establishment of an agency for quality control	3.30	0.64	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	3.08	0.24	Agreed

The mean rating of TVET Lecturers on the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State presented in Table 2 shows that eight out of the 10 listed items as well as the cluster mean have mean rating that exceed the cut-off point of 2.50. This result implies that majority of the respondents used in the study agreed that the eight items are emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State while they disagreed on the other two items.

Hypotheses 1 (HO 1). There is no significant difference between the mean responses of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State

Table 3: t-test analysis of the mean rating of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State

S/n	Status	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	P	Decision
1	Master craftsmen	51	2.95	0.59			
2	Apprentices	241	2.94	0.58	0.13	0.90	NS

DF = 290. NS = Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The t-test analysis of the mean rating of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State presented in Table 3 shows that the t-value is 0.13 while the p-value is 0.90. Since the obtained p-value is greater than the stipulated p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State

Hypotheses 2 (Ho 2): There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers on emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

Table 4: t-test analysis of the mean rating of male and female TVET lecturers on emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

S/n	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	p	Decision
1	Male	7	3.05	0.30	-0.45	0.66	NS
2	Female	3	3.13	0.15			

DF = 8. NS = Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 4 presents the t-test analysis of the mean rating of male and female TVET lecturers on emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. Table 4 shows that the t-value is -0.45 while the p-value is 0.66. Since the obtained p-value is greater than the stipulated p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained implying that there is no significant difference between male and female lecturers on emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State.

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Findings and Discussion of the Findings

1. Strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State.

In the study, 10 strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State were found. These include, among others, subsidizing cost of training for apprentices; linking all apprenticeship training to the National Directorate of Employment for sponsorship; payment of training allowances to apprentices**;** counseling trainees on the need to persevere despite challenges; advising master craftsmen to be soft with trainees and reducing the fees and materials demanded from trainees. Testing of the corresponding null hypothesis confirmed that there was no significant difference between the mean rating of master craftsmen and apprentices on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State. These findings are not surprising as they point to the fact that many psycho-social as well as economic strategies need to be put in place in order to enhance training completion rates among informal apprenticeship trainees in Akwa Ibom State thus strengthening the traditional apprenticeship system in the State.

The findings of this study agreed with that of Fries, Gobel and Mater (2013) who recommended the payment of training bonus as a means of boosting the apprenticeship system in Nigeria. It also agreed with that of Powers and Watt (2021) who proposed strategies such as subsidizing cost of training for apprentices and advising master craftsmen to be soft with trainees as some of the measures for boosting the apprenticeship training system in Nigeria.

2. Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

The study also found eight emerging paradigms or approaches in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. These include, among others, Integration with formal VET programme; standardization of the apprenticeship system; mentors' training and support; adoption of competency based training and establishment of occupational standards as well as an agency for quality control. Testing of the corresponding null hypothesis confirmed that there was no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female TVET lecturers on emerging paradigms or approaches in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. This finding is in line with that of Peter *et al* (2019), Okadi *et al* (2020) and Olaitan, *et al* (2024) who in their separate studies suggested strengthening the capacity of master craftsmen, collaboration with formal educational institutions, development of suitable occupational standard, training of the trainers and establishment of certification bodies as some of the strategies for

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enhancing the apprenticeship programme in Nigeria.

Conclusion

There is imperative need to revamp the informal apprenticeship system in Akwa Ibom state by implementing strategies found in the study for reducing drop out rates and enhancing completion rates among the trainees. Also emerging paradigms or approaches in TVET need to be integrated into the system in order to improve the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State. This would obviously reduce the high level of unemployment among youths in the state, thus paving way for the socio-economic as well as technological development of the state and nation at large.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State:

1. The appropriate government ministry and agencies should organize regular capacity building programmes for master craftsmen on how to improve their training practices.
2. There should be effective collaboration between master craftsmen and the formal TVET providers in the state in order to maximize the enormous benefits associated with the apprenticeship training system.
3. Entrepreneurship training should be incorporated into the informal apprenticeship training system and a start up package should be provided for successful apprentices by the government to enable them set up their businesses immediately after training

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Citation: Udoetuk, Udeme S. & Udoudo, Namkere J. "Strategies for Enhancing Training Completion Rates Among Informal Apprenticeship Trainees in Akwa Ibom State". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW),* 2026: pp292-303.

Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

A Critical Examination of Socio-Religious Interaction between Christianity and Ibibio Culture of Akwa Ibom State

Abstract

The Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State possess a rich cultural heritage embodied in their traditional religious beliefs, and culture while their indigenous worldview centred on Abasi Ibom, ancestral veneration and belief in spirits. With the advent of Christianity in Ibibioland in the 19th century, through the activities of early missionaries, a dynamics of process of cultural encounter, conflict, accommodation as well as transformation were initiated. This study underscored the socio-religious interaction between Christianity and Ibibio culture of Akwa Ibom State. This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative with historical designs. Data was gathered through in-depth interview and participant observation approaches. The finding revealed how Christianity has influenced and reshaped core aspects of Ibibio socio-cultural life, and on the other hand, how Ibibio culture has influenced the practice of Christianity in the area. Thus, Christian presence in Ibibioland has led to decline in certain practices considered incompatible with her doctrine but has not totally eradicated Ibibio culture. The study concluded that the interaction is not of total conflict but of continuous negotiation which prove certain elements of inculturation and syncretism resulting in Africanized Christianity. It is strongly recommended that a balanced inculturation approach that preserves positive Ibibio cultural values such as traditional language, arts, music, among others be maintained while promoting Christian moral principles for sustainable development of Ibibioland.

Keywords: Christianity, Socio-religious Interaction, Ibibio Culture, Inculturation, Akwa Ibom State

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Date Received: 18th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 29th September, 2026

Introduction

Christianity, which was introduced to the Ibibio people in the year 1846, did not meet the people in a religious vacuum. Rather, it met the people in their traditional religious background and cultural beliefs and practices of divinations, consulting oracles, sacrifices to gods, witchcraft, and superstition. These practices have continued to exist and exert influence on Ibibio people despite the numerous Christian groups and denominations operating in the area whose teachings and doctrines are directly against aspects of the cultural beliefs and practices.

Many Ibibio people, even professed Christians still patronise their indigenous religious traditions, especially

in time of crisis where they assume that prayer alone cannot solve all things, thus regressing to their traditional concept of *Abasi unyaŋa anyaŋa idem* – "Help yourself as God is saving or helping you". To many Ibibio Christians, this means that though becoming registered members of Christian churches, in your private life, you can still practice your traditional religion or revert to it during crisis situation. The influence of Ibibio religious traditions is still very strong in their being, despite their conversion to Christianity and their membership in diverse Christian Churches. Presently, the socio-religious interaction between Ibibio culture and Christianity presents a serious challenge to the Ibibio Christians. Hence, the question is; what is the possibility of expressing authentic Christian faith within the Ibibio cultural context?

Concept Clarifications

i. Syncretism

Syncretism is the combination of different forms of religious belief or practice, or the amalgamation of different religions (Tienou, 1990). It occurs when ideas, practices, and other entire worldviews are imported into a Christian frame of reference.

ii. Inculturation

Inculturation is the presentation and re-expression of the gospel in forms and terms proper to a particular culture and not the juxtaposition or compromise with the cultures of the place which invariably may lead to syncretism (Anthony, 2012). It refers to the incarnation of the Christian message in a particular cultural context in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the church and remarking it so as to bring a new creation.

iii. Ibibio (African) Christians

Phaswana (2000) observes that there is being developed an interpretation of Christianity and specifically for Christian Theology that one may describe as African**.** Actually, the point is that an African is becoming a Christian within his or her social and religious milieu. An African Christian therefore balances the African traditional values with the Christian beliefs and practices. Hence, Ibibio Christian(s) refers to an individual or group of African persons who do not see any contradiction in syncretising that is, holding a mixture of both African and Christian beliefs and practices at the same time in their daily religious observance. Accordingly, he or she is living a 'Christian life' in and from Africa cultural and traditional background, and equally interacting with African religion in all its facets in his or her daily life.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this paper is based on "Vygotsky's Socio-cultural Theory" advocated by Lev S. Vygotsky. The theory emphasized the influence of culture, environs, and people on the individual in physical, spiritual, emotional, mental, and psychological

being (McLeod, 2007). Thus, the way the individual communicates, understands, relates and cope with one another is influenced. Basically, Vygotsky's theory suggests that development depends on interaction with people and the tools that the culture provides to help people form their own view of the world. Thus, there are three ways a cultural tool can be passed from one individual to another. The first one is imitative learning where one person tries to imitate or copy another. The second way is by instructed learning which involves remembering the instructions of the teacher and then using these instructions to regulate self. The final way is through collaborative learning which involves a group of peers who strive to understand each other and work together to learn (Gallagher, 1999).

Aligned with this theory we understand that Christianity as a religion is a cultural institution which cannot exist in a cultural vacuum and cannot as well be culturally uniform. It cannot be introduced into a strange culture without first understanding the said culture, rooted, vested in it, and being ready to make use of it for the Gospel's sake. It is seen that the cultural growth of a person depends to a large extent on the social interactions with the societal norms, values and the wisdom of the elders or mature people as agent of communication that impact knowledge. Gallagher (1999) posits that social interaction leads to continuous step-by-step changes in people's thought and behaviour.

In view of this, the adoption of socio-cultural theory as the suitable theoretical framework to appraise the interactions between Christianity and Ibibio culture is very important in this study. Therefore, this theory demonstrates that sociologically Christianity though itself is a religion, needs some aspects of Ibibio culture for it survival in the area.

Brief History of Ibibio People

Ibibio is used and represented here as both a language, and as an ethnic group found in Akwa Ibom State, the modern South-south geographical zone of Nigeria. According to Udoh (2008), the Ibibio land lies to the South-Eastern corner of Nigeria, roughly between latitude 4° 25^{1} and 5° 30^{1} North and longitudes 7° 30^{1} and 8° 30^{1} East. He furthers that the Ibibio, to the South is bounded by the Bight of Bonny, Abia State forms its northern boundary. To the West, the Rivers and shares a common boundary with the Ijaws, while Cross River State lies in its Eastern boundary and shares a common boundary with the western Cameroon.

It is observed that the name Ibibio originally was a generic name for *okop usem Ibibio* - people who understand and speak Ibibio language clearly. Historically, this was applied to Annang, Ekid, Oron, and Central Ibibio, even the Efik; it was never applied in exclusive sense of today to designate solely the Central Ibibio. These various historical ethnic groups who have been known by this generic name 'Ibibio' share common origin,

customs, traditions, as well as language (Abasiattai, 1991a). Therefore, Ibibio is the name by which the people are called, and the language which they speak, and it is by this name that they are known today. This means that the term "Ibibio" is unique to the people, for it is used both for their language and identity (Lot, 2023).

Understanding Culture

Contextually, Culture remains the total way of life of the people which includes art, music, dance, religion, beliefs and practices, and everything that contributes to the survival of a man on earth. It is a mark of identity which consist both the material and immaterial aspects of the people in a given society. To understand it fully, Bediako (1988) maintains that culture is taken to mean the way of thinking and behaviour shared by a substantial social grouping which gives them identity in relation to others. It therefore seen that culture is a phenomenon of identity that marks out a people and makes them different from others. This means that every human must be culturally patterned in one way or the other for his acceptability into the given society. Perhaps this may be one of the reasons anthropologists, according to Etuk (2002) says that 'each culture is as good as another for it must contain within it those features which guarantee the survival of its people and function efficiently'. Thus, the uniqueness, personality, and individuality of a people are affirmed in its culture. It is therefore understood, that no culture is universal, rather, it is assimilated by a given group of people in a particular area. In its widest usage, culture means the totality of a people's way of life, using language as a most important ingredient and as an aspect where culture is identified, and a vehicle through which it is spread.

The Ibibio people however, are deeply embedded in their culture. This cultural behaviour had made them very artistic and celebrative in a special way. This artistic and dramatic way of life does interpret and preserve the religious beliefs and practices of the Ibibio people. For instance, in the pre-Christian days among the Ibibio, the people built *nwommo* - a monument for the inhabitation of the soul of an ancestor, and *iso ekpo-ete* and *iso ekpo-eka* shrines for paternal and maternal parents. These were well decorated traditionally with libation poured with sacrifices on a fixed date. These were the expressions of faith in an afterlife as well as veneration of ancestorship, portraying socio-religious responsibility of the Ibibio people. The Ibibio cultural practices are also expressed in their oral expression, sculpture, carving, weaving, music and dance. These are made to depict certain aspects of life of the people. The Ibibio language and its use of proverbs (*mme nke*) are vital aspects of the culture. Their musical rhythms and movements in dance give richness to their culture. These cultural imports have educated and provided easy way of understanding the socio-religious interaction between Christianity and the Ibibio culture (Etuk, 2002).

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Conceptually, the Ibibio culture is a world of ideals, arts and science which the people create for themselves. It provides the framework within which human life becomes meaningful based on standards of morality, shapes human's personality, and it is everything that is encapsulated in a people's way of life. It helps humans in a community to express themselves, questions issues, and make progress positively in life.

African/Ibibio Worldview

The worldview of the people general is religious in all aspects. To a large extent, worldview is a picture of the universe that man creates for himself. It involves a re-linking of nature, man and history to the supernatural. In Ibibio worldview, man is always at the centre, and surrounded by other beings. There is a spiritual view of life and almost everything is given a spiritual or religious interpretation. The activity which man carries out in his life shows the level of his interaction with his nature, cultural pattern, religious beliefs and philosophy (Lot, 2023).

Olumbe (2008) submits that worldview depends on the community to which a person belongs and grows up in, and on what is learned from family. Actually, religion dictates and shapes the worldview of a person. Conversely, religion is at the core of a person's worldview, it is essentially a manifestation of the underlying religious beliefs. Thus, an individual's worldview is reinforced through repetition of familiar religious actions and is generally taken for granted until one encounters a different worldview which forces them to analyse why they do or perceive things in a certain way.

A worldview is the framework of most basic beliefs that shapes our view of the world. It is a blueprint, or a map for reality: first, it helps to explain and interpret life and the world; and second, it is the starting point to view life, take decisions and actions, and the assumptions upon which we build our lives. Worldview helps in cultural interpretation of human surroundings, give improved meaning which allows us express ourselves in language, religion, art, notion of right or wrong explanation of the meaning of life – these constitute parts of the cultural systems of a society.

Practically in Ibibio sociological worldview, anything that would bring peace, joy and prosperity not only to the individual, but also to the community is accepted, while those things that would bring curses, sadness, sickness, death, calamity, disgrace or disrespect to the individual or the community are simply avoided and rejected, same is passed to the next generation.

The Concept of Ibibio Traditional Religion

It is difficult in tracing the origin of Ibibio Traditional Religion, that is when and who founded the religion. To accounts for the genesis of the African Traditional Religion, Kagema (2015) states that the existence of creatures implies a Creator of order, an Orderer, and of harmony, a Harmoniser.

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Observably, Ibibio Traditional Religion is as old as the first man on the Ibibio land. The religion originated by the people, from their experiences and quest for the unknown. Actually, the Ibibio's' reflection on their experiences in lives led them to reverence and display (sometimes shallow) fear for God.

It is equally noticeable that the African cosmology is basically religious and the title, African traditional religion shows that this religion had been practiced long before the introduction of other religions (such as Christianity, Islam and others) into the continent (Kibicho, 2010). Despite the coming of these new religions, the level of patronage enjoyed by indigenous belief systems and practices covertly and overtly proofs that African traditional religion is still a living religion (Nkonge and Gechuko, 2014). Obviously, Opoku (1993) observes that though this religion is not the only religion of the people of Africa, and in some parts of Africa the religion is no longer directly and regularly practiced; the religion does continue to the modern times in different ways and forms where it greatly influences the lives of the African people as a whole and Ibibio in particular.

The foremost principle in the Ibibio traditional religious belief system is the belief in two planes or worlds of existence; the physical and the spiritual. According to Abasiattai (1991c) the Ibibio conceive the universe as comprising the visible, material universe, and the invisible universe which is under the control of the *Abasi Ibom* (Supreme Deity) and divinities - *mme ndem*. Thus, both universes mingled and are subject to the *Abasi Ibom*. The ancestral or spiritual world (*obio ekpo)* is the abode of the ancestors or the living dead (*ekpo mkpa or mme ikaan*), the invisible, while the physical world – *aderibod*, is that of the living. These two planes or world must coexist in harmony with people to carry out their religious obligations judiciously (Lot, 2023).

The Advent of Christianity in Ibibioland

In the 19th century, the white explorers and missionaries introduced Christianity into the then South-Eastern Nigeria which serves as the springboard from where Christian religion spread to the surrounding communities including Ibibioland. According to Abasiattai (1991b), Christianity was introduced into Ibibio land by different missionaries, at diverse locations and at different times. Presbyterian Mission (or The United Free Church of Scotland) was led by Rev. Hope M. Waddell to Calabar in 1846 through the appeal made by the Kings of Calabar to the British Government in 1842 in anticipation of utilising the missionaries' skills to develop Efik land, but they later realised that Christianity has subverted Efik government and religion.

Edem (2012) opined that by 1885 when Britain declared Southern Nigeria a Protectorate, the Missionaries had already expanded inland along the Cross River and opened stations at Ikot Ana and Uwana in 1884 and 1887 respectively

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all in Akwa Ibom State. From Calabar, Mary Slessor, a missionary explorer, opened up a mission station in Itu in 1903. With the advent of the mission in Itu, the vast Ibibio mainland lay opened for the missionary enterprise into the whole Ibibio land. Actually, the Primitive Methodist Mission was established in Oron in 1894, from where it spread to Adadia (Ibibio) in the present Uruan Local Government Area in 1907 (Edem, 2012).

Similarly, through the initiatives of certain Ibeno Chiefs, Rev. Samuel A. Bill brought Qua Iboe Mission to the area in 1887, and by 1906, Rev. Bill assisted by other missionaries and indigenous converts penetrated and extended their mission territories in the Ibibio land extensively. Afterward, The Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Ikot Abasi in 1902, Roman Catholic Mission in 1904 were established. Later, in 1930s, The Apostolic Church Nigeria, Assemblies of God Mission (now Assemblies of God, Nigeria) and others came on board. According to Edet (2024), the impact of the Lutheran Church of Nigeria in Akwa Ibom State started with her arrival in 1936. The Church started with sixteen congregations under the supervision of Rev. Dr. Henry Nau as the Pioneer Minister. The congregational system was adopted as her operational church governance. With this, the Church grew into several congregations within and outside Akwa Ibom State Through this missionary endeavour, mission schools were established in Eket 1889, Etinan in 1898, Ikot Ubo in 1904 among others. Noah (1994) asserts that apart from building of schools and preaching the doctrine against the killing of twin children, the Qua Iboe Mission in 1916 established Mission Institute, Etinan which has played an extremely important role in the educational advancement of the Ibibio and the entire state.

The early missionaries saw themselves as social and religious reformers, who tried in their own way to achieve their mission goal, which was the conversion of Ibibio people into Christianity. It seems their approach and attitude did not produce a wholesome result. This is because most of the Ibibio people only know how to live within their traditional religious context which is the embodiment of their cultures (Abasiattai, 1991a). They were of the opinion that by condemning the Ibibio traditional religious beliefs and practices, social and political means of control, they would produce converts in the new faith; but this rather produced people with split personality - who could neither be totally African, and at the same time, not firmly rooted in Christianity.

According to Essien (2011), as the various forms of Christianity spread through Ibibioland, at a glance, one would think that Christianity has succeeded in uprooting the traditional religious practices of the people. But even in the 21st century, this is far from the truth. Rather, the religious movements that abound in the area have attempted to maintain the practices of the traditional religious system especially in the area of

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witch-hunting, spiritual diagnoses of sickness and determining the causes of death and so on.

Udo (1983) maintained that the Europeans saw the shrines for the Ibibio minor deities and ancestors and learned that Ibibio believe that the deities and ancestors have souls in living animals. They condemned Ibibio traditional religion and categorized it as animism. They claimed that the Ibibio have no concept of the Supreme God who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Consequently, the Christian Missionaries made every effort to replace Ibibio traditional religion with Christianity, which they claimed to be monotheistic. Antia (2005) says Christianity preached against almost everything African. The new faith insisted on absolute devotion to the one and only God, whereas the authorities and the people of the land recognised and worshipped many deities.

Howbeit, the advent of Christianity in Ibibioland had meant the introduction of a Christian worldview, different from Ibibio traditional worldview. Admittedly, Christianity made tremendous impact in the area. It abolished slave trade and slavery, human sacrifices and killing of twins, introduced education, established hospitals and charity homes. It destroyed some level of superstition, increased human knowledge and brought about improved human welfare. Through education and Christian religion, it was possible for the Ibibio to re-shape their faith and worldview.

Perception of Ibibio People towards the Early Christian Missionaries

Obviously, Christian missionary enterprise in the Ibibio was nurtured in the era of colonialism. Therefore, due to colonial factor, many of the converts to Christianity adopted a new identity based on the colonial-Christian order. The missionaries felt that the Ibibio never knew anything about God, nor acquired any acceptable cultural characteristic that has any relationship or bearing with Christianity. Therefore, they appeared to be hostile to Ibibio cultures and their religious beliefs and practices. May be, they did not see the compatibility between Ibibio religious traditions and Christianity. Therefore, they tried their best to uproot the Ibibio culture and religious traditions and to supplant them with imported Christianity which of course was clothed in Western cultures.

In 1945 when Christian enterprise reaches its peak in Ibibioland in 1945, the traditional religious beliefs and practices still maintained relevance. The people did not instantly and readily accept the Christian missionaries and their messages. The perception towards the missionaries was generally as a result of human behaviour that does not easily welcome change especially religious beliefs and practices which is part of their cultural heritage. Apparently, human beings as a whole cannot simply change his or her religious tradition except there are proofs beyond all reasonable doubts that the new religion has a better alternative than the old (Lot, 2023).

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Uncompromisingly, the people greeted the missionaries with suspicion, unfriendliness, scepticism and resentment. Reasons responsible for these hostilities were the curiosity and fear in the minds of the Ibibio people due to the colour of skin of the white missionaries, differences in nationality, and religious perception. The people were struck with anxiety considering the missionaries to be either ghost or superhuman. The people even suspected and judged the missionaries to be enemies or spies who came to steal the rich cultural endowments or expose them to surrounding enemies. Some missionaries were attacked mercilessly and even murdered in the course of trying to evangelise the interior parts of the Ibibio society. These actions rendered the environment harsh for missionaries (Edem, 2012). The insensitivity was very obvious.

Moreover, Ibibio indigenes especially the Chiefs were skeptical about the education that was introduced by the missionaries. Therefore, mostly slaves, orphans and handicapped children were given out to school while the sons and daughters of the Chiefs were kept away to care after the traditional heritage. Most importantly, the missionaries condemned the divinities and deities of the land and prevented the Christian converts from ancestral venerations. Besides, sacred rivers, streams and ponds that were defied, were challenged by the new converts to Christianity. These sacrilegious behaviours were interpreted as serious offence to the divinities and deities of the land. Hence, without the instrument of colonialism, and cataclysm of colonial conquests, Christian march through Akwa Ibom State as a whole and Ibibioland could not have been as smooth as it is today. However, some communities such as Itu were friendly and receptive, and some Chiefs even regarded the presence of the European Missionaries as blessing and prestige (Odey, 2010). Consequently, Western Christianity was transplanted into Ibibio traditional society, root and branch, in terms of doctrine, worship and polity without the necessary adaptations and modifications which the cultural context demanded (Odey, 2010).

Conceptualization of interactions between Christianity and Ibibio Culture

Christianity is a revolutionary and progressive faith. Christianity as a religion transcends all cultures from its beginning, and the Gospel message has not been tied to any cultural background. It is not a traditional religion to any people; no community claims it as its indigenous and natural religion or a national cult. The nature of Christianity automatically challenges as well as harmonizes any existing culture in any community it finds itself (Onunwa, 2008). This offers Christianity opportunity to embrace all cultures and every aspect of human life yet; it often offers a challenge and cannot compromise with any cultural and traditional elements that do not allow full expression of Christian faith. Jesus Christ called for a new way of life in which all social and cultural barriers

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would be broken. Obviously, there are often tensions arising out of the opposition it poses to certain traditional and cultural values.

Historically, Christianity did not enter an empty world; the Roman (Empire) culture provided the nursery bed in which the early church was nurtured. Christianity therein built their basic theological and doctrinal formulations from the conceptions of the popular religions that existed before its birth (Onunwa, 2008). In other words, the cultural background and the basic traditional religious tenets of the Roman Empire helped and nurtured Christianity in its upbringing, the Greek cultural context and all her philosophical thoughts inclusive (Onunwa, 2008). Yet, Christianity had to select what seemed good and profitable to its own goal, survival, mission, and made use of them in order to make itself relevant and meaningful to the people.

Onunwa (2008) further observes that Christianity does a lot of things to any culture it meets. First it absorbs its positive and progressive aspects, refines, purifies and expresses itself through them. Finally, it throws away what it considers obstacles to human development, progress and fulfilment inherent in that cultural system. Mugambi (2013) maintains that Christianity cannot be expressed or communicated without a cultural medium. Thus, language as an aspect of culture is being used as a medium for the expression and communication of the Christian faith. The people speak Ibibio language as their cultural identity, and Christianity is expressed and communicated only through this cultural medium. That is why for the traditional Ibibio Christians; as far as their culture is concern their daily rituals and religious practices become very cordial and inseparable partners.

Christianity cannot afford to stand outside an existing culture; for it will permeate it, absorb it, purify it and propagate itself through the cultural context of such area for the good of the people. Christianity has the capacity and capability to incarnate itself in any culture as Christ did, "Word became Flesh, and lived among men" (John 1:14). It can speak to the people in their diverse languages and symbols, and penetrates to the innermost part of their cultures. Thus, no culture can imprison authentic Christianity nor claim the monopoly of it.

The emphasis on sexual abstinence outside of marriage and marital fidelity by The Apostolic Church doctrines is in harmony with the traditional culture of the Ibibio society, which also stresses the same values. The emphasis on spiritual forces behind events in the material world finds a strong parallel in the Ibibio traditional worldview, but using different ways to approach it.

In Ibibio land, it is observed that there is a pronounced opposition to certain aspects of cultural and traditional religious beliefs and practices. For instance, Christianity forbids her members from performing *uwa nkpo*

adiaha-owo; awa-oduongo, *ye awa-adia* - the traditional marital rites for the first daughter that involve obnoxious sacrificial rituals. The Christian members, who had already performed them, renounced their vows and those not yet performed refused to go through the rituals. Libation, *uduod ukod nno/nkood mme ikaan*, which is a common aspect in every traditional event in Ibibio tradition and culture, is opposed by the church as it emphasizes that prayer to God alone in the name of Jesus Christ. The effect of this, according to Parrat (1997), is to break down traditional influence on the people and society, and to create a new society with different cultural and integrative values.

Moreso, the idea of 'rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God', by the traditional Ibibio Christians when faced with life crises, is directly in opposition to Christian tenets. Equally, among the Ibibio people, it is observed that there is always a reversion to divination – *use nkpo*, and spiritual explanation for sudden occurrences in the physical world. The people speak of evil spirits and witches who use their powers for destructive purposes. Thus, it is possible for Ibibio person to belong to the world of church and Christianity strictly on Sundays, and turn to diviners and medicine-men to manage his affairs for the rest of the week and live his normal life (Etuk, 2002). Therefore, we see an Ibibio Christian living in two contrasting worlds, when things are pleasant, he will go to church and gives testimony, coming back home he will pour libation to his ancestors; when facing life threatening situation, he will immediately consult diviners and medicine-men for solution without any further consideration.

The Church has it that God has the ultimate power, and everything happens at His command. The Church emphasizes that the power in the name of Jesus Christ is the only power to overcome all other spiritual forces. Deliverance from demonic attacks in the name of Jesus Christ forms a significant part of the doctrines of the Church. Thus, the fear of witchcraft and other spiritual forces have been significantly allayed through the demonstration of the reality of the power of God in many Christian Churches. Apparently, Christianity has transcended all human cultures and expresses itself through the culture of the local community it comes across.

Africa as a whole and Ibibio in particular is not strange t**o** Christianity; it has been planted and rooted deeply in the Ibibio soil for a long time though with varied history. Je'adayibe (2012) asserts that what Africa as a whole is witnessing presently as a global shift to the African continent with the Christian growth is actually a return of Christianity to its historical antecedents that had marked its early growth and impact. However, the originality and peculiarity of the life of Christianity and of the mission was not compromised despite the immense influences from culture and tradition of the society where it existed. It is only the people, the nominal Christians, that

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syncretised. The cultural influences did not cause the deviation from the basic Christian doctrines. This is to prove that Christianity had always known how to cope with challenging cultural global realities and to pick the variable elements from the existing cultures in order to propagate its message to the world. This is the basic features of Christianity from time immemorial (Onunwa, 2008). Therefore, among some Ibibio Christians, Christianity is understood as a social organisation wherein God and money can be seriously and conscientiously worshiped simultaneously. Some regarded Christianity as a religion where money is demanded as a symbol of membership, just as it is in any secular organisation (Sunday Ubong Akpan, personal communication on 2/8/2026).

Comfort Akpan Saviour (personal communication on 2/8/2026) noted that nowadays, most sermons that are preached in many churches actually make the members to feel that their regular payment of tithes, dues, and other offerings into the coffers of the church will not only bring untold blessings to them in the here and now, but will ensure them wealth when they get to heaven. It is therefore pertinent to see more of prosperity preaching in almost all the Christian churches than repentance and salvation messages by the ministers, and the members see the regular offering as a channel through which a person can reap rewards after death. A number of worshippers are made to believe that the cheque for the large donation they make to the Church is the treasure that is laid up for them in heaven. This leads to the concept of heaven as a bank vault where church money is kept.

Emmanuel David (personal communication on 1/7/2026) noted that for others, Christianity is a religion by which professing Christians are permitted to partake in the Holy Communion as external identification. Obviously, for other Ibibio Christians, Christianity has meaning in terms of its pragmatic advantages and materials usefulness over non-Christians religions. According to Israel Effiong (personal communication on 12/7/2026), this is obvious because most Christians embraced Christianity because it helped them have less expensive funeral for their parents. For instance, some churches help in buying the coffin, while other members support financially during funeral ceremonies. Furthermore, according to Anietie Ekpo (personal communication 12/7/2026) some churches have some social groups in which members form themselves into, this includes: youth fellowship, women and men fellowships. Such groups always come together to support their individual member especially during social functions like marriages, child dedications, thanksgiving services, funerals, and so on. Moreover, Ekerete Arthur (personal communication on 2/8/2026) opines that in many Christian Churches bachelors and spinsters always find their marriage partners. Sometimes, they make contacts that would help them get more customers for their business, even to get some governmental and political appointments.

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Conclusion

The paper noted that Christianity embraces all cultures including the Ibibio culture and every aspect of human life, and compliments aspects of Ibibio culture. Besides, it often offers a challenge and is stubbornly intolerant, and uncompromising to the cultural and traditional elements that do not accept it full expression. It has been able to speak to the people in their language and symbol, and penetrating the innermost part of their cultures. Notably, the Ibibio culture provided the nursery bed in which Christianity was nurtured in Ibibio of Akwa Ibom State.

Nevertheless, syncretistic practices among many Ibibio show that Ibibio traditional religion is still alive and active in the life and soul of the people. The resilience of the traditional religious beliefs and practices cannot obviously be denied. This is evidence because the people have re-explained many of their rituals, believing to give them new meaning and dimension. This exists as a subsidiary within or under the cloak of Christian practices. Thus, the Ibibio people who have been converted to Christianity are unable to extricate themselves from their traditional religious beliefs and practices. But this encounter with Christianity means that the worldview will never remain what it was.

Recommendations

Based on the interaction between Christianity and the Ibibio culture; the following are the recommendations:

i. The Ibibio Christians must acquaint themselves with certain aspects of their culture and tradition such as language, arts, music, dance, because the Christian faith is to be effectively expressed and communicated only in culturally designed media.

ii. The clergies must translate their understanding of the Christian faith into the cultural and traditional term familiar to their prospective converts, converting them appropriately to the faith without syncretising.

iii. Trained and spiritually equipped biblical scholars should be called into the ministry, and those already in the ministry should be educated effectively to avoid syncretism.

iv. The preaching and teaching about the power of God and His salvation should commence very early in ones' life before and after conversion in water baptism.

v. More concerted efforts should be geared towards preaching the undiluted message of salvation, and not heresy that is after materialism.

vi. The Government should also make health facilities accessible and affordable and make the people aware of the importance of healthy living.

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ORAL INTERVIEW

S/N	NAME	AGE	STATUS	DATE
1.	Emmanuel David	60	Elder	1/7/2026
2.	Israel Effiong	35	Brother	12/7/2026
3.	Anietie Ekpo	39	Deacon	12/7/2026
4.	Ekerete Arthur	71	Elder	2/8/2026
5.	Sunday Ubong akpan	58	Elder	2/8/2026
6.	Comfort Akpambang	58	Deaconess	2/8/2026
7.	Saviour Akpan	51	Brother	2/8/2026
8.	Nse-Abasi S. Akpan	56	Pastor	12/8/2026
9.	EnobongOkonEtim	39	Chorister	12/8/206
10.	Enefiok E. Udo	62	Elder	12/8/2026
11.	Elizabeth Saturday Akpabong	38	Chorister	12/8/2026
12.	Christiana Enobong	33	Sunday School Teacher	1/9/2026
13.	Bassey Ekanem	42	Elder	1/9/2026
14.	Janet Okon	28	Member	1/92026

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Empirical Article

Open Access

The Influence of Agricultural Education on Job Creation Among Youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State

Abstract

This study examined the influence of agricultural education on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area (LGA), Enugu State, with particular attention to innovative agricultural training and agricultural entrepreneurship programmes. A descriptive survey design was adoptedwith the target population comprising 1,363 youths who participated in the Enugu State Agricultural Development Programme (ENADEP) in Aninri during the 2024–2025 programme cycle. From it, 299 respondents were selected using the Freund and Williams sample-size procedure. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 significance level. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities ($r = .671$, $p = .003$, $n = 299$). Agricultural entrepreneurship programme participation also had a positive relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness ($r = .761$, $p = .024$, $n = 299$). Descriptively, innovative training recorded a grand mean of 3.30 (SD = 1.08), while agricultural entrepreneurship programmes recorded a grand mean of 3.82 (SD = 0.98). The findings suggested that practical, technology-oriented agricultural education and entrepreneurship support can strengthen youth participation, self-employment and agribusiness engagement. The study recommended stronger integration of modern production technologies, business-management skills, finance, market linkages and digital tools into youth agricultural programmes.

Keywords: *Agricultural education, innovative agricultural training, agricultural entrepreneurship, youth, agribusiness, job creation, Aninri.*

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Date Received: 10th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 30th September, 2026

Introduction

Youth unemployment remains a major development concern because inadequate access to productive work can weaken household welfare, deepen poverty and encourage rural–urban migration. Agriculture and the wider agrifood system offer a particularly important employment pathway because opportunities extend beyond primary production to input supply, mechanisation, processing, logistics, marketing, retail and digital services. FAO's recent evidence shows that agrifood systems remain a major source of employment for young people globally

and argues that youth need better access to skills, productive resources, finance, markets and technology.

The relevance of youth participation is especially strong in Africa, where demographic growth is occurring alongside changing agricultural labour requirements. FAO (2025) reports that 44% of working youth globally rely on agrifood systems for employment and emphasises that young people can become producers, processors, service providers and innovators. The implication is that agricultural education should not be restricted to conventional production skills; it should also develop entrepreneurial, technological, financial and market competencies.

In Nigeria, the employment potential of agriculture has been recognised through several youth-oriented interventions. Evidence from the Fadama Graduate Unemployed Youth and Women Support programme indicates that agricultural training can improve agripreneurship performance, while participation in youth-in-agribusiness programmes can reduce poverty and vulnerability. These findings reinforce the argument that education becomes more economically valuable when training is connected to productive assets, markets, finance and enterprise development.

The present study focuses on Aninri LGA of Enugu State, an area with substantial agricultural activity and participation in ENADEP programmes. The study responds to the need for context-specific evidence on whether innovative agricultural training and entrepreneurship education are associated with youth participation in agriculture and agribusiness. The study discovered that youths in Enugu State have shown interest in agricultural information, but that some campaigns have not been sufficiently practical or convincing to translate information into sustained participation. This distinction between receiving information and developing employable capability is central to the present investigation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the employment potential of agriculture, many young people remain insufficiently engaged in productive agricultural and agribusiness activities. The problem is not simply a lack of agricultural resources; it also concerns whether young people possess the practical competencies, confidence, entrepreneurial skills, finance and market knowledge needed to convert agricultural opportunities into viable livelihoods. Where agricultural education remains theoretical or disconnected from technology and enterprise development, its contribution to job creation may be limited.

The problem is particularly relevant in rural communities where young people face constraints such as inadequate capital, weak market access, limited mechanisation and perceptions of agriculture as labour-intensive. The original study therefore identifies a local evidence gap: limited empirical work directly examining the relationship between innovative agricultural training,

agricultural entrepreneurship programmes and youth employment-related participation in Aninri LGA.

Aims and Objective

The main objective was to examine the influence of agricultural education on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State. Other specific objectives were to;

vi. Assess the influence of innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA.

vii. Evaluate the influence of agricultural entrepreneurship programmes on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA.

Research Questions

- What influence does innovative agricultural training have on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA?
- What influence does agricultural entrepreneurship programming have on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA?

Hypotheses

H01: Innovative agricultural training has no significant relationship with youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri LGA.

H02: Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes have no significant relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri LGA.

Conceptual Clarifications

Agricultural Education

Agricultural education refers to formal and informal learning processes through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to agricultural production, agribusiness and the wider food system. In the context of this study, it includes practical training, technology-oriented instruction, entrepreneurship education and other learning activities intended to equip youths to participate productively in agriculture.

Contemporary evidence suggests that agricultural education is more likely to influence career and enterprise choices when learners perceive the learning environment, teaching quality and course content as relevant to actual agribusiness opportunities. In Nigeria, research on agricultural degree programmes found that perceptions of learning and teaching significantly influenced students' choice of agribusiness as a career. This supports a broader view of agricultural education as a pathway that shapes both competence and occupational orientation.

Innovative Agricultural Training

Innovative agricultural training involves the use of improved production techniques, appropriate mechanisation, digital tools, demonstrations, practical learning and problem-solving approaches. The concept responds to the perception that conventional agricultural work is physically demanding and

technologically outdated. Innovative training can make agricultural careers more attractive by demonstrating productivity-enhancing technologies and by giving learners practical competencies that are directly transferable to farm and non-farm value-chain activities.

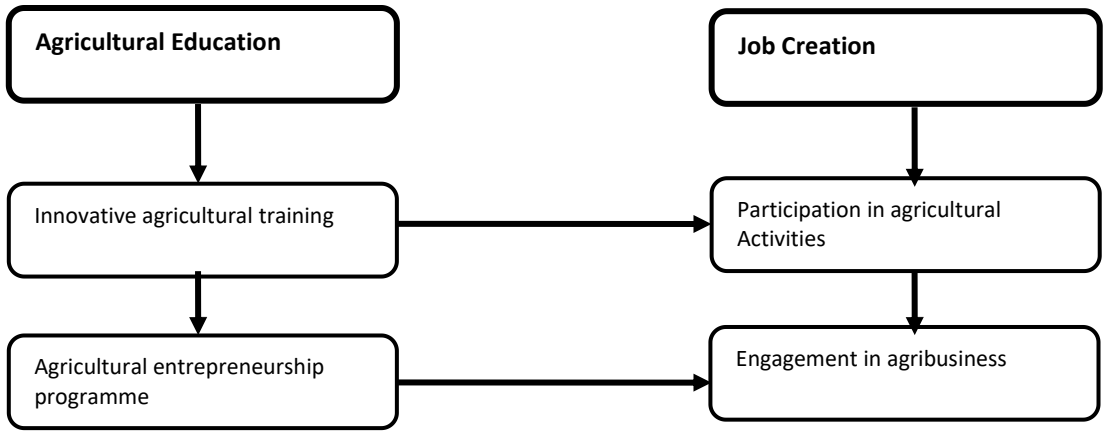
Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme

Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes are structured interventions designed to help participants identify agricultural business opportunities, develop business plans, manage enterprises, access finance and markets, and operate profitably. Such programmes are particularly important because participation in agriculture does not automatically translate into employment or income. Entrepreneurship education helps youths move from being potential producers to becoming owners or managers of viable agribusiness ventures.

Job Creation and Youth Participation

In this study, job creation is operationalised broadly to include self-employment, entrepreneurial engagement and employment-related participation in agricultural value chains. Youth participation in agricultural activities includes production, livestock, processing and related activities, while agribusiness engagement includes input supply, production, processing, marketing, distribution and other commercial services.

Conceptual Framework



Source: (Nade, & Malamsha, 2021; Addo, 2024; Okoli, & Onugha, 2025; Uzochukwu, *et. al.*,2015)

Fig. 1: Diagram of Conceptual Framework

The study hypothesized that agricultural education will have a significant influence on job creation among youths in Aninri Local Government Area, Enugu State. It further proposed a significant relationship between innovative

agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities; And a significant relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship programme and youth engagement in agribusiness.

Theoretical Framework

Human Development Theory

The study is anchored on the Human Development perspective associated with Haq (1995) and Sen (1999). Human development focuses on expanding people's capabilities and substantive opportunities to lead productive and meaningful lives. Education is important within this framework because it expands the knowledge, skills and choices available to individuals.

Applied to agricultural education, the theory suggests that training can expand youths' capability to identify opportunities, adopt improved practices, manage enterprises and participate in markets. Agricultural education therefore represents more than the transfer of technical information; it is a capability-building mechanism. When young people gain practical skills and entrepreneurial competencies, they may have greater freedom to choose productive livelihoods and create income-generating activities.

The theory is particularly appropriate to the Aninri context because agricultural employment can be understood as an avenue for expanding economic capability in a rural setting. Innovative training may improve technical capability, while entrepreneurship programmes may strengthen business and market capability. Together, these forms of education can widen the range of livelihood opportunities available to young people.

Empirical Review

Innovative Training and Youth Participation

Addo *et al.* (2024) reported evidence that agricultural education can support community development and employment, indicating the importance of structured education in building productive capabilities. Although their context differs from Aninri, the study provides support for examining agricultural education as an employment-oriented intervention.

Research on youth participation in agricultural training programmes in Nigeria also indicates that participation is shaped by demographic, educational and attitudinal factors. Adeyanju *et al*. (2020), using data from 977 respondents in a Fadama-related programme, found that programme participation was associated with factors including age, formal education, perceptions of agricultural programmes and employment status. Importantly, participation in the programme increased the likelihood of youth engagement in agribusiness.

Similarly, a 2021 study of agricultural training and youth agripreneurship performance in Nigeria found that programme participation improved agripreneurship performance after controlling for selection effects. The

outcome was measured using average income from agripreneurship activities, providing evidence that training may have economic effects beyond attitudes or intentions.

Evidence from ENABLE-TAAT programmes across Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda further indicates that participation in agripreneurship empowerment programmes can improve young agripreneurs' skills. The study of 1,435 young agripreneurs found that participants had higher agripreneurship skill scores than non-participants and that programme participation had a positive causal effect on skills.

These findings are consistent with the argument that innovative agricultural education should be practical and linked to real economic opportunities. Training can influence participation by increasing technical competence, confidence, awareness of opportunities and perceived attractiveness of agriculture.

Entrepreneurship Programmes and Agribusiness Engagement

Adeyanju *et al*. (2020) found that participation in agricultural programmes positively influenced youths' likelihood of engaging in agribusiness. Their evidence is particularly relevant because the programme combined training and empowerment support and involved Nigerian youths.

Bello *et al*. (2022) examined the Youth-in-Agribusiness Programme in Nigeria using data from 668 youths and found that participation had a significant positive effect on poverty reduction and reduced vulnerability to future poverty. The authors argued for strengthening skills acquisition and youth empowerment programmes. This supports the proposition that agricultural entrepreneurship can generate welfare benefits when training is connected to enterprise opportunities.

A 2022 study of youths' willingness to exploit agribusiness opportunities in Nigeria also showed that entrepreneurial characteristics and contextual factors matter for youths' willingness to pursue agribusiness. Such evidence indicates that enterprise development is partly a matter of building entrepreneurial orientation and opportunity-recognition capability.

Recent evidence continues to strengthen this argument. Aruleba (2024) examined stimulation of youth interest in agribusiness for employability in rural communities in southwest Nigeria, focusing on motivations, employability skills and mechanisms for addressing barriers. The study reinforces the importance of making agribusiness attractive and developing skills that correspond with labour-market requirements.

The international evidence is also instructive. FAO's 2025 assessment emphasises that youth engagement in agrifood systems requires access to skills, productive resources, finance, markets and technology. Consequently, entrepreneurship programmes should not be limited to classroom instruction; they should create pathways into viable value chains. The literature demonstrates the value of training and

entrepreneurship interventions, but relatively fewer studies combine innovative agricultural training and entrepreneurship programming within a single local-government context. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining both pathways among ENADEP-trained youths in Aninri LGA.

Methodology

Research Design and Area

A descriptive survey design was used. The design was considered suitable because the study sought to examine respondents' experiences and perceptions of agricultural education programmes without manipulating the study variables. The research was conducted in Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State, an agrarian area where crop production, livestock and agro-based activities are important livelihood activities.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised 1,363 male and female youths who participated in ENADEP agricultural and entrepreneurial programmes in Aninri during the 2024–2025 programme cycle. Using the Freund and Williams formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% tolerable error, a sample size of 299 was obtained.

Sampling and Instrument

The study reports the use of simple random sampling to select respondents. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire covering demographic information, exposure to innovative agricultural education, participation in entrepreneurship programmes and employment-related agricultural engagement. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Validity and Reliability

Content and face validity were established through expert review involving specialists in agricultural education, research methodology, measurement and evaluation. A pilot study involving 30 ENADEP-trained youths in Awgu LGA produced a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for the instrument.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the relationships corresponding to the two hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23.0.

Decision Rule

For the descriptive items, a mean score of 3.00 or above was interpreted as agreement. For hypothesis testing, statistical significance was determined at $p < .05$.

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Results

OBJECTIVE 1: The influence of innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 4.1.1: innovative agricultural training on youth participation in agricultural activities

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	- X	SD	Decision
1	Innovative agricultural training programmes have increased my interest in participating in farming and related activities.	78 (25.7 %)	74 (24.4 %)	53 (17.5%)	57 (18.8 %)	37 (12.4 %)	818	3.4	1.1	Agree
2	The agricultural training, I received exposed me to modern farming techniques that improved my productivity.	58 (19.4 %)	78 (26.1 %)	68 (22.7%)	58 (19.4 %)	37 (12.4 %)	855	3.3	1.0	Agree
3	Training in innovative agricultural practices has motivated me to view agriculture as a profitable career choice.	62 (20.7 %)	77 (25.8 %)	74 (24.7%)	58 (19.4 %)	28 (9.4 %)	830	3.1	1.2	Agree
4	Participation in agricultural training programmes has enhanced my practical skills and confidence in agricultural ventures.	68 (22.7 %)	78 (26.1 %)	66 (22.1%)	47 (15.7 %)	40 (13.4 %)	830	3.5	1.1	Agree
5	Innovative agricultural training has led to greater youth involvement in community-based agricultural projects within Aninri.	53 (17.7 %)	77 (25.8 %)	60 (20.1%)	62 (20.7 %)	47 (15.7 %)	890	3.2	1.0	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard deviation				**3.3**	**1.08**				

The results show general agreement that innovative agricultural training improved youth participation. The highest mean (3.5) was recorded for enhanced practical skills and confidence, suggesting that hands-on learning may be especially important. Interest in farming also recorded a positive mean of 3.4, while exposure to modern farming techniques recorded 3.3.

The findings indicate that the training experience was not restricted to knowledge acquisition; respondents

perceived changes in confidence, interest and participation. The overall mean of 3.30 indicates a moderately positive assessment. The result supports the argument that agricultural training becomes more influential when it addresses practical barriers and introduces modern methods. This is consistent with evidence from Nigeria showing that agricultural training programmes can improve youth agripreneurship performance and with wider evidence that skills, technology and opportunity access are central to youth engagement in agrifood systems.

OBJECTIVE 2: The influence of agricultural entrepreneurship programme on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Table 4.1.2: Agricultural entrepreneurship programme on youth engagement in agribusiness

		5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD	∑FX	- X	SD	Decision
1	The agricultural entrepreneurship programmes have equipped me with business management skills for running agribusiness ventures.	77 (25.8 %)	96 (32.1 %)	62 (20.7%)	41 (13.7 %)	23 (7.7 %)	749	3.8	1.0	Agree
2	Participation in entrepreneurship training has enabled me to start or plan to start my own agribusiness enterprise.	88 (29.4 %)	90 (30.1 %)	40 (13.4%)	49 (16.4 %)	32 (10.7 %)	762	3.9	0.9	Agree
3	The entrepreneurship programmes provided adequate financial and advisory support for youth agribusiness initiatives.	64 (21.4 %)	78 (26.1 %)	65 (21.7%)	54 (18.1 %)	38 (12.7 %)	839	3.7	1.1	Agree
4	Agricultural entrepreneurship education has improved my ability to identify and exploit agribusiness opportunities.	80 (26.8 %)	80 (26.8 %)	59 (19.7%)	46 (15.4 %)	34 (11.4 %)	789	3.8	1.0	Agree
5	The entrepreneurship programmes have significantly increased youth employment and self-reliance in agribusiness within Aninri.	80 (26.8 %)	78 (26.1 %)	54 (18.1%)	55 (18.4 %)	32 (10.7 %)	796	3.9	0.9	Agree
	Grand mean and standard deviation				**3.82**	**0.98**				

The results reveal stronger agreement for agricultural entrepreneurship programmes than for innovative training. The highest means (3.9) were obtained for starting or planning an agribusiness and increased employment/self-reliance. The mean of 3.7 for financial and advisory support was the lowest among the five indicators, suggesting that support services may require further strengthening.

Overall, the grand mean of 3.82 indicates a high level of agreement that entrepreneurship programmes contributed to youth engagement in agribusiness. The pattern suggests that respondents perceived enterprise-oriented education as particularly relevant to self-employment. Entrepreneurship education may be most effective when it combines business skills with practical production knowledge, finance, mentoring and market access. The finding is consistent with Nigerian evidence that youth agribusiness programmes can improve economic outcomes when participants receive structured training and support.

Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS ONE: Innovative agricultural training has a significant influence on youth participation in agricultural activities in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Correlations

		Innovative agricultural training	participation in agricultural activities
Pearson Correlation	Innovative agricultural training	1.000	.671
	participation in agricultural activities	.671	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Innovative agricultural training	.	.003
	participation in agricultural activities	.003	.
N	Innovative agricultural training	299	299
	participation in agricultural activities	299	299

The correlation between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities was positive and statistically significant (r = .671, p = .003). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The result indicates that higher levels of innovative training exposure were associated with higher levels of youth participation in agricultural activities.

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HYPOTHESES TWO:Agricultural entrepreneurship programme has a significant influence on youth engagement in agribusiness in Aninri Local Government Area, in Enugu State, Nigeria

Correlations

		Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	engagement in agribusiness
Pearson Correlation	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	1.000	.761
	engagement in agribusiness	.761	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	.	.024
	engagement in agribusiness	.024	.
N	Agricultural entrepreneurship programme	299	299
	engagement in agribusiness	299	299

The relationship between agricultural entrepreneurship programme participation and youth engagement in agribusiness was positive and statistically significant (r = .761, p = .024). The null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates a strong positive association between entrepreneurship programming and youth engagement in agribusiness.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding demonstrates a moderately strong positive association between innovative agricultural training and youth participation in agricultural activities. This finding is consistent with the Human Development perspective because training expands the capabilities required to participate productively. It also aligns with Nigerian studies showing that participation in agricultural training programmes can improve agripreneurship performance.

The descriptive results provide additional context. Respondents reported improvements in interest, exposure to modern techniques, practical skills and confidence. This suggests that innovation is relevant not only because of technology itself but because it can change how young people perceive agricultural work. When agriculture is presented as a field involving mechanisation, improved production methods, digital information and enterprise opportunities, it may become more attractive as a career.

The second finding, indicates a strong positive association between entrepreneurship programming and agribusiness engagement. This is consistent with evidence from Fadama-related programmes and Youth-in-Agribusiness interventions in Nigeria. The findings suggest that enterprise education can help bridge the gap between knowing about agriculture and operating an agricultural business.

The stronger correlation for entrepreneurship programming may reflect the direct connection between

business-management competencies and commercial engagement. Training that covers opportunity identification, planning, finance, marketing and enterprise management is more directly aligned with self-employment than general agricultural knowledge alone. The findings also correspond with FAO's recent emphasis on skills, productive resources, finance, markets and digital access as components of youth-inclusive agrifood systems. The implication is that agricultural education should be designed as an integrated employment pathway rather than as isolated technical instruction.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

i. Innovative agricultural training had a positive and significant relationship with youth participation in agricultural activities ($r = .671$, $p = .003$).

ii. Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes had a positive and significant relationship with youth engagement in agribusiness ($r = .761$, $p = .024$).

Conclusion

The study concludes that agricultural education is an important component of youth employment development in Aninri LGA. Innovative agricultural training is associated with stronger participation in agricultural activities, while entrepreneurship-oriented programming is strongly associated with engagement in agribusiness. The findings reinforce the view that agricultural education can contribute to employment when it develops practical capabilities and connects young people to enterprise opportunities.

Recommendations

iii. Government and agricultural development agencies should expand practical, technology-oriented training that includes mechanisation, improved production methods, digital agriculture and problem-solving.

iv. Agricultural entrepreneurship programmes should combine business-management education with mentoring, financial literacy, access to credit and market linkages. ENADEP and similar programmes should strengthen value-chain training so youths can participate in input supply, production, processing, logistics, marketing and digital agricultural services.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes local empirical evidence on the relationship between two dimensions of agricultural education—innovative training and agricultural entrepreneurship programming—and youth employment-related participation in Aninri LGA. It extends the discussion beyond general claims about agriculture and employment by examining specific educational pathways and their association with participation in agriculture and agribusiness.

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Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)

Volume 1, Number 4

Mixed-Method Article

Open Access

Influence of Social Media on the Revival of African Traditional Religion: Implications for Christian Evangelization in Enugu State

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of social media on the revival of African Traditional Religion (ATR) and its implication for Christian Evangelization in Enugu state. Four research questions guided this study just as the work is anchored on Cultivation Theory, and Technological Determinism Theory. The population of the study comprised 889,189 users of social media in Enugu state and a sample of 384 users was drawn from 17 Local Governments in Enugu state. Survey research design was adopted to collect data for the study while the instrument used for the study was structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that Enugu states residents are significantly exposed to contents on African Traditional Religion on social media. Also, exposure to content on African Traditional Religion through social media has significant impact on the resurgence of ATR in Enugu State. Again, the Revival of African Traditional Religion through social media contents impact Christian evangelization efforts in Enugu State just as social media promotion of contents on African Traditional Religion does account for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State. As a recommendation, Evangelizers or Gospel ministers should gain more online presence so as to counter high level of exposure of African Traditional Religion content on social media. Again, the positive attitude of ministers of the Gospel should be encouraged so that influence of social media promoting African Traditional content will not weigh them down. The study concluded that education on the freedom of worship and religion should be conducted regularly to teach people that nobody has the right to attack or intimidate the other on the account of religion even when one feels that the other group did it in the past.

Keywords: Social Media, Evangelism, African Traditional Religion, Christianity, Enugu State, Revival.

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Date Received: 25th September, 2026

Date Accepted: 30th September, 2026

Introduction

The interplay between social media and religious practices has gained significant attention, particularly regarding its influence on the resurgence of African traditional belief systems and the dynamics of faith in contemporary society. There is this tendency among different people to go back to African Traditional Religion (ATR). It appears as a new norm in our clime to see people struggling to reinvent some traditions

which hitherto were considered obsolete. In a YouTube interview, Olupona (2022), stressing the need to return to traditional religion said that the missionaries who of course worked hand in glove with the colonial masters brainwashed our people to see our culture and religion as evil. As such, believers in indigenous religion face stigma, embarrassment and criminalization.

Our forebears who practiced this showed that it demands a lot of discipline and sacrifice on the part of the adherent. Despite the significant presence of Islam and Christianity, African Traditional Religion has persisted through generations, albeit often marginalized in mainstream discourse. This marginalization can be attributed to a history of colonialism and missionary activities that sought to replace indigenous belief systems with Western ideologies (Bakibinga-Gaswaga, 2021). Nonetheless, there has been a noticeable resurgence of interest in African Traditional Religion, suspected to have been fueled in part by the growth of social media.

Statement of the Problem

The revival of African Traditional Religion seen today among Nigerians, orchestrated by social media holds significant implications for Christian evangelization efforts within the country. The implication could be positive or negative. On one hand, it presents a challenge to evangelization strategies that do not acknowledge the cultural contexts of potential converts, which the researcher sees as positive. On the other hand, as so many persons increasingly embrace African Traditional Religion, they may develop a sense of pride in their spirituality that conflicts with traditional Christian teachings. Thus, resisting or being dismissive of anything that is not in tandem with their cultural identity. There could also be an apparent demonization of anything Christianity as if it is the cause of our present woes.

Moreover, the type of revival of African Traditional Religion championed by the youths on the internet could be antagonistic. It stems from a reaction of what the people assumed happened in the past. Nwadike (2024) is of the opinion that people are calling for a return of African Traditional Religion on the grounds that Christianity has failed. They are condemning Christianity because it apparently failed to proffer solutions to their immediate problem. They believe that religion should be able to take care of their problems as seen preached by so many men and women of God. The consequence is to accept anything that is laced with indigenous practice that claims to have solution to their problem as African Traditional Religion and attack Christianity.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

i. To what extent are residents of Enugu State exposed to social media content on African Traditional Religion?

ii. To what extent does exposure to social media content on African

Traditional Religion influence the resurgence of ATR in Enugu State?

iii. In what ways does the revival of African Traditional Religion through social media content impact Christian evangelization efforts in Enugu State?

iv. To what extent does social media promotion of African Traditional Religion content account for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State?

Literature Review

Social Media

The constant development of technology has bequeathed novel concepts and terms which are becoming prominent in our everyday lingo. Social media is one of those concepts that are becoming dominant in our communication, thanks to technological development. Functionally, it is bridging geographical divides and creating global networks. Ozkan and McKenzie (2008) assert that individuals can readily communicate with other internet users, trade files and information, and accomplish various objectives through the use of social media and its technologies. The connectivity and unity facilitated by social media have transformed it into a virtual living place, fostering a worldwide society where distance is no obstacle.

Social media is often regarded as interactive technologies that enable the creation, sharing, and aggregation of content (including ideas, interests, and many kinds of expression) within virtual communities and networks (Wikipedia, 2017). Social networks and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and WhatsApp exemplify these systems. Kuzeci (2010) characterized social media as a framework that enables individuals to engage in online sharing on a shared platform. Kirkbir (2013) view social media as a mechanism that enables interaction among individuals and groups, hence fostering social relationships. Haenlein and Kaplan (2010) define social media as "a collection of Internet-based applications that leverage the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, facilitating the creation and exchange of user-generated content." A notable component in the aforementioned definitions is the participatory character of the platform, wherein users actively provide material and enable others to engage with that content.

Historically, the emergence of social media dates back to the late 1990s with the emergence of early platforms such as Six Degrees (1997). This offered users opportunity to create profiles and establish connections. Other platforms like Friendster (2002) and MySpace (2003), which further popularized social networking made inroad in early 2000. Social media took their form and shape with the launch of Facebook in 2004. This according to Boyd & Ellison (2007) marked a pivotal moment in social media history, setting the stage for a new era of online social interaction. This was followed by other platforms like YouTube

(2005), Twitter now X (2006), Instagram (2010), Tiktok (2012) etc. The introduction of video-sharing platforms such as YouTube (2005) expanded the definition of social media to include multimedia content sharing. These developments reflect a transition where social media transforms into a multifaceted environment that offers varied forms of engagement, including text, images, and videos, thereby enriching user experiences (Burgess & Green, 2009).

Social media provides a space for communities to form around shared interests, backgrounds, or causes. These virtual communities support discussions, collaboration, and activism, thereby creating a sense of belonging among users (Baker & Andrews, 2010). The ability to connect with like-minded individuals fosters collective identity and enhances social support networks. Youths, who are often considered digital natives, use social media to express their worldviews, engage with their heritage, and connect with like-minded individuals. Studies have shown that social media serves as a space for cultural affirmation and revival among Nigerians, enabling them to explore and discuss African Traditional Religion openly, often in ways that were not possible in traditional settings (Omar & Ondimu, 2024).

African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion comprises many beliefs, rites, and practices native to Africa. Academics like Mbiti (1990) contend that African Traditional Religion offers a feeling of identity and cultural foundation. African Traditional Religion (ATR) comprises the myriad spiritual beliefs and practices native to different ethnic groups throughout the African continent. In contrast to established religions with a unified teaching, ATR is distinguished by its diverse practices, profound traditions, and strong focus on community and ancestral ties. Comprehending ATR necessitates an understanding of its historical context, cosmology, practices, socio-political aspects, and its interaction with other belief systems.

The core of African Traditional Religion encompasses a complex cosmology that unifies the physical and spiritual realms. Most ATR traditions encompass a belief in a Supreme Being, frequently seen as the creator and sustainer of existence. African Traditional Religion is not just a set of beliefs but is intricately woven into the fabric of African cultures. It influences art, music, dance, and oral literature, providing a framework for expressing communal identity and values. Stories and proverbs are vehicles through which moral lessons are taught, ensuring that traditions are passed down through generations. The communal nature of ATR fosters a sense of belonging and social cohesion, where religious practices are often communal rather than individualistic.

In the contemporary context, ATR often coexists with world religions such as Christianity and Islam. This syncretism can lead to complex interactions where traditional beliefs and practices are integrated with Abrahamic faiths. While some individuals maintain strict

adherence to ATR, others blend elements from various religions, reflecting a dynamic spiritual landscape. Recent studies indicate that Nigerians are increasingly seeking to reconnect with these traditional practices as a counter-narrative to the dominant Christian narrative, particularly in the wake of globalization and religious pluralism (Ojen & Nweze 2025). The revival is marked by a resurgent interest in ancestral worship, traditional healing, and community rituals, all of which are often discussed and disseminated through social media.

Evangelization

The term evangelization is gotten from Greek word, *ewagelion*, which means good-news, or gospel. It is a concept that refers to the act of spreading the Christian Gospel and making converts to God. In a loose sense, the act of sharing one's beliefs and values with others, could be termed evangelization. Our context here is the strict sense or Christian context, and here evangelization is often associated with missionary works, personal testimonies, and efforts to convert others to Christianity, spreading of *Good news* or preaching as the case may be.

The roots of evangelization can be traced back to the early Christian church when followers of Jesus Christ began to spread his teachings. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) is one of the most cited biblical passages where Christ mandated his disciples to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations." The apostles and other early Christians played a pivotal role in this mission of evangelization. The persecution of the early Christians fueled this work of evangelization. The death of Stephen made the early Christians to move out from Jerusalem, each taking the *Good news* wherever he goes. Saul, who was part of those persecuting the Christians later got converted (Acts 9) and became Apostle Paul. Apostle Paul, played a crucial role in disseminating Christian doctrine across the Roman Empire, often adapting their message to resonate with diverse audiences (Horsley, 1997).

In Catholic theology, the New Evangelization has gained prominence, emphasizing renewed efforts to evangelize in traditionally Christian societies that have become increasingly secular. Pope John Paul II and subsequent popes have called for new methods to reach a post-Christian world, highlighting the use of contemporary media and technology as significant tools for spreading the gospel (Dulles, 1976). Thus evangelization work is a continuum. In this part of the world, it is worthy to note that evangelization has often been instrumental in socio-political change, with churches providing critical support for education, health care, and social justice initiatives (Ttagani, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research topic was drawn from several interrelated theories namely, Cultivation Theory, and Technological Determinism Theory.

These theories offer a thorough framework for comprehending how social media serves as a catalyst for the resurgence of African Traditional Religions (ATRs) among the inhabitants of Enugu state and the ensuing ramifications this resurgence has for Christian evangelization.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a social theory that analyzes the enduring impacts of television and media consumption on audience perceptions and beliefs. Initially formulated by George Gerbner in the 1960s, the idea asserts that persons who engage extensively with media, especially television, are predisposed to view reality in alignment with the predominant messages and themes depicted in that media. The cultivation theory, as articulated by George Gerbner and his associates, posits that mass media significantly influences the formation of individuals' cultural and social values. The hypothesis posits that mass media "cultivate" values, views, and conceptions over a prolonged duration. In accordance with such reasoning, advocates contend that the impact of television exposure should be assessed not in terms

The primary emphasis of the research undertaken by Gerbner *et al* is the impact of exposure to violent television content. In their later investigations, they sought to establish that excessive television viewing may impair individuals' perspective of the "real world." Gerbner *et al* employed quantitative analytical models to investigate the correlations between cultural indicators generated by the "television world" and the reactions of viewers purportedly influenced by those images. This hypothesis posits the concept of "mean world syndrome," indicating that frequent consumers of media tend to regard the world as more perilous and violent than it truly is, attributable to the abundance of violent content. Cultivation theory transcends violence to include other societal beliefs, norms, and values propagated by media narratives.

Cultural Resurgence: Globalization has spurred a heightened interest in cultural identity. Many individuals turn to traditional practices as a way to reconnect with their heritage amid widespread modernization and Westernization.

Counter-Narratives to Colonialism: The historical context of colonialism, which often involved the vilification and suppression of indigenous religious practices, leads to a resurgence of interest in ATR as a form of rebellion against imposed beliefs.

Technological Determinism Theory

Theory of Technological Determinism, as articulated by Anaeto and Jacobs (2015), is a reductionist framework that posits that the technology of a civilization dictates the evolution of its social structure and cultural values. This hypothesis posits that technological advancements or media serve as the primary catalyst for social transformation. West and Turner (2014), characterize the examination of media, technology, and communication, and its impact on human contexts, as Technological Determinism

Theory. This notion originates from Thorstein Veblen, Karl Marx, and Marshall McLuhan, who elaborated on it in the 1960s. In 1962, McLuhan elucidates technological determinism as the phenomenon whereby technological advancements inevitably induce cultural transformation. The ways of communication influence human existence. McQuail (2005), posits that technological determinism theory encompasses the following assumptions:

i. Communication technology is fundamental to society. It is the vital essence of any community.

ii. Technology propels transformation across all media businesses.

iii. Each technology is oriented towards specific forms, contents, and applications of communication.

iv. The progression of technological discovery and application impacts social transformation.

v. Transformations in communication and social révolutions concerning gender.

vi. New media subverts traditional power structures.

Technological Determinism Theory analyzes the influence of various media on human experiences and social frameworks. In 1968, Neil Postman invented the term "media ecology," drawing from theoretical principles introduced by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 (Gencarelli, 2006). Marshal McLuhan, as edited by Stephanie and Staines (2004), characterized Ecology in this context as the environment in which the medium operates its nature and its societal impact. Neil Postman asserts that in biology, a 'medium' refers to the substance in which bacterial cultures develop, such as a Petri dish; conversely, in media ecology, the medium is defined as 'a technology within which a [human] culture flourishes.' mediums ecology examines how communication mediums influence human perception, comprehension, emotions, and values, as well as how our engagement with media either enhances or hinders our survival prospects. The term ecology denotes the examination of environments: their composition, characteristics, and effects on humans. An environment constitutes a complex messaging system that influences human cognition, emotion, and behavior. Media ecology posits that media serve as extensions of human senses throughout different epochs, with communication technology being the principal catalyst for social transformation. McLuhan is renowned for coining the expression, "the medium is the message," a much contested assertion suggesting that the media utilized to convey a message is equally, if not more, significant than the message itself. McLuhan posited that media shape societal evolution, asserting that notable epochs of development can be delineated by the emergence of particular technologies within those eras.

Methodology

The study employed the survey research design while questionnaire was used to elicit information on social media and the revival of African Traditional Religion among residents of Enugu and

implications to evangelization. The population of this study was drawn from residents in Enugu State who are social media users with the population of 889,189 (Statista; 2022). In order to determine the sample size for this study, the researcher employed the use of Australian online calculator with 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error and arrived at sample size of 384 respondents was achieved while the multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of respondents from the local governments in Enugu state. The subsequent subsections outline discussion topics for the following procedures: Research Design, Study Area, Study Population, Sample Size, Sampling Method, Data Collection Instrument, Instrument Validation, Instrument Reliability, Data Collection Method, and Data Analysis Method.

Sampling Technique

The study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique in the selection of respondent; this technique thus allows the use of various stages in the process. In the stage one, the researcher clustered the local government areas that make up Enugu State based on their senatorial district. In the stage two, using the simple random sampling, the researcher through randomization selected two local government areas from each of the senatorial district to represent the entire 17 Local Government in Enugu. At the last stage, the researcher distributed 64 copies of the questionnaire each to only social media users in the selected local government areas after using dividing the sample size with the six selected local governments that will represent others $\frac{384}{6} = 64$. To test the reliability of the measuring instrument, the researcher used Test re-test mathematical formula which yielded the reliability value 0.9, implying that the structured questionnaire was reliable. Then, the mean analysis was employed for the data analysis.

Result

The data collected was analyzed to correspond with each research question, 384 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved out of the 384 copies shared to the respondents. Thereafter the mean analysis was used to analyze the items whereby the decision rule states thus: Decision Rule: If the calculated mean is equal or greater than the criterion mean (2.5), then the decision is accepted but if the calculated mean is lower than the criterion mean (2.5), the decision is rejected.

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Research Question 1. To what extent are residents of Enugu State exposed to ATR content through social media?

Table 1

Item	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	Mean $\overline{X}$	DECISION RULE
I am exposed to contents on ATR through Social Media very often.	192	82	40	70	1,164	3.1	Accepted
I am exposed to contents on ATR through Social Media often.	202	76	38	68	1,180	3.1	Accepted
I am exposed to contents on ATR through Social Media occasionally.	88	72	77	147	869	2.3	rejected
I am not exposed to contents on ATR through Social Media at all.	62	70	147	105	857	2.2	Rejected
Average Mean						2.7	Accepted

Table 1 shows that the residents of Enugu state are significantly exposed to content of ATR through social media. The average mean is 2.7 and it is accepted.

Research Question 2: To what extent does exposure to social media content on African Traditional Religion influence the revival of ATR in Enugu State?

Table 2

Item	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	X	DECISION RULE
Social Media contents on ATR are highly impactful on the revival of ATR in Enugu State.	204	101	58	21	1,256	3.3	Accepted
Social Media contents on ATR are considerably impactful on the revival of ATR in Enugu State.	189	158	22	15	1,289	3.4	Accepted
Social Media contents on ATR are moderately impactful on the revival of ATR in Enugu State.	23	26	142	193	647	1.7	Rejected
Social Media contents on ATR do not influence the revival of ATR in Enugu State.	21	43	128	192	661	1.7	Rejected
Average Mean						2.5	Accepted

This table shows that exposure to ATR content through social media influence revival of ATR in Enugu state. The average mean is 2.5 and it is accepted.

Research Question 3: In what ways does the revival of African Traditional Religion through social media content influence Christian evangelization efforts in Enugu State?

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Table 3

Item	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	Mean $\overline{X}$	DECISION RULE
Revival of African Traditional Religion through Social Media exposes people to Syncretism.	180	155	27	22	1,261	3.3	Accepted
Revival of African Traditional Religion through Social Media reduces conversion rate in Enugu state.	199	149	21	15	1,300	3.4	Accepted
Revival of African Traditional Religion through Social Media gives room for competing narrative in Enugu state.	168	146	38	32		3.2	Accepted
Average Mean						3.3	Accepted

This table shows that exposure to syncretism, reduction of conversion rate and presentation of competing narrative are the ways through which social media influence evangelization efforts in Enugu state. The average mean is 3.3 and it is accepted.

Research Question 4: To what extent does social media promotion of African Traditional Religion content account for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State?

Table 4

Item	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	Mean $\overline{X}$	DECISION RULE
Social Media promotion of African Traditional Religion content account for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State.	103	201	34	46	1,129	2.9	Accepted
Promoters of African Traditional Religion content via social media mocks Christian teachings	181	136	20	47	1,219	3.1	Accepted
Promoters of African Traditional Religion content via social media spread false narratives about Christian beliefs	190	112	43	39	1,221	3.2	Accepted
Promoters of African Traditional Religion content via social media uses hate speech	128	118	88	50	1,092	2.8	Accepted

against Christians.

Average Mean	3	Accepted

This table shows that revival of ATR through social media accounts for the attack on evangelization in Enugu state. The average mean is 3 and it is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Enugu State residents' exposure to African Traditional Religion contents on social media

The first research question was to investigate if Enugu states residents are exposed to contents on African Traditional Religion on social media. From data obtained from the field, the research discovered that there is high rate of exposure of the resident of Enugu state to contents on African Traditional Religion through Social Media. The reason for this is substantiated by the conceptual review, which sees social media as a space that bridges geographical divides and creates global networks and a global community where contents of different magnitudes are shared.

The fact that contents on African Traditional Religion are shared through social media makes those who subscribe to the use of social media susceptible to them. Among those who are inclined to this resurgence are mainly youths. The finding also corroborates cultivation theory which is one of the theories upon which this work revolves. George Gerbner *et al* assert that the cultivation hypothesis posits that mass media play a predominant influence in shaping individuals' cultural and social beliefs. The hypothesis posits that mass media "cultivate" values, views, and conceptions over a prolonged duration. Proponents contend that the impact of exposure to television and social media should be evaluated not in terms of immediate reactions but rather over an extended duration. The current visibility of African Traditional Religion content on social media does not imply that it originated recently. It is a cumulative impact. In our empirical review, the study of Nweke (2019), *The Revival of African Spiritualities: A Religious Basis for a Sociopolitical Renaissance in Africa,* supports this finding because that the revival of ATR we experience abound on account of online exposure to content on African Traditional Religion.

Influence of social media on the resurgence of African Traditional Religion in Enugu State

Going further, the second research question sought to find out whether exposure to contents on African Traditional Religion through the use of social media influences the resurgence of African Traditional Religion in Enugu state. From the testimony of respondents made evidence in the data presented in research questions 2. It was discovered that the majority of the respondents are in the affirmation that the exposure to content on African Traditional Religion through social media influence the resurgence of ATR in Enugu State. This is based on the fact that the average

mean of the table controlling the question is 2.5. This implies that the question is accepted since it is within the average mean of the decision rule. This affirms the research of Nweke and Okpaleke, (2019), *The Re-emergence of African Spiritualities: Prospects and Challenges*. They enumerated many reasons which could be the cause and concluded that there is a re-awakening of African Traditional Religion.

Ways through which the revival of African Traditional Religion through social media influence Christian Evangelization efforts in Enugu State

Again, research question three focus was on how the revival of African Traditional Religion through social media content impacts Christian evangelization efforts in Enugu State. The data presented in research question three suggests that the revival of African Traditional Religion (ATR) through social media has had a notable influence on Christian evangelization efforts in Enugu State. What is more, the mean of the responds who believe that ATR content through Social Media exposes people to Syncretism is 3.3, an indication that this their opinion is confirmed. Reduction of conversion rate and giving room for alternative narrative in the state, are also other ways through which ATR content on social media, influence Christian Evangelization efforts. Therefore, data collected from the above indicate a significant perception that social media is facilitating ATR's resurgence, potentially challenging or reshaping Christian evangelization. Okeke *et. al* (2017), talking of the relationship between Christianity and African Traditional Religion established that there was occasional destruction of lives and property and demolition of the people's artifacts and groves by Christians, and this has led to reduction in the sources of income of the people, and in the tourist sites available in most Igbo towns. The first reaction to the above is a sort of revenge. Many people as we can see in the background of the studies, are sponsoring people to go back to ATR, through social media, Matthias Ezeaku, is aggressively carrying out the campaign in Enugu state and beyond.

Social media contents on African Traditional Religion accounts for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State.

Research question four, concerns itself with whether social media promotion of content on African Traditional Religion account for media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State. The data suggests a strong perception that the promotion of African Traditional Religion (ATR) content on social media contributes to media attacks on Christian evangelization in Enugu State. This is vetoed by the fact that average mean of the question scaled through the decision rule, since it is 3 while the decision rule is 2.5, as such, it is accepted. This overwhelmingly indicates a widely held view that ATR's online presence is challenging Christian evangelization.

The data provides insight into the types of media attacks on Christian evangelization observed in Enugu State,

with varying degrees of intensity and prevalence. Mockery of Christian beliefs ranks high. Content creators who claim to be sworn traditionalist now use social media space to mock the church and ridicule the gospel and evangelization. So the most frequently observed form of attack, indicating that social media content often ridicules Christian doctrines, practices, or faith-based perspectives are made palpable by content creators. Hate speech against Christian leaders is also another way of attack. This implies that a significant portion of respondents have witnessed derogatory or offensive statements directed at Christian leaders, which could impact their influence and credibility. Some youths who are part of those clamouring for return to African Traditional Religion, often time meant out cyber-attack on ministers of Gospel. Spread of false narratives ranked high from the respondents. This spells concerns about misinformation or deliberate misrepresentation of Christian teachings and evangelization efforts. Bloggers often clip-out some messages from ministers of God out context and use it to marline the body of Christ. The above may not be unconnected with Asiedu (2021), as we can see in the empirical review where he submitted that Islam and Christianity were explicitly identified as religions that cast an unfavorable perception on African Traditional Religions (ATR) in the past. Therefore, most of these attacks come as a revenge for demonizing them in the past.

Conclusion

So far, the data available imply that social media containing African Traditional Religion content have serious influence on the people who make use of social media as algorithm will continue to feed them with content on African Traditional Religion so long as they surf the net. Be that as it may, the fact that when one is expose to a particular thing over and over again, as the cultivation theory suggests, one's reality may tilt towards the particular reality that one is often exposed to. Thus, it was determined that social media exert an impact on the contemporary rebirth of African Traditional Religion.

Recommendations

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

i. Evangelizers or Gospel ministers should gain more online presence so as to counter high level of exposure of African Traditional Religion content on social media.

ii. There should be both constant and proper reminder to social media users that majority of the content they encounter online were created by those who know little or nothing about African Traditional Religion. As such, they should discard the contents when algorithm sends them their way.

iii. Again, the positive attitude of ministers of the Gospel should be encouraged so that influence of social media promoting African Traditional contents will not weigh them down.

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iv. Education on the freedom of worship and religion should be conducted regularly to teach people that nobody has the right to attack or intimidate the other on the account of religion even when one feels that the other group did it in the past.

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