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Social Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Achieving Seven of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Abstract

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has placed unprecedented pressure on governments, corporations, and civil society to close persistent gaps in poverty, inequality, health, and environmental stewardship. Public budgets and conventional market mechanisms have repeatedly proven insufficient to meet the scale of this ambition on their own. Social entrepreneurship, understood as the deliberate combination of entrepreneurial methods with a primary orientation toward social value creation, has emerged as one of the more promising instruments for closing this gap. This study examined how social entrepreneurship functions as a catalytic mechanism for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to establish the institutional and financial conditions that either enable or constrain this catalytic role. The central problem motivating the study is that existing scholarship on social entrepreneurship and the SDGs remained fragmented into isolated, single-country case accounts, leaving the cross-context mechanisms through which social enterprises translate innovation into measurable SDG progress under-theorized. Anchored on Social Entrepreneurship Theory and Stakeholder Theory, the study adopted a qualitative systematic literature review guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol, drawing on secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, institutional reports, and policy documents published between 2015 and 2025. The reviewed evidence converges on seven of the seventeen SDGs, namely SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 7, SDG 8, and SDG 10, with a major finding that social enterprises consistently and most strongly advance SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 10 through hybrid business models that convert social problems into investable opportunities, while this catalytic contribution remains concentrated among a narrow band of well-networked ventures rather than diffused across the wider social enterprise population.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development Goals, Social Innovation, Impact Measurement, Blended Finance.

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Introduction

Since 2015, the 193 member states of the United Nations have organised their development agenda around 17 Sustainable Development Goals, a framework that consolidates the world's

ambitions on poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, clean energy, decent work, and environmental protection into a single, interlinked roadmap for 2030 (United Nations 2015). The scale of that ambition, however, has consistently outpaced the capacity of national treasuries and multilateral aid budgets to fund it, and this financing and delivery gap has forced policymakers to look beyond the state for partners capable of generating social value at speed and at scale. It is against this backdrop that non-state, market-oriented actors have been drawn into the centre of the sustainable development conversation, not as peripheral contributors but as co-architects of how the goals might realistically be achieved within the remaining implementation window.

Social entrepreneurship has become one of the most closely watched of these market-oriented interventions. Dees (1998) frames the social entrepreneur as a distinct species within the entrepreneurial family, one who pursues a social mission with the same discipline, innovation, and determination that a conventional entrepreneur applies to profit. Building on this foundation, Mair and Marti (2006) define social entrepreneurship as a process that innovatively combines resources to pursue opportunities that catalyse social change or address unmet social needs, a definition that deliberately widens the field beyond the personality of the founder to the process of value creation itself. What distinguishes social entrepreneurship from conventional charity or corporate social responsibility is precisely this hybridity: social enterprises are structured to generate revenue, yet that revenue is instrumental to, rather than the purpose of, the social mission (Zahra *et al*., 2009).

The relevance of this hybrid model to the SDGs lies in its capacity to reach populations and problems that both government programmes and purely commercial enterprises tend to under-serve. In Uganda, social entrepreneurs have been found to support vulnerable populations and to address social, environmental, and economic problems simultaneously, contributing directly to the realisation of specific SDGs even where formal state capacity is weak (Turyakira *et al*., 2025). Comparable evidence from India and South Africa shows social entrepreneurial activity advancing multiple SDGs at once by working at the base of the economic pyramid, where conventional markets rarely reach (Kaur *et al*., 2023). In Kenya, ventures such as mobile-money platforms and agricultural market linkages illustrate how social enterprises weave together poverty reduction, food security, and decent work into a single commercial proposition (Kithae & Munge, 2025).

The World Economic Forum (2023) notes that even as African social entrepreneurs increasingly align their missions with specific SDGs, they continue to face acute constraints in funding and philanthropic access, with local organisations receiving

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only a small share of the large gifts disbursed by donors. This tension, between social entrepreneurship's demonstrated potential and the structural barriers that blunt it, sits at the heart of the present inquiry.

This study therefore interrogates social entrepreneurship not as an isolated national phenomenon but as a cross-context catalytic mechanism for the SDGs, examining both the pathways through which social enterprises generate development outcomes and the institutional conditions that determine whether that catalytic potential is realised or dissipated. Rather than claiming a diffuse contribution across the entire 2030 Agenda, this study restricts its focus to the seven SDGs for which the reviewed literature provides direct, named empirical evidence: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The sections that follow set out the study's objectives and questions, situate the problem within the existing literature, present the theoretical lenses guiding the analysis, describe the qualitative systematic review methodology adopted, report the major findings, and close with a conclusion and a targeted recommendation for policymakers and development finance institutions.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

i. Examine how social entrepreneurship functions as a catalytic mechanism for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals across diverse economic contexts.

ii. Analyse the institutional and financial factors that mediate social entrepreneurship's capacity to translate social innovation into measurable SDG outcomes.

iii. Identify the challenges and enabling conditions that determine the scale and sustainability of social entrepreneurship's contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

Research Questions

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

i. In what ways does social entrepreneurship function as a catalytic mechanism for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals across diverse economic contexts?

ii. How do institutional and financial factors mediate social entrepreneurship's capacity to translate social innovation into measurable SDG outcomes?

iii. What challenges and enabling conditions determine the scale and sustainability of social entrepreneurship's contribution to the 2030 Agenda?

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Statement of the Problem

The last decade has produced a steadily growing body of scholarship linking social entrepreneurship to the Sustainable Development Goals, yet a closer reading of this literature reveals gaps that justify further inquiry. Much of the existing evidence is organised around single-country case studies, examining social enterprise activity in Uganda (Turyakira *et al*., 2025), Kenya (Kithae & Munge, 2025), or a paired comparison of India and South Africa (Kaur et al., 2023), without a cross-context synthesis of the mechanisms through which social enterprises actually convert innovation into SDG progress. Each study confirms that social entrepreneurship contributes to specific goals, most consistently SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 10, but few explicitly theorise why the contribution is uneven across goals or why environmental SDGs in particular receive comparatively less attention than poverty- and livelihood-focused goals (Turyakira *et al*., 2025).

A second, related gap concerns the institutional and financial conditions that mediate this catalytic capacity. The literature is consistent in noting that social entrepreneurs operate under significant financial and managerial constraints that undermine their ability to fulfil their social mission at scale (Turyakira *et al*., 2025; World Economic Forum, 2023). These constraints are typically documented descriptively rather than analysed as structural mediators that determine whether social innovation reaches investable, fundable, and measurable form. Without a framework capable of explaining how financing gaps and weak impact-measurement systems intervene between social entrepreneurial activity and SDG outcomes, policy recommendations risk remaining generic calls for more support rather than targeted interventions. This absence of an integrated, cross-context, and mechanism-focused perspective constitutes the core problem that the present study seeks to address.

Literature Review

Scholarly interest in social entrepreneurship has grown substantially since the concept was first popularised in the late 1990s, evolving from a preoccupation with the personal traits of individual social entrepreneurs toward a broader concern with the processes, resources, and institutional environments that shape social value creation. Dees (1998) was among the earliest to argue that social entrepreneurs constitute a distinct class of change agents who apply market discipline to social missions, a foundational claim that subsequent scholars have both built upon and complicated. Mair and Marti (2006) reframed the field around process rather than personality, defining social entrepreneurship as the innovative combination of resources to pursue opportunities that catalyse social change, a definition still widely cited in contemporary empirical work. Zahra *et al*.

(2009) extended this process view by developing a typology of social entrepreneurs based on the scope of the social problems they target, distinguishing local, regional, and global orientations and highlighting the ethical tensions that accompany each.

Empirical studies applying these foundational ideas to the SDG agenda have proliferated since 2015, generally converging on the finding that social entrepreneurship contributes most visibly to poverty-focused and livelihood-focused goals. Turyakira *et al*. (2025), drawing on interviews with social entrepreneurs in Uganda, found that these actors support vulnerable populations and address social, environmental, and economic problems concurrently, with the clearest documented contributions falling under SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, and SDG 10. Notably, the same study observed that environmental sustainability receives comparatively less attention from social entrepreneurs than social and economic outcomes, and that financial constraints alongside limited managerial capacity restrict the scale of their impact. This pattern of concentrated but unevenly distributed contribution recurs across other national contexts.

In Kenya, Kithae and Munge (2025) documented how entrepreneurial ventures spanning mobile financial services, solar energy access, and agricultural market linkages have measurably advanced SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 5, SDG 7, and SDG 8, while simultaneously identifying access to finance, regulatory bureaucracy, and market competition as the three most significant barriers constraining further scale. Their descriptive research approach, based on desk analysis of secondary data and real-world case comparisons, illustrates how individual ventures can be mapped onto specific SDGs, but stops short of generalising the conditions under which such mapping becomes replicable across different ventures and sectors. A comparative study of India and South Africa similarly found that social entrepreneurial activity at the base of the economic pyramid advances multiple SDGs simultaneously, reinforcing the view that social enterprises are particularly effective where formal markets and state services under-serve low-income populations (Kaur *et al*., 2023).

This pattern extends well beyond Africa and South Asia. In China, Zhang *et al*. (2022) traced how social entrepreneurs identify and develop social opportunities in rural communities, converting locally rooted problems, such as under-utilised agricultural assets or weak market access, into viable ventures that function as an alternative to conventional, top-down poverty-reduction programmes. In Indonesia, Pratono *et al*. (2023) found that social enterprises supporting the creative economy advanced SDG-aligned outcomes by helping informal creative workers embrace their cultural identity,

access customers through social networks, and attract donor support through crowdfunding, illustrating a distinctly digital pathway through which social entrepreneurship can advance the SDGs. Reviewing the field more broadly, Ramya *et al*. (2024) synthesise the literature on how social entrepreneurship aligns business activity with the SDGs and identify funding constraints, difficulty measuring social impact, and the challenge of scaling as the recurring obstacles that cut across virtually every context studied, a conclusion echoed by Lasisi's (2022) review of the broader nexus between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development, which similarly frames entrepreneurship as a corrective to the limited reach of state-led development efforts.

A smaller but important strand of the literature turns the analytical lens onto the field of research itself rather than onto individual ventures. Using bibliometric analysis of the Web of Science database, Vaquero García et al. (2024) mapped the intersection of social economy research and the SDGs between 2015 and 2021 and found that, despite a steadily growing volume of publications, the field remains heavily concentrated in Europe and lacks a clearly defined focus on social economy organisations as catalysts for the SDGs, with scholars tending to study specific themes such as governance, labour, or microfinance in isolation rather than the catalytic mechanism as a whole. This finding is significant because it suggests that the fragmentation observed in country-specific case studies is mirrored at the level of the research field itself. Complementing this, Raman *et al*. (2025) undertook an integrative review of social entrepreneurship and sustainable technologies and argued that the field's fragmented theoretical grounding, drawing on behavioural, institutional, and social capital perspectives without a unifying framework, has itself limited researchers' and practitioners' ability to generalise about how social innovation translates into SDG outcomes across sectors.

Beyond country-specific case evidence and academic self-assessment, broader commentary from development-focused organisations situates social entrepreneurship within the wider architecture of SDG financing and philanthropy. The World Economic Forum (2023) observes that African social entrepreneurs are increasingly and deliberately aligning their ventures with specific SDGs and continue to encounter systemic barriers in accessing philanthropic and investment capital, with the majority of large donor gifts continuing to flow toward international rather than local organisations. This observation echoes a recurring theme across the literature: that the constraint on social entrepreneurship's contribution to the SDGs is less a shortage of innovative capacity than a shortage of mechanisms for recognising, funding,

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and scaling that capacity once demonstrated.

The literature confirms that social entrepreneurship makes a real and measurable contribution to specific SDGs, particularly those concerned with poverty, gender equality, and decent work, across an increasingly wide range of national and sectoral contexts spanning Africa, South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. This contribution is consistently constrained by financial and institutional barriers rather than by any deficit of entrepreneurial innovation, a conclusion reinforced not only by individual case studies but by bibliometric evidence that the research field itself remains fragmented and geographically concentrated. What remains comparatively underdeveloped is a synthesis that draws these fragmented, largely single-country and single-sector findings into a coherent account of the catalytic mechanisms at work across contexts, and that explicitly theorises how institutional and financial mediation shapes the translation of social innovation into measurable SDG progress. This is the gap the present study addresses.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theoretical lenses: Social Entrepreneurship Theory and Stakeholder Theory. Social Entrepreneurship Theory, as developed by Dees (1998) and later refined by Mair and Marti (2006) and Zahra *et al*. (2009), conceptualises the social entrepreneur as an agent who identifies social problems as exploitable opportunities and mobilises innovative combinations of financial, human, and social resources to address them, without treating profit as the primary measure of success. This theoretical lens is well suited to the present study because it explains the supply side of the catalytic relationship examined here, namely how and why social enterprises identify SDG-aligned opportunities and structure hybrid ventures around them.

Stakeholder Theory, originally advanced by Freeman (1984), complements this by explaining the demand side of the relationship: the multiple, often competing groups, including beneficiaries, investors, government regulators, and local communities, whose interests a social enterprise must simultaneously satisfy in order to survive and scale. Because the SDGs are themselves an inherently multi-stakeholder agenda, spanning governments, private capital, civil society, and affected communities, Stakeholder Theory offers a useful frame for understanding why social enterprises that successfully balance these competing claims tend to achieve broader and more durable SDG-aligned outcomes than those that privilege a single stakeholder group. Read together, the two frameworks position social entrepreneurship as a mechanism that converts multi-stakeholder social needs

into innovative, resource-mobilising ventures, and they guide the thematic interpretation of the literature synthesised in this study.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design based on a systematic literature review approach, appropriate for synthesising and critically interpreting existing knowledge on social entrepreneurship's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals. A literature review of this kind is itself a recognised research methodology rather than a preliminary step toward some other method, and it is particularly well suited to mapping a fragmented field, clarifying its conceptual boundaries, and identifying gaps that justify further inquiry (Snyder, 2019). Rather than generating primary data, the research integrates conceptual, empirical, and policy-based evidence drawn from prior studies to provide a comprehensive account of the catalytic mechanisms and constraints documented in the literature. To enhance transparency and methodological rigour, the review process was guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework. In line with qualitative research traditions, PRISMA was not applied as a statistical meta-analytic tool but as a structured guide for documenting the identification, screening, and selection of relevant literature (Page *et al*., 2021).

Data Sources

The study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from reputable academic and institutional sources. Peer-reviewed journal articles, working papers, and institutional reports were retrieved through structured web-based academic search, covering material indexed by Google Scholar and hosted on publisher platforms (including Elsevier, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald) and institutional repositories such as ResearchGate, alongside primary reports from the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, and multilateral development bodies. This search-engine-based retrieval approach was adopted in place of direct institutional subscription access to closed databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, and this constitutes an acknowledged limitation of the review, discussed further below. The review concentrated on literature published between 2015 and 2025, a period bounded at the lower end by the formal adoption of the SDGs and marked throughout by increasing scholarly and policy attention to social entrepreneurship as a development mechanism.

Search Strategy

A structured and systematic search strategy was developed to ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant studies. Eight distinct search queries were run, combining terms derived directly from the study's objectives, including social entrepreneurship, sustainable development goals, social innovation,

impact measurement, and blended finance, with Boolean-style combinations and regional and temporal qualifiers applied consistently across queries.

PRISMA Stage	Description
Identification	Records identified through web-based academic search and institutional sources
Screening	Duplicates removed; titles and abstracts screened for relevance
Eligibility	Full-text and detailed records assessed against inclusion criteria
Included	Final set of studies included in qualitative synthesis

Following the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework, the systematic review progressed through four sequential stages. The search returned 63 records across eight web-based search queries, supplemented by 4 additional records identified through citation tracing to foundational theoretical and methodological works, for a total of 67 records identified. After removing 21 duplicate records, largely arising from the same source being surfaced by more than one query or appearing across multiple citation-index pages, 46 unique records remained for screening. Title and abstract screening led to the exclusion of 14 records that were not specific to social entrepreneurship, including general development-finance content, tourism- or SME-focused pieces without a social entrepreneurship or SDG framing, and studies with a mismatched unit of analysis. Full-text and detailed assessment was then conducted on the remaining 32 records, resulting in the exclusion of a further 12 records due to unverifiable authorship, reference-listing-only pages with no retrievable analytical content, publication outside the 2015–2025 SDG-era window, or thematic mismatch on closer reading. This left 20 studies for inclusion in the final qualitative synthesis, of which 17 are cited by name throughout this paper and listed in the references; the remainder informed the thematic coding described below without being individually quoted.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before study selection to maintain analytical rigour. Studies were included if they explicitly examined social entrepreneurship, social enterprise activity, or social innovation in relation to one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and policy documents written in English. Studies were excluded if they lacked relevance to social entrepreneurship or the SDGs, were purely opinion-based without analytical grounding, appeared as duplicate records across searches, or could not be traced to a verifiable author and publication source.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, a qualitative method well suited to synthesising

findings across multiple textual sources. Each of the 20 included studies was reviewed in detail and coded according to recurring themes related to social entrepreneurial practices, SDG outcomes, and the institutional or financial factors shaping those outcomes. The identified themes were interpreted through the lenses of Social Entrepreneurship Theory and Stakeholder Theory, enabling the study to move beyond descriptive summaries toward an integrated understanding of how innovation, resource mobilisation, and stakeholder alignment interact to determine SDG-related outcomes.

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 spanning multiple regions. The use of explicit inclusion criteria, a transparent screening process, and PRISMA-guided documentation further strengthened methodological consistency. A limitation of the review is that retrieval relied on web-based search rather than direct institutional access to subscription databases such as Scopus and Web of Science; while this broadened access to open, publicly indexed literature, it may have excluded some paywalled studies and means the identification counts reported here reflect what a search-engine-mediated review could retrieve rather than a full census of the published literature. Although qualitative systematic reviews do not aim for statistical generalisation, the structured and transparent approach employed in this study supports analytical reliability and allows future researchers to replicate or extend the review using institutional database access.

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 organised around three dominant themes that consistently appeared across the reviewed literature. Across the corpus, seven SDGs recur with direct, named empirical support: SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 7, SDG 8, and SDG 10. These themes reflect how social entrepreneurship currently functions as a catalytic mechanism for these seven goals, the outcomes associated with this role, and the constraints shaping its effectiveness.

Concentrated Catalytic Contribution to Poverty, Gender, and Livelihood Goals

The most consistent and significant finding across the reviewed studies is that

social entrepreneurship makes a measurable catalytic contribution to a specific cluster of Sustainable Development Goals, most prominently SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Evidence from Uganda shows social entrepreneurs supporting vulnerable populations while addressing overlapping social, environmental, and economic problems, with the clearest and most consistently documented outcomes concentrated in poverty reduction and livelihood improvement (Turyakira *et al*., 2025). Parallel evidence from Kenya demonstrates how ventures built around mobile financial inclusion, clean energy access, and agricultural market linkages simultaneously advance multiple SDGs through a single commercial proposition, illustrating the multiplicative character of well-designed social enterprise models (Kithae & Munge, 2025). Similarly, social entrepreneurial activity in India and South Africa shows that ventures operating at the base of the economic pyramid advance several SDGs concurrently, precisely because they are structurally positioned to serve populations that both government programmes and conventional markets tend to overlook (Kaur *et al*., 2023).

However, the findings also reveal that this catalytic contribution is not evenly distributed. Environmental sustainability goals receive markedly less attention from social entrepreneurs than social and economic goals, a pattern attributed to the comparatively longer payback horizons and higher technical barriers associated with environmental interventions relative to livelihood-focused ventures (Turyakira *et al*., 2025). This confirms that social entrepreneurship functions as a genuine catalytic mechanism for SDG advancement, directly addressing the first research question, but also demonstrates that this catalytic role is selective rather than comprehensive. Read through the lens of Social Entrepreneurship Theory, this selectivity reflects the fact that social entrepreneurs, like their commercial counterparts, gravitate toward opportunities where the combination of resources required to act is most readily assembled, meaning that goals requiring longer-term, capital-intensive interventions are systematically under-served by the current social enterprise landscape.

Financial and Institutional Mediation of Catalytic Capacity

A second major finding is that financial and institutional conditions act as decisive mediating variables between social entrepreneurial innovation and realised SDG outcomes. Across the reviewed studies, social entrepreneurs are consistently reported to be financially constrained, with limited managerial capacity further undermining their ability to fulfil their social mission at scale (Turyakira *et al*., 2025). In Kenya, access to finance, complex regulatory processes,

and intense competition from both established firms and informal market actors are identified as the three most significant barriers restricting the scale of social enterprise impact, despite the demonstrated viability of the underlying business models (Kithae & Munge, 2025). At a continental level, this financing constraint is compounded by a broader philanthropic imbalance: African social entrepreneurs report facing persistent difficulty in accessing the funding needed to start and scale their ventures, with the large majority of major donor gifts continuing to flow to international rather than local organisations (World Economic Forum, 2023).

This finding directly addresses the second research question and is best interpreted through Stakeholder Theory, which frames access to finance as one of several competing stakeholder demands, alongside beneficiary needs, regulatory compliance, and community legitimacy, that a social enterprise must satisfy simultaneously in order to survive. Where funders, regulators, and communities are not aligned around a shared understanding of what constitutes credible social impact, social enterprises are forced to divert scarce resources toward stakeholder management rather than toward the innovation and delivery that generate SDG outcomes in the first place. The evidence therefore suggests that institutional and financial mediation is not a peripheral constraint but a central determinant of whether social entrepreneurial innovation converts into measurable SDG progress.

Fragmented Measurement and Limited Cross-Context Learning

The third theme to emerge from the synthesis is that the absence of standardised impact-measurement frameworks limit both the visibility and the scalability of social entrepreneurship's SDG contribution. Existing studies tend to document SDG-related outcomes descriptively, mapping specific ventures onto specific goals through case narrative rather than through a common measurement standard that would allow comparison across ventures, sectors, or countries (Kaur *et al.*, 2023; Kithae & Munge, 2025; Turyakira *et al.*, 2025). This fragmentation makes it difficult for investors and development finance institutions to identify which social enterprises are producing the most cost-effective SDG outcomes, and in turn makes it harder for well-performing ventures to attract the capital needed to scale beyond their initial context.

This finding directly addresses the third research question, revealing that the primary barrier to scaling social entrepreneurship's contribution to the SDGs is not a shortage of investable ideas but a shortage of the shared measurement infrastructure that would allow those ideas to be recognised, compared, and funded at scale. This interpretation is consistent with both theoretical frameworks guiding the study: Social Entrepreneurship Theory explains why

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innovative ventures continue to emerge despite these constraints, while Stakeholder Theory explains why, in the absence of a shared measurement language, funders and social enterprises struggle to reach the alignment needed for capital to flow toward demonstrated impact.

Conclusion

The clearest insight to emerge from this synthesis is that social entrepreneurship's catalytic power is being throttled less by a shortage of innovation and more by an absence of recognition. Across every context reviewed, from Uganda to Kenya to South Asia, social entrepreneurs have repeatedly demonstrated the capacity to design ventures that simultaneously address poverty, inequality, and livelihood gaps in ways that neither government programmes nor conventional markets have matched. What is missing is not the entrepreneurial capability to act, but the institutional apparatus needed to see that capability clearly enough to fund and scale it.

This points to a narrower but more consequential conclusion than the field has generally drawn. The future contribution of social entrepreneurship to the SDGs will be determined less by the volume of new ventures launched than by whether funders, governments, and social enterprises converge on a shared standard for recognising which ventures are genuinely delivering SDG-aligned outcomes. Until that convergence occurs, the sector will remain structurally capable of producing impact far in excess of what is currently financed, measured, or scaled.

Recommendations

Governments and development partners should harmonise SDG-impact measurement and link certification to access to blended finance, including concessional loans, impact bonds, and risk-sharing facilities. Rather than leaving impact measurement to the discretion of individual funders or ventures, as is currently the case, a standardised framework would allow investors to compare the SDG performance of social enterprises across sectors and countries on a common basis, reducing the due-diligence burden that currently discourages capital from flowing to smaller, locally rooted ventures. For these recommendations to be enforceable rather than aspirational, national ministries responsible for finance, trade, and social development should be tasked with adopting the framework into existing SME and social enterprise registration processes, so that certification becomes a practical gateway to funding rather than an optional add-on. Development finance institutions, for their part, should commit a defined proportion of their SDG-focused portfolios specifically to certified social enterprises operating in the under-served environmental and long-payback goal areas identified in this study, ensuring that the current concentration of impact

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around poverty and livelihood goals is deliberately broadened over time.

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Security Management Strategies and Challenges Constraining the Mitigation of Banditry in Niger Sate

Abstract

This study examined the security management strategies and operational challenges constraining the mitigation of armed banditry and its impact on economic development in Niger State, Nigeria. Framed within Rational Choice Theory, the study investigated how criminal syndicates exploit institutional gaps for material gain, turning vast, unpoliced frontiers like the Allawa and Kamuku forest reserves into highly volatile enclaves. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study utilized a sample size of 400 respondents, reducing field data from 367 retrieved questionnaires and secondary macroeconomic data. The findings revealed that while government-led kinetic measures such as military sweeps and forest-clearing operations achieved localized, temporary successes, their long-term efficacy is severely undermined by a reactive "kinetic loop" and the absence of permanent civil-military holding forces. Consequently, vital economic routes across frontline Local Government Areas specifically Shiroro, Rafi, and Munya remain highly insecure, precipitating a severe agrarian collapse and driving transport-induced headline inflation above 34%. Furthermore, the study identified critical micro-level institutional bottlenecks, including delayed responses to distress calls, acute shortages of operational surveillance equipment, and fragmented intelligence coordination between formal security agencies and local vigilantes. Soft, non-kinetic measures like early warning units remain profoundly underfunded due to fiscal disbursements favoring reactive containment lines. The study concluded that armed banditry has evolved into a structurally entrenched economy of violence that systematically drains developmental capital. It recommended an urgent architectural shift toward balancing kinetic operations with permanent border-patrol assets, real-time intelligence-sharing repositories, and state-backed socio-economic stabilization frameworks.

Keywords: Security Management, Armed Banditry, Economic Development, Rational Choice Theory, Niger State, Joint Military Operations.

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Introduction

The relationship between internal security management and sustainable macroeconomic growth remains a central theme in global development policy. Across industrialized and emerging economies alike, historical and contemporary evidence demonstrates that the protection of territorial integrity, human capital, and property rights is an absolute prerequisite for fostering economic development (World Bank, 2024). When a state fails to maintain its monopoly over the legitimate use of violence, organized criminal syndicates and non-state armed actors inevitably

move into the governance vacuum, eroding investor confidence and destroying local markets. On a global scale, the proliferation of specialized transnational crime networks ranging from drug cartels in Latin America to maritime piracy syndicates in Southeast Asia illustrates how structural security management deficits can turn potentially lucrative economic corridors into highly volatile, ungoverned conflict zones (UNODC, 2024).

Sub-Saharan Africa faces a complex array of unconventional security challenges that directly undermine its long-term development agendas, such as the African Union's Agenda 2063. The sub-continent's security landscape has shifted from traditional interstate conflicts toward highly decentralized, asymmetric internal threats, including pastoralist-farmer clashes, violent extremism, and rural banditry (AfDB, 2025). In the West African sub-region, this crisis is exacerbated by deep-seated institutional weaknesses, high rates of youth unemployment, extreme poverty, and highly porous national borders that facilitate the trafficking of illegal small arms and light weapons (ECOWAS, 2025). This regional instability has severely disrupted cross-border supply chains, triggered mass migrations, and decimated agrarian economies. Consequently, these factors have forced states to divert scarce capital from vital public infrastructure and social welfare programs to fund reactive, expensive kinetic military operations.

Within the Nigerian Federation, this regional vulnerability manifests as a severe domestic crisis, with armed banditry emerging as a dominant threat to human survival and economic stability. Armed banditry in Nigeria characterized by mass kidnappings for ransom, village raids, the extortion of rural communities, and large-scale cattle rustling has evolved from low-level, localized thefts into a sophisticated, multi-billion naira criminal industry (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2025). The country's security architecture has struggled to contain this threat, largely due to a lack of state presence across vast, unpoliced forests and a persistent shortage of personnel within formal law enforcement agencies. This internal insecurity has crippled Nigeria's real sector by triggering an agrarian collapse across its northern breadbasket, disrupting domestic transport networks, and creating deep regional disparities in food security and industrial production.

Niger State has become an epicenter of this crisis within the north-central geopolitical zone, presenting a unique challenge due to its vast geography and economic structure. As Nigeria's largest state by landmass, it features massive, rugged terrains and dense forest reserves such as the Allawa and Kamuku forests that share borders with volatile states like Zamfara and Kaduna, making them ideal hideouts for criminal networks (Mikail *et al.*, 2025). Indicators from early 2025 through mid-2026 highlight the growing severity of this threat. For instance, the mass abduction of over 300 students and

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staff from a boarding school in the Papiri community highlighted the continuing vulnerability of the state's social infrastructure (Africa Defense Forum, 2026; Anyanwu, 2026).

Furthermore, data from recent security trackers reveals that between 2025 and 2026, armed attacks across volatile Local Government Areas like Shiroro, Rafi, and Munya have resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and forced thousands of smallholder farmers into displaced person's camps (Umar et al., 2026). Because agriculture is the backbone of Niger State's economy, these attacks have caused a sharp drop in crop production, worsened food insecurity, and severely limited local economic growth (Vulegbo et al., 2026). While the state government has tried various tactics including joint military operations, local vigilante partnerships, and technology-driven surveillance the violence continues. This persistence raises critical questions about how current security strategies are designed, executed, and constrained.

Statement of the Research Problem

The ongoing breakdown of human and economic security in Niger State stems from persistent armed banditry, combined with a distinct lack of empirical research regarding how tactical and operational failures directly stall local economic development. In an ideal situation, the state's security management architecture would feature a highly proactive, intelligence-driven, and well-coordinated framework where formal forces work seamlessly with community vigilantes to secure vast forests, protect rural agrarian hubs, and foster an environment that attracts investment. However, the current reality stands in sharp contrast to this ideal, as criminal syndicates have grown increasingly bold and sophisticated, evolving from simple livestock theft into organized kidnap-for-ransom operations and forced taxation of rural populations (Anyanwu, 2026).

To address this challenge, both state and federal authorities have made significant efforts, including deploying joint military tasks forces, expanding funding for the local Vigilante Corps, and banning cash ransom payments. Despite these continuous interventions, the problem stubbornly persists, driven heavily by "conflict entrepreneurs" who profit from illicit arms trafficking and resource extraction, and further worsened by low troop-to-population ratios, broken inter-agency intelligence sharing, and a lack of local trust in formal law enforcement (Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2025).

This persistent violence is structurally sustained by a clear gap in contemporary literature. Most existing studies focus broadly on the national or northwest regional levels, often overlooking the distinct dynamics within the north-central zone (Madubuegwu & Abah, 2023). Furthermore, current literature heavily relies on general sociopolitical or historical assessments, leaving a critical empirical shortage of recent (2025–2026) data that connects operational security management constraints such as broken inter-agency communication and

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intelligence leakages directly to the stagnation of specific local economic indicators (Umar et al., 2026).

This research is urgently needed to fill these analytical gaps. Without an objective study of these operational bottlenecks, security responses will remain reactive and ineffective, leaving Niger State's agrarian economy in a state of permanent decline. This investigation is therefore vital to uncover the specific operational hurdles limiting security efforts and to provide actionable, evidence-based strategies capable of restoring peace and unlocking sustainable economic development.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the security management strategies and challenges constraining the mitigation of banditry towards fostering economic development in Niger Sate. The specific objectives are to:

i. Determine the extent to which government interventions and security strategies has mitigated banditry and fostered a conducive environment for economic development in Niger State;

ii. Analyse the issues and challenges constraining the mitigation of banditry towards fostering economic development in Niger State.

Conceptual Review

Security

According to Igbuzor (2011) security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. It demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption. To Omede (2012) security is a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. Security can further be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighbourhood and by people around (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

Security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese, & Ogunde, 2013). It also focuses on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection. This description of the foregoing structured the concept of security into four dimensions. These dimensions can be woven together to give a composite

definition of security as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological (Olabanji & Ese, 2014).

Security is conceived as to be secure and free from both fear of physical, psychological abuse, violence, persecution, or death and from want such as food, health and good job (Asmau & Abdulrasheed, 2020).

Banditry

Dmeller (2018) views banditry as the use of weapons by a gang of robbers or outlaws belonging to a gang, to steal or rob from the people in an isolated or lawless area of a country. This perspective does not suit the nature of banditry in Nigeria as bandits perpetrate crimes and violence in communities where the rule of law is engrained. Okoli and Okpaleke (2017) conceptualise banditry as armed violence perpetrated by criminal opportunists and syndicates in the countryside and frontiers of countries. They argue that banditry comprises acts of armed criminality targeting human lives or properties: armed robbery, kidnapping, cattle rustling and allied armed violence. The perspective of Okoli and Okpaleke (2017) suits the operationalisation of the concept of banditry in this study which sees it as violent acts perpetrated by unlawful armed groups terrorising people and state institutions, thereby necessitating response mechanisms from the FGN. Their view is, thereby, adopted for this study.

Economic Development

Economic development is thus a multivariate concept; hence there is no single satisfactory definition of it. Economic development is a process where low income national economies are transformed into modern industrial economies. It involves qualitative and quantitative improvements in a country's economy. Political and social transformations are also included in the concept of economic development in addition to economic changes. Thus, we conclude that aggregate and per capita real incomes are not sufficient indicators of economic development. Rather economic development is concerned with economic, social and institutional mechanisms that are necessary for bringing large scale improvements in the levels of living of the masses (Umar, 2024).

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Balarabe, Kirfi & Abdulsaam (2021), carried out an assessment of the impact of structures and inter-institutional collaboration on the delivery of security services in the bandits-bedevilled Zamfara and Sokoto States. The study used survey method. The population of the study is comprised of Non state actors, Security Agencies (Army, Police and NSCDC), Zamfara (affected communities) and Sokoto (Affected Communities) totaling 3019 out of which a sample size of 906 was drawn. Questionnaire was administered on respondents. Data was analyzed using simple percentage. Hypothesis was tested using simple regression. The study utilized the

structural functional analysis as its framework of analysis. It was observed that insecurity in North-western Nigeria especially in Zamfara and some parts of Sokoto States have become a dilemma to reckon with. Banditry is one of the disturbing atrocities desecrating the human face of the affected states viz-a-viz it's depleting effect on socioeconomic development in the entire Northwest. The study however discovered that the quality of services delivery by the Security agencies during the pre and banditry era is not significantly impacted by the structures and institutional collaboration in Zamfara and Sokoto States. It was recommended that government at the state and national levels should as a matter of proficiency ensure undiluted synergy between and among security structures and institutions. The study compare data of two state (Sokoto and Zamfara) whereas the current study will use a single state data which is Niger state in its analysis.

Ugwueze & Onuoha (2020), in their study titled hard versus soft measures to security: explaining the failure of counter-terrorism strategy in Nigeria. The paper utilized qualitative and textual method of data collection and analysis respectively. The study observed that Nigeria continues to face the challenge of containing terrorism despite adopting diverse counter-terrorism measures. While extant literature has evaluated the impacts of these measures, explaining why terrorist attacks in Nigeria persist despite a robust hard approach through the traditional use of force is still lacking. The article argued that because counter-terrorism in Nigeria is lacking in soft approach, it will be difficult for the Nigerian state to defeat Boko Haram insurgency even with military force. The paper concluded and recommended among others that to effectively address the threat posed by terrorism, Nigeria needs to take concerted efforts to address the gap between what exists on paper and what it delivers in practice. The study limited its scope contextually to the way-out of the quagmire of insurgency in Nigeria without delving its analysis into how the insurgency activities have halted the economic activities of the nation at large and Niger State in particular through the lost of FDI, decline in GDP and human capital development which will all be addressed by the current study.

Mohammed, Liman, Yusuf and Oyinloye (2023), impact of communal and government measures in combating armed banditry on human security in Niger state, Nigeria. The research is conducted by examining literature banditry, communal strategies and government intervention measures. The literature was obtained through searches in publicly available material. Literature from non-serial publications, official reports, and conferences has been included particularly if they have been cited by other references in term of banditry. The study engaged the Theory of Structural Functionalism in a thematic study to examine effects of communal and government measures in combating

armed banditry on human security in Niger state, Nigeria. The study revealed that communal efforts have positive though marginal effects on tackling banditry in Niger State. While government efforts are largely seen as reactive and less effective at confronting banditry. Based on these findings, the study concludes that community oriented policing will go a long way in addressing banditry. The study recommended that Federal and State Government should bring security apparatus closer to the community as against warehousing security in the exclusive list. The study also recommends that government narratives to counter banditry should be the deployment of good governance as good governance will engender employment and provision of basic amenities. The study is closely related to the current study, however, the area of departure with the current study is on the second variable of investigation where the reviewed study centers on human security. Hence, the reason why the current study aimed at interrogating the variable of economic development in order to see how it has been impacted in Niger state.

Haliru (2020) in his study considered an examination of the efforts of security agencies in tackling banditry in northern Nigeria. His study utilised primary and secondary data in analysing the phenomenon. Findings from the study revealed that the response process against banditry has been excessively militarised and devoid of non-military dimensions in dealing with similar situations. The author recommended that the FGN could strengthen arms control efforts in border areas by enhancing the organisational capacity of border security agencies through the use of modern technology to strengthen the inspection and control of cross-border trade. Haliru however did not consider the effectiveness of the government security response mechanisms in in mitigating banditry and fostering a conducive environment for economic development in Niger State.

Alade (2020) examined government's security response to banditry attacks in the North West Zone of Nigeria. Adopting quantitative and qualitative research methods, his study posited that despite the institution of varied joint security operations in the North West Zone, security in the zone has deteriorated throughout the years. He noted that this was aggravated by the failure of an amnesty programme and peace deal inaugurated by the Governors of Katsina and Zamfara States. The study revealed that the two most powerful banditry groups (Buharin Daji and Dogo Gyedi) and other groups did not participate in the peace pacts. He concluded that the response mechanisms of the Nigerian government have not put an end to the recurrent banditry issues in the affected region. Alade (2020) did not however consider the mechanisms through which the response aims at curtailing banditry in Niger state have been effective towards boosting the state's economic development.

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Ezirim, Haruna, Paul and Humbe (2023), carried out a study on complicating role of bandit's informants in the fight against banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study used survey and documentary method of data collection and quantitative data were analyzed using simple descriptive techniques, while qualitative data were content analyzed. The study adopted the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) that holds that organized crime is an instrument for social climbing or socio-economic advancement. The study observed that the security forces and several willing individuals are strategizing to combat the menace of armed bandits in Zamfara State, Nigeria. However, some criminally-minded individuals in the state are crippling the efforts by providing information and other logistics to armed bandits. This development is a threat to national security and the effort to combat banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study findings indicate that bandits-informants in Zamfara State, Nigeria supply information on security raids, attacks or counter attacks, food items, fuel, sale of stolen properties, arms and ammunitions supply, information revealing wealthy targets. The study recommended among others that traditional leaders, religious leaders, NGOs, members of the press and willing individuals should embark on awareness creation within communities in the State on the danger of being informants to bandits. The study was conducted in Zamfara state hence the need to do same in Niger state in order to unveil the complicating role of bandits informants in the fight against banditry within the state and how such nefarious act have contributed in undermining the economic development.

Okorie, Duke, Agbo and Bassey (2023), Porous Borders, Banditry and Insecurity in Northern Nigeria: A Human Security Perspective in the Country's Fourth Republic. The study utilized the content analysis methodological orientation as data were mainly secondary sources: textbooks, magazines, internet materials, Journal publications, etc. the human security theory was explored. Ironically as the country journeyed into the fourth republic, the Nigerian society saw itself drowning in many trouble waters, mostly in areas of conflicts conflagration. This manifested in the Niger Delta Resources conflict, Boko haram, various ethnic cum religious conflicts, unknown, gunmen, Herdsmen, bandits, etc. The current nefarious activities of bandits in Nigeria have been a matter of serious concern due to the death toll, destruction of lives and properties, attack at military camps/bases, and carting away their weapons. It was discovered that: poor border policing, easy manipulations of youths by criminal agents, poor internal security architecture paved way for prevalent of bandits and other criminal agents. The study recommended among others effective policing and security, adequate and judiciously utilizing of security votes. The study is region specific whereas the current study is state-centric.

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Adegbami & Kugbayi (2024), investigated armed banditry and challenges of national development: is Nigeria's governance system failing? The study relies on researchers' observation of unfolding events in the study areas and secondary data. The study revealed that the poor quality of governance offered by the successive political leaders of Nigeria was the major inducing factor of these bandits' activities. Other factors include political and economic reasons, a high unemployment rate, and a high level of poverty. The study recommends that good governance should be instituted, this can be achieved by banning people of questionable character from holding public offices in the country, and leaders with proven integrity and emotional intelligence who will deal with the root causes of heinous activities in the country be put in place. The study interrogated the phenomena of banditry nationwide whereas the current study will focus on Niger state in north central Nigeria.

Olawale & Folasade (2023), interrogated the drivers of insurgency, armed militancy, and banditry in Nigeria: implications for national integration and security. By analyzing these drivers using secondary data archival records, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of insurgency, armed militancy, and banditry in Nigeria. The study unveiled that Nigeria has faced significant challenges in maintaining peace and stability due to the rise of various insurgent groups, armed militias, and criminal bands across the country. This study suggested that addressing the drivers of insurgency, armed militancy, and banditry is crucial for promoting national integration and enhancing security in Nigeria. It highlights the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach that combines efforts in socio-economic development, political inclusivity, conflict resolution, and law enforcement. A notable shortcoming of Olawale & Folasade's study is its limited focus on its methodology. Thus, more comprehensive research is required to explore varied techniques and strategies in investigating the drivers of banditry in Niger state.

Theoretical Framework

Analysing the persistent challenge of banditry and its economic implications necessitates the application of carefully selected theoretical perspectives in order to offer valuable insights into the causes, dynamics, and economic repercussions of insecurity. In contextual alignment with the Niger State experience, this study identifies the Rational Choice Theory as the most pertinent for examination. These theoretical standpoint is discussed in detail below.

Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory, originally proposed by John Stuart Mill in the 19th century and formalized by economists such as Gary Becker (1976), was later expanded and popularised in political science by James S. Coleman (1990) and Jon Elster (1997). This theory emerged as

a framework to explain human behaviour through calculated individual choices based on perceived costs and benefits. The theory rests on the principle that individuals act based on rational calculations intended to maximise personal benefit while minimising potential losses. Its core assumption is that human behaviour is essentially goal-oriented, and actors are presumed to weigh the costs and benefits before making decisions (Becker 2017, 14). Cornish and Clarke (2016) extended this framework into criminal decision-making, positing that offenders engage in deliberate reasoning processes before committing crimes. Therefore, criminal acts such as banditry are not random but the result of calculated decisions aimed at achieving specific objectives, particularly material gain.

Central to Rational Choice Theory is the argument that crime thrives where perceived benefits outweigh risks or penalties. As such, when enforcement is weak, and the potential reward is high, criminal activities like banditry become more attractive (Clarke 2016, 11). The theory logically connects to the issue of insecurity by asserting that internal security threats emerge from rational decisions made by actors responding to socio-economic conditions. The linkage to economic development becomes apparent as prolonged insecurity disrupts investment, weakens local markets, and deters infrastructural growth, thereby reducing productivity. The Rational Choice Theory thus implies that, if government policies increase the cost of crime via tougher laws, surveillance, and economic inclusion; the occurrence of internal security threats such as banditry would decline, consequently promoting a more stable environment conducive to economic advancement.

Despite its explanatory strength, the Rational Choice Theory has attracted substantial criticism. Scholars such as Tilley (2018, 6) and Hayward (2020, 17) have argued that the theory oversimplifies human motivation and underestimates the influence of emotion, cultural context, peer pressure, and systemic deprivation. When applied to the context of insecurity, especially in low-income and conflict-prone environments, critics believe it fails to account for grievances, trauma, and socio-political marginalisation that drive actors into banditry. Others, such as Wikström and Treiber (2021, 19), have questioned the assumption of full rationality, especially in volatile contexts where decisions are often made under emotional distress or extreme coercion. Thus, while the theory recommends punitive deterrence and rational incentives as solutions, these may be insufficient in regions where structural poverty and social dislocation override calculative reasoning.

Nonetheless, the Rational Choice Theory remains significantly applicable for evaluating the impact of banditry on economic development in Niger State. Its explanatory scope aligns with the observable patterns of organised cattle

rustling, road ambushes, and ransom kidnapping that are often premeditated and profit-driven. The empirical interrogation by Archer and Tritter (2023) indicates that many bandit groups strategically target economic assets such as markets, highways, and farmlands, making cost-effective decisions about when and where to strike. This strategic behaviour reflects elements of rational planning, which supports the theory's suitability for this study. Moreover, the intermittent ceasefire negotiations and ransom settlements further suggest the presence of calculative interests, where actors assess their bargaining power to maximise financial benefits. In this sense, the Rational Choice Theory offers valuable insights into how economic incentives, institutional weaknesses, and security lapses interact to sustain bandit operations and undermine development progress.

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 reduce 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 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 as a platform 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. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information.

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 charts. The discussion of findings then followed**.** This was supported with information from extant literature.

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Analysis on Security Management Strategies and Challenges Constraining the Mitigation of Banditry towards Fostering Economic Development in Niger Sate.

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on security management strategies and challenges constraining the mitigation of banditry towards fostering economic development in Niger Sate. The responses were guided by the research questions and objectives and presented in Figures and Tables.

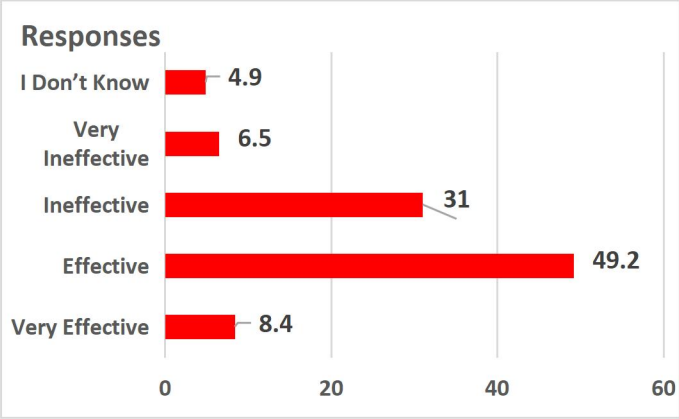
Government Interventions and Security Strategies in Mitigating Banditry and Fostering a Conducive Environment for Infrastructural Development and Poverty Reduction in Niger State

The first research question examined the extent to which government interventions and security strategies has mitigated banditry and fostered a conducive environment for infrastructural development and poverty reduction in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at Figures 1.1 to 1.3 and Table 1.1.

A. Assessing the Effectiveness of Military Raids and Forest-Clearing Operations in Curbing the Spread of Kidnapping and Destruction of Infrastructures in Rural Communities of Niger State.

Respondents were asked about the effectiveness of military raids and forest-clearing operations in curbing the spread of kidnapping and destruction of infrastructures in rural communities of Niger State.

Figure 1.1: Respondents Assessment of the Effectiveness of Military Raids and Forest-Clearing Operations in Curbing the Spread of Kidnapping and Destruction of Infrastructures in Rural Communities of Niger State.



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

Figure 1.1 depicts that a cumulative 57.6 per cent of respondents opined that the military raids and forest-clearing operations have been effective in curbing the spread of kidnapping and destruction of infrastructures in rural communities of Niger State. Another category of respondents cumulatively ranking 37.5 per cent noted that the military raids and forest-clearing operations of the anti-banditry troops was ineffective in Niger State. From the analysis, it could be surmised that the military raids and forest-clearing operations in the curtailment of banditry though is fairly effective, does not exert significant

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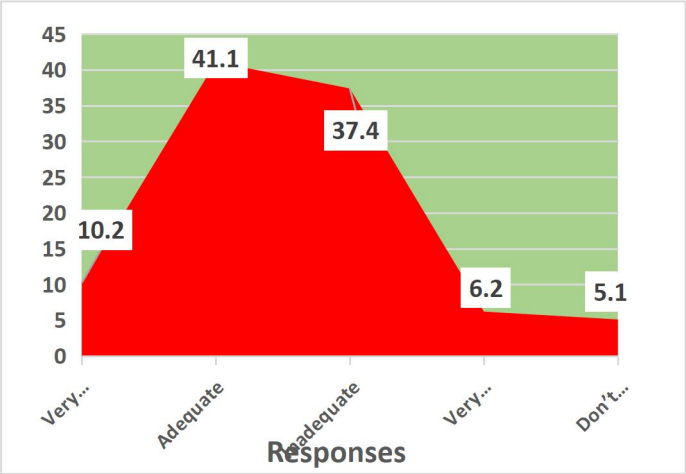
positive influence on the curtailment of banditry in Nigeria.

This analysis is buttressed by security tracking assessments from SBM Intelligence (2025), which indicate that over 1,500 security personnel have been killed in front-line operations, highlighting that purely kinetic containment frameworks lack strategic sustainability and suffer from extreme friction. Furthermore, this structural division aligns with the assertions of Rosenje a& Adeniyi (2025), who contend that Nigerian counter-banditry operations remain trapped in a reactive "kinetic loop" where short-term tactical clearances fail to translate into durable regional peace due to the failure to establish a permanent administrative and security presence in vast rural frontiers.

B. Rating the Adequacy of Current Security Strategies in Keeping Rural Roads and Economic Access Routes Open Across Affected LGAs such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi.

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of current security strategies in keeping rural roads and economic access routes open across affected LGAs such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi.

Figure 1.2: Respondents Rating of the Adequacy of Current Security Strategies in Keeping Rural Roads and Economic Access Routes Open Across Affected LGAs such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi.



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

Figure 4.9 depicts that 10.2 per cent respondents opined that the current security strategies in keeping rural roads and economic access routes open across affected LGAs such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi was very adequate, while 41.1 per cent respondents rated the effect of the current security strategies in keeping rural roads and economic access routes open to be adequate. In addition, 37.4 per cent respondents indicated that the influence of current security strategies in keeping rural roads and economic access routes open across banditry affected LGAs such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi was inadequate. From the analysis, it could be surmised that the effect of security response mechanisms to banditry in Niger state has been partially adequate towards the enhanced curtailment of banditry and security rural roads and economic access routes open. There is, however, the need for Niger state government and FGN to strengthen the logistics support framework of the

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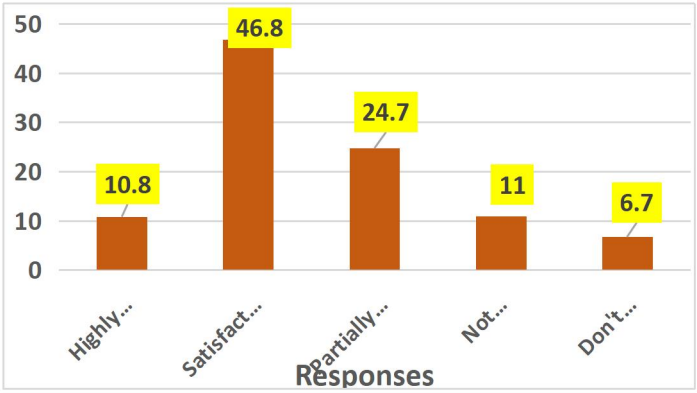
security response mechanisms for improved contributions to the curtailment of banditry across the state.

The perceived partial adequacy of these route-clearing mechanisms across Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi mirrors official assessments from regional tracking platforms which note that armed groups have commercialized regional instability through an entrenched, predation-based ransom economy that collects billions in illicit levies annually, directly undermining formal state trading networks (SBM Intelligence, 2025). This logistical bottleneck is further validated by national macroeconomic indices from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2026), which reveal that persistent rural security risks, road blockades, and forced protection levies continue to act as key drivers of escalating transport-related inflation across the North-Central geopolitical zone.

C. Determining the Extent to Which Security Interventions Contributed to the Reopening and Continued Operation of Public Schools in Areas Earlier Affected by Banditry.

Another question was posed to respondents in order to determining the extent to which security interventions contributed to the reopening and continued operation of public schools in areas earlier affected by banditry in Niger State.

Figure 1.3: Respondents View on Determining the Extent to Which Security Interventions Contributed to the Reopening and Continued Operation of Public Schools in Areas Earlier Affected by Banditry.



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

As highlighted on Figure 1.3, a cumulative 57.6 per cent respondents were of the view that the security interventions in curtailing banditry in Niger state has been satisfactory in ensuring the reopening and continued operation of public schools in areas earlier affected by banditry in Niger State. In addition, 24.7 per cent respondents opined that the security interventions and efforts has been partially satisfactory in this regard.

This community-level institutional fragility is directly corroborated by empirical data from international rights monitors and national data repositories, which confirm that the persistent threat of mass abductions across the North-Central zone continues to trigger severe contractions in rural school enrollment and the mass displacement of vital teaching personnel (Amnesty International, 2026; National Bureau of Statistics, 2025). In addition, this volatile educational context matches the assertions of Anyanwu (2026), who argues

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that the continuous exposure of rural educational facilities to extortionist syndicates prevents the restoration of a predictable social life, thereby crippling human capital development and locking rural communities into a cycle of structural vulnerability.

D. Rating the Extent to Which the Following Government Interventions Helped Mitigate the Impact of Banditry on Community Security and Livelihood Restoration in Niger State (2015–2024).

In order to further establish the extent to which government interventions and security strategies has mitigated banditry, respondents were asked to rate the extent the following government interventions helped in mitigating the impact of banditry on community security and livelihood restoration in Niger State.

Table 1.1: Rating the Rating the Extent to Which the Following Government Interventions Helped in Mitigating the Impact of Banditry on Community Security and Livelihood Restoration in Niger State (2015–2024).

Government Interventions	Effective	%	Ineffective	%	Don't Know	%
Military raids in bandit-dominated forests	241	**65.7**	113	**30.8**	13	**3.5**
Forest-clearing and patrol base establishment	204	**55.6**	142	**38.7**	21	**5.7**
Creation of local vigilante taskforces	212	**57.8**	137	**37.3**	18	**4.9**
Resettlement and rehabilitation programmes	147	**40.1**	199	**54.2**	21	**5.7**
Deployment of mobile police and military units to rural LGAs	113	**30.8**	225	**61.3**	29	**7.9**
Reinforcement of intelligence-gathering and surveillance	149	**40.6**	197	**53.7**	21	**5.7**
Government engagement with traditional rulers and local actors	174	**47.4**	167	**45.5**	26	**7.1**
Provision of community-level early warning and response units	70	**19.1**	276	**75.2**	21	**5.7**

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

As highlighted in Table 1.1, Military raids in bandit-dominated forests operations which is a combination of security response and anti-banditry efforts in Niger state was rated most effective as affirmed by 65.7 per cent of respondents, while creation of local vigilante taskforces (57.8 per cent), forest-clearing and patrol

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base establishment (55.6 per cent) and government engagement with traditional rulers and local actors (54.8 per cent) were equally rated fairly effective operational dimensions of the government interventions efforts in mitigating the impact of banditry on community security and livelihood restoration in Niger State.

On the contrary, the provision of community-level early warning and response units programmes of anti-banditry operations in Niger state was rated most ineffective as affirmed by 75.2 per cent of respondents, while deployment of mobile police and military units to rural LGAs (61.3 per cent) was equally rated as ineffective operational dimensions of the nature of security response mechanisms for curtailing banditry. In addition, resettlement and rehabilitation programmes (54.2 per cent) and reinforcement of intelligence-gathering and surveillance (53.7 per cent) were rated by respondents as fairly ineffective operational mechanisms of the government anti-banditry operations in mitigating the impact of banditry on community security and livelihood restoration in Niger State. Consequently, it is essential for FGN and NSG to ensure adequacy of operational components of the response mechanisms towards improving the proficiency of the anti-banditry troops in Niger state. It could be deduced from the analysis that the nature of banditry and government response includes ineffectiveness of operational dimensions such as provision of community-level early warning and response units programmes, deployment of mobile police and military units to rural LGAs and reinforcement of intelligence-gathering and surveillance which could constrain efficient government-security response in the curtailment of banditry in Niger State.

The overwhelming ineffectiveness of soft, non-kinetic mechanisms like early warning units is validated by financial metrics from the Open Treasury Portal, which reveal that despite trillions allocated to national security institutions, less than thirty percent of capital budgets are efficiently released and disbursed to front-line field operations, starving community stabilization programs of required resources (GovSpend, 2026). This operational distortion tracks closely with economic warnings from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2025), which emphasize that supply-side security shocks repress real-sector growth because vital development capital is consistently diverted away from rural stabilization initiatives to fund expensive, reactive military containment lines.

Issues and Challenges Constraining the Mitigation of Banditry towards Fostering Rural Infrastructural Development and Reducing Poverty Levels in Niger State.

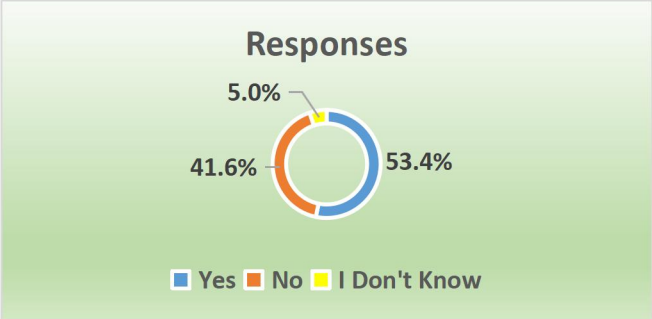
The second research question evaluated the effect of issues and challenges constraining the mitigation of banditry

towards fostering rural infrastructural development and reducing poverty levels in Niger State. To address this research question, the study asked respondents appropriate questions and data generated are presented at Figures 1.4 to 1.6 and Table 1.2.

A. Assessing Whether the Inadequate Presence of Well-Equipped Security Operatives across Forested and Rural Border Communities in Niger State Weakened Efforts to Curb Banditry since 2015.

Another question was posed to respondents to assess whether the inadequate presence of well-equipped security operatives across forested and rural border communities in Niger State weakened efforts to curb banditry since 2015.

Figure 1.4: Respondents View on Assessing Whether the Inadequate Presence of Well-Equipped Security Operatives across Forested and Rural Border Communities in Niger State Weakened Efforts to Curb Banditry since 2015.



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

The responses on Figure 1,4 depicts that 196 (53.4 per cent) respondents were of the view that the inadequate presence of well-equipped security operatives across forested and rural border communities in Niger State weakened efforts to curb banditry since 2015. Another category of respondents ranking 153 (41.6 per cent) respondents opined that the inadequate presence of well-equipped security operatives across forested and rural border communities in Niger State do not in any way contributed in weakening the efforts to curb banditry since 2015. The analysis infers that there is need for the government to upscale the presence of well-equipped security operatives across forested and rural border communities in Niger State through improved logistics, arms and ammunitions in order to strengthen the efforts to curb banditry in the state.

This empirical insight is strongly validated by analytical tracking from SBM Intelligence (2026), which demonstrates that armed gangs systematically exploit these unpoliced forest enclaves to operate as parallel authorities, imposing formal protection taxes on rural populations. In alignment with this reality, Mikail et al. (2025) note that the vast, rugged terrains of the Allawa and Kamuku forest reserves present ideal tactical hideouts for criminal networks, allowing them to supplant state sovereignty in the absence of specialized border-patrol assets.

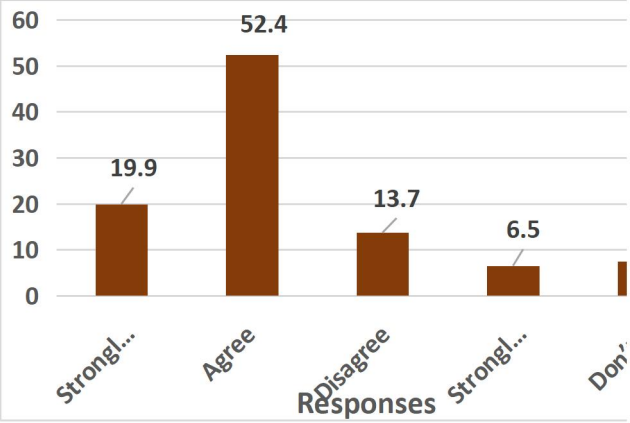
B. Ascertaining whether weak intelligence Coordination between Local

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Vigilantes and Formal Security Agencies has Hindered Effective Mitigation of Banditry in Niger State.

Respondents were asked ascertaining the extent of their agreement with the assertion of whether weak intelligence coordination between local vigilantes and formal security agencies has hindered effective mitigation of banditry in Niger State.

Figure 1.5: Respondents View on Ascertaining whether weak intelligence Coordination between Local Vigilantes and Formal Security Agencies has Hindered Effective Mitigation of Banditry in Niger State.



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

As highlighted in Figure 1.5, 72.3 per cent respondents cumulatively indicated by agreeing that weak intelligence coordination between local vigilantes and formal security agencies has hindered effective mitigation of banditry in Niger State. In addition, 20.2 per cent respondents cumulatively opined that weak intelligence coordination between local vigilantes and formal security agencies has not in any way hindered effective mitigation of banditry in Niger State. It could be surmised from the analysis that the current level of weak intelligence coordination between local vigilantes and formal security agencies has posed as a challenge for enhanced curtailment of banditry in Nigeria.

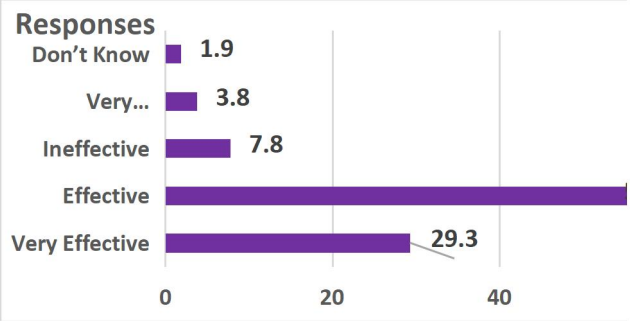
This communication breakdown is supported by institutional critiques from Dataphyte (2026), which reveal that organizational silos, transactional mistrust, and a lack of unified information repositories routinely cause strategic paralysis within the internal security architecture. This operational friction agrees with Umar et al. (2026), who contend that the inability of formal security forces to integrate community-generated intelligence lines prevents tactical maneuvers from being proactive, rendering state campaigns predominantly reactive.

C. Rating the Effectiveness of Government's Disbursement of Security Funds and Logistical Support to Security Agencies Operating in Banditry-Prone LGAs Such as Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya Aided the Curtailment of Banditry in Niger State.

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which effective government's disbursement of security funds and logistical support to security agencies operating in banditry-prone LGAs Such as Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya aided the curtailment of banditry in Niger State.

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Figure 1.6: Respondents Rating the Extent to Which Effective Government's Disbursement of Security Funds and Logistical Support to Security Agencies Operating in Banditry-Prone LGAs Such as Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya Aided the Curtailment of Banditry in Niger State.



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

The responses in Figure 1.6 shows that majority of respondents cumulatively ranking 86.5 per cent respondents shows that the government's disbursement of security funds and logistical support to security agencies operating in banditry-prone LGAs Such as Rafi, Shiroro, and Munya has been effective in aiding the curtailment of banditry in Niger State. It could be surmised from the analysis that effective government's disbursement of security funds and logistical support to security agencies operating in banditry-prone areas is a vital mechanism that must be sustained towards enhancing the curtailment of banditry in Niger State. This fiscal baseline is validated by macroeconomic evaluations from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2026), which indicate that despite tight monetary policies designed to anchor economic expectations, persistent rural insecurity and supply shocks continue to devalue real fiscal investments. This persistent inflation keeps field operating costs extraordinarily high, effectively lowering the actual purchasing power of regional security budgets and stalling field operations.

D. Rating the following issues based on How Significantly they have constrained the Mitigation of Banditry in Niger State Between 2015 and 2024.

Respondents were further asked to rate the effectiveness of the issues that have significantly they have constrained the mitigation of banditry in Niger State between 2015 and 2024.

Table 1.2: Rating the following issues based on How Significantly they have constrained the Mitigation of Banditry in Niger State Between 2015 and 2024.

Issue	Very Significant	Significant	Less Significant	Not Significant
Infiltration of foreign armed groups through porous borders	57.8	26.2	6.6	9.4
Shortage of operational vehicles and surveillance equipment	59.7	29.3	5.8	5.2
Delayed response to distress calls by security agencies	68.5	18.3	6.3	6.9

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Poor inter-agency collaboration among security bodies	35.3	52.6	7.1	5.0
Displacement of communities limiting economic activities	52.4	31.9	6.9	8.8
Political interference in security appointments and operations	55.2	31.7	7.5	5.6
Non-payment or irregular payment of security allowances	58.6	28.7	6.2	6.5
Lack of formal rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant bandits	49.9	37.0	8.7	4.4

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

The analysis on Table 12 above shows that majority of the respondents gave high ratings to most of the indices or challenges. However, the most highly rated challenges include delayed response to distress calls by security agencies (68.5 per cent), shortage of operational vehicles and surveillance equipment (59.7 per cent), non-payment or irregular payment of security allowances (58.6 per cent), infiltration of foreign armed groups through porous borders (57.8 per cent), political interference in security appointments and operations (55.2 per cent), displacement of communities limiting economic activities (52.4 per cent), lack of formal rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant bandits (49.9 per cent), as well as poor inter-agency collaboration among security bodies (35.3 per cent). It therefore suffices that FGN and NSG needs to procure and make available more night fighting capabilities, patrol vehicles and improve welfare packages for security personnel deployed for anti-banditry operations in Niger State.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2025) confirm that this unchecked security crisis has triggered a severe agrarian collapse across vulnerable local government areas, driving Niger State's headline inflation rate to one of the highest in the country at over 34%. By imposing forced harvest taxes, destroying grain stores, and driving smallholder farmers into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, armed syndicates have severely disrupted the region's agricultural supply chain, draining financial liquidity from rural households and preventing the state from implementing sustainable development or poverty reduction programs.

Discussion of Findings

Government Interventions and Security Strategies in Mitigating Banditry and Fostering a Conducive Environment for Infrastructural Development and Poverty Reduction in Niger State.

The study established that while state military sweeps and forest-clearing operations provide immediate, localized

disruptions against criminal networks, their long-term efficacy remains limited by the absence of permanent holding forces. Security tracking data from SBM Intelligence (2025) notes that purely kinetic containment frameworks suffer from severe structural friction, resulting in high frontline casualties and rapid bandit reoccupation of strategic voids. This aligns with Rosenje & Adeniyi (2025), who assert that operations are trapped in a reactive "kinetic loop" where short-term tactical clearances fail to yield durable peace due to an absent permanent administrative and security presence in rural frontiers.

Furthermore, the study revealed that security along rural road networks and economic corridors across Local Government Areas (LGAs) like Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi is only partially adequate, creating severe logistical bottlenecks for agricultural trade. SBM Intelligence (2025) corroborates that armed networks have commercialized this regional instability through an entrenched, multi-billion naira predation-based ransom economy. This matches data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2026), indicating that persistent route closures act as primary drivers of escalating transport-related inflation across the North-Central geopolitical zone.

Additionally, although interventions have satisfactorily supported the physical reopening of public schools, these social infrastructures remain highly fragile. Empirical data from Amnesty International (2026) and the NBS (2025) confirm that persistent threats of mass abductions continue to trigger severe contractions in rural school enrollment and mass displacement of teaching personnel. As Anyanwu (2026) points out, continuous exposure to extortionist syndicates prevents a predictable social life, crippling human capital development and locking rural communities into structural vulnerability.

Finally, a multi-variable tactical breakdown reveals a critical imbalance within the state's framework: kinetic approaches are rated as moderately useful, whereas soft, non-kinetic measures (early warning units, intelligence reinforcement, and resettlement) are overwhelmingly ineffective. Public metrics from the Open Treasury Portal reveal that less than 30% of allocated national security capital budgets are efficiently released to frontline field operations, starving stabilization programs of vital resources (GovSpend, 2026). This operational neglect tracks with Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2025) warnings that supply-side security shocks repress real-sector growth, consistently diverting developmental capital away from rural stabilization into expensive, reactive military deployments.

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Issues and Challenges Constraining the Mitigation of Banditry towards Fostering Rural Infrastructural Development and Reducing Poverty Levels in Niger State.

The study revealed that an inadequate presence of well-equipped formal security personnel across forested border corridors and rural communities has structurally weakened anti-banditry campaigns since 2015. This security gap leaves vast territories unpoliced, enabling criminal networks to establish alternative governance structures. Analytical tracking from SBM Intelligence (2026) illustrates that armed gangs exploit these unpoliced forest enclaves to operate as parallel authorities, imposing formal protection taxes on farmers. In alignment with this, Mikail et al. (2025) note that the rugged terrains of the Allawa and Kamuku forest reserves present ideal tactical hideouts for criminal networks to supplant state sovereignty due to a lack of specialized border-patrol assets.

Furthermore, weak intelligence coordination and fragmented harmonization between local vigilantes and formal security agencies serve as primary operational barriers. This communication breakdown prevents real-time processing of actionable data, allowing mobile syndicates to evade state operations. Institutional critiques from Dataphyte (2026) reveal that organizational silos, transactional mistrust, and a lack of unified information repositories routinely cause strategic paralysis, agreeing with Umar et al. (2026) that the inability to integrate community-generated intelligence lines keeps state campaigns predominantly reactive.

The study also noted that while funding and logistical support are highly effective when they actually reach frontline units in vulnerable LGAs, the broader framework remains heavily constrained by micro-level institutional failures. Macroeconomic evaluations from the CBN (2026) indicate that despite tight monetary policies designed to anchor economic expectations, persistent rural insecurity and supply shocks continue to devalue real fiscal investments. This inflation keeps field operating costs extraordinarily high, lowering the purchasing power of regional security budgets and stalling field operations.

Ultimately, operations are severely constrained by a combination of operational failuresdelayed responses to distress calls, shortages of operational vehicles, and irregular payment of allowances alongside structural challenges like porous borders and community displacement. Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports from the NBS (2025) confirm that this security crisis has triggered a severe agrarian collapse across vulnerable LGAs, driving Niger State's headline inflation rate above 34%. By imposing forced harvest taxes, destroying grain stores, and driving smallholder farmers into IDP camps, armed syndicates have disrupted the region's agricultural supply chain, draining financial liquidity from rural

households and preventing the state from implementing sustainable development or poverty reduction programs.

Conclusion

A critical synthesis of the empirical findings and macro-institutional indicators demonstrates that armed banditry in Niger State has evolved into a structurally entrenched political economy of violence rather than a transient security friction. While state-led kinetic interventions deliver immediate, localized tactical disruptions, their strategic efficacy is fundamentally undermined by a systemic "kinetic loop" where mobile syndicates routinely reoccupy strategic vacuums due to an absent permanent administrative and security presence in rural frontiers. This structural vulnerability is further worsened by a severe tactical imbalance within the state's security architecture, which disproportionately funds reactive containment lines while starving soft, non-kinetic measures such as community early warning units, proactive intelligence repositories, and resettlement frameworks of vital capital resources, leaving critical socioeconomic spaces and trade corridors highly fragile.

From a developmental standpoint, these operational bottlenecks and geographic challenges interact to create an institutional crisis that directly impedes rural infrastructure delivery and poverty reduction frameworks. The lack of well-equipped personnel across unpoliced border corridors has allowed armed gangs to supplant formal state sovereignty, functioning as parallel administrative authorities that extract illegal taxes from vulnerable agrarian populations. This structural collapse of the rural economy marked by mass displacements, supply-side contractions, and hyperinflation across local government areas such as Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi consistently devalues fiscal investments. Ultimately, because developmental capital is continuously diverted to fund expensive, reactive military deployments, the state's capacity to execute sustainable social investments is crippled, locking the region into a self-perpetuating cycle of structural vulnerability and poverty.

Recommendations

i. The Niger State Government, in collaboration with federal security institutions, must restructure its security architecture to balance kinetic interventions with robust, non-kinetic stabilization strategies. This requires deploying permanent civil-military holding forces and local administrative outposts within cleared forest frontiers to prevent bandit reoccupation, while fully funding community early warning units, school protection models, and agrarian resettlement initiatives. This shift is essential to insulate social infrastructure, secure vital trade corridors (Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi), and lower transport inflation, thereby fostering a predictable environment for infrastructure delivery and poverty reduction.

ii. To resolve critical operational bottlenecks, the Niger State Government

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must establish a unified, real-time intelligence-sharing repository that bridges the communication gap between community vigilantes and formal security agencies, dismantling organizational silos to enable proactive tactical operations as well as deploy specialized, well-equipped border-patrol assets and surveillance technology to reclaim unpoliced "ungoverned spaces" within the Allawa and Kamuku forest reserves.

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Dynamics of Nigeria–United Kingdom Bilateral Relations and its Impact on Human Capital Development in Nigeria's Education Sector, 2015-2025

Abstract

Bilateral educational diplomacy is frequently leveraged by developing countries to bridge local instructional gaps and drive capacity building. However, the exact institutional pathways through which external bilateral interventions interact with severely underfunded domestic educational systems remain under-researched. This study critically examined the dynamics of Nigeria–United Kingdom bilateral relations and their subsequent impact on human capital development within Nigeria's education sector. Grounded in Theodore Schultz's Human Capital Theory, the study adopted a qualitative, triangulated research design. Primary data were gathered via semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (N = 17) across key diplomatic and educational institutions, including the Federal Ministry of Education, the British High Commission, and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs complemented by process-tracing and qualitative content analysis of bilateral policy texts from 2015 to 2026. The findings revealed an institutional paradox which is that, while Anglo-Nigerian bilateral frameworks (manifested through Chevening fellowships, Commonwealth scholarships, and transnational education initiatives) demonstrated a strong positive relationship with high-level knowledge transfer and academic standardization, these gains are severely neutralized by domestic systemic decay. Specifically, the study established that the structural impact of bilateral educational gains is heavily constrained by an acute domestic funding deficit (with Nigeria's education budget stagnating at 6.15% of national expenditure in 2025 and 2026) and a debilitating asymmetric "brain drain" of skilled academic and technical personnel to the UK. The study concluded that bilateral partnerships cannot act as an independent engine for national human capital formation without a resilient domestic framework. It recommended that the Federal Government of Nigeria shift its strategic approach from external scholarship dependency toward institutionalizing robust, local research and development frameworks, while enacting strategic reintegration policies to retain foreign-trained talents within productive domestic sectors.

Keywords: Bilateral Relations, Educational Diplomacy, Human Capital Development, Brain Drain, Anglo-Nigerian Relations, Educational Policy.

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Introduction

In today's global educational space, the development of human capital is fundamentally anchored on the qualitative depth, structural resilience, and technical capacity of a nation's academic institutions (Olowonefa & Lawal, 2024). As educational systems worldwide shift toward advanced digital literacy, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) frameworks, and highly specialized pedagogical

methodologies, the cultivation of human capabilities requires continuous institutional modernization. Within this context, sovereign states actively leverage bilateral educational diplomacy to bridge local pedagogical gaps, enrich academic research, and foster cross-border institutional collaborations (Afolabi & Ekundayo, 2025). International partnerships, therefore, serve as vital institutional pipelines for the transfer of instructional technologies, curriculum enrichment, and academic capacity building.

Historically, the educational ties between Nigeria and the United Kingdom have evolved from a highly centralized colonial system of schooling into a dynamic, multi-layered post-colonial partnership (Danjuma, 2024). This relationship operates through prominent institutional bodies such as the British Council, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). These organizations drive collaborative programs aimed at upgrading instructional delivery, funding academic fellowships, and establishing joint research initiatives between British and Nigerian universities (British Council Nigeria, 2025). While Nigeria possesses the largest student population in Sub-Saharan Africa, its local institutions face severe operational strains, making academic cooperation with the UK a critical avenue for absorbing contemporary global educational standards and best practices.

However, a profound disconnect exists between the institutional objectives of these bilateral educational frameworks and the operational realities within Nigeria's domestic schools. While specific initiatives like the UK-Nigeria Higher Education Partnerships and various transnational education (TNE) policies aim to elevate local academic standards, Nigeria's domestic educational sector suffers from severe systemic stress. Recent budgetary data indicate that the Federal Government of Nigeria allocated an inadequate N3.52 trillion to the education sector in 2025, a figure that remained stagnant in the 2026 fiscal appropriation, thereby reducing the sector's share of national expenditure to just 6.15% (National Universities Commission, 2026). This funding deficit chokes institutional capacity, resulting in obsolete laboratory equipment, poorly trained teaching personnel, and an outdated curriculum that fails to prepare students for modern global demands.

Consequently, Nigeria's educational indicators remain severely depressed on global human capital indices, characterized by an acute shortage of technical skills and a growing learning poverty rate among graduates (World Bank, 2025). This reality underscores the urgent need to critically evaluate how Anglo-Nigerian bilateral frameworks specifically teacher professional development grants, technical education aid, ICT infrastructure support, and

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institutional exchange programs can be strategically leveraged. Examining these elements is crucial to addressing the internal structural decay of Nigeria's school system and transforming it into a resilient engine for genuine educational human capital development.

It is against this backdrop that this study examines the dynamics of Nigeria–United Kingdom bilateral relations and its impact on human capital development in Nigeria's education Sector.

Statement of the Research Problem

Numerous studies, such as Amadi & Alolote (2019), Ariye (2020), Adelakun (2021), Babangida (2022), Awogbemi (2023) among many others, have their focus only on the relationship between human capital development and economic growth, while ignoring Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and its contribution to human capital development in education in Nigeria. The role of education in elevating any nation's rapid growth and development cannot be overstated. It is the nexus that strengthens all other sectors of an economy. Those in health, politics, economic, and even agricultural sectors rely on education for the acquisition of skills and for coping with societal dynamics. Just like all other policies, educational policies require adequate financing to stir up all other activities revolving around it. Unfortunately, the educational sector in Nigeria has faced several bottlenecks, one of which, is the poor financing of the sector. The study of this nature is prompted by the slow rate of Nigeria's economic growth despite the huge contributions of the government and other private bodies. Researches on this topic carried out over the years have not really achieved its prior objectives. According to Adam Smith, the prosperity of a country is determined by the skill, efficiency and attitude of the labour used by that country.

Bilateral diplomatic and educational partnerships between a developing state and an advanced academic superpower like the United Kingdom should serve as a functional conduit for curriculum development, teacher capacity building, and infrastructural modernization within the host nation's school system (Afolabi & Ekundayo, 2025; Danjuma, 2024). For Nigeria, its historical educational alliance with the UK is theoretically expected to upgrade local pedagogical quality, enrich scientific research output, and significantly enhance human capital outcomes across all levels of education.

However, the current situation reveals a severe institutional paradox. Despite decades of sustained bilateral educational programs, international grants, and high-profile scholarship schemes, Nigeria's educational sector remains trapped in a state of systemic decay. This crisis is manifested in poorly equipped classrooms, an acute shortage of specialized technical teachers, and a massive "brain drain" of top-tier academic talents migrating to British universities (NUC, 2026; Olowonefa & Lawal, 2024). To arrest this decline, successive Nigerian administrations have implemented

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targeted policy reforms, including the Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector and the National Human Capital Development (HCD) Strategy (Federal Ministry of Education, 2025).

Yet, these crises persist, highlighting a major gap in the literature. While contemporary researchers extensively analyze human capital as a broad macroeconomic tool for wealth generation (Adelakun, 2021; Awogbemi, 2023), they systematically ignore the specific, practical impact of external bilateral educational interventions on actual classroom outcomes, teacher training quality, and curriculum modernization. This study is therefore necessitated by the urgent need to fill this analytical gap by providing an empirical evaluation of the exact institutional channels through which Nigeria–UK bilateral relations affect human capital development within Nigeria's education sector.

Research Questions

i. What is the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and human capital development in education in Nigeria?

ii. What are the possible impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development in education in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the Nigeria–United Kingdom bilateral relations and its impact on human capital development in Nigeria's education sector, while the specific objectives are to:

i. Analyze the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and human capital development in education in Nigeria.

ii. Ascertain the possible impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development in education in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Bilateral Relations

In international relations, bilateral cooperation is a mutually cooperation that is generally known as bilateral relations. In connection with the concept of bilateral relations, Krisna (2021) in his international political dictionary said that: "Bilateral relations are conditions that describe a mutual and influential relationship or a mutual relationship occurs between two parties or two countries and the state acts as the main actor in the implementation of the bilateral relationship. This bilateral cooperation aims to create peace, accelerate the problem solving process between the two countries involved, and improve mutual prosperity. In this case, it pays more attention to social, political, cultural and economic structures so as to produce a harmonious relationship between the two countries.

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In bilateral diplomacy the main concept used is that a country will pursue its national interests in order to obtain maximum benefits and the only way is to make good and prolonged relations between countries. Basically, the bilateral relationship is a cooperative relationship between countries which is a diverse meeting of international interests from several countries which cannot be fulfilled by their own people. The definition of cooperation according to Holsti can be divided into five, among others are: The view that two or more value interests or goals meet each other and can produce something, promoted or fulfilled by all parties, approval of certain problems between two or more countries in order to utilize the conflict of interest equation, the view or expectation of a country that the policies decided by other countries help the country to achieve its interests and values, official or unofficial rules regarding future transactions made to carry out the purpose and transactions between countries to fulfil their agreement.

Bilateral relations are the founding element of international relations, or, as Thomas Gomart has suggested, "the basic form of the diplomatic game" (Gomart, 2022:65). The centrality of bilateral relations can be seen on the historical, strategic, and numerical levels. First, on a historical level, the use of diplomatic relations between states through official missions began in the seventeenth century among European monarchies, the equivalent of what may be called "traditional diplomacy" or "old diplomacy." The Congress of Westphalia in 1648 recognized equal status among all sovereign nations, whose mutual recognition was conducted through receiving foreign consular agents. This mainly European bilateral diplomacy, widespread until the First World War, was characterized by the central role played by embassies, a high degree of secrecy in negotiations, and bonds created through intermarriage among major ruling families that went hand in hand with political alliances. Colonial empires and decolonization subsequently led to the development of a profusion of other types of bilateral relations between Europe and the rest of the world.

Bilateral Relations (Bilateralism) therefore consists of the political, economic, or cultural relations between two (2) sovereign/independent states. When states recognize one another as sovereign states and agree to develop diplomatic relations, they exchange diplomatic agents such as ambassadors to help in dialogues and cooperation. Through bilateral relations, states can develop tailored agreements that only apply to contracting states. Therefore, in this study, bilateralism implies the conduct of political, economic or cultural relations between two sovereign states. When states recognize one another as sovereign states and agree to diplomatic relations, they have created a bilateral relationship.

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Human Capital Development

According to Adelakun (2021) human capital development refers to increasing skills, knowledge, productivity, and resourcefulness of citizens through the process of human capital formation. Aluko (2025) defined Human capital development as the process that enhances the skills, knowledge, efficiency, and resourcefulness of citizens through a process of human capital formation, generally conceived. Thus, human capital development is a citizen's centred stratagem, and not goods-centred or production-centred tactic of growth. Human capital development also refers to the procedure of acquiring and raising the number of people who have the skills, good health, education and experience that are critical for economic development. Therefore, human capital development talks about the improvement of skills that are being acquired or that are gifted and the enhancing of knowledge through training and practical activities that will enable one to possess problem solving skills and be able to provide solutions when needed.

Investment in human capital is a prerequisite for human capital development. Human Capital Development refers to the investment that an organization, society or country make in their citizens to increase their productive capacity and their quality of life. Human capital formation is achieved essentially through formal education, a system of practical training relating to a particular trade or enterprise, and other activities that lead to the acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge that ultimately lead to enhanced productivity. Therefore, human capital development refers to the process of acquiring the number of people who have the skills, education and experience that are essential for socio-economic development of a country (Amsalu, 2021). Harry (2020) posits that Human capital development is the quantum of efforts directed at developing and orienting human beings so as to equip them to be productive to themselves, in particular, and the society in general. To Amsalu (2021), it is called the productive base of a given nation consisting of all forms of capital – physical, human, natural and social which the present generation bequeaths to its descendants.

From the above, in human capital development, education and health are essential. Education is concerned with the cultivation of the whole person ‖ including intellectual, character and psychomotor development. It is the human resources of any nation, rather than its physical capital and material resources, which ultimately determines the character and pace of its economic and social development. Human capital development is the process of building the inherent skills, knowledge and capabilities of people to enhance their contributions towards productive activities in their location, environment or country. Human capital development entails educating the populace so that they have the wherewithal to make better

use of the world's existing resources. The health of the population, which in turn influences productivity, and on-the-job training designed to boost employee efficiency are both aspects of human capital development.

Education

Several scholars have advanced their views about the definition of education. According to sources, education is a word derived from the Latin word, "education" meaning breed, train, tutelage, or rear (Veschi, 2020); while Dewey (2018) refers to education as all one with growing, it has no end beyond itself (meaning that Education is everything along with growth, education itself has no final destination behind itself). Others define education as the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. There is absolutely no doubt that humanity and society have made tremendous progress since the introduction and adoption of education as a catalyst for developing and harnessing the human capital input. History is replete with the actions, struggles, and efforts made by man to improve his well-being through constant enquiry into phenomena, exploration of the environment, and the exploitation of natural resources contained therein. The transition from the Stone Age to the Iron Age, the invention of agriculture, the advent of traditional and modern technology, developments in natural and health sciences, communication, and energy have all been attributed to knowledge and to education. From age to age, man has sought to improve his living condition by ordering and mastering his environment and has succeeded due mainly to improvements in the methods and scale of the acquisition of knowledge and its application.

In the view of Eze (2025), education, particularly schooling, serves as the basis for human capital, as it plays a fundamental role in the accumulation of foundational skills, such as literacy and numeracy. It is in this regard that the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) set the most ambitious global agenda for education ever: all children, young people, and adults achieving at least minimum levels of literacy and numeracy by 2030. Therefore, all developing countries were advised to invest in human capital formation, of which Nigeria also participated. Education is the pursuit of a wide range of activities, planned and managed for the benefit of a society and its members. To educate is to systematically influence people's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. For education to be effective in any society, it has to be embracing of the current realities of today's world. This is to avoid or prevent mediocrity and its impact in national development.

For Nyere, (2025) education is the transmission from one generation to another of the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of the society. It is clear that education makes man moral and ethical, induces the individual into the shared values of society, develops commitment to societal

goals in the individual, prepares the young members of society for the future; defines behavioural patterns of individuals and society; and also enhances the productive capabilities of individuals and by extension the society. Education, therefore, is the gate way to development both materially and otherwise.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Igbini, Oluka and Oharisi (2020) studied Nigeria and the United Kingdom Diplomatic Relations: The Emerging Issues in the Post-Brexit Era. The study explored and unearthed the emerging opportunities and challenges that may result from the post-Brexit trade and other diplomatic intercourse between the UK and Nigeria on one hand, and the EU, ACP, and other Commonwealth countries, including Nigeria specifically, on the other hand. To achieve the objectives of this study, a combination of descriptive, explanatory, and desktop methods were adapted to access valid qualitative but analytical data that helps to elicit and espouse the position of the authors in the study. General System Theory (GST) was adopted to explain the potential diplomatic relationships between the post-Brexit UK, EU, and ACP, the Commonwealth, with respect to trade, commerce, and industry.

The study concluded that the emerging post-Brexit trade and other diplomatic relations will throw up challenges and opportunities which proportion may not be immediately determined. The study recommended as follows: that Government in Nigeria and other affected nations should key into the post-Brexit diplomacy by designing economic and industrial blueprints that would provide them the foundations for mutual economic benefits, be prepared to take advantage of the new changes that are likely to accompany post-Brexit trade diplomacy critically analyzing them to avoid the mistakes of the past economic and trade regimes, ensure that currency equilibrium is permitted in its post-Brexit diplomacy. This simply means that the government should ensure that there is a balance of her local currency and pound in the post-Brexit trade intercourse with UK among others. The gap identified in the study is lack of explanation on the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and human capital development of Nigeria.

Okeke & Elegbede (2024) investigated the effect of human capital development, employee coaching, and career support on organizational commitment among employees at Union Bank Plc, Lagos, Nigeria. Employing a cross-sectional design with random sampling, responses from 169 respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics, while multiple regression analysis through SPSS was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The study found that human capital development and employee coaching do not significantly affect organizational commitment, while employees' career development significantly affects organizational

commitment. The study, therefore, recommended that the management of banks should not only invest adequately in developing their human capital to enhance their skills and competence in work operations but also ensure their conversion to full-time or permanent employee status so as to increase their productivity within the organization and thereafter improve national productivity and growth. Nevertheless, the overall gap identified under this review is the inability to sufficiently provide an explanation on the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and human capital development of Nigeria.

Ihensekhien & Soriwei (2023) evaluated the influence of human capital on industrial sector growth in Nigeria from 1986 to 2020. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag co-integration method of estimation was applied in the empirical analyses to determine the influence of human capital variables on industrial sector growth. The empirical observations revealed that the government's recurrent investment in education had a significantly negative short-run impact on industrial sector growth, while in the long run, there was a significant positive influence. Government recurrent expenditure on health revealed a short-run significant impact on industrial sector growth, while in the long run, it was observed to be negative. The implication of this on the industrial sector is that for the desired level of industrial sector growth to be achieved, investment in education should be increased by government policy. The study suggested that there should be a premeditated government investment in education and health to achieve the desired level of industrial sector growth in Nigeria in the nearest future. Again, this study failed to explain the possible impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development in education in Nigeria.

Okoli, Ezenwob & Onugha (2024) examined human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to measure the impact of the components of the human development index (life expectancy, education index and Gross National Income (GNI) index) on economic growth in Nigeria with the aid of secondary macroeconomic data sourced from World Bank Development Indicators (WDI) covering a period of 32 years (1990-2022). The method of analysis employed was the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique using Life Expectancy, Adult Literacy, Primary School Enrolment, Gross National Income, Population Growth, and Gross Fixed Capital Formation as independent variables with Gross Domestic Product as the dependent variable.

The estimated model shows that Life Expectancy and Adult Literacy have positive and insignificant impact on economic growth while School Enrolment Primary, Gross National Income and Gross Fixed Capital Formation have significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria. The study recommended that

Nigeria government should ensure structural reforms on health and education through training and proper education to enable individuals to have the skills, knowledge and experience that will improve their productivity and in turn have a positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Nevertheless, what has not be adequately addressed under this review is the possible impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development of Nigeria which has constitute gap in literature.

Theoretical Framework

To place this study in its proper perspective, there is a need for a theoretical framework. The human capital development theory is considered more appropriate to achieve the goal of a comprehensive review. The human capital theory, as originated by Schultz (1993), centres more on how education, health, training, and skills increase productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing their levels of cognitive, affective and psychoactive skills. In this regard, the theory postulates that human capital is the key element in improving a firm's assets and employees to increase productivity, as well as a sustainable competitive advantage. Human capital engrosses resources that are inherent in human being, which can be developed to improve their respective living conditions. The human capital model further links expected lifetime employment to one's incentive to acquire marketable training. In turn, trainings acquired formally and on the job, determine earning potentials. Thus expected lifetime work histories, as well as social benefits such as reduced crime, reduced unemployment, and greater economic growth, are most important motivators towards the achievement of high earnings. Ezeaku *et al* (2018) assert that human capital development is a key determinant of economic progress because it initiates technological advancement as well as invention and innovativeness through the advancement of intellectual capital (available stocks and flows of knowledge), social capital (stocks and flows of knowledge gained from networking), and organizational capital (institutionalized knowledge stored in organizations' databases and manuals).

The human capital theory as explained by Adelakun (2021) is one that shows how education leads to increase in productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills. He further stated that Theodore, Schultz, Gory, Bucker and Jacob Mincer introduced the notion that people invest in education so as to increase their stock of human capabilities which can be formed by combining innate abilities with investment in human beings. Examples of such investment include expenditure on education, on-the-job training, health and nutrition-these have been recurring in the literature. The provision of education is seen as a productive investment in human capital which is considered to be equally or even more worthwhile than that of physical capital.

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The human capital theory is one of the foundational theories of socio-economic development. The founding scholars hold that any acquired qualities and abilities that help individuals and groups be economically productive is an individual or group human capital. However, the focus by classical human capital model on schooling and training as the major factors comprising human capital on all levels has made the human capital measurement tools to generally assess only educational attainment on these levels. This overly simplified approach creates difficulty in accurately assessing the strengths and weaknesses of human capital in a country but policy-makers and others use these simplified estimates of human capital because the factors suggested to have significant impact on human capital are mostly intangible and the collection of such data costly.

According to the human capital theory, educational investments are made in anticipation of greater future returns or value. Since knowledge is subject to increasing the returns because these are non-rival goods, some past studies have posited that the longer your studies or the more the training you are exposed to, the more the future benefits you are going to earn (Bowen, 2018). Also, this position of acquiring education and its implication for enhancing growth, productivity and employment has been situated in the growth literature. The human capital theory is thus, an extension of the investment theory applied to human resources.

The human capital theory shows how education leads to increase in productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills. Human capital theory offers a conceptual structure for comprehending the significance and worth of individuals in achieving organizational triumph. It underscores the notion that people are valuable resources whose competencies can be enriched through educational pursuits and training programs. As per this theory, allocating resources toward human capital development results in heightened productivity, creativity, and overall organizational efficacy. Moreover, the theory underscores the significance of education in nurturing human capital, commencing from the early stages of life and persisting through formal educational channels. By imparting individuals with pertinent knowledge and proficiencies, education serves as a pivotal element in augmenting human capital and nurturing economic progress (Petchko, 2018).

Methodology

The qualitative research design was adopted because it probed deeply, intensively, and analyses the interaction between variables involved in the study. This has the advantage of identifying the major issues in the Nigeria – United Kingdom Bilateral Relations as well as outlining the human capital development of Nigeria and the gaps in them. This study population is one hundred and sixty – seven (167) limited to staff and officials of the Federal Ministry for

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Foreign Affairs, British High Commission, Abuja, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Chartered Institute of Human Resource Management (CIHRM), Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Federal Ministry of Education, Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA). The reason for choosing these institutions become necessary and fundamental because of the strategic position they have occupied and knowledge in terms of Nigeria – United Kingdom Bilateral Relations and human capital development of Nigeria.

To arrive at the sample size, the researcher used the Black and Champion (1976) technique in selecting the size. Whereas the total number of the population is one hundred and sixty – seven (167), this formula recommends ten percent (10%) of the total population as the sample size for measurement. Therefore, the work adopts 10% of the 167 population, which means the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with seventeen (17) respondents. Data for research was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through Key Informant Interviews with semi-structured interviews. The study utilized secondary data sources, which were drawn from a wide range of credible materials. These included peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications from the Federal Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, policy briefs, reports from international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and UNICEF, and relevant publications from research institutions. In addition, reputable Nigerian newspapers and media reports were consulted to provide current insights into the implementation of programmes such as the Bilateral Education Agreement (BEA) and other international educational initiatives. The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of participants.

The study adopted a mixed methods approach for data analysis, combining several qualitative research methods and approaches. The study combined iterative content analyses of Nigeria – UK bilateral agreements from relevant institutional records and written texts with primary data that was collected in the field through interaction, particularly through interviews with key informants or participants. Content analysis of secondary data analysis (Process tracing) was drawn from the research and policy literature, as well as documentation from practitioner communities was triangulated with empirical data from key informant obtained through interviews.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Objective One: To analyze the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and Human Capital Development in Nigeria's education Sector.

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> Through bilateral agreements with United Kingdom, Nigeria has consistently sought to expand access to quality education, enhance human capital development, and strengthen institutional capacity across its educational system. One major dimension of Nigeria's foreign policy in education is international collaboration and academic exchange. The country has maintained educational partnerships with advanced economies such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and China, enabling Nigerian students and academics to benefit from scholarships, research opportunities, and technical training. Programmes such as the Bilateral Education Agreement (BEA) scholarships have facilitated the movement of Nigerian students to countries including Russia, Morocco, and Algeria. These initiatives are designed not only to build local expertise but also to foster diplomatic relations and cultural exchange, thereby strengthening Nigeria's global presence (KII/Male/45/Abuja/April/2026).

Another critical aspect is Nigeria's engagement with international organizations in shaping its educational policies and reforms. Agencies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and UNICEF have played significant roles in supporting Nigeria's education sector through funding, technical assistance, and policy guidance. Nigeria's participation in global education initiatives such as Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 on quality education reflects its commitment to aligning domestic educational priorities with international standards. These partnerships have contributed to reforms in curriculum development, teacher training, and educational planning. Nigeria's foreign policy has also influenced the internationalization of its tertiary education system. Nigerian universities have increasingly engaged in global research collaborations, staff exchange programmes, and international conferences. This has improved knowledge transfer, enhanced research output, and increased the global visibility of Nigerian institutions (Jajere and Abdullahi, 2025).

> The benefits of internationalization are constrained by challenges such as inadequate funding, brain drain, and limited infrastructure, which affect the ability of Nigerian institutions to fully compete on the global stage. Nigeria's foreign policy addresses issues of student mobility and Diaspora engagement. A significant number of Nigerian students pursue education abroad, contributing to the global exchange of knowledge and skills. While this outward mobility enhances individual capacity, it also raises concerns about brain drain when graduates choose not to return. In response, the government has explored policies aimed at engaging the Nigerian academic Diaspora through collaborative research, virtual teaching, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, thereby leveraging global expertise for national development. Nigeria's foreign policy plays a vital role in shaping the development of its education sector through international collaboration, policy alignment, and capacity building. While notable progress has been made in promoting global engagement and improving educational standards,

> significant challenges remain. Strengthening institutional frameworks, increasing investment in education, and adopting a more strategic approach to international partnerships are essential for maximizing the benefits of foreign policy for educational development in Nigeria (KII/Male/51/Abuja/April/2026).

The relationship between the UK and Nigeria spans decades with great potential and success stories of economic growth, cultural exchange and educational development. Some of these benefits range from capacity building for the educational sector through a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which in turn drives innovation in research, economic growth, productivity, and efficiency across all sectors. The exchange of students and academia who undergo world class educational programs in UK institutions, enables knowledge transfer, skills, and expertise between both countries. The partnership between both countries also drives innovation and entrepreneurship through job creation, curriculum development, business development and opportunities for entrepreneurs. The cultural exchange between both countries might seem least important but this has helped in bridging cultural barriers and building respect, understanding, diplomacy, and trade between both countries (KII/Female/47/Abuja/April/2026).

> From this partnership, has emanated several success stories of individual academic attainments in the UK funded by UK government-funded scholarship bodies such as Chevening, Commonwealth scholarships, The Great scholarship, and the UK-Nigeria Research partnerships. The Chevening scholarship program has funded over 1500 Nigerians to study in the UK since 1983 while the Commonwealth scholarships program has enabled over 3,400 Nigerian scholars to study in the UK since 1959. These scholars have made great contributions upon completion of their studies to Nigeria's development in diverse fields, driving innovation and economic growth. This partnership is not devoid of a major flaw which has been a huge cause of concern both the Nigerian government and the UK government — Brain Drain. This is because many scholars upon completion of their studies fail to return to Nigeria to give back to the country, thereby depriving Nigeria of the acquired skills and expertise (The Guardian Nigeria, 2025).

Human capital development is of utmost importance in the improvement of education as it enhances the practices of teachers and the learning of students. Effective professional development programs enable teachers to acquire new knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies that directly influence their instructional practices. Consequently, this leads to the implementation of more engaging and effective teaching methods, resulting in improved educational outcomes. Educational institutions play a vital role in this process by providing teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities. By doing so, they ensure that educators stay updated with the latest research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, and new curriculum resources. This continuous learning empowers teachers to adapt their teaching methods to effectively cater to

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> the evolving educational landscape and the diverse needs of their students. Effective professional development programs help to develop leaders within the education system who can build a culture of high expectations. When school leaders believe in the potential of all students to learn, it positively influences the entire educational environment. These leaders can inspire and motivate both teachers and students, creating a more conducive atmosphere for learning and growth.

Nwachukwu (2023) asserts that the professional development of teachers allows them to acquire needed skills such as stress management. Furthermore, the development of human capital serves to enhance the school community through a cascading effect. As educators acquire advanced training and knowledge, they gain access to fresh insights and more efficient tools to impart to their students. This not only elevates the standard of teaching but also fosters a culture of perpetual learning within the educational institution, benefiting both instructors and learners alike. Investing in the professional growth of teachers is imperative for the progress of education, as it directly influences teaching methodologies, student academic achievements, and the overall cohesion of the school community. By providing teachers with the necessary resources and guidance, educational institutions can ensure that they are adequately prepared to address the evolving needs of their students and equip them for triumph in their academic pursuits and future endeavours.

> One of the most visible outcomes of Nigeria's foreign policy in education is the institutionalisation of international scholarship schemes under bilateral arrangements. The Bilateral Education Agreement (BEA) programme, implemented through diplomatic engagements has provided structured pathways for Nigerian students to access higher education abroad. Beyond the numerical value of beneficiaries, the significance of the programme lies in its targeted focus on critical fields such as engineering, medicine, and applied sciences areas where domestic training capacity has historically been constrained
> (KII/Female/43/Abuja/April/2026).

Available records indicate that thousands of Nigerian students benefitted from the scheme between 2015 and 2022, reflecting sustained government commitment to human capital development. This initiative has also contributed to reducing skill shortages in specialised sectors upon the return of beneficiaries. However, scholars have noted that while the programme has been impactful, its long-term success depends on effective reintegration policies that ensure returning graduates are absorbed into productive sectors of the Nigerian economy (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022; Daily Trust, 2023).

> In Nigeria, impactful research activities have been at a very low level, due to declining quality of research infrastructure such as the absence of modern scientific laboratories where cutting-edge research can be conducted, declining quality of the academia, dearth of funding and the lack of incentives for relevant publications. The

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> problems that have militated against the role of the universities in the triple helix are institutional in nature, whereas some arise from the long established classical approach to research and development within the university system tailored at the nation's priorities is the tool for addressing societal challenges (KII/Male/40/Abuja/April/2026).

Another major missing link is lack of an established national institution devoted to Research and Development as a deliberate effort to enhance human capital development and fast track economic advancement of our nation through the instrumentality of science and technology. To spur the nation's drive towards making research and development the ace and game changer in our national development agenda, there is the compelling need for a robust institutional framework for a sustainable funding of Research and Development (R&D) to accelerate the nation's industrialization drive and enhance human capital development.

Objective Two: To ascertain the possible impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development in education in Nigeria.

> The Nigeria-UK bilateral relationship significantly impacts human capital development in Nigeria through a duality of knowledge transfer and severe brain drain. While partnerships bolster academic capacity and skills development, they also drain Nigeria of critical teaching and healthcare professionals. The impacts of this bilateral dynamic manifest across three main areas: Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer Scholarships and Exchange Programs: Initiatives like the UK's Chevening Scholarships and the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission enable Nigerian professionals to acquire globally competitive skills, which they often bring back to drive innovation in Nigerian academia and industry. Institutional Partnerships: Educational delegations, such as the UK Department for Business and Trade's visits to Nigeria's Ministry of Education in Abuja, focus on expanding access to world-class schools and technical skills development within Nigeria (KII/Female/41/Abuja/April/2026).

Human capital development is crucial for educational progress in Nigeria as it enhances educational outcomes and improves workforce readiness. By focusing on investing in the growth and development of individuals, stakeholders can build a stronger education system that supports sustainable advancement. Developing the necessary human capital, which includes individuals with the appropriate skills, knowledge, competencies, mindset, attitude, and motivation, is essential for achieving sustainable development. This approach equips people with the capacity to mitigate the negative impact of society on the environment and safeguard the planet for future generations (Odekunle, 2019).

> The UK-Nigeria Strategic Partnership framework prioritizes job creation and development, leveraging investment to improve economic resilience. Driven by recent foreign exchange shifts, the Nigerian government is partnering with the UK to establish high-quality

> international schools locally, reducing the financial burden on Nigerian families while elevating domestic educational standards. The UK's recruitment of skilled Nigerian educators and healthcare professionals has contributed to severe talent gaps in Nigerian institutions (KII/Female/41/Abuja/April/2026).

Education has functioned as a soft power instrument within Nigeria's foreign policy architecture. Through sustained academic exchanges and institutional partnerships, Nigeria has deepened bilateral relations with several countries. For example, educational cooperation between Nigeria and Russia, which dates back to the early post-independence period, has remained a stable component of diplomatic engagement. These partnerships extend beyond scholarship provision to include cultural exchange programmes, joint academic initiatives, and technical training. The enduring nature of such collaborations demonstrates that education serves not only developmental goals but also diplomatic interests by fostering mutual trust and long-term engagement. Empirical observations suggest that countries with strong educational ties to Nigeria tend to maintain broader cooperation in trade, technology transfer, and cultural diplomacy (Ogunnubi & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016; Premium Times, 2024).

Access to Global Knowledge and Skill Acquisition Nigeria's foreign policy has facilitated access to global knowledge systems by enabling students and academics to study and conduct research in technologically advanced environments. Exposure to modern laboratories, innovative teaching methods, and interdisciplinary research has significantly enhanced the intellectual capacity of Nigerian beneficiaries. This exposure is particularly important in science and technology-driven disciplines, where infrastructure deficits at home can limit effective training. Graduates of foreign programmes often return with advanced competencies that contribute to improved service delivery in sectors such as healthcare, engineering, and information technology. Studies have shown that international academic exposure enhances critical thinking, research productivity, and professional adaptability among graduates (British Council, 2020). Nevertheless, the extent of impact is sometimes moderated by systemic challenges such as inadequate research funding and limited opportunities for knowledge application within Nigeria. This underscores the need to align foreign training with domestic development priorities. Attraction of International Funding and Institutional Support Nigeria's engagement in global diplomacy has also translated into increased access to international funding and technical assistance for education. Multilateral institutions such as the World Bank have played a central role in supporting educational reforms in Nigeria. Funding interventions have focused on improving access, enhancing quality, and strengthening institutional

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capacity across various levels of education.

For instance, major financing initiatives under programmes such as the Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) and Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) have provided substantial resources for infrastructure development, teacher training, and system reforms. Reports indicate that these interventions have contributed to increased school enrolment and improved learning outcomes in several states (World Bank, 2023; Reuters, 2025). This achievement illustrates how foreign policy engagements can yield concrete developmental benefits, particularly when aligned with national education priorities and supported by effective implementation frameworks. Promotion of Educational Standardization and Policy Reforms Nigeria's participation in international education frameworks has influenced the adoption of global best practices in policy formulation and system management. Through collaboration with international organisations and adherence to global benchmarks, Nigeria has undertaken reforms in curriculum development, accreditation processes, and quality assurance mechanisms. Institutions such as the National Universities Commission have incorporated international standards into accreditation and programme evaluation processes, thereby improving the credibility of Nigerian qualifications. Additionally, engagement with global bodies has encouraged policy innovations in areas such as outcome-based education, digital learning, and institutional governance. These reforms have enhanced the comparability of Nigeria's education system with global standards, thereby increasing the mobility of Nigerian graduates and strengthening the country's academic reputation internationally (UNESCO, 2022; Okebukola, 2021).

Expansion of Access to Education through Policy Reforms Linked to Foreign Engagements A more recent development in Nigeria's foreign policy trajectory is the strategic redirection of resources from external scholarship dependency toward strengthening domestic education systems. Lessons drawn from years of international engagement have informed policies aimed at expanding access within Nigeria. Government initiatives such as the introduction of student loan schemes, expansion of local scholarship programmes, and increased investment in tertiary institutions reflect this shift. Reports from The Guardian Nigeria indicate that these reforms are designed to accommodate a larger population of students while reducing the financial burden associated with studying abroad. This transition represents a more sustainable approach to educational development. Rather than abandoning international cooperation, Nigeria is leveraging its foreign policy experiences to build a more resilient and inclusive domestic system. The emerging model

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combines selective international exposure with strengthened local capacity, thereby ensuring broader access and long-term national benefits. Furthermore, human capital development plays a critical role in improving workforce readiness by providing individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to excel in their careers. Skills training programs, professional development opportunities, and ongoing learning initiatives contribute significantly to preparing individuals for the workforce in Nigeria. However, challenges such as limited resources, inadequate training facilities, and lack of support systems can hinder the effective implementation of human capital development programs for improving workforce readiness (Kyllonen, 2023).

Discussion of Findings

The results amongst others showed that there is a positive and strong relationship between the nature of Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations and human capital development in education in Nigeria. Through bilateral agreements with United Kingdom, Nigeria has consistently sought to expand access to quality education, enhance human capital development, and strengthen institutional capacity across its educational system. One major dimension of Nigeria's foreign policy in education is international collaboration and academic exchange. The country has maintained educational partnerships with the United Kingdom, enabling Nigerian students and academics to benefit from scholarships, research opportunities, and technical training. Programmes such as the Bilateral Education Agreement (BEA) scholarships have facilitated the movement of Nigerian students to the UK. These initiatives are designed not only to build local expertise but also to foster diplomatic relations and cultural exchange, thereby strengthening Nigeria's global presence. The finding is in agreement with Mohammed et al. (2026) study that revealed the relationship between tertiary education and human capital development. This finding is in tandem with Okeke and Elegbede (2024) submission that education is crucially important for the development of human capital. At an individual level, your education affects your skill sets, your earnings, your employability, and your adaptational capacities. It also affects your health, which is also critical for human functioning and human capital development. Education helps individuals fulfil and apply their abilities and talents and increases productivity in an economy.

As predicted, the study also revealed that the relationship between the UK and Nigeria spans decades with great potential and success stories of economic growth, cultural exchange and educational development. Some of these benefits range from capacity building for the educational sector through a skilled and knowledgeable workforce, which in turn drives innovation in research, economic growth, productivity, and

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efficiency across all sectors. The exchange of students and academia who undergo world class educational programs in UK institutions, enables knowledge transfer, skills, and expertise between both countries. The partnership between both countries also drives innovation and entrepreneurship through job creation, curriculum development, business development and opportunities for entrepreneurs.

The study established that Nigeria-UK bilateral relationship significantly impacts human capital development in Nigeria through a duality of knowledge transfer and severe brain drain. While partnerships bolster academic capacity and skills development, they also drain Nigeria of critical teaching and healthcare professionals. The finding is in agreement with Aluko's (2025) views that education plays a very important and crucial role in improving the production capacity of a population. Available records indicate that thousands of Nigerian students benefitted from the scheme between 2015 and 2022, reflecting sustained government commitment to human capital development. This initiative has also contributed to reducing skill shortages in specialised sectors upon the return of beneficiaries. However, scholars have noted that while the programme has been impactful, its long-term success depends on effective reintegration policies that ensure returning graduates are absorbed into productive sectors of the Nigerian economy (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022; Daily Trust, 2023).

Conclusion

This study has attempted to highlight the impacts of the Nigeria – United Kingdom bilateral relations on human capital development in Nigeria's education Sector. It showed how and why education developed across the world and the benefit that it has brought to mankind by creating the needed human capital for the progress achieved so far. It has particularly shown how the Nigerian education system evolved and expanded overtime and explored Nigeria's potential to develop an enduring research culture to underpin its future greatness. Human capital development plays a crucial role in educational advancement by focusing on enhancing the knowledge, skills, and attributes of individuals. The theoretical underpinnings of human capital theory emphasize the value of investing in people to drive organizational success and economic growth. In practice, educational institutions can leverage human capital development to improve teaching practices, student learning outcomes, and overall organizational performance.

By prioritizing human capital development in education, organizations can foster a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and growth that benefits individuals and society as a whole. In the context of educational advancement, human capital development serves as a catalyst for transforming the learning environment and improving teaching practices. By investing in teachers' professional

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development and implementing student-centered approaches, educational institutions can enhance the human capital of their workforce and educational outcomes.

Concrete steps will have to be taken to address these problems if the nation is to achieve and build the needed human capital to develop the country. One of the most important steps is creating the needed atmosphere or environment for research activities in the country by government. The provision of basic infrastructure and facilities, which goes hand in hand with increased budgetary allocation to the education sector and to research specifically, has become imperative. Understanding the specific context and diversity of individual research systems and how it relates to partnerships and international cooperation remains key to effective research and capacity building among the nation's academics. Developing national systems for research to identify needs is also necessary. It is through such systems that research results and local impact are known and measured. Building research capacity becomes paramount and can be carried out through fostering collaborations, partnerships and networking among local and international researchers, sharing and managing research and funding research.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

i. Nigeria should leverage its diplomatic ties with the UK Department for Business and Trade to prioritize the establishment of high-quality Transnational Education (TNE) partnerships and international schools locally. Future bilateral educational agreements must mandate a joint counterpart-funding mechanism where international grants are structurally tied to upgrading domestic research laboratories and institutional infrastructure. This will ensure that the "nature" of the bilateral relationship directly repairs the structural and instructional decay of domestic classrooms rather than serving merely as an exit route for local talents.

ii. To mitigate the severe impact of asymmetric brain drain and the talent gaps caused by UK recruitment of skilled Nigerian professionals, the government must institutionalize formal policy frameworks for academic Diaspora engagement. Rather than treating outward student and faculty mobility as a total loss, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should negotiate structural "brain circulation" clauses within the UK-Nigeria Strategic Partnership framework. This includes formalizing virtual teaching tracks, collaborative co-supervision of doctoral research, joint scientific publications, and mandatory short-term physical return incentives for Chevening and Commonwealth beneficiaries. Furthermore, a dedicated National Institution for Research and Development must be established to provide

competitive incentives and robust career integration tracks that absorb returning foreign-trained graduates into productive sectors of the Nigerian economy.

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The Theology of Blessings and Curses in Deuteronomy 28 and African Traditional Religious Worldview

Abstract

This paper examined how Deuteronomy 28's covenant blessings and curses interact with African Traditional Religion's own curse cosmology, and what happens theologically when the two frameworks merge inside contemporary Nigerian Christianity. The problem addressed is that this merger has occurred largely unexamined. It has produced a popular curse theology that blends biblical covenant language with indigenous ancestral sanction, applied by many pastors without distinguishing where one system ends and the other begins, sometimes with serious human cost, including continued witchcraft accusation against vulnerable women. Existing scholarship has documented the popularity of generational curse teaching and the witchcraft accusations it can fuel. It has done comparatively little sustained textual comparison of Deuteronomy 28 itself against African Traditional Religion's curse logic to establish precisely where the two frameworks agree and where conflation misrepresents both. From a qualitative, library-based comparative method, this paper filled that gap. It found that Deuteronomy 28 and African Traditional Religion share a covenantal, relational understanding of curse as consequence for broken obligation. The two frameworks diverge sharply, however, on curse's transmissibility, permanence and locus of remedy, differences popular Nigerian theology has largely collapsed. It concluded that a textually disciplined, comparative theology can correct this collapse without dismissing either tradition, and proposed a corrective framework for preaching and pastoral practice.

Keywords: Deuteronomy 28, blessing, curse, African Traditional Religion, generational curse, Nigerian Pentecostalism, witchcraft

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Introduction

Deliverance services across Nigerian Pentecostal churches now devote more pulpit time to breaking generational curses than most congregations spend on the doctrine of grace, a pastoral reality this paper treats as a live theological problem rather than a curiosity. Deuteronomy 28 lays out, in exhaustive and deliberately uncomfortable detail, the blessings that follow covenant faithfulness and the curses that follow its abandonment, a text that has travelled further into ordinary Nigerian Christian life than almost any other Old Testament chapter, quoted in wedding sermons,

cited on church banners, and invoked nightly in deliverance services built around the specific ambition of breaking curses believed to travel down bloodlines. What has received less careful theological attention is how thoroughly this popular use of Deuteronomy 28 has merged with a separate and older cosmology, African Traditional Religion's own understanding of curse as ancestral sanction for broken obligation, producing a hybrid curse theology now standard across much of Nigerian Pentecostalism that few pastors or congregants could accurately trace back to either source alone. This paper treats that unexamined merger as a genuine theological problem, not because either tradition's underlying concern with covenant, consequence and moral order is illegitimate, but because collapsing two distinct frameworks without examining where they actually agree and where they diverge has produced pastoral practice, and in the more severe documented cases, witchcraft accusation and abuse, that neither tradition, read carefully, straightforwardly supports.

Scholarship on each side of this merger is substantial but has rarely been brought into direct textual comparison. Biblical scholarship on Deuteronomy 28 itself is well developed, with the chapter widely recognised as following the covenant treaty form common to the ancient Near East, in which blessing and curse function as the enforcement clauses of a suzerain-vassal relationship between God and Israel. On the African side, Ayelotan's (2024) study of witchcraft, curse and Christian response within Yorùbá Pentecostalism documents in granular ethnographic detail how indigenous curse belief, understanding curse as consequence for broken relationship with a divinity or a wronged person, continues to structure how Nigerian congregations interpret personal misfortune, while Chung and Makponga's (2026) wider review finds this curse logic disproportionately directed at older, poor and socially marginal women accused of being its source. Sakupapa's (2023) broader analysis of decolonial currents in African Christian theology names the underlying methodological problem, that African Christian scholarship has often borrowed indigenous categories impressionistically rather than through disciplined comparison with the biblical text those categories are being read alongside.

What remains missing is the specific work of comparison this paper undertakes: reading Deuteronomy 28's covenant curse structure directly against African Traditional Religion's own curse cosmology to establish, with textual precision, where genuine theological convergence exists and where popular Nigerian curse theology has quietly substituted one framework's assumptions for the other's without acknowledging the substitution. This paper conducts that comparison, then traces its consequences within contemporary Nigerian Pentecostal practice, and closes by proposing a corrective theological framework capable of taking both

traditions seriously without collapsing them into an unexamined hybrid.

The discussion proceeds by first examining Deuteronomy 28 within its ancient Near Eastern covenant treaty context, then examining curse and moral causation within African Traditional Religion on its own terms, then tracing how the two frameworks have merged within Nigerian generational curse doctrine specifically, and finally addressing the human cost this merger has produced, particularly through continued witchcraft accusation, before proposing a corrective theological framework. It closes with findings, a conclusion, and recommendations for pastors, theological educators and denominational leadership.

Definition of Terms

Covenant curse: within Deuteronomy 28, the specific negative consequences pronounced as the enforcement clause of Israel's covenant with God, activated by covenant breach rather than by external malevolent agency.

Ancestral curse: within African Traditional Religion, a spiritual sanction believed to result from a broken vow, disregarded obligation or offence against a divinity, ancestor or wronged person, capable of affecting the offender and, in some accounts, their descendants.

Generational curse doctrine: a teaching common within contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism holding that specific misfortunes, illness, poverty, infertility, are transmitted across family bloodlines as inherited spiritual consequence of ancestral sin or covenant, requiring deliberate deliverance to break.

Ancient Near Eastern treaty form: the standard literary and legal structure used in ancient suzerain-vassal covenants, comprising historical prologue, stipulations, and blessing and curse clauses enforcing the treaty, a form biblical scholarship widely recognises Deuteronomy as following.

Witchcraft accusation: the attribution of misfortune or curse to the malevolent supernatural agency of a specific, usually socially marginal, individual, followed by social, economic or physical sanction against the accused.

Comparative theology: a theological method that reads two distinct religious traditions alongside one another with sustained attention to both convergence and genuine difference, rather than assuming either equivalence or straightforward hierarchy between them.

Covenant Blessing and Curse as Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Form in Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28 belongs to a recognisable ancient literary genre, the suzerain-vassal treaty, in which a greater power binds a lesser one through stipulated obligations backed by pronounced blessing for compliance and curse for breach, a structure scholars have long shown parallels Hittite and neo-

Assyrian treaty documents from the same broad historical period. Within this structure, curse is neither arbitrary nor externally imposed by a hostile third party; it is the covenant's own enforcement mechanism, activated specifically by Israel's breach of stipulations laid out earlier in the book, and its scope, drought, military defeat, exile, disease, corresponds closely to standard treaty-curse language attested across the wider ancient Near East rather than representing something theologically unique to Israel's own imagination.

Two features of this covenant structure matter directly for the comparative argument this paper builds. First, blessing precedes curse in Deuteronomy's own presentation and receives proportionally less textual space, a literary choice scholars reading the chapter closely have noted departs from surrounding ancient Near Eastern treaty convention, in which curse clauses typically dominate, suggesting the text's rhetorical centre of gravity is fundamentally about the possibility of blessing rather than the inevitability of curse. Second, and more decisively for the pastoral practice this paper later examines, curse in Deuteronomy 28 is explicitly conditional and covenant-specific: it applies to Israel's own breach of the Sinai covenant, is reversible through the repentance and restoration described in Deuteronomy 30, and nowhere in the text is curse described as an inherited, bloodline-transmitted affliction independent of the current generation's own covenant fidelity, a distinction the following sections show has been substantially blurred in contemporary popular application.

This textual precision matters because much of the pastoral use of Deuteronomy 28 within Nigerian Pentecostalism treats the chapter as though it establishes a general, transhistorical principle of inherited bloodline curse rather than the specific, conditional and reversible covenant enforcement clause the text actually presents. The gap between what Deuteronomy 28 states and what popular preaching frequently claims it states is not a matter of interpretation alone; it is a matter of a specific theological framework, examined next, being read into the text from outside.

Curse, Ancestral Sanction and Moral Causation in African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion's understanding of curse operates through its own coherent, relationally grounded logic rather than as a primitive precursor awaiting biblical correction. Ayelotan's (2024) ethnographic study of Yorùbá Pentecostal communities in Nigeria and the United Kingdom documents how curse within indigenous cosmology is understood as the consequence of a broken vow made with a divinity, a disregarded obligation to an ancestor, or an offence against another person whose grievance carries spiritual weight, a logic the study's interviewed pastors and

practitioners describe as distinct from the popular Western caricature of witchcraft as arbitrary malevolence. On this account, curse is relational and consequence-based, activated by specific broken obligation rather than existing as an ambient hereditary affliction attached to bloodlines independent of any triggering breach, a structural feature that, as the following section shows, resembles Deuteronomy's own conditional curse logic considerably more closely than popular Nigerian preaching typically acknowledges.

Where African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology diverges from Deuteronomy's covenant framework is in the specific mechanism of curse activation and its potential for cross-generational transmission. Indigenous belief holds that a curse resulting from serious offence against a divinity or wronged party can, in some accounts, extend to descendants who did not themselves commit the triggering breach, a transmission logic tied to lineage and bloodline responsibility that has no clear textual counterpart in Deuteronomy 28's own conditional, individual-generation covenant enforcement. This divergence is not a matter of one tradition being more primitive than the other; it reflects two genuinely different theological anthropologies, Deuteronomy's covenant curse bound to the current generation's own fidelity, African Traditional Religion's ancestral curse capable of extending responsibility across lineage in a way biblical covenant curse, read on its own terms, does not straightforwardly support.

This divergence matters practically because remedy differs correspondingly between the two systems. Deuteronomy 30 locates the remedy for covenant curse squarely in repentance and covenant renewal by the generation currently under curse. African Traditional Religion's remedy for ancestral curse frequently requires ritual mediation, sacrifice, oath-renegotiation or reconciliation with the specific offended party or their descendants, a mediated and often specialist-dependent process rather than the more directly accessible repentance Deuteronomy describes. Both remedy structures are theologically coherent within their own systems; the difficulty examined next arises specifically when contemporary Nigerian Christianity borrows elements of both without acknowledging which remedy logic it is actually applying at any given moment.

Meet: Generational Curse Doctrine in Nigerian Pentecostalism

Generational curse doctrine as preached across much of contemporary Nigerian Pentecostalism represents, on the evidence examined above, a specific and largely unacknowledged hybrid: it borrows Deuteronomy 28's covenant vocabulary of blessing and curse while quietly importing African Traditional Religion's logic of cross-generational, bloodline-transmitted spiritual consequence, a logic Deuteronomy's own

text does not clearly support on its own terms. Ayelotan's (2024) interviews with Nigerian and diaspora Yorùbá Pentecostal pastors found this hybrid operating largely without the pastors themselves distinguishing which claims derived from which source, biblical texts and indigenous curse cosmology cited interchangeably as though they constituted a single, seamless theological system rather than two traditions merged through popular practice rather than deliberate theological reasoning.

This unacknowledged hybrid produces specific pastoral consequences the underlying texts, read separately and carefully, do not require. Deliverance ministries built around identifying and breaking inherited bloodline curses frequently treat present-day misfortune, illness, poverty, delayed marriage, as evidence of an ancestral spiritual transaction requiring ritual-adjacent Christian intervention, prolonged fasting, prophetic diagnosis, specific deliverance liturgy, a pattern structurally closer to African Traditional Religion's mediated ancestral-curse remedy than to Deuteronomy 30's more direct repentance-based restoration. The theological cost of this substitution is considerable: it can displace confidence in the finished, once-for-all character of Christ's redemptive work, a concern raised within contemporary Nigerian evangelical commentary itself, with believers directed toward an ongoing search for hidden ancestral cause rather than toward the covenant restoration Deuteronomy's own text presents as already available through repentance.

Sakupapa's (2023) broader methodological critique of African Christian theology's impressionistic borrowing from indigenous categories applies to this specific case with unusual precision: the problem is not that Nigerian Pentecostalism has drawn on African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology, an engagement this paper's own comparative reading suggests has genuine theological resource to offer, but that it has done so without the disciplined comparison this paper has just conducted, producing a hybrid doctrine that neither Deuteronomy's covenant text nor African Traditional Religion's own curse logic, read carefully on its own terms, actually endorses in the specific bloodline-transmission form now widely preached.

Witchcraft Accusation, Curse Belief and Their Human Cost

The hybrid curse doctrine traced above carries a documented human cost that moves this paper's argument from an academic textual question to a pressing pastoral one. Chung and Makponga's (2026) evidence synthesis, drawing on material from Ghana, Nigeria and Malawi, finds that curse and witchcraft accusation disproportionately target older, poor and socially isolated women, a pattern Kimpinde's (2025) study of witchcraft belief in Ga-Rankuwa Township finds operating through precisely the logic this paper has traced, misfortune attributed to a specific

accused individual's spiritual agency rather than examined through the covenant-conditional, repentance-oriented framework Deuteronomy's own text actually presents. Waribo's (2024) documentation of the amosu phenomenon in Enugwu-ukwu, South-East Nigeria, and Amnesty International's (2025) investigation into witch camps in northern Ghana together establish that this is not a marginal or historical concern but an active, ongoing harm sustained in part by the very hybrid curse theology this paper has identified.

A corrective theological framework, built directly from the comparative reading conducted above, requires three specific commitments rather than a wholesale rejection of either tradition. First, preaching and pastoral teaching on Deuteronomy 28 should restore the text's own conditional, current-generation covenant logic, resisting the popular but textually unsupported reading of the chapter as establishing an inherited, bloodline-transmitted curse independent of the present generation's own covenant standing. Second, engagement with African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology should proceed through the same disciplined comparative method this paper has modelled, naming explicitly which claims derive from which tradition rather than presenting a merged doctrine as though it were straightforwardly biblical. Third, pastoral response to claimed curse or misfortune should be built around Deuteronomy 30's repentance-and-restoration remedy rather than around the search for a specific human agent, an accused witch, believed to be curse's active source, directly addressing the accusation dynamic Chung and Makponga (2026) and Kimpinde (2025) document as the pattern's most severe human cost.

This corrective is not a call to abandon African Traditional Religion's genuine theological resource, its relational, consequence-based understanding of curse converges meaningfully with Deuteronomy's own covenant logic and offers African Christian theology real interpretive material, but a call to engage that resource with the textual precision this paper has demonstrated is both possible and, given the documented human cost of its absence, urgently necessary.

Findings

Deuteronomy 28 presents covenant curse as conditional, current-generation and reversible through the repentance Deuteronomy 30 describes, a structure considerably narrower than the inherited, bloodline-transmitted curse popular Nigerian preaching frequently attributes to the chapter. African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology, examined on its own terms, shares Deuteronomy's relational and consequence-based logic while genuinely diverging on cross-generational transmission and ritual-mediated remedy, a divergence reflecting two coherent but distinct theological anthropologies rather than one tradition's error awaiting correction by the other

(Ayelotan, 2024). Contemporary Nigerian generational curse doctrine represents a largely unacknowledged hybrid of these two frameworks, borrowing Deuteronomy's covenant vocabulary while importing African Traditional Religion's bloodline-transmission logic without textual warrant from either source read separately (Sakupapa, 2023). This hybrid doctrine carries a documented and serious human cost, contributing to a pattern of witchcraft accusation disproportionately harming older, poor and socially isolated women across Nigeria, Ghana and Malawi (Chung & Makponga, 2026; Kimpinde, 2025; Waribo, 2024). A corrective theological framework restoring Deuteronomy's own conditional covenant logic, engaging African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology through disciplined rather than impressionistic comparison, and redirecting pastoral response toward repentance-based restoration rather than accusation, is both textually defensible and pastorally necessary.

Conclusion

Deuteronomy 28's blessings and curses and African Traditional Religion's ancestral curse cosmology are not the same doctrine wearing different theological clothing, and treating them as such, the pattern this paper has traced across much of contemporary Nigerian Pentecostal practice, has produced a hybrid curse theology that neither source, read carefully, actually supports and that has contributed to genuine and documented harm against vulnerable people. The two traditions converge meaningfully on curse as relational consequence for broken obligation rather than arbitrary malevolence, a convergence worth taking seriously as a resource for African Christian theology. They diverge just as meaningfully on curse's transmissibility across generations and on where its remedy properly lies, Deuteronomy locating remedy in the current generation's own repentance, African Traditional Religion frequently requiring ritual mediation extending across lineage. A theology that collapses this divergence without examination inherits the least defensible features of both systems, unbounded bloodline liability without Deuteronomy's textual warrant, displaced accusation without African Traditional Religion's own emphasis on specific, examinable offence. Restoring the distinction this paper has drawn is not a defensive move protecting either tradition from the other, but the precondition for a genuinely African Christian theology capable of engaging both scripture and indigenous cosmology with the seriousness, and the care for human consequence, both traditions deserve.

Recommendations

Building on this conclusion, the following steps are recommended. Nigerian theological seminaries should include Deuteronomy 28 within a required comparative module examining its

ancient Near Eastern covenant form directly alongside African Traditional Religion's curse cosmology, equipping graduating pastors to distinguish the two frameworks rather than preach them as an unexamined hybrid.

Denominational leadership overseeing deliverance ministry should issue clear doctrinal guidance restoring Deuteronomy 30's repentance-based remedy as the primary pastoral response to claimed curse or misfortune, explicitly cautioning against practices that direct congregants toward identifying a specific accused human source of affliction (Chung & Makponga, 2026).

Biblical scholars should extend the comparative method modelled in this paper to other frequently conflated Old Testament and African Traditional Religion themes, sacrifice, oath-taking, ritual purity, building a broader body of textually disciplined comparative theology for African Christian scholarship to draw upon.

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An Explainable Predictive Risk Intelligence Framework for Strengthening Governance Effectiveness and Project Success

Abstract

Artificial intelligence has become central to how African FinTech firms detect fraud, assess credit risk, and extend financial services to previously underserved populations. However, its rapid deployment has outpaced the governance structures meant to keep it accountable. This study set out to understand how explainable predictive risk intelligence relates to AI governance effectiveness in African FinTech organisations, and, in turn, how that governance effectiveness shapes the success of AI-enabled digital transformation projects. The inquiry drew on the Technology–Organization–Environment framework and Dynamic Capabilities Theory to make sense of how firms convert technological capability and regulatory pressure into workable governance practice. Because the aim was conceptual rather than statistical, the study proceeded through a qualitative systematic literature review, synthesised Seventeen evidence sources published between 2019 and 2025, supplemented by foundational theoretical and methodological works from Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and relevant regulatory and industry publications. The literature was analysed using Jabareen's (2009) conceptual framework analysis method. The review's central finding was that, while explainability is widely treated in the literature as a mechanism that strengthens governance, and governance is in turn widely linked to project success, no source retrieved through the search integrated all three constructs such as; explainability, governance, and project success, within an African institutional setting. Existing African-focused scholarship addresses AI regulation or financial inclusion in isolation, leaving governance frameworks that combine predictive risk intelligence with explainability largely theorised outside the continent. The study concluded that sustainable AI-enabled transformation in African FinTech rests less on predictive sophistication than on the institutional capacity to govern that intelligence transparently. It recommended that African FinTech regulators and industry bodies establish mandatory explainability standards, requiring that predictive risk systems used in credit, fraud, and compliance decisions be auditable and interpretable by both supervisors and the institutions that deploy them.

Keywords: Explainable Artificial Intelligence; Predictive Risk Intelligence; AI Governance; African FinTech; Project Success; Digital Transformation.

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence is arguably a defining technology of the current wave of industrial change, increasingly influencing how organisations create value, manage risk, and respond to rapidly changing business environments. AI has evolved from experimental

applications into an important organisational capability supporting decision-making, risk management, fraud detection, and customer-service processes. This transition reflects a broader shift in which organisations are integrating AI into core workflows and strategic activities. Recent survey evidence indicates that more than three-quarters of organisations report active AI use in at least one business function, with many redesigning workflows around AI-enabled capabilities (McKinsey & Company, 2025). Consistent with earlier theorising on how firms develop and renew capabilities in response to changing environments (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), this development extends beyond technological adoption to the reorganisation of organisational processes around data, analytics, and predictive capabilities.

That reorganisation is what most people mean by digital transformation, not simply automating an existing process, but rebuilding structures, business models, and decision systems around what digital tools now make possible. AI sits at the centre of this because of a fairly narrow but consequential ability, to process large volumes of data, surface patterns a human analyst would miss, and generate predictions that inform decisions in real time (Teece *et al*., 1997; McKinsey & Company, 2025). Financial services have absorbed more of this than almost any other sector, and the reason is structural rather than incidental. Banks and financial institutions already operate in data-dense, transaction-heavy, tightly regulated environments, which makes them a natural fit for AI-driven credit assessment, fraud detection, anti-money-laundering monitoring, and algorithmic forecasting (Vuković, Dekpo-Adza, & Matović, 2025). The gains are real, faster decisions, tighter risk controls, better-tailored products, but they come bundled with a governance problem that is easy to underestimate: as these systems grow more sophisticated, it becomes correspondingly harder to say with confidence why a given system reached a given decision, and that opacity has direct implications for oversight and trust (Černevičienė & Kabašinskas, 2024).

Within financial services, FinTech is where this tension shows up most visibly. FinTech, broadly, is the use of digital technology to make financial products and services more accessible, cheaper to deliver, and easier to use, and AI has become one of its principal engines, powering digital payments, mobile banking, alternative credit scoring, robo-advisory, identity verification, and fraud prevention (Vuković *et al*., 2025). Nowhere is this more visible than in Africa, where mobile money and digital payment platforms have driven a decade of rapid growth in financial inclusion, reaching populations that conventional banking had largely bypassed (Oriji, Shonibare, Daraojimba, Abitoye, & Daraojimba, 2023). African FinTech firms now lean on AI to assess creditworthiness in markets with thin credit histories, to flag fraudulent transactions, and to

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personalise services for highly diverse customer bases, all tasks well suited to AI's pattern-finding strength, and all tasks that matter more, not less, in environments where the margin for error is thinner (Mota Makore, 2024).

The trouble is that governance has not kept pace with adoption across much of the continent, the legal and regulatory instruments meant to oversee financial technology predate widespread AI use, and consequently say little about explainability, algorithmic bias, or automated decision-making (Mota Makore, 2024). Internally, many organisations show the same lag, they roll out AI systems faster than they build the policies, oversight mechanisms, and risk structures needed to manage them responsibly, leaving gaps in model monitoring, transparency, and accountability that raise the odds of operational, ethical, and reputational harm (Kuiper, van den Berg, van der Burgt, & Leijnen, 2022). Much of this stems from a structural feature of modern AI itself, many of the models in use function as black boxes, producing accurate outputs through processes that are difficult for developers, let alone regulators or customers, to trace or explain (Sokol & Flach, 2020; Fritz-Morgenthal, Hein, & Papenbrock, 2022). When those outputs determine who gets credit, whose transaction gets flagged, or how a customer is classified, that opacity stops being a technical footnote and becomes a governance liability.

This matters beyond compliance, because governance effectiveness has a direct bearing on whether digital transformation initiatives succeed at all. These projects already carry substantial risk on their own, heavy investment, organisational disruption, and the ordinary difficulty of getting people to change how they work, and research on transformation failure consistently points to weak governance and poor risk management as recurring culprits. Layering AI onto that picture adds further complexity around data quality, model drift, and regulatory exposure. What follows from this is the concern this study takes up, how African FinTech organisations can govern increasingly autonomous AI systems in ways that build rather than erode trust, and what role explainable predictive risk intelligence might play in making that possible.

Problem Statement

AI has undeniably expanded what African FinTech firms can do, automate decisions, catch fraud earlier, assess credit more precisely, and reach customers that traditional banking structures were never built to serve (Vuković *et al*., 2025; Oriji *et al*., 2023). But that expansion has occurred largely without a matching expansion in the ability to govern it. The core difficulty is one of interpretability, as AI models used for credit approval, fraud investigation, and risk scoring become more complex, they also become harder to audit, and this opacity strains the trust of regulators,

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customers, and the institutions themselves (Černevičienė & Kabašinskas, 2024; Kuiper *et al*., 2022).

The problem is sharper in African markets specifically, because the regulatory scaffolding that might otherwise compensate for this opacity is itself still forming. Legal frameworks in many jurisdictions were not designed with AI in mind and offer little explicit guidance on algorithmic accountability or automated decision-making (Mota Makore, 2024), and evidence suggests organisations are adopting AI faster than they are building the governance capacity to manage it (Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2025). The result is an environment where regulatory uncertainty, fragmented compliance expectations, and limited institutional capacity intersect at exactly the point where the stakes are highest.

In this study, project success extends beyond traditional measures of time, cost, scope, and quality to include stakeholder acceptance, effective adoption, regulatory compliance, risk reduction, and the achievement of intended digital transformation outcomes. Such projects already fail at high rates because of inadequate governance and weak risk management even before AI is introduced (Boston Consulting Group, 2020), and AI adds its own layer of difficulty through model drift, data quality problems, and algorithmic bias. Existing governance approaches tend to emphasis compliance and oversight after the fact, rather than building predictive risk intelligence and explainability into decision-making as it happens. The problem this study addresses, then, is a practical one: African FinTech organisations need a way to govern AI that is transparent and accountable enough to sustain trust, and predictive enough to catch risk before it compounds, and at present, no coherent approach combines both.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to develop an explainable predictive risk intelligence framework for strengthening AI governance effectiveness and enhancing project success in African FinTech digital transformation initiatives. In pursuit of this aim, the study set out to:

i. Examine the role of explainable predictive risk intelligence in strengthening AI governance effectiveness within African FinTech organisations;

ii. Assess the influence of AI governance effectiveness on project success in AI-enabled digital transformation initiatives within African FinTech organisations; and

iii. Develop a conceptual framework explaining how explainable predictive risk intelligence can enhance AI governance effectiveness and contribute to project success in African FinTech digital transformation.

Research Questions

i. How does explainable predictive risk intelligence strengthen AI

governance effectiveness within African FinTech organisations?

ii. How does AI governance effectiveness influence project success in AI-enabled digital transformation initiatives within African FinTech organisations?

iii. How can explainable predictive risk intelligence and AI governance be integrated into a conceptual framework for enhancing project success within African FinTech digital transformation environments?

Theoretical Framework

This study rests on two theoretical anchors that, taken together, explain both why AI governance breaks down and how organisations might fix it. The first, the Technology–Organization–Environment (TOE) framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990), holds that technology adoption decisions are shaped simultaneously by three forces; the technological attributes of the innovation itself, the internal readiness of the organisation to absorb it, and the external environmental conditions, regulation, market pressure, competitive dynamics, within which the organisation operates. Applied here, TOE gives structure to what would otherwise be a diffuse list of governance problems. Explainability and model interpretability sit on the technological dimension; internal oversight capacity, risk policies, and staff competence sit on the organisational dimension; and the immaturity of AI-specific regulation across African jurisdictions sits on the environmental dimension. Read this way, the governance failures described in the literature can therefore be understood as consequences of misalignment across the three dimensions, particularly where technological capability outpaces organisational and environmental readiness.

The second, Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece *et al*., 1997), explains how firms might close that gap over time rather than simply naming where it lies. Teece and colleagues describe three capabilities organisations need to adapt to changing conditions; sensing opportunities and threats, seizing them through timely resource allocation, and reconfiguring internal structures to sustain the advantage gained. Mapped onto AI governance, sensing corresponds to an organisation's ability to detect emerging model risk before it materialises into harm, which is precisely what predictive risk intelligence is meant to do. Seizing corresponds to the governance structures that translate a detected risk into a concrete response, such as escalation protocols or model retraining. Reconfiguring corresponds to the institutional learning that lets an organisation update its governance policies as its AI systems and regulatory environment evolve. TOE and Dynamic Capabilities Theory frame explainability not as a technical add-on but as a governance capability in its own right, one that only functions when technological, organisational, and

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environmental conditions are aligned, and one that must be continuously sensed, seized, and reconfigured rather than installed once and left alone. This dual lens underpins the conceptual synthesis that this review builds toward.

Methodology

Because the aim of this study was to build conceptual understanding rather than to test a hypothesis against primary data, a qualitative systematic literature review (SLR) was the most suitable design. This approach is well suited to synthesising scattered scholarly and institutional knowledge into a coherent conceptual account, consistent with established guidance on using systematic review to generate evidence-informed conceptual and managerial insight rather than merely to catalogue prior findings (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

Literature was retrieved systematically from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, supplemented by targeted searches of institutional and regulatory sources such as McKinsey & Company and relevant financial regulatory authorities. Search strings combined the study's core constructs using Boolean operators for instance, pairing explainable artificial intelligence or XAI with financial services or FinTech; pairing AI governance or algorithmic governance with project success or digital transformation; and pairing predictive risk intelligence or risk analytics with Africa or emerging markets. Each string was run independently across databases, with results exported to a reference manager for deduplication.

Sources qualified for inclusion if they were published between 2019 and 2025, written in English, addressed AI governance, explainability, predictive risk analytics, or project success within financial services or a comparably data-intensive sector, and were either peer-reviewed or, where grey literature was used, issued by a credible institutional or regulatory body. Purely technical papers with no organisational or governance relevance, unsupported opinion pieces, non-English sources, and duplicates were excluded. This process yielded a final synthesis sample of seventeen sources.

The retained literature was analysed using Jabareen's (2009) conceptual framework analysis method, which proceeds through mapping the literature across thematic domains, identifying recurring categories, assessing each category's theoretical role against the TOE and Dynamic Capabilities lenses, integrating categories into coherent relationships, and validating the resulting framework against the full source set, including checking for domains the search failed to surface. Because the review was conducted by a single researcher, credibility was supported through triangulation across academic, industry, and regulatory source types and through a documented, auditable search-and-selection trail, consistent with established criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The scope of the review was

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deliberately bounded to English-language, database-indexed sources published within the 2019–2025 window, a limitation stated here explicitly rather than treated as incidental.

Finding

i. No Integrated Governance Framework Exists for African FinTech

The review surfaced several patterns, but one finding stands out as the most consequential for both scholarship and practice; despite a search deliberately designed to capture work at the intersection of explainability, AI governance, and project success, no retrieved source integrates all three constructs within an African institutional context.

This gap is worth dwelling on because it is not for lack of relevant surrounding scholarship. The literature is, if anything, fairly confident that explainability strengthens governance. Černevičienė and Kabašinskas (2024), synthesising 138 studies, argue that interpretability is necessary to improve risk assessment and to sustain a resilient, trustworthy financial ecosystem, a position echoed by Kuiper *et al*. (2022) in their study of how banks and supervisory authorities treat explainability as a precondition for trusting AI-driven financial decisions, and by Sokol and Flach (2020), who propose standardised fact sheets as a way of making explainability auditable within governance processes. The literature is similarly confident, if less precise, that governance effectiveness relates to project success. Vuković *et al*. (2025) treat governance and explainability as central to successful AI-enabled financial transformation, while noting the absence of standardised implementation frameworks; Chang and Chen (2025) identify leadership commitment and organisational readiness as success drivers in digital transformation more broadly; Barba-Sánchez, Meseguer-Martínez, Gouveia-Rodrigues, and Raposo (2024) similarly link firm-level IT capability and digital orientation to transformation performance, again without reference to AI governance specifically; and the Boston Consulting Group (2020) frames transformation success in largely financial-outcome terms that do not explicitly account for AI governance maturity at all. Taken together, these strands support a directional relationship rather than a precise one, governance and success are measured through non-comparable proxies across studies, a limitation the field has inherited rather than resolved.

What is missing is the connective tissue between these strands, and specifically, the African institutional context in which that connective tissue would need to hold. The African-focused sources the search did retrieve, Mota Makore (2024) on AI regulation and financial inclusion in South Africa, Oriji *et al*. (2023) on FinTech legal frameworks across the continent, and the Centre for Economic Policy Research (2025) on AI in emerging-

market financial supervision, each treats governance or financial inclusion as a subject in its own right, without connecting either to explainability or to project-level outcomes. This should be read as a bounded finding rather than a sweeping one: African-specific AI governance scholarship clearly exists and is growing, which tempers any claim that the continent is simply absent from the literature. But within the parameters of this review's English-language, database-indexed search, the pattern held consistently enough across all three African-focused sources to support a fairly direct conclusion, that an integrated, Africa-contextualised framework linking explainability, governance, and project success is not merely a nice addition to the literature but a genuine and currently unmet need.

Conclusion

The single point worth holding onto from this review is a reframing rather than a summary: explainability in African FinTech should not be treated as a technical feature bolted onto an AI system after the fact, but as a governance capability in its own right, on the same footing as risk policy or regulatory compliance. The literature already accepts, fairly comfortably, that explainability helps governance and that governance helps project success. What it has not yet done, and what this review makes newly visible by its absence, is treat those two relationships as parts of a single institutional capability that African FinTech organisations need to build deliberately, rather than acquire as a side effect of adopting better models. That distinction matters because it changes where the responsibility sits; not with the sophistication of the AI system a firm buys or builds, but with whether the institution has the structures in place to sense, interpret, and act on what that system is doing. Until governance is understood in those terms, predictive capability alone will keep outrunning the institutional capacity meant to keep it accountable.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following actionable recommendations are proposed:

i. Institutionalise mandatory explainability requirements for AI deployment **-**
African FinTech regulators, central banks, and financial-sector governance bodies should establish mandatory explainability requirements as a formal condition for deploying AI systems in high-impact financial decision-making. The requirements should initially prioritise AI applications used for credit assessment, fraud detection, customer-risk classification, and regulatory compliance**,** where algorithmic decisions can have significant consequences for customers and financial institutions.

ii. Integrate explainability requirements into existing

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supervisory and licensing processes -
National financial regulatory authorities should incorporate explainability assessments into existing licensing, authorisation, model-validation, and supervisory-review procedures rather than waiting for comprehensive AI-specific legislation. This would enable regulators to use existing institutional mechanisms to require FinTech organisations to demonstrate that their AI systems can produce understandable and reviewable outputs.

iii. Adopt standardised AI explainability documentation **-**
Regulators and industry governance bodies should develop a standardised documentation template for AI systems, drawing on the explainability fact-sheet approach proposed by Sokol and Flach (2020). At a minimum, the documentation should identify the model's purpose, data sources, key variables, decision logic, limitations, known risks, validation procedures, and the basis for individual or aggregate AI-generated decisions. This documentation should be accessible to authorised internal auditors, risk managers, and regulatory supervisors.

iv. Require continuous explainability and risk monitoring throughout the AI lifecycle -
FinTech organisations should not treat explainability as a one-time requirement completed during system development. Regulators should require organisations to establish continuous monitoring mechanisms that assess model performance, data changes, model drift, emerging risks, and the consistency of explanations throughout the AI system's operational lifecycle. Significant changes in model behaviour or risk exposure should trigger documented review and, where necessary, model recalibration or suspension.

v. Establish clear accountability for AI-generated decisions **-**
FinTech organisations should assign clearly defined responsibilities to senior management, AI developers, data scientists, risk managers, compliance officers, and internal auditors for overseeing AI systems. Explainability documentation should therefore be incorporated into existing AI governance, risk management, audit, and compliance structures**,** ensuring that responsibility for AI-supported decisions does not become diffused across technological systems.

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Women and Clandestine Activities: A Case Study of Human Trafficking and Child Labour in Nigeria

Abstract

This article examined the paradoxical and understudied phenomenon of female perpetration in human trafficking and child labour in Nigeria. These crimes are predominantly attributed to male criminal networks and organised syndicates, yet a growing body of evidence shows that women make up a significant and active tier of perpetrators, often occupying roles that are indispensable to trafficking supply chains rather than incidental to them. This research employed a qualitative case study design, treating Nigeria as a bounded national case and drawing on secondary sources, peer-reviewed studies, legal instruments, and institutional reports from bodies such as NAPTIP and the UNODC, to examine how women's agency, vulnerability, and complicity converge in the exploitation of children. The article questioned the theoretical frameworks that have historically rendered women's criminality invisible and contended for a fuller understanding of gender and agency in organised crime, one in which the attributes conventionally read as markers of feminine virtue, gentleness, compassion, maternal instinct, can also function as instruments of exploitation. Findings indicate that this invisibility is not accidental: it is built into legal definitions, institutional practice, and scholarly convention alike, with direct implications for how Nigeria's trafficking and child-protection frameworks are drafted and enforced.

Keywords: human trafficking, child labour, gender and crime, child protection, Nigeria.

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Introduction

The conventional narrative of human trafficking and child labour in Nigeria foregrounds male perpetrators, organised criminal networks, and patriarchal power structures as the primary drivers of these crimes. That framing is not wrong, but it is incomplete. It obscures a critical and historically underexamined dimension of the phenomenon: the systematic participation, agency, and often essential facilitation role that women play in the orchestration, maintenance, and expansion of trafficking and labour-exploitation networks.

To be clear, the argument here is not that male culpability should be minimised, nor that gender-based analysis is irrelevant to understanding trafficking. It is, more narrowly, that frameworks which render invisible the role of women, particularly women embodying the social and biological attributes conventionally coded as

maternal, nurturing, and compassionate, miss an important part of how child exploitation actually happens in Nigeria and across the African diaspora.

Women's participation in trafficking and child labour is not merely incidental, nor is it simply a product of their own prior victimisation. Their distinctive position within households, kinship networks, and informal economies makes them, in practice, strategically valuable actors within trafficking supply chains. The very attributes that legitimate maternal authority, tenderness, trustworthiness, access to children, the capacity to soothe and nurture, can be turned to exploitative ends. Documented case material compiled by Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and by international bodies records instances in which mothers have been directly implicated in trafficking their own children, in which aunts have arranged the placement of nieces into domestic servitude, and in which female neighbours have brokered arrangements that delivered children into labour bondage (NAPTIP, 2022; UNODC, 2018). These are not the only pathways, and the available case documentation is not systematic enough to establish their relative frequency with confidence; a limitation this article returns to below, but they are documented enough to demand scholarly attention that moves beyond purely victimological frameworks toward an account of women's complex agency within criminal ecosystems.

Nigeria is an instructive case site for this kind of investigation. It functions simultaneously as a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking, and its combination of acute economic precarity, thin child-protection infrastructure, and long-standing, culturally embedded practices of child fosterage and domestic labour creates conditions in which gendered trafficking networks can take root and persist.

Nigerian scholarship on these phenomena has, on the whole, rarely foregrounded women's agency and perpetration, tending instead to emphasise poverty, patriarchy, and male organised crime as the primary analytic lenses. By emphasizing Nigerian cases specifically, this article aims to contribute a more textured, and grounded account of how gender operates as a vector of criminality, and not only as a marker of victimhood.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative, single-case research design, with Nigeria treated as the bounded case under examination rather than a comparison across multiple national contexts. The choice of Nigeria was purposive: as both a major source and destination country for trafficking, with a well-documented (if imperfectly enforced) legal framework and an active national anti-trafficking agency, it offers unusually rich secondary material against which to examine the specific question of women's perpetration.

The evidence base consists entirely of secondary sources: peer-reviewed criminological and sociological research

on trafficking in Nigeria and comparable contexts; Nigerian legal instruments, principally the Child Rights Act (2003) and the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2015); and institutional reporting from NAPTIP and international bodies including the ILO and UNODC. No primary data such as interviews, court records, or case files, were collected for this study; the analysis is therefore interpretive and synthetic rather than empirical in the strict sense, and its claims about the scale of women's involvement in trafficking (as opposed to the existence and mechanisms of that involvement) should be read with that limitation in mind. Sources were read thematically, coded for recurring patterns in how gender shaped access, authority, and legal visibility, and organised around the four analytic questions set out in the Introduction.

Literature Review

The invisibility of women's participation in organised crime has been a persistent problem in criminological scholarship. Criminology has long been animated by an implicit assumption that organised crime, particularly in its most systematic and violent forms, is inherently male terrain. Several intellectual traditions reinforced this assumption. Early organised-crime scholarship, especially in the North American and European contexts, focused overwhelmingly on mafia structures, drug-trafficking syndicates, and protection rackets, domains coded as masculine and understood to require physical violence or overt coercion. The result was a canonical image of the organised criminal as distinctly masculine: aggressive, territorial, embedded in all-male networks.

Feminist criminology has long challenged this assumption. Liz Stanley and Sue Wise's *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* (1993) argues that mainstream sociological and criminological frameworks reproduce a form of epistemic injustice, rendering certain forms of harm and agency, particularly those associated with women, invisible to scholarly and institutional scrutiny (Stanley & Wise, 1993).

Feminist criminology has long argued that women occupy varied positions within criminal networks that reflect the specific social resources gender affords them, rather than a single undifferentiated role. James Messerschmidt's structured action theory treats crime itself as a resource through which men and women "do gender" in socially available, structurally constrained ways, implying that the criminal opportunities open to women differ systematically from those open to men, tracking the trust, mobility, and suspicion that gendered social position confers, rather than any lesser capacity for organised offending (Messerschmidt, 1997, as cited in Aderoju, 2024). Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney-Lind's earlier call for a feminist criminology made a related point: mainstream criminology's near-exclusive focus on men had left the diverse roles women actually occupy in

crime, as organisers as well as accomplices, largely undocumented (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1986, as cited in Aderoju, 2024). Applied to trafficking specifically, this suggests that women's roles as recruiters, intermediaries, and household-level custodians of children are not incidental but track the specific social terrain, kinship access, presumed harmlessness, domestic authority, that is more readily available to women than to men.

Applied to trafficking specifically, this line of argument is persuasive. Siddharth Kara's research on global slavery systems has shaped much of the contemporary understanding of trafficking networks; across his trilogy of studies, Kara documents the role of female perpetrators and observes that women traffickers are often especially effective at recruiting and managing victims, precisely because they can mobilise gendered trust and access in ways male perpetrators typically cannot (Kara, 2009, 2012, 2017).

Global estimates of trafficking vary by source, but the International Labour Organization has conservatively estimated that approximately 27.6 million people are in situations of forced labour globally, with children accounting for roughly 7.4 million of that figure (ILO, 2017). These aggregate numbers conceal considerable regional and sectoral variation. Trafficking operates through supply chains linking zones of acute poverty to higher-income destination areas, exploiting both legal and irregular migration channels along the way.

Trafficking theory has evolved considerably over the past two decades. Louise Shelley documents the shift from early supply–demand models toward more sophisticated accounts of trafficking as a distinct criminal enterprise, one that routinely intersects with legitimate economic sectors such as domestic work, agriculture, the sex industry, and manufacturing (Shelley, 2010). Phil Williams's analysis of transnational criminal networks similarly emphasises their structural and organisational sophistication, supply-chain management, risk mitigation, and adaptive capacity to law-enforcement pressure, a sophistication that depends substantially on reliable intermediaries able to operate with reduced visibility, a role women frequently occupy (Williams, 2001).

Nigeria's child-labour situation has to be read against several overlapping contexts: post-colonial state formation, uneven regional development, the coexistence of customary kinship systems with modern legal frameworks, and the particular pressures of economic adjustment and informalisation that have shaped Nigeria since the 1980s. Child labour was not comprehensively proscribed in Nigerian law until relatively recently; although the 1999 Constitution nominally guarantees the right to education and protection from exploitation, enforcement mechanisms have remained thin.

The Child Rights Act of 2003 is Nigeria's most comprehensive statutory child-protection framework, but its implementation has been inconsistent

across the federation, and certain forms of child labour, domestic servitude within households, apprenticeship arrangements, continue to occupy ambiguous legal and social ground (Okojie, 2009).

Estimates of child labour in Nigeria are contested, but credible sources put the figure at roughly 15 million children, or between a quarter and a third of the national child population, engaged in some form of labour, with a substantial and under-acknowledged proportion in domestic servitude concentrated in cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt (ILO, 2020). Girls disproportionately experience domestic and sexual labour; boys are concentrated in street trading, artisanal mining, and manufacturing. This gendered distribution of labour forms is itself revealing of the gendered networks through which children are recruited, placed, and exploited.

Nigerian criminological data on female offending more broadly supports the claim that women's criminality is under-researched and under-counted rather than genuinely rare. Nigeria's total prison population stood at 78,621 in 2024, of whom 97.8 percent were male and only 2.2 percent female (Nigerian Correctional Service, 2024, as cited in Aderoju, 2024), a gender gap that has been attributed partly to unreported offending by women and partly to the more lenient treatment, often termed "chivalry," that male-dominated police and court systems are said to extend to female suspects (Agboola, 2014; Barkan, 1997; Fontebo, 2013; Suleiman, 2014, as cited in Aderoju, 2024). Feminist criminologists have long contested this chivalry thesis, arguing instead that the scarcity of research on female offenders reflects a discipline that has treated women's crime as too minor to merit sustained study. Carol Smart's founding critique put the point starkly: "Our knowledge is still in its infancy" (Smart, 1977, as cited in Aderoju, 2024).

This general pattern of under-theorised female offending is compounded, where trafficking and child exploitation specifically are concerned, by a further problem: the tendency of feminist pathways scholarship to treat women's criminality only as a downstream product of their own victimisation. Kathleen Daly's gender pathways model, developed from a study of women sentenced in a New York felony court, identifies five routes into female offending: "street women" fleeing abusive homes, drug-connected women whose offending follows from addiction, "harmed and harming women" whose own childhood abuse issues into later harmful behaviour toward others, battered women coerced by intimate partners, and women engaged in economic offending for survival or gain (Daly, 1992, as cited in Aderoju, 2024). This typology matters for the present study precisely because it already anticipates that a woman's own history of harm can issue into her later harming of others, rather than only into passive victimhood. It is this same non-linear relationship between victimisation and perpetration, applied specifically to

trafficking, that the following section examines in the Nigerian case.

Emerging Evidence of Women's Perpetration in Human Trafficking

Over the past decade, empirical research on trafficking has increasingly documented women's role as perpetrators rather than only as victims. Global trafficking prosecution data compiled by the UNODC indicate that women comprise roughly 35 to 40 percent of convicted human traffickers worldwide (UNODC, 2018, 2019). In some African contexts, women represent the majority of prosecuted traffickers, particularly in cases involving domestic servitude and child labour.

Part of why the default assumption of male perpetration has persisted is the dominance, within the literature, of sex-trafficking frameworks specifically. Liz Kelly argues that the international anti-trafficking movement has constructed narratives centred on male sexual predation and the victimisation of women and girls for sexual exploitation, a framing that has crowded out attention to other trafficking forms and other perpetrator profiles (Kelly, 2005).

African criminological scholarship has been slower than scholarship in other regions to address women's perpetration directly. Malinda Smith's research on transnational smuggling and trafficking across African borders documents that women's participation is neither incidental nor motivated solely by prior victimisation; women have accrued material, social, and symbolic benefits through their involvement in these networks (Smith, 2015).

Read against Daly's gender pathways typology discussed above, the Nigerian trafficking case fits most closely within the "harmed and harming" and economic-offending pathways: women who have themselves experienced abuse, deprivation, or trafficking-related exploitation may subsequently move into recruiting or managing others, a trajectory Daly's model treats as one of several plausible, non-linear routes into offending rather than as a contradiction requiring special explanation (Daly, 1992, as cited in Aderoju, 2024). This finding is consistent with the broader pattern Siddharth Kara documents for trafficking networks more generally, in which prior victimisation and subsequent perpetration frequently coexist within a single woman's biography (Kara, 2009).

Contemporary feminist scholarship has increasingly complicated narratives that position women as natural nurturers and inherently pacific beings. Donna Haraway argues, in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, that the construction of women as natural nurturers is itself a myth, one that obscures women's capacity for complexity, contradiction, and harm (Haraway, 1991). Miranda Fricker's concept of testimonial injustice, the systematic devaluing of certain people's credibility as witnesses and knowers, helps explain why women's own accounts of harm they have caused are so rarely treated as credible or even sought

out (Fricker, 2007). Taken together, this double invisibility, women read as inherently benevolent, and women's testimony discounted even when it isn't, creates considerable space for women perpetrators to evade both accountability and recognition.

The capacity to nurture does not preclude the capacity to exploit, and the experience of childbirth does not automatically generate empathy for other people's children. Women's socially legitimated authority within households and kinship networks, and their biologically grounded access to children, become resources that can be, and sometimes are turned toward exploitation rather than protection.

None of this is meant to pathologise women or motherhood as such. The point, rather, is that women's agency, power, and capacity for harm need to be recognised as part of the ordinary texture of human behaviour rather than treated as an anomaly requiring special explanation. Taking that capacity seriously is a precondition for understanding how women participate in trafficking networks, and for designing interventions that actually address it.

Women's Participation in Trafficking and Child Labour Networks in Nigeria

Women's participation in the exploitation and trafficking of children in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon, though its scale and systematisation have intensified alongside urbanisation, economic liberalisation, and the expansion of informal labour markets. Historical records of child domestic servitude from Nigeria's colonial and early post-colonial periods document cases in which women householders participated directly in the recruitment, purchase, and labour exploitation of young girls and boys (Okojie, 2009). Long-standing Nigerian fosterage and apprenticeship practices, in which children were placed in the households of traders, craftspeople, and wealthier families, provided a customary institutional template that later trafficking networks have, in places, adapted and exploited (Okojie, 2009).

Contemporary manifestations of women's perpetration operate across multiple sites and forms. In Lagos and other major urban centres, networks of female intermediaries facilitate the placement of children from poorer areas into domestic servitude in wealthier households; these women typically occupy precarious positions in the labour market themselves, often as house servants or informal traders, and leverage their knowledge of both the domestic labour market and vulnerable children to broker placements. In the northern Nigerian context, women have similarly played a role in facilitating child trafficking connected to internal migration and the placement of children in Qur'anic schools under the *almajiri* system, acting as brokers between families and informal schooling networks and identifying children who end up in street begging and manual labour rather than the religious education their families were promised.

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Motherhood, Family Networks, and the Initiation of Trafficking

Case documentation and the limited empirical research available describe instances in which mothers themselves initiate the trafficking of their own children, whether by negotiating directly with employers or traffickers or by working through intermediaries. The circumstances vary, but they typically combine acute economic destitution, relationship instability, and the absence of any viable alternative livelihood strategy. In some documented cases, mothers place children with partners or kin in exchange for material support or a measure of relational stability.

The relationship between maternal agency and maternal vulnerability is genuinely complex, and it resists neat sorting into victim-or-perpetrator categories. Mothers who participate in trafficking their own children very often do so under conditions of real material desperation and severely limited choice. Acknowledging those constraining circumstances, however, does not erase the fact of maternal complicity in a child's exploitation. The two things are compatible, however uncomfortable that is to sit with.

Beyond mothers, female relatives such as grandmothers, aunts, stepmothers, and fictive mothers, exercise real authority over children's fates. In the extended kinship systems characteristic of many Nigerian communities, decisions about a child's placement and labour are often made collectively, and women frequently hold considerable power within these networks: determining who has access to a child, negotiating the terms of a labour placement, and mediating disputes when they arise.

Beyond the family unit, women also operate as intermediaries within broader trafficking and labour-exploitation networks, capitalising on their social positioning and on the gendered dimensions of trust and access. Female recruiters work within communities of origin, identifying vulnerable children, building rapport with families, and negotiating initial placements, a work that depends on their ability to mobilise social credibility, kinship ties, and local knowledge. Other women act as brokers linking different nodes of a trafficking network: between recruiters and traffickers, between traffickers and employers, between employers and the children themselves. This brokerage function is essential to how these networks operate, and it allows the women who perform it to accrue real economic and social capital; some move into more senior roles, becoming coordinators or even heads of trafficking enterprises in their own right.

The custodial role that some women occupy is particularly revealing of how assumptions about care work end up facilitating exploitation. A female householder who employs a child in domestic labour exercises daily control over that child's body, movements, and labour, and the outward appearance of care and mothering can mask what is, in

substance, profound control and exploitation.

Access, Authority, and the Gendered Construction of Kinship

Trafficking networks depend, in part, on the mobilisation of gender itself as a resource. Women are normatively positioned as caretakers and nurturers, and that positioning generates a presumption of benevolence that can be, and is, instrumentalised to gain access to vulnerable children; parents and community members are, on the whole, less inclined to scrutinise a woman's intentions or to see her as potentially dangerous. Women's positioned access to children through motherhood, household roles, and kinship networks also provides particular information: which children are vulnerable, which families are under economic strain, which children might plausibly be moved out of their kin networks without provoking alarm. That knowledge has value, and it can be monetised.

In a context of pervasive gender inequality and constrained legitimate income opportunities, participation in trafficking networks can become one of the few avenues through which some women, marginal traders without capital, displaced rural migrants, or women without male economic support following divorce or widowhood, can generate meaningful income. And women's participation is further enabled by a specific form of gender-blindness in law enforcement and social monitoring: police and child-protection officials, working from their own gendered assumptions about who constitutes a threat, may scrutinise men's behaviour far more closely than women's, with the effect that a woman's involvement in a case can shift how that case is categorised and investigated in the first place.

Women's presumed benevolence, gentleness, and non-violence provide a distinctive cover for exploitation. Parents are, understandably, more inclined to entrust a child to a woman than to a man, on the assumption that she will treat the child with kindness. This presumption is not incidental to women's effectiveness as perpetrators, it is close to the centre of it. Women's historical exclusion from formal violence and criminal authority, while a genuine form of subordination, simultaneously generates a distinct kind of power in clandestine settings: a form of invisibility that men rarely have access to.

Trafficking operates not only through overt violence and coercion but through psychological manipulation and the deliberate construction of dependence. Women who are skilled at reading others' emotional needs are often particularly adept at creating the psychological conditions in which children remain, in effect, complicit in their own exploitation. This capacity to perform care while extracting harm is amplified by the social legitimacy already granted to women's nurturing roles: a man who gives a child affection and material support while also extracting labour from that child tends to arouse suspicion; a woman doing exactly the same thing is more often read as simply performing a maternal role. That asymmetry is, this article argues,

systematically exploited within trafficking networks.

Legal Frameworks, Institutional Blindness, and the Invisibility of Women Perpetrators

Nigerian legal frameworks criminalising trafficking and child labour were historically built around an assumption that men were the primary perpetrators. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015, while gender-neutral on its face, contains implicit assumptions about perpetration that have left women's participation comparatively invisible: it emphasises transportation and movement across borders as defining elements of trafficking, a definition that aligns more readily with stereotypically male roles than with women's typical roles in recruitment and household-based exploitation. Similarly, a definition of trafficking centred on forced labour or extortion may fail to capture the more subtle coercive dynamics of household-based child labour orchestrated by women. This blindness to household-based and relationally embedded exploitation creates real space for women perpetrators to avoid criminal liability.

Police and child-protection officials in Nigeria operate under similar gendered assumptions about who is likely to be a criminal. During trafficking investigations, they are, on the available evidence, less likely to scrutinise women's behaviour or to pursue prosecution against them; the mere fact of a woman's involvement can shift how a case is categorised and pursued. This gendered invisibility compounds an already serious problem of limited resources, capacity, and institutional corruption within Nigerian law enforcement, meaning that cases involving women perpetrators may receive even less institutional attention than comparable cases involving men.

Nigerian child-protection frameworks have also historically been shaped by an assumption that privileges maternal rights and parental autonomy. That deference has meant that a mother's decision to place a child in labour, or to send a child to relatives under arrangements that amount to trafficking, has often been treated as a matter of family autonomy rather than one of child protection, and the underlying presumption that mothers naturally act in their children's interest has meant that maternal agency in trafficking has frequently gone unrecognised and unaddressed. That presumption of maternal benevolence, effectively institutionalised in law and policy, becomes a mechanism through which women perpetrators escape accountability.

Conclusion

This article has examined the systematic participation of women in human trafficking and child labour in Nigeria, arguing that this involvement is not a peripheral or incidental phenomenon but an integral feature of how trafficking networks function and expand. The biological and social

attributes conventionally read as markers of feminine virtue such as gentleness, compassion, maternal instinct, and the lived experience of reproductive vulnerability, position women as strategically valuable participants in the trafficking and exploitation of children.

None of this is meant to suggest that women bear primary responsibility for trafficking and child labour in Nigeria; the structural conditions of poverty, economic inequality, weak state institutions, and persistent demand for cheap labour remain foundational to the whole system. The argument, rather, is that any adequate response to trafficking has to grapple with the full complexity of perpetration, including the ways gendered inequality and gendered authority become resources that some women use to harm others more vulnerable than themselves. By centring Nigerian cases specifically, this article has sought to contribute a more geographically grounded account of how gender operates as a vector of criminality, and not only as a marker of victimhood.

This research also contributes to a broader effort within gendered criminology to move beyond purely victimological frameworks and engage seriously with women's capacity for agency, power, and harm. Recognising women's perpetration is not a betrayal of feminist commitments to challenging gender inequality; if anything, it extends those commitments, since it takes seriously how power actually operates, including the uncomfortable fact that members of a marginalised group can themselves become implicated in harming people even more vulnerable than they are. A criminology adequate to the realities of trafficking in the Global South needs to hold onto these complexities rather than treat any category of person, women included, as exempt from scrutiny regarding their capacity for harm.

Recommendations

(a) First, Nigeria's legal frameworks governing trafficking and child labour should be revised to explicitly name and address women's trafficking perpetration, rather than relying on gender-neutral language that in practice tracks male-typical trafficking roles more closely than female-typical ones.

(b) Second, law enforcement and child-protection training should directly confront the gendered assumptions about criminality identified in this article, building investigators' capacity to recognise and act on evidence of women's involvement in trafficking with the same rigour applied to cases involving men.

(c) Third, child-protection frameworks should be reviewed with an eye to reducing automatic deference to parental and maternal autonomy in cases where the evidence suggests exploitation, while remaining alert to the risk of over-criminalising mothers who are themselves acting under severe

economic duress; these two goals are in tension, and reconciling them will require more field-level research than currently exists.

(d) Finally, anti-trafficking interventions should address the gendered economic constraints that make trafficking-related income attractive to some women in the first place. Poverty does not excuse trafficking, but the limited legitimate income opportunities available to many Nigerian women plainly increase their exposure to illicit alternatives; expanding women's access to legitimate economic opportunity is not a complete solution, but it is a necessary part of one.

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An Exposition of Nigerian University Governance and Administrative Structure

Abstract

Universities primary responsibility is not simply to deliver services but to create knowledge, preserve it, question accepted ideas and prepare people who can contribute meaningfully to society. That responsibility has influenced the way universities are organized and governed over centuries. Since a university cannot function effectively where administrative convenience overrides academic judgment, it cannot fulfil its mandate where academic freedom exists without accountability. The challenge of Nigerian Universities then has always been to hold these competing demands together without weakening either. From this point of view, this research carried out an exposition of Nigerian universities in order to understand their organogram, roles, responsibilities and objectives. The study contended that, although statutes, regulations and other legal instruments define institutional authority, they cannot by themselves guarantee sound administration. The study therefore affirmed, that much depends on the people entrusted with implementing those provisions and the values they bring to the process. The study concluded that Nigerian Universities may be numerous, but each hold a lot of promises of impact through enduring reforms that will reposition it for greatness where sound knowledge and dedication to duty is entrenched.

Keywords: Nigeria, University, Governance Structure, Administration, Accountability, Reforms.

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Introduction

Experience has shown that two universities operating under the same legal framework can produce very different outcomes because leadership, administrative culture and professional judgment often determine how governance is translated into practice. This point is emphasized by Shattock (2010) who notes that, "good governance is about much more than organizational structures; it is about relationships, behaviors and culture" (p. 7).

It is equally important to note that universities are not governed in the same way as government ministries or private corporations. Decisions affecting teaching, research and academic standards cannot rest solely with executive authority because the legitimacy of those decisions depends on the participation of those with academic expertise. This understanding explains why shared governance has remained a defining feature of universities across different jurisdictions. Kezar and Holcombe (2017)

observe that shared governance "aligns institutional decision making with the expertise of faculty, administrators and governing boards" (p. 3).

Governance and administration are often discussed as though they perform separate functions but are closely intertwined in practice. Governance establishes direction, defines institutional priorities and protects the mission of the university. While administration gives practical effect to those decisions through planning, coordination and day to day execution. One without the other leaves the institution vulnerable just as governance that is disconnected from administration rarely moves beyond policy statement. The effectiveness of a university therefore depends less on the existence of statutory organs than on the quality of interaction among them. It majorly depends on the willingness of those who occupy positions of responsibility to act in the interest of the institution rather than personal authority. Understanding how these structures function is essential for every staff member because governance determines decision-making processes, accountability systems, administrative procedures, and academic regulation within the university.

2.0 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to

i. Examine the governance and administrative structure of the university.
ii. Evaluate why shared governance has remained a defining feature of universities across different jurisdictions.

Philosophy of University Administration

Many of the administrative difficulties that surface in our universities today are not failures of procedure as much as they are failures to appreciate the nature of the institution itself. Once a university begins to see itself as another government establishment, it gradually loses the very character that distinguishes it from every other public institution. This is why Kezar and Holcombe (2017) observe that shared governance "aligns institutional decision making with the expertise of faculty, administrators and governing boards" (p. 3).

A university was never intended to be a bureaucracy that awards degrees but first and foremost, a community organized around knowledge. Everything else, whether administration, finance, infrastructure or governance, exists because that community exists. Whenever administration begins to compete with scholarship instead of serving it, the institution slowly loses its sense of purpose. Efficient administration alone has never made a great university. It is for this reason that Newman (1982) described the university simply as "a place of teaching universal knowledge" (p. xix).

Altbach, Reisberg and de Wit (2023) observe that universities now operate within a global knowledge economy in

which research, innovation and international engagement have become defining measures of institutional performance. Universities bring together individuals whose authority rests not on office but on scholarship. For example, professors cannot simply be managed in the same way one supervises employees in a conventional bureaucracy because academic life depends upon intellectual independence. Clark (1983) recognized this reality when he described universities as organizations in which authority is naturally dispersed across specialized communities of expertise. In practice, this means that influence is earned as much through intellectual credibility as through official position. A Vice Chancellor for example, may possess statutory authority, but that authority alone rarely carries an institution very far. Lasting institutional decisions are built on confidence, consultation and professional respect. Shattock (2010) captures this point clearly when he argues that "good governance is about much more than organizational structures; it is about relationships, behaviors and culture" (p. 7).

A university cannot defend academic freedom while neglecting academic integrity because the two are inseparable. Altbach (2001) observe that academic freedom is "the central value of the university" (p. 206). Academic freedom belongs primarily to scholars in the exercise of teaching and research. Institutional autonomy belongs to the university as a corporate body. It protects the institution's ability to make academic, administrative and strategic decisions according to established academic principles rather than external directives. Public universities derive much of their funding from government, operate under statutory frameworks and remain accountable to regulatory authorities. The more difficult question is how accountability can be maintained without reducing universities to extensions of government departments.

Kezar and Holcombe (2017) describe shared governance as a framework that aligns institutional decision making with the knowledge of governing boards, administrators and faculty members. Decisions reached through genuine consultation may take longer, but they often command greater institutional confidence because they benefit from multiple perspectives before implementation. Universities are older than most of the individuals who lead them and, if properly managed, they will outlive all of them. Every administrator therefore occupies office only temporarily and that reality should inform the exercise of authority. Positions within the university are held in trust for the institution, not owned by those who occupy them. Stewardship encourages administrators to ask a different set of questions such as what responsibility requires shifting attention from personal influence to institutional continuity? Administrators who appreciate the philosophy of the university are generally better equipped to interpret regulations wisely, manage disagreements

constructively and preserve institutional stability during periods of uncertainty.

Evolution of University Governance in Nigeria

Governance in the Nigerian university system is therefore best understood as the product of historical experience rather than legislative design alone. The structures that define authority today evolved in response to changing ideas about the purpose of the university, the relationship between the academy and the state, and the demands of national development. Appreciating that history helps to explain why certain governance practices have endured while others have been jettison or challenged.

Modern university governance owes much to the medieval universities of Bologna, Paris and Oxford. These institutions were not established by governments in the contemporary sense but grew from associations of scholars and students who organized themselves around learning. Authority was exercised collectively and academic decisions were made within scholarly communities. Although the administrative complexity of today's universities is far removed from those early beginnings, one principle has remained. It is that universities govern themselves most effectively when scholarship retains a central place in institutional decision making.

That tradition travelled across Europe and eventually shaped the British university system from which Nigeria inherited much of its higher education culture. The collegiate model developed in Britain placed considerable emphasis on academic self-governance, deliberation through committees and the distribution of authority among various institutional organs. Even where governing boards exercised oversight, academic matters largely remained within the jurisdiction of academic bodies. Clark (1983) holds that universities differ from conventional organizations precisely because authority is dispersed among specialized communities of expertise rather than concentrated within a single administrative hierarchy.

Nigeria's experience with university governance cannot, however, be understood simply as a continuation of British traditions. The colonial administration introduced higher education primarily to produce skilled manpower for public administration and the professions. While this objective contributed to the establishment of tertiary institutions, it also meant that governance initially reflected colonial administrative priorities more than just the aspirations of an autonomous university system. The establishment of the University College, Ibadan in 1948 marked the formal beginning of university education in Nigeria. As an affiliate of the University of London, the institution operated within British academic regulations and governance traditions. Academic programmes, examination standards and administrative procedures were substantially influenced by the parent institution. This arrangement ensured

internationally recognized standards, but also limited the institution's capacity to define its own academic priorities.

Officially known as the *Commission on Post School Certificate and Higher Education in Nigeria*, this was established in 1959 to advise the government on the country's higher education needs in anticipation of independence. The Ashby Report advanced a vision of universities as institutions that should enjoy sufficient academic independence to pursue teaching and research while remaining responsive to national priorities. The years immediately following independence witnessed the establishment of what are now commonly described as Nigeria's first generation universities. Institutions such as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, and the University of Lagos emerged during a period of immense national optimism. They were conceived not merely as centers of learning but as strategic instruments for nation building. Universities were expected to produce skilled professionals, cultivate national leadership, promote scientific advancement and strengthen Nigeria's place within the international community.

By the late twentieth century, the Nigerian university system had entered a new phase as Federal and state governments established new universities to widen access to higher education, while private universities later emerged as important participants within the sector. One of the defining moments in the evolution of university governance in Nigeria was the establishment of the National Universities Commission. Created in 1962 as an advisory body and later strengthened through the National Universities Commission Act of 1974. The Commission assumed responsibilities that extended beyond coordination into quality assurance, programme accreditation, institutional planning and system wide policy development.

Successive amendments to the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act sought to clarify institutional authority, protect university autonomy and reduce arbitrary interference in university administration. Few legislative interventions have shaped governance in Nigerian universities as profoundly as the 2003 amendment. Among other reforms, it strengthened the statutory roles of Governing Councils in matters relating to appointments, discipline and institutional oversight while affirming the responsibilities of Senates in academic affairs. The legislation attempted to restore an important constitutional principle within university administration which are that, different organs exist because they perform different functions, not because they compete for authority.

In practice, institutional disagreements often arise not because statutes are silent but because institutional actors fail to appreciate the boundaries established by those statutes. This observation is particularly relevant within universities

such as the University of Uyo, where governance reflects both national legislation and institution specific statutes. While broad principles of governance remain consistent across Nigerian universities, each institution develops administrative traditions shaped by its history, organizational culture and statutory instruments. Experienced administrators learn to distinguish between what the law requires, what institutional practice permits and what good judgment recommends.

Governance Structure and Roles in the University

In a conventional bureaucracy, authority typically flows from the apex through successive administrative levels. Efficiency often depends upon the speed with which executive decisions are transmitted and implemented. Universities cannot function effectively on that model because many of their most important decisions require academic judgment rather than administrative instruction. Questions relating to curriculum, research standards, examinations and the award of degrees cannot be resolved solely through executive authority because they derive their legitimacy from scholarly expertise. Clark (1983) notes that higher education is characterized by "organized anarchy" in which authority is dispersed across specialized communities of knowledge rather than concentrated within a single command structure. The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, together with institutional statutes and regulations, establishes distinct governance organs whose powers are intended to complement rather than compete with one another (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003). Appreciating this constitutional arrangement is essential before examining the individual organs themselves.

The Visitor

Because the office is occupied by the President in federal universities and by State Governors in state universities, there is a tendency to assume that the Visitor functions as the day to day head of the institution. The Visitor exists not to administer the university but to safeguard its constitutional integrity. The Visitor therefore performs a constitutional rather than an executive function. Through powers defined by law, the Visitor receives reports on the state of the university, constitutes visitation panels where necessary and ensures that the institution remains faithful to its statutory mandate. Summarily, the Visitor's responsibilities include: Appointment of Governing Council members, receiving visitation panels, Addressing major institutional disputes.

The Chancellor

Universities have always recognized that institutions are sustained not only by administrative systems but also by tradition, identity and public confidence. The Chancellor embodies those intangible dimensions of university life. As the ceremonial head of the university, the Chancellor presides over convocations and confers degrees on behalf of the

institution. More importantly, the office serves as a visible representation of the university's continuity beyond successive administrations. While Vice Chancellors complete their tenures, Governing Councils are reconstituted, Academic staff retire, the institution, however, continues. The Chancellor reminds the university community that it belongs to a tradition larger than any individual office holder.

The Pro Chancellor and Chairman of Council

If the Chancellor represents continuity, the Pro Chancellor represents active governance. This is one of the most important offices within the governance structure because it provides leadership to the Governing Council, the organ charged with the strategic oversight of the university. The Pro Chancellor leads the body responsible for ensuring that the university remains faithful to its mission, exercises prudent stewardship over its resources and maintains appropriate standards of accountability. There is a natural temptation for Governing Councils to involve themselves in operational matters, particularly where institutions face financial or administrative difficulties. However, governance becomes ineffective when oversight is confused with execution.

The Governing Council

The Governing Council occupies a central position within the constitutional architecture of the university because it serves as the institution's highest policy making and oversight body. Its authority derives not from administrative convenience but from the recognition that universities require independent strategic supervision capable of protecting institutional interests beyond the tenure of individual administrators. The statutory responsibilities of Council extend to finance, property, staffing, strategic planning and the general welfare of the institution, subject always to the powers assigned by law to Senate in academic matters. These responsibilities explain why Councils are deliberately constituted to include individuals drawn from diverse professional backgrounds. Universities benefit when strategic decisions are informed not only by academic experience but also by expertise in law, finance, public administration, industry and national development.

The Governing Council should not be understood as the university's executive authority but as its strategic conscience. The Governing Council is the highest decision-making body responsible for policy and financial management of the university.

Key functions include:

- Appointment of principal officers
- Approval of university budget
- Oversight of university property and finances
- Strategic planning and policy direction.

The Vice Chancellor

If the Governing Council provides strategic oversight, the Vice Chancellor gives practical direction to the life of the university. The Vice Chancellor stands at the point where academic leadership, executive administration and public accountability meet. Every significant decision eventually passes through this office, whether it concerns academic programmes, staff welfare, finances, infrastructure, student affairs or external relations. It is therefore one of the few offices within the university where almost every institutional interest converges.

The most successful Vice Chancellors are those who understand when to lead decisively, when to consult widely and when to allow established governance processes to take their course. Universities respond far better to leadership that builds consensus than to authority that seeks unquestioning compliance. Shattock (2010) aver that, effective governance rests upon relationships and institutional culture as much as formal powers. That observation applies nowhere more clearly than to the office of the Vice Chancellor. The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act recognizes this central role by designating the Vice Chancellor as both the chief academic and chief executive officer of the university, responsible for implementing the decisions of Council and Senate while ensuring the efficient administration of the institution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2003). The VCs responsibilities include:

- Academic leadership
- Administrative coordination
- Implementation of council decisions

Representation of the university nationally and internationally

The Senate

Long before modern universities developed elaborate administrative systems, academic communities understood that decisions affecting scholarship should remain in the hands of scholars. That conviction continues to justify the Senate's place as the supreme academic authority within the university. The responsibilities entrusted to Senate are extensive because they relate directly to the university's core mission. Admissions, curriculum development, examinations, research standards, academic regulations and the award of degrees all fall substantially within its jurisdiction. The Senate is the highest academic authority of the university. It is responsible for:

- Academic policies
- Curriculum development
- Approval of results and degrees
- Regulation of teaching and research

Membership typically includes:

- The Vice-Chancellor
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors

- Professors
- Faculty representatives
- Librarian

Congregation and Convocation

Congregation and Convocation belong to the latter category with their importance sometimes underestimated because they are not involved in the daily administration of the institution. Their functions however reinforce accountability, institutional continuity and collective ownership. Congregation ordinarily consists of academic staff together with specified categories of senior administrative personnel.

Convocation, by contrast, extends the university's corporate identity beyond its serving staff. It brings together graduates, senior officers and other persons recognized under the university's statutes. In doing so, it reminds the institution that its responsibilities do not end at graduation. Alumni remain part of the university's continuing story, contributing experience, professional networks and public goodwill that often prove invaluable to institutional development.

Congregation and Convocation

Congregation consists of all academic staff and senior administrative staff of the university. Its functions include:

- Participation in university governance
- Election of representatives to Senate and Council
- Discussing institutional policies
- Congregation reflects the principle of collegial governance in universities

Convocation is composed of:

- Graduates of the university
- Academic staff
- Members of the governing council

It serves mainly ceremonial purposes but may also participate in the election of representatives to the Governing Council

Faculties, Departments, Institutes and Centers

Under the leadership of Deans, faculties coordinate academic programmes, oversee quality assurance and promote interdisciplinary collaboration. Departments, led by Heads of Department, remain the primary intellectual homes of academic disciplines. It is here that curricula are implemented, research agendas are pursued and the daily interaction between staff and students takes place.

Institutes and specialised centres add another dimension to university governance by creating spaces where scholarship can respond directly to emerging national and global challenges. Whether devoted to public policy, environmental studies, entrepreneurship, health sciences or technological innovation, these units enable universities to organise knowledge around contemporary problems rather than

traditional disciplinary boundaries alone. Their growing prominence reflects an important shift in higher education as universities are increasingly expected not only to generate knowledge but also to demonstrate its relevance to society just as it is happening in the University of Uyo.

Administrative Reporting Lines in the University

Shattock (2010) observes that successful universities combine sound governance with competent professional administration. The significance of this observation lies in its recognition that academic excellence does not emerge independently of administrative effectiveness. The philosophy of university administration rests on three interrelated principles which are service, stewardship and coordination. Administrators exist to enable the university to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Universities cannot function through isolated administrative units operating independently of one another and this is where coordination becomes important. Mintzberg (1979) holds that complex organisations succeed through the careful coordination of specialised activities rather than the mere accumulation of authority.

Principal Officers and the Administrative Machinery

The administrative life of the university revolves around its Principal Officers. While statutes differ slightly from one institution to another, Nigerian public universities generally recognise the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, the Bursar and the University Librarian as Principal Officers., Their effectiveness depends not only upon competence within their respective domains but also upon their capacity to work collaboratively in advancing institutional objectives.

The Registrar

Among the Principal Officers, the Registrar occupies a particularly distinctive position because the office connects virtually every aspect of university administration. Statutory provisions commonly describe the Registrar as the Chief Administrative Officer of the university and Secretary to the Governing Council, Senate, Congregation and Convocation. These descriptions, however, reveal only part of the office's significance. They identify formal responsibilities but do not fully capture the role the Registrar plays in sustaining institutional continuity.

Because the Registrar serves several governance organs simultaneously, impartiality becomes essential. The office must support the Governing Council without diminishing the authority of Senate. It must advise the Vice Chancellor while preserving institutional neutrality. It must facilitate decision making without becoming the decision maker. That delicate balance distinguishes professional university administration from personal loyalty to individual office holders. The National Universities Commission (2021) has consistently emphasised institutional governance and quality assurance as inseparable

components of effective university administration. Reporting relationships form part of that quality assurance framework because they support transparency, consistency and administrative responsibility.

The Bursar

Ambitious strategic plans, innovative research programmes and impressive academic policies fundamentally depend upon the prudent management of financial resources. This explains why the office of the Bursar occupies such a strategic place within the administrative structure of the university. The Bursar serves as the Chief Financial Officer and is responsible for the planning, management and accountability of the university's financial resources. The office provides the financial intelligence upon which institutional decisions are made. Whether Management is considering the establishment of a new faculty, embarking on capital projects, recruiting staff or introducing new academic programmes, sound financial advice from that office is indispensable.

Summary of Responsibilities of Principal Officers

The Registrar

Key responsibilities of the Registrar include:

- Custodian of university records
- Administrative coordination
- Interpretation of statutes and regulations
- Oversight of staff administration
- Organization of meetings of statutory bodies
- Ensures institutional continuity, regulatory compliance, and administrative efficiency.

The Bursar

- The Bursar is responsible for financial administration, including:
- Budget preparation,
- Financial reporting
- Revenue management
- Compliance with public financial regulations.

The University Librarian

The responsibilities of the University Librarian have expanded significantly in recent years. Modern university libraries are no longer defined simply by physical collections. They now manage electronic databases, institutional repositories, digital archives, research data services and information literacy programmes. Consequently, the University Librarian occupies a leadership role in supporting teaching, research and innovation within a digital academic environment. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2022) observes that university libraries are expected to support open scholarship, digital transformation and lifelong learning. The Librarian oversees the university library system, supporting teaching, learning, and research.

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Directors, Deans and Heads of Department

The Dean provides academic and administrative leadership within the faculty. Successful Deans understand that leadership within the university depends more upon influence than command. Academic colleagues respond most positively to leaders who combine intellectual credibility with administrative competence. Heads of Department supervise curriculum implementation, staff development, student welfare, examinations, departmental finances and countless administrative responsibilities that directly affect the quality of teaching and learning. Directors of specialised units, whether responsible for academic planning, quality assurance, procurement, information technology, physical planning, student affairs, research administration or entrepreneurship, provide the specialised expertise required by a contemporary university.

Summary of Responsibilities of Heads of Department

Academic Leadership

- Provide leadership for academic programmes.
- Coordinate teaching, learning, and research activities.
- Ensure quality delivery of the curriculum.
- Promote research, innovation, and community service.
- Student Administration
- Monitor students' academic progress.
- Handle students' academic matters and disciplinary issues.
- Coordinate examinations and result processing.
- Ensure timely submission of examination results.
- Guide students on academic regulations and career development.

Administrative Responsibilities

- Chair departmental meetings.
- Implement Senate and Faculty decisions.
- Coordinate course allocation and teaching schedules.
- Supervise academic and non-academic staff.
- Recommend appointments, promotions, and staff development.
- Prepare departmental budgets and annual reports.
- Ensure proper management of departmental facilities and laboratories.

Governance

- Serve as the link between the Department, Faculty, and Central Administration.
- Ensure compliance with University regulations and accreditation requirements.

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- Promote teamwork and harmonious working relationships.

The Faculty Officer

- Chief Administrative Officer of the Faculty.
- Serve as Secretary to the Faculty Board.
- Prepare notices, agendas, and minutes of Faculty Board meetings.
- Implement decisions of the Faculty Board.
- Maintain official Faculty records and confidential documents.
- Coordinate examination administration within the Faculty.
- Process students' academic records and graduation documentation.
- Coordinate correspondence between the Faculty and Registry.
- Advise the Dean on administrative procedures.
- Supervise administrative staff within the Faculty.
- Coordinate staff leave records, personnel matters, and logistics.
- Ensure compliance with University regulations and administrative procedures.
- Facilitate communication between Departments, the Dean's Office, and Central Administration.

The Role of Faculty Quality Assurance Personnel

Academic Quality

- Monitor compliance with National Universities Commission (NUC) and University quality standards.
- Ensure proper implementation of approved curricula.
- Monitor teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes.
- Review course delivery and assessment methods

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Conduct quality assurance inspections.
- Monitor lecture attendance and course coverage.
- Verify examination processes and academic integrity.
- Evaluate departmental performance using established indicators.

Accreditation Support

- Coordinate preparation for NUC accreditation exercises.
- Ensure availability of required academic documents.
- Monitor compliance with accreditation recommendations.
- Maintain quality assurance records and evidence

Reporting

- Prepare periodic quality assurance reports.
- Advise the Dean and Departments on quality improvement measures.
- Liaise with the University's Directorate of Quality Assurance.

Working with the Vice-Chancellor

- Implement approved policies faithfully.
- Provide timely and accurate reports.
- Offer professional advice when requested.
- Support the University's strategic vision.
- Execute assignments diligently.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Demonstrate loyalty to institutional objectives rather than individuals

Working with the Deputy Vice-Chancellors

- Seek guidance on academic or administrative matters.
- Ensure proper coordination of assigned responsibilities.
- Submit reports through appropriate channels.
- Participate in institutional planning and monitoring.

Working with the Registrar

- Observe established administrative procedures.
- Ensure proper documentation.
- Comply with circulars and directives.
- Consult the Registry on matters relating to appointments, promotions, discipline, leave, and regulations.
- Maintain effective communication with the Registry.

Working with the Bursar

- Follow approved financial regulations.
- Obtain financial clearance before expenditure.
- Prepare realistic budgets.
- Ensure accountability for public funds.
- Submit retirement documents promptly.
- Comply with procurement regulations.

Working with the University Librarian

- Support acquisition of learning resources.
- Encourage research visibility.
- Collaborate on institutional repository development.
- Promote information literacy.
- Ensure departments maintain current academic materials

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Coordination Rather Than Command

A Registrar preparing Council papers requires information from the Bursar, the Vice Chancellor, Directors and academic units. Accreditation exercises demand cooperation among academic departments, quality assurance units, works departments, procurement offices and the Registry. Student admissions involve academic planning, information technology, the Registry, the Bursary and faculties simultaneously. Few administrative activities belong exclusively to a single office. In this respect, Mintzberg (1979) argued that the coordination of specialised work represents one of the defining challenges of complex organisations. Universities perhaps illustrate this better than most institutions because their activities span teaching, research, administration and public service at the same time. Administrative effectiveness therefore depends not upon rigid hierarchy but upon carefully organised collaboration within recognised constitutional boundaries.

One of the easiest ways to create administrative tension is to bypass an office whose statutory responsibility is directly affected by a decision. Such actions may appear to produce quicker results, but they often weaken accountability and generate avoidable misunderstandings. Experienced university administrators do not only ask whether they possess the authority to take a decision, but whether the appropriate office has been consulted.

The Vice Chancellor occupies a unique position within this network of relationships. As the chief executive and chief academic officer, the Vice Chancellor provides strategic direction while ensuring that decisions of Council and Senate are faithfully implemented. Effective Vice Chancellors recognise that leadership is strengthened, not diminished, by drawing upon the expertise of other Principal Officers. Universities are simply too complex for any one individual to possess complete knowledge of every administrative, financial, legal and academic issue requiring executive attention.

The Registrar occupies an equally important place within these relationships because the office serves as the principal adviser on administrative procedure and institutional governance. There is a common misconception that the Registrar merely communicates decisions taken elsewhere. In practice, the office contributes long before decisions are made. Through knowledge of statutes, regulations, precedents and institutional practice, the Registrar helps ensure that proposals presented for consideration are procedurally sound and capable of lawful implementation.

The Registrar must provide objective counsel even where such advice may not coincide with the preferences of senior officers. Loyalty within university administration is owed first to the institution and its governing framework rather than to individual personalities. That distinction is essential because

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administrators who compromise professional judgment for personal convenience rarely strengthen the institutions they serve.

The relationship between the Vice Chancellor and the Bursar deserves particular attention. Many institutional initiatives begin with academic or strategic aspirations, but every initiative eventually encounters financial realities. A healthy relationship between these offices therefore depends upon mutual appreciation rather than competing priorities. The Bursar should not be viewed as the officer who simply refuses expenditure, nor should financial advice be regarded as resistance to institutional progress. Sound financial management protects the long term sustainability of decisions that may appear attractive in the short term.

The University Librarian occupies a similarly strategic position within the leadership team. Universities increasingly define their competitiveness through research visibility, digital resources, scholarly communication and knowledge management. Consequently, library leadership as already noted has become an essential component of institutional planning rather than an isolated support service. Decisions relating to research development, accreditation, postgraduate education and international collaboration all benefit from the active involvement of the University Librarian. These goes to show a broader administrative principle where effective collaboration among Principal Officers depends not upon similarity of responsibilities but upon recognition that their responsibilities are complementary.

Administrative Structure for Non-Academic Operations

The administrative arm of the university supports academic activities through several divisions such as:

- Establishment Division
- Academic Affairs Division
- Student Affairs Division
- Works and Maintenance
- Procurement
- Security Services
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

These units ensure the smooth functioning of the institution.

Principles of Administrative Reporting

- Respect the chain of command.
- Report to your immediate supervisor.
- Escalate issues only when necessary.
- Keep proper records of official communications.
- Obtain approvals before implementing major decisions.
- Maintain confidentiality of official information.
- Ensure accountability at every level.

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- Communicate decisions promptly to subordinates.

Benefits

- Clear accountability.
- Faster decision-making.
- Effective coordination.
- Reduced conflicts.
- Improved service delivery.
- Good governance and institutional stability.

Roles of Directors

- Provide strategic leadership for their directorates.
- Develop and implement policies approved by Management, Senate, and Council.
- Coordinate activities within their units to achieve institutional goals.
- Prepare annual work plans, budgets, and performance reports.
- Supervise Deputy Directors and other staff within the directorate.
- Ensure compliance with University regulations, government policies, and statutory requirements.
- Advise the Vice-Chancellor and Management on matters relating to their areas of responsibility.
- Promote staff development, innovation, and efficient service delivery.
- Ensure prudent management of financial, human, and material resources.
- Represent the University in relevant committees, meetings, and external engagements.

Roles of Deputy Directors

- Assist Directors in planning, coordinating, and implementing departmental activities.
- Supervise designated units and staff.
- Coordinate projects, programmes, and institutional initiatives.
- Monitor implementation of policies and report progress to the Director.
- Prepare reports, memoranda, and official correspondence.
- Stand in for the Director when delegated or in the Director's absence.
- Ensure timely execution of administrative decisions.
- Mentor junior administrative staff.
- Facilitate communication between the Director and subordinate officers.
- Support continuous improvement within the Directorate.

The Committee System in the University

The committee system is the primary mechanism through which universities deliberate, formulate policies, make

recommendations, and take collective decisions. It promotes participatory governance, transparency, accountability, and shared responsibility. While Principal Officers provide leadership, committees provide the mechanism through which much of the university's business is examined, debated and refined before formal decisions are taken. To those unfamiliar with university administration, the committee system sometimes appears unnecessarily elaborate. Questions are occasionally asked about why universities require so many committees when executive decisions might appear quicker. It must be stated here that universities are not designed primarily for speed but for careful judgment. The committee system is one of the oldest traditions in university governance. It reflects the belief that institutional decisions are strengthened when they benefit from collective expertise rather than individual opinion. This tradition has endured because universities deal with matters that are often intellectually, professionally and legally complex. Curriculum development, appointments and promotions, research ethics, student/staff discipline, procurement, budgeting and quality assurance all require perspectives that no single office can reasonably provide.

Shattock (2010) argues that committees contribute to effective governance by creating opportunities for informed deliberation before institutional decisions are made. Their value therefore lies not simply in collective participation but in improving the quality of decision making. Properly constituted committees reduce the likelihood of oversight, broaden institutional ownership of decisions and enhance transparency. At the same time, committees should never become substitutes for leadership. One weakness that occasionally emerges in university administration is the tendency to establish committees for matters that clearly fall within existing administrative responsibilities. Excessive reliance on committees can delay implementation and encourage unnecessary bureaucracy. A committee should exist because its work genuinely requires collective expertise, not because difficult decisions are being deferred.

Successful committees possess clearly defined terms of reference, with membership reflecting relevant expertise rather than mere representation. Meetings are conducted according to established procedures and deliberations properly recorded. Recommendations are expressed with sufficient clarity to guide subsequent action. Above all, committees recognize that their authority derives from the bodies that constitute them. Hence, they can recommend, advise and deliberate, but they do not ordinarily substitute themselves for the statutory organs to which they report.

The Registrar's office occupies a particularly significant position within the committee system. As Secretary to many of the university's principal organs, the Registrar ensures that meetings are convened in accordance with statutory

requirements, agenda papers are properly circulated, proceedings accurately recorded and resolutions communicated to the appropriate offices for implementation. These responsibilities may appear procedural, but are fundamental to institutional governance. Decisions that are poorly documented or improperly communicated frequently create administrative difficulties long after meetings have concluded.

Importance of the Committee System

- Encourages collective decision-making.
- Draws on diverse expertise.
- Promotes transparency.
- Enhances accountability.
- Improves institutional governance.
- Facilitates consultation.
- Reduces arbitrary decision-making.
- Strengthens institutional democracy.

Types of University Committees

- Statutory Committees
- Standing Committees
- Ad-hoc Committees

Composition of Committees

- Committees usually consist of:
- Chairman
- Secretary
- Members
- Co-opted members (where necessary)

Expectations

Appointed Directors, Deputy Directors, Heads of Department, Faculty Officers, Quality Assurance Personnel in the Faculties of the university, are expected to:

- Understand university regulations
- Uphold ethical standards
- Promote academic excellence
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Respect institutional hierarchy
- Contribute to research and innovation
- Maintain accountability and transparency

Conclusion

From the ensuing discussion, it is clear that the administrator must possess something beyond technical competence which is institutional understanding (Okorie, 2025). Understanding the governance and administrative structure of the university is essential for all staff of the university, particularly as Directors, Deputy Directors, Heads of Department, Faculty Officers, Quality Assurance Personnel in the Faculties. The effectiveness of the university system depends on the proper functioning of its governing organs, principal officers, and administrative structures, as well as the collaboration between academic and non-teaching staff. Equally important are the established decision-making processes,

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committee systems, and relationships with external regulatory bodies, which help maintain academic standards and institutional credibility.

Furthermore, adherence to principles of accountability, transparency, and clearly defined reporting lines ensures responsible management of resources and promotes trust within the university community. Ultimately, when all members of the university understand these governance structures and perform their roles effectively, the institution is better positioned to achieve its core mandate of teaching, research, and community service, thereby contributing meaningfully to national development and societal progress.

The administrator must possess something beyond technical competence which is institutional understanding. A university administrator is not simply a custodian of files, processes and approvals. The administrator is a custodian of institutional trust as every decision taken, every record maintained and every interaction with staff and students either strengthens or weakens confidence in the university. This is why administrative responsibility should never be reduced to compliance alone. Compliance ensures that rules are followed, but professionalism asks a deeper question whether those rules are being applied in a manner consistent with the mission and values of the institution. In closing, Kezar and Holcombe (2017) emphasize that shared leadership strengthens higher education institutions because it recognizes that expertise exists across different parts of the university.

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Analyzing Domestic Financial Corruption Constraints on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Output for Institutional Anti-graft Reform (2015-2023)

Abstract

Corruption has been a canker-worm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of various segments of Nigeria with foreign policy outputs not an exception. Due to the prevalence of corruption in Nigeria, appointments and promotion of diplomats are been marred. This study aimed to investigate domestic financial corruption constraints on Nigeria's foreign policy output for institutional anti-graft reform (2015-2023) in order to identify how corruption interrupted Nigeria's foreign policy output during the period under review. It also sought to analyse its nature, ascertain the challenges and effort which were made to contain the tide. In doing this, the study relied on the Agboola Gambari's variant of concentric circle as its theoretical framework whereas the survey research design was adopted. Data was generated through responses from questionnaires which were presented in charts and analyzed using Microsoft excel statistical tool. The findings of the study revealed that, the nature of corruption was such that Nigerian diplomats are the real perpetrators of corruption and this made it difficult for members of the international community to relate with our diplomats on matters of mutual interest. It noted further that it is this distrust that created the poor image reputation problem for the country, denied her of potential foreign investment, gave room for horrendous insecurity experienced in parts of the country and made the effort to tame the tide almost impossible. Conclusively, in order to tame the menace of corruption bedeviling Nigeria's foreign policy output, the citizens need to rise and ensure that only qualified individuals are allowed to occupy public offices at all levels in the country. The study recommended the use of social media and other media outlet to rewrite the battered national image of the country and portray it in good light as well as to expose the menace of corrupt practices.

Keywords: Corruption, Policy, Foreign Policy, Output, Nigeria, Anti-Graft, Finance.

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Introduction

Corruption is a global pandemic that coexist with man irrespective of race, religion, language, color, terrain, and system of political administration. Khalid (2021) opined that 'the story of corruption is as old as man'. Perhaps it begins when Adam ate the forbidden fruit and continues with today's big stories such as political lobbying for personal gain, cash for honors, and the Pandora Papers'. Lawal, (2007) as cited in Kenechukwu (2018) added that "Corruption is ubiquitous. It is a serious problem that has existed in the human society for a long time and occurs in both developed and developing economies of the world". It can be found in every human institution with Nigeria and its foreign policy output not an exception.

The consequence of corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy is central to this research. It is not only pathetic but also regrettable given its resources and size. For the records, Nigeria takes pride in ample mineral and other natural resources deposited in almost every community in the federation yet, issues of gas supply to turbines continue to generate national discourse in 21st century Nigeria. The data from World Bank (2024) show that even though Nigeria brags about being Africa's largest economy, it is far low in terms of GDP per capita ($877) when compared to countries like South Africa with $6,253 , the Philippines $4,154, Vietnam $4,717, Thailand $7,345, and even Poland with outrageous $25,022. Additionally, the government has not been able to provide refined crude oil for local industrial consumption; export the same for foreign exchange, or better still, use it as an economic tool to drive her foreign policy objectives in the international market. Consequently, the naira has continued to nose dive into a worthless 'tissue paper' for trade and exchange with Foreign Investors seeking other states to invest their resources because of the naira's uncertainty and multiple (but exorbitant) exchange rates.

It is a known fact that political appointment in Nigeria particularly during the period under review was done based on nepotism, favouritism or compensation of party loyalists depending on the amount of individual contribution during the campaign as against widely acceptable standard of merit. For clarity, Ahigbe (cited in Business Day 2017) research shows that out of 100 political office holders appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari since he came to office in 2015, 81 are Northerners. Apart from the fact that nepotism is corruption in itself, it led to the appointment of individuals who did not understand national objectives and the art of international politics and bargaining. The result of this was the flagrant visa ban on Nigerians by the United Arab Emirates and the deportation of Nigerians by several other countries due to poor and docile diplomatic engagement.

Uddoh, (2016) observed that national interest is the thread that runs through both domestic and foreign policies, but corruption is the antithesis of national interest. Corruption is the single most critical factor attributable to Nigeria's political instability and economic stagnation. It is against this background that this research work investigated domestic financial corruption constraints on Nigeria's foreign policy output for institutional anti-graft reform with a special attempt to analyze how the Mohammed Buhari administration whose three-point agenda was to fight against corruption, guarantee national security, and improve the economy, confronted the scourge in line with our foreign policy objectives.

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Statement of the Research Problem

Foreign policy serves as the primary instrument through which nation-states articulate, pursue, and project their national objectives in the international arena. In Nigeria, however, pervasive public corruption has severely impaired foreign policy outputs and hindered the attainment of core national interests. Between 2015 and 2023, high-profile institutional corruption scandals such as inflated ministry procurement costs (Oluwatuyi, 2023) and unverified financial losses in state agencies publicly undermined the country's diplomatic credibility and self-sufficiency goals. Despite anti-corruption measures pursued by successive administrations, including the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the Whistle-Blowing Policy, systemic corruption persisted. Consequently, global indicators consistently highlighted Nigeria's declining external image and high corruption prevalence (Transparency International, 2018). This persistent institutional failure has created a critical gap between Nigeria's articulated foreign policy goals and its real-world diplomatic efficacy. Therefore, this study examines the impact of corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy outputs from 2015 to 2023 to identify structural remedies that align its international engagements with strategic national interests.

Research Questions

i. What is the nature of financial corruption and its influence on Nigeria's foreign policy objectives from 2015 to 2023?

ii. What is the impact of financial corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy output from 2015-2023?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to analyze domestic financial corruption constraints on Nigeria's foreign policy output for institutional anti-graft reform (2015-2023).Whereas the specific objectives are:

i. To examine the nature of financial corruption and its influence on Nigeria's foreign policy objectives from 2015 to 2023.

ii. To unveil the impact of financial corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy output from 2015-2023.

Conceptual Review

Corruption

The concept of corruption has been defined in various ways by different scholars. According to Gebeye (2012), corruption is a universal problem undermining universal value. Khan (1996) sees corruption as an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private-regarding motives such as wealth, power or status. Gire (1999) defines corruption as a betrayal of trust resulting

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directly or indirectly from the subordination of public goals to those of individuals. Thus, a person who engages in nepotism has committed an act of corruption by putting his family's interest over those of the larger society. Gibbons (1976), conceives corruption from the perspective of politics. For him, political corruption is the use of a public office in a way that forsakes the public interest, measured in terms of mass opinion, elite opinion or both in order that some form of personal advantage may be achieved at the expense of that public interest. In the same vein, Obayelu (2007) defines corruption as an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or misuse of public power for private benefit.

Foreign Policy

Like corruption, foreign policy is not easy to define because it means different things to different scholars. Charles Hermann calls it a 'neglected concept'. This is due to the assumption of researchers that they already know what it is. Contrarily, it is even broader and more complex than their assumption. Writers like Ota & Ecoma (2016) maintained that the difficulty associated with the meaning of the concept is because it can be either viewed as an expression of human behavior or a diplomatic tool that is expressible in secrecy.

Bojang (2018) (cited in Chioke & Umeokafor 2022) considers foreign policy as the behavior of states toward other states. The behavior here includes the nation's policy gazette which encapsulates the government's political ideology, and economic, social, and religious positions. Britannica (2004) considers foreign policy as general objectives that guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states. It is important to add here that the general objectives include the national interest of the government.

Morgenthau (1948) refers to foreign policy as a government's strategy for dealing with other nations. It involves the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of plans and actions to achieve national goals in the international arena. What this means is that foreign policy is not about just teeth-at-tee but very strategic engagement and exchange by state policymakers in the international system. Gibson (1954) cited in (Boajang 2018) views foreign policy as a well-rounded comprehensive plan based on knowledge and experience for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world. It is aimed at promoting and protecting the interests of the nations. This calls for a clear understanding of what those interests are and how far we hope to go with the means at our disposal. Anything less than this falls short of being a foreign policy" It encompasses a wide range of objectives, including defense, security,

economic benefits, and humanitarian assistance.

Empirical Review

Smith (2020), adopted both Institutional theory and realist theory were employed in this study to achieve valid findings while qualitative methods of data collection include but are not limited to interviewing policy experts, and anti-corruption gurus and studying transparency international articles and reports over the years. The study revealed that corrupt leaders of nation-states often adjust their country's foreign policy to suit their selfish interests. It also established that corruption erodes trust personally and as a nation in its interaction with other nationals. It advocates for the strengthening of institutions of government to deter systemic stealing. Advocates for transparent negotiations in domestic and international environments to help rebuild the country's damaged image. Encourage civil society organizations to create a platform for exposing official graft. This work did not capture the other influences like citizens' voices and their ability to oppose corrupt leaders as that may of the many factors that may shape the mind of the political leader. The work under research will encompass those and show that a strong citizen's voice will serve as a basis for deterring corrupt leaders.

Bello (2018) relied on the dependency theory as the basis for analyzing the implication of corruption on Nigeria's regional leadership in the West African sub-region. A comparative case study of regional organizations like the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) African Union (AU) the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and a host of others to which Nigeria belongs. The study found that the distrust other African nations have on Nigeria is responsible for its inability to take on its rightful place as a regional leader. It recommends the setting up of regional instruments peculiar to Africa in corruption monitoring. The gap in this work is its limitation of Nigeria's foreign policy to just Africa and not the global community where the impact of corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy extends.

For Idris (2018), the theoretical framework for the analysis is embedded in the Theory of two publics developed by Peter Eke Ekeh. The study relied on a descriptive qualitative method of analysis with data from journals, articles, manuscripts, unpublished reports, and internet sources. The bad national image of Nigeria is not only faulty but also does not represent the true character of all Nigerians because there are hard-working citizens who earn legitimate wages. The prevalence of corruption is not only a result of poverty and poor remuneration but also a result of the weak deterrent instrument of the state. The above formed the major findings of the study. Consequently, the

recommendation is that global media campaigns, diplomatic summits, and jingles should be carried out to correct corruption behaviour and restructure the bad image; The Government must deliberately address the root causes of corruption and urgently seek international help to fight corruption from advance nations and most destination countries for Nigerian stolen funds; and Leaders and office holders must begin to lead by example by declaring their assets and encourage subordinates to do the same in a verifiable manner. National image is not as important as citizen's patriotism. The emphasis on rebranding the national image abroad should not form the priority of any Nigerian government rather the need to mobilize citizens to trust and believe in the system and contribute their quota towards the good of the country. This forms the research gap in this study with corruption and Nigeria's foreign policy output from 2015 to 2023.

In Adesanya (2021), the theory of realism was adopted in investigating the influence of China and the United States influence on Nigeria's foreign policy engagement. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. It posited that corruption and the poor national image are always an albatross for Nigeria's bargaining power with the Western world or developed nations and this does not help put the nation's strategic interest foremost. Similarly, it also posited that the absence of strong deterrent and punitive measures in the country reduces the ability of the country to effectively and firmly bargain with the West for its interests. Given this, it suggests, the training and retraining of policymakers and diplomats to improve their knowledge of effectively bargaining for the country's good. Equally, it advocates for the creation of a bilateral anti-corruption agency that will oversee Nigeria's engagement and activities with China and the United States of America. Lesser attention was given to the roles of multinational companies and organizations in taming the activities of corrupt diplomats given the fact that they are the vehicle for these engagements. My research intends to highlight the roles of multinational trade agencies in enforcing corruption across national boundaries and how they can become effective instruments for curtailing corruption as it relates to Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted structural functional and concentric cycle theories as my analytical tool. The reason for this is deliberate. Structural functional tool clearly relates to systems and their effectiveness while it is systems that determines the efficiency of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust. Concentric cycles on its part relates to the inter-connectivity of systems. Using the two helped the study to analyze corruption

and Nigeria foreign policy output 2015-2023

Structural Functionalist Theory

Propounded by Émile Durkheim and Robert K. Merton, (1858 -1917) Structural Functionalism conceptualizes society as a complex system of distinct components that must function interdependently to sustain collective stability. Merton observes that specific societal structures exert intense pressures on public officeholders, frequently compelling non-conformist behavior and the abuse of official privilege. In Nigeria's public administration, deep-seated sociocultural expectations such as pressure from extended family, community networks, and patronage groups force public servants to prioritize parochial resource distribution over constitutional oaths of transparency and accountability. The failure to resist these informal demands induces what Durkheim termed *anomie*, a state of normlessness where institutional rules lose their binding authority, leading public servants to abandon their core administrative mandates in favor of systemic corruption and nepotism.

In the context of *Analyzing Domestic Financial Corruption Constraints on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Output*, Structural Functionalism explains the domestic root causes of administrative decay. Between 2015 and 2023, informal patronage pressures led to widespread financial diversion across strategic public institutions. This institutional *anomie* compromised internal anti-graft mechanisms such as the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the Whistle-Blowing Policy thereby eroding state administrative integrity, weakening domestic institutional capacity, and depleting the public funds required to sustain a coherent foreign policy apparatus.

Concentric Circle Theory

Formulated by Ernest Burgess in 1925 to model urban structural organization, Concentric Circle Theory was adapted for foreign policy analysis by Ibrahim Gambari (1989, as cited in Yusuf & Alfa, 2019). The theory asserts that a nation's foreign policy priorities expand outward in hierarchical, ring-like structures determined strictly by national interest:

- **The Innermost Circle:** Focuses on core national interests, including Nigeria's domestic security, territorial integrity, and peaceful relations with immediate border neighbors (Gambari, 1989, as cited in Yusuf & Alfa, 2019).
- **The Second Circle:** Encompasses economic, political, and social integration within the West African sub-region under ECOWAS (Gambari, 1989, as cited in Yusuf & Alfa, 2019).
- **The Outer Circles:** Directs focus toward continental African issues, self-determination, and broader global diplomatic engagements (Hassan, 2011; Gambari, 1989, as cited in Yusuf & Alfa, 2019).

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Scholars emphasize that because a nation is not a global power, its foreign policy commitments, preoccupations, and external resource expenditures must strictly align with its actual domestic capabilities and financial means (Yakubu, 2014). Furthermore, theoretical frameworks guiding Nigeria's external relations must account for internal domestic conditions rather than relying solely on abstract global assumptions (Gambari, 2008, as cited in Akogwu et al., 2021).

In analyzing the 2015–2023 period, Concentric Circle Theory demonstrates the external diplomatic fallout of internal graft. Because a state's external effectiveness across its outer diplomatic rings depends directly on the stability and resources of its "innermost circle" (domestic stability and fiscal capability), widespread domestic corruption severely impairs external engagement. Depleting state resources through public-sector graft starves the innermost ring, directly weakening Nigeria's financial capability and moral authority to lead within ECOWAS (the second circle), champion continental African integration (the third circle), and command credibility in global multilateral forums.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed-method research design. The population of the study consists of respondents from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), the Nigeria Institute for International Affairs (NIIA), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), public complaints commission, the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), the Nigeria police force and others. The targeted population of the study is 12,730 which comprises of individuals drawn from both civil and anti-graft institutions actively involved in addressing corruption, as well as agencies responsible for coordinating foreign policy. These groups were carefully chosen because they are positioned at the foreign policy formulation, community engagement, and anti-graft crusade, offering crucial perspectives relevant to the study's objectives. Krejecie and Morgan's 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 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

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version that was used for analyzing data for the study is SPSS 25.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

A total of 370 copies of questionnaire were distributed while 331 copies were retrieved. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 331 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.

Analysis on Domestic Financial Corruption Constraints on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Output for Institutional Anti-Graft Reform (2015-2023).

This Section dwelt on the analysis and presentation of data on domestic financial corruption constraints on Nigeria's foreign policy output for institutional anti-graft reform (2015-2023). The responses were guided by the research questions and objectives and presented in Tables.

Nature of Corruption and its Influence on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives

The first research question was to examine the nature of corruption and its influence on Nigeria's foreign policy objectives. To address this questions, respondents were asked appropriate questions and data generated are presented in simple percentage tables.

Assessing Whether or Not the Prevalence of Corruption within the Nigerian Government Significantly Hampered the Effectiveness of Foreign Policy Decisions between 2015 and 2023.

In order to achieve the first research question, respondents were asked to assess whether or not the prevalence of corruption within the Nigerian government significantly hampered the effectiveness of foreign policy decisions between 2015 and 2023.

Table 1.1: Respondents' View on Whether or not the Prevalence of Corruption within the Nigerian Government Significantly Hampered the Effectiveness of Foreign Policy Decisions between 2015 and 2023.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	184	55.6
Strongly Agree	73	22.1
Disagree	45	13.6
Strongly Disagree	10	3
Unknown	19	5.7
Total	331	100

Source: **Author's Field Survey (2025)**

From table 1.1 above, a cumulative of 184 respondents representing 55.6 per cent of the total respondents agreed with the assertion that the Prevalence of Corruption within the Nigerian Government Significantly Hampered the

Effectiveness of Foreign Policy Decisions between 2015 and 2023. The table also show that 73 respondents representing 22.1 of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 45 percent representing 13.6 disagreed and 10 respondent representing 3 percent strongly disagreed with assertion that the prevalence of corruption within the Nigerian government significantly hampered the effectiveness of foreign policy decisions between 2015 and 2023. In the same vein, 19 respondents representing 5.7 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can be deduced from the analysis here that greater percentage of respondents believe that the Prevalence of Corruption within the Nigerian Government Significantly Hampered the Effectiveness of Foreign Policy Decisions between 2015 and 2023.

Assessing Whether Corruption-Related Scandals Involving Nigerian Government Officials Negatively Impacted Nigeria's International Reputation and its Ability to Build Trust with other Nations During the Period 2015-2023.

In order to achieve the second research question, respondents were also asked to state if corruption related scandals involving Nigerian government officials negatively impacted Nigeria's international reputation and its ability to build trust with other nations during the period 2015-2023.

Table 1.2 The Outcome of Respondents on Whether Corruption-Related Scandals Involving Nigerian Government Officials Negatively Impacted Nigeria's international Reputation and its Ability to Build Trust with other Nations during the period 2015-2023.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	190	57
Strongly Agree	100	30.2
Disagree	23	7
Strongly Disagree	12	4
Unknown	6	1.8
Total	331	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025).

From table 1.2 above, a cumulative of 190 respondents representing 57 per cent of the total respondents agreed with the assertion that corruption-related scandals involving Nigerian government officials negatively impacted Nigeria's international reputation and its ability to build trust with other nations during the period 2015-2023. The table also show that 100 respondents representing 30.2 of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 23 percent representing 7 disagreed and 12 respondent representing 4 percent strongly disagreed with assertion that corruption-related scandals involving Nigerian government officials negatively impacted Nigeria's international reputation and its ability to build trust with other nations during the

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period 2015-2023. Only 6 respondents representing 1.8 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can be deduced from the analysis here that greater percentage of respondents believe that corruption-related scandals involving Nigerian government officials negatively impacted Nigeria's international reputation and its ability to build trust with other nations during the period 2015-2023.

Assessing the Extent to Which Embezzlement of Funds Allocated for Foreign Policy Initiatives Hinder the Successful Implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Goals between 2015 and 2023

Respondents were also asked to state to what extent did embezzlement of funds allocated for foreign policy initiatives hinder the successful implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023.

Table 1.3. Represent the outcome of respondents view on Assessing the Extent to Which Embezzlement of Funds Allocated for Foreign Policy Initiatives Hinder the Successful Implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Goals between 2015 and 2023

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	95	28.7
Strongly Agree	185	56
Disagree	15	4.5
Strongly Disagree	24	7.2
Unknown	12	3.6
Total	331	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025).

From table 1.3 above, a cumulative of 95 respondents representing 28.7 per cent of the total respondents agreed with the assertion that the embezzlement of funds allocated for foreign policy initiatives hinder the successful implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023? The table also show that 185 respondents representing 56 of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 15 percent representing 4.5 disagreed and 24 respondent representing 7.2 percent strongly disagreed with assertion that the embezzlement of funds allocated for foreign policy initiatives hinder the successful implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023. In the same vein, 12 respondents representing 3.6 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can be deduced from the analysis here greater percentage of respondents believe that the embezzlement of funds allocated for foreign policy initiatives hinder the successful implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023.

Impact of Corruption on Nigeria's Foreign Policy Output from 2015-2023

The second research question aimed to interrogate the impact of corruption on Nigeria's foreign policy output from

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2015-2023. To address this question, respondents were asked appropriate questions and data generated are presented in simple percentage tables.

Corruption Significantly Undermined Nigeria's Ability to Achieve its Foreign Policy Goals Between 2015 and 2023.

Respondents were asked to assess whether or not corruption significantly undermined Nigeria's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023

Table 1.4: Is a Representation of Respondent's View on Whether Corruption Significantly Undermined Nigeria's Ability to Achieve Its Foreign Policy Goals Between 2015 and 2023.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	55	16.7
Strongly Agree	40	12.1
Disagree	115	34.7
Strongly Disagree	111	33.5
Unknown	10	3
Total	331	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025)

From table 1.4 above, a cumulative of 55 respondents representing 16.7 per cent of the total respondents agreed with the assertion that corruption significantly undermined Nigeria's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023. The table also show that 40 respondents representing 12.1 percent of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 115 respondents representing 34.7 percent disagreed and 111 respondent representing 33.5 percent strongly disagreed with assertion above. In the same vein, 10 respondents representing 3 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can therefore be deduced from the analysis here that greater percentage of respondents disagreed that corruption has significantly undermined Nigeria's ability to achieve its foreign policy goals between 2015 and 2023.

Determining Whether or Not the Diversion of Funds Intended for Foreign Policy Initiatives Due to Corruption Led to a Noticeable Decline in the Effectiveness of Nigeria's Diplomatic Efforts (2015-2023).

In order to achieve the second research question, respondents were also asked to provide answers to whether diversion of funds intended for foreign policy initiatives due to corruption led to a noticeable decline in the effectiveness of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts (2015-2023).

Table 1.5: Presentation of Respondents View on Assessment to Find out Whether Diversion of Funds Intended for Foreign Policy Initiatives Due to Corruption Led to a Noticeable Decline in the Effectiveness of Nigeria's Diplomatic Efforts (2015-2023).

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	184	55.6
Strongly Agree	73	22.1
Disagree	45	13.6
Strongly Disagree	10	3
Unknown	19	5.7
Total	331	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025)

From table 1.5 above, a cumulative of 184 respondents representing 55.6 per cent of the total respondents agreed with the assertion that the diversion of funds intended for foreign policy initiatives due to corruption led to a noticeable decline in the effectiveness of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts (2015-2023). The table also show that 73 respondents representing 22.1 of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 45 percent representing 13.6 disagreed and 10 respondent representing 3 percent strongly disagreed that diversion of funds intended for foreign policy initiatives due to corruption led to a noticeable decline in the effectiveness of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts (2015-2023). In the same vein, 19 respondents representing 5.7 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can be deduced from the analysis here that indeed within the period under review (2015-2023) that the diversion of funds intended for foreign policy initiatives due to corruption led to a noticeable decline in the effectiveness of Nigeria's diplomatic efforts

Corruption within the Nigerian Government Damaged Nigeria's International Reputation and Credibility, Hindering its Ability to Forge Strong Alliances and Partnerships (2015-2023).

Respondents were also asked to provide answers to whether Corruption within the Nigerian government damaged Nigeria's international reputation and credibility, hindering its ability to forge strong alliances and partnerships (2015-2023).

Table 1.6: Respondents View on Assessment to Find out Whether Corruption within the Nigerian Government Damaged Nigeria's International Reputation and credibility, hindering its Ability to Forge Strong Alliances and Partnerships (2015-2023).

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	181	55
Strongly Agree	115	34.7
Disagree	9	2.7
Strongly Disagree	12	3.6
Unknown	14	4
Total	331	100

Source: Author's Field Survey (2025)

From table 1.6 above, a cumulative of 181 respondents representing 55.6 per cent of

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the total respondents agreed with the assertion that Corruption within the Nigerian government damaged Nigeria's international reputation and credibility, hindering its ability to forge strong alliances and partnerships (2015-2023). The table also show that 115 respondents representing 34.7 of the total respondents cumulatively strongly agreed with the posed question. While 9 percent representing 2.7 disagreed and 12 respondent representing 3.6 percent strongly disagreed that Corruption within the Nigerian government damaged Nigeria's international reputation and credibility, hindering its ability to forge strong alliances and partnerships (2015-2023). In the same vein, 14 respondents representing 4 percent of the total respondents have no idea on the posed question. Following this, it can be deduced from the analysis here that indeed within the period under review (2015-2023) Corruption within the Nigerian government damaged Nigeria's international reputation and credibility, hindering its ability to forge strong alliances and partnerships.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that corruption expresses itself in various forms and nature, particular when it is found within government circle. It maintains that it has the ability to obliterate anything it comes in contact with. In this case, Nigeria's foreign policy is its victim! This study argued that the Prevalence of Corruption within the Nigerian government has significantly hampered the effectiveness of foreign policy decisions within the period under review. Ideally, Nigeria foreign policies ought to be effective and a model in the international system given its strategic geographic position; its huge resources and population.

Sadly, the work notes that our foreign policy initiative has been ineffectual and not implementable due to the appointment of persons who either lacked the re-requisite knowledge of foreign policy tact, timid to pursue the country's national objectives and therefore undertaking their personal interest. This position was held by Oji (2024), he argued that the issue persists, largely because those leading the fight against corruption are frequently implicated in it themselves. Similarly, Action Aid Nigeria, (2015) cited in Oji (2024) also echoed that ``some of the key drivers of corruption in the country are officials in the executive arm, the legislature, the judiciary, the law enforcement agency, civil servants/public officers, politicians and political parties, corruption in the private sector, the oil and gas sector and the banking sector". Their desire to put their personal interest foremost makes the process very slow and unattractive. As a result, Nigeria's foreign policy is such that it took the back seat. Described by many as a toothless bull dog which cannot bite in the wake of violation.

The study notes that corruption had multiplying impact on Nigeria and its

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foreign policy during the period under review. First, it argued that corruption further battered the reputation of the country by giving it a very bad national image (Nigerians are generally described as dishonest, dubious and not patriotic citizens). This notion scared and propelled genuine investors to seek for investment opportunities in other climes even with lesser opportunities than Nigeria presents. Therefore, compelling majority of skilled Nigerians leaving the shores of this country in-search of greener pastures and opportunities abroad. This mass exodus exposed the challenges in our domestic front which of course was of hunger, starvation, disease, unemployment, poverty, insecurity amidst abundant natural resources. Nigerians where therefore forced to pay whopping amount to foreign embassies and often subjected to inhuman treatment at airports. Those who could not afford the often outrageous visa fees as noted earlier in this study were left with the only option to travel through the Sahara desert where many died in cold blood. A view which corroborates the assertion of Owuamanam & Agbaenyi (2021) who noted that Nigeria's international image crisis is enveloped in the poor international perception of Nigerian business environments, poor perception of Nigeria/Nigerians Abroad and the international perception of corruption in Nigeria. This is seen in the withdrawal of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), ill-treatment/unwarranted suspicion of Nigerian nationals abroad, the deportation of Nigerian nationals, visa ban, and Nigeria's corruption perception index and poor ranking reports. Idowu & Ogunbiyi (2024) also re-echoed it, by identifying corruption as one of the "corrosive elements of Nigeria's political system with its attendant effects on national image that is rapidly gaining greater attention today. This manifests in the electoral process characterized by money bag politics, political thuggery, godfatherism, anointing candidates to subvert a free and fair party primary election – as well as in governance with contempt for the rule of law, flagrant abuse of office, economic corruption amongst others political misdemeanour''

Conclusion

Policy makers are usually confronted by the conflicting choices that corruption provides in their bid to formulate tangible policies and action that will be beneficial to their people and country. However, in the international system, corruption is also the tool through which most national governments employ in pursuing their foreign policy objectives. In the last decade, corruption has been a major hindrance to Nigeria in achieving its foremost foreign policy trust which is ensuring security and peace in Africa; being among the global super economic and military block to be reckoned with.

The mode of political appointment from 2015-2023 was repulsively characterized by nepotism, favoritism, day light bribery, lack of accountability, judicial

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rascality and misappropriation of public funds. An evidence that even president Buhari was not aware of the task ahead of him. As a result, a list of inefficient and incompetent diplomats with no tact on policy formulation, who lacked negotiating and manipulating abilities. Therefore, this made the country a laughing stock in the committee of nations during the period under review. Similarly, the rampant cases of graft across various ministries; which includes the legislative, judicial arms and the governments inability to bring the perpetrators to account for these crimes against its own people made mockery of the institution of government and the fight against corruption which was also one of the three much touted agenda by the administration. And because it is normal that the international community senses you in the light of your domestic realities and relates with you in that manner; obviously, Nigeria became a toothless bull dog, not recognized, not respected and not even feared. Even worst, its policy makers were unable to attract much into the country due to distrust arising from battered image.

Recommendations

i. **Institutionalization of Merit-Based Vetting and Statutory Merit Standards for Public and Diplomatic Appointments:** To prevent compromised appointments and protect Nigeria's external credibility, the Federal Government should enact statutory amendments tightening the vetting and confirmation processes for public officeholders and Foreign Service appointments.

ii. **Institutionalization of a Strategic Public Diplomacy Framework and Digital Media Partnerships:** Rather than attempting to censor or informally regulate citizen-generated content, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in partnership with the Ministry of Information and National Orientation should establish an institutionalized, digital-first Public Diplomacy Strategy.

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The Paradox of Obedience to Legal Authority and Moral Responsibility

Abstract

This study sought to interrogate the paradoxical assumption that obedience to legal or institutional authority can shield an individual from moral responsibility for wrongful conduct. The study arose from a jurisprudential problem made visible in the Nigerian context by the 2018 JAMB Makurdi controversy, where the alleged disappearance of public funds was attributed to a snake, raising questions about institutional instructions, personal judgment and responsibility. The study addressed this problem through jurisprudential analysis of legal authority and moral agency, Hannah Arendt's account of thoughtlessness in Adolf Eichmann, and Albert Bandura's theory of moral disengagement. It found that authority may explain why an individual acts, but it does not, without more, justify the act or extinguish the actor's responsibility. Obedience becomes morally problematic when individuals surrender judgment, displace responsibility onto superiors, or construct excuses that distance them from foreseeable consequences. The study further found that responsibility may be shared and differently weighted according to knowledge, intention, coercion, capacity and degree of participation. Consequently, neither superiors nor subordinates can automatically transfer responsibility to the other. The study recommended that legal and public institutions cultivate more effective and responsible obedience through ethical training, internal reporting mechanisms, protection for conscientious dissent, transparent institutional accountability and clear limits to the defence of superior orders. It concluded that a credible legal order requires not blind obedience, but morally responsible obedience.

Keywords: Authority, Disengagement, Obedience, Responsibility, Thoughtlessness.

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Introduction

Obedience, is indispensable to the functioning of every organised society. Legal systems, political institutions, workplaces and other forms of authority, depend upon individuals recognising commands as binding and acting in accordance with them. Consequently, the moral significance of obedience becomes problematic when the command itself produces, facilitates or conceals wrongdoing. The difficulty is not simply whether an order is legally valid, but whether, its recipient can invoke the authority of the person who issued it as a sufficient reason for escaping responsibility for what he or she has done. The jurisprudential tradition has long wrestled with the relationship between law and obligation, particularly with the question whether the existence of an authoritative rule creates an obligation to obey it. In the opinion of Atiq, Emad H, Contemporary non-positivist approaches, complicate any simple identification of legal authority with moral justification, insisting that the authority of law cannot be understood independently of the

reasons that make its demands worthy of recognition (10). The problem, therefore, begins where obedience is treated not merely as compliance with authority but as a substitute for personal moral judgment.

This problem becomes particularly acute, when individuals defend questionable conduct by claiming that they were merely following instructions. Such a defence appears to relocate responsibility from the person who acted to the person who commanded. But this raises a fundamental questionas: does receiving an order diminish the moral agency of the person who carries it out? The distinction between being compelled and choosing to comply is crucial here. A person may be subject to institutional pressure, fear punishment, or reasonably presume that a superior's instruction is legitimate; none of these circumstances necessarily means that the person ceases to be a moral agent. The jurisprudential significance of this distinction is that, legal authority may explain the source of an individual's decision without necessarily determining its moral worth. As Fuller's account of legality suggests, a functioning legal order involves, reciprocal expectations between authority and those subject to it, while Dworkinian jurisprudence, resists the idea that individuals can always surrender their moral judgment to institutional rules (Fuller 39; Dworkin 14-15). The question is consequently not whether obedience has value, it plainly does, but whether obedience, has a point at which it becomes an excuse for refusing responsibility.

The issue is illuminated with particular force by Hannah Arendt's examination of Adolf Eichmann, and her controversial description of the banality of evil. Arendt's concern was not that, Eichmann lacked the capacity to understand rules or follow instructions; rather, she drew attention to the disturbing possibility that, extraordinary wrongdoing can be facilitated by ordinary individuals who cease to think critically about what they are doing (Arendt 287). Eichmann's repeated appeal to duty and obedience exposes a dangerous moral displacement: the actor presents himself as an instrument of another's will rather than as a person responsible for his own participation. Albert Bandura's theory of moral disengagement provides a complementary psychological explanation of this phenomenon. Individuals can distance themselves from the moral implications of conduct through mechanisms such as displacement and diffusion of responsibility, thereby making actions they might otherwise recognise as wrong psychologically acceptable (Bandura 194). What Arendt reveals philosophically as the danger of thoughtlessness, Bandura helps explain psychologically as a process through which individuals construct distance between themselves and the consequences of their actions.

The Nigerian experience provides a compelling context in which this problem can be examined beyond its

classical philosophical formulations. The 2018 incident at the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) office in Makurdi, in which a missing sum of public money was attributed to a snake, that allegedly entered the premises and swallowed the funds, raises questions that are more profound than the absurdity of the explanation itself. If an employee merely repeated or defended a narrative supplied by a superior, does that instruction relieve the employee of responsibility for participating in its communication? If the superior supplied the explanation, does that superior bear exclusive responsibility for it? And if the explanation was obviously implausible, what obligation did the individual have to question, resist or report it?

These questions expose the central concern of this study which is, a person cannot claim moral agency, when choosing conduct that serves his or her purposes, and surrenders that agency, when the consequences become blameworthy. This study therefore argues that obedience to legal or institutional authority does not, by itself, absolve an individual of moral responsibility. Authority may constrain choice, explain conduct and sometimes legitimately justify compliance, but where an individual knowingly participates in wrongful conduct, responsibility cannot simply be transferred upward to the person who issued the command. Ultimately, a morally responsible person must answer not only to the question, "Who instructed me?" but also to the more demanding question, "What did I choose to do?"

Legal Authority and the Moral Agency of the Obedient

What, then, does it mean to say that a person is subject to legal authority? At the most basic level, legal authority is the institutional power to make, interpret and enforce rules that individuals are expected to recognise as binding. However, this description immediately creates a deeper jurisprudential question: why should a person regard another person's command as a reason for action? If a superior tells an employee to do something, the employee may obey, because of fear, employment obligations, institutional discipline or respect for authority. But none of these reasons, necessarily, establishes that the commanded act is morally right. Hart's distinction between primary and secondary rules, helps explain how a legal system transforms social practices into an institutional structure of obligation, particularly through rules that identify, modify and adjudicate legal standards (79-99). Legal authority, therefore differs from mere physical power. A robber can compel obedience through a weapon, but such coercion, does not make the robber an authority. Authority claims a right to direct conduct, in a manner that purports to provide a legitimate reason for action. The difficulty begins, however, when the person receiving the command treats the authority behind the instruction as sufficient reason to stop asking whether the action itself is defensible.

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This distinction becomes clearer, when we separate legal obligation from moral responsibility. A law may require a person to perform an act, prohibit another, or empower an official to issue a binding directive; nevertheless, the existence of that legal requirement, does not necessarily, settle every moral question arising from compliance. Fuller's account of legality is important here because it conceives law not simply as commands backed by institutional force but as a reciprocal enterprise in which the exercise of authority imposes conditions upon both ruler and ruled (39). The implication is significant: if authority demands obedience, while simultaneously encouraging conduct that is dishonest, arbitrary or destructive of the purposes for which legal institutions exist, obedience cannot automatically be treated as morally self-justifying. Contemporary non-positivist jurisprudence, similarly challenges the assumption that legal validity exhausts the reasons an individual may have for treating a rule as authoritative. Atiq's discussion of contemporary non-positivism demonstrates the continuing jurisprudential concern with whether law's authority can be adequately explained without reference to normative reasons that bear upon its justification (6). The obedient person, therefore, remains confronted by a question that authority alone cannot answer: "I have been ordered to do this, but is doing it, something for which I can responsibly answer?"

The question becomes even more difficult, where the authority is unquestionably legitimate, but the particular instruction is morally questionable. This is where the language of "I was only following orders" becomes problematic. It attempts to transform the subordinate, from an agent, into an instrument, as though, the superior's decision, passes through the subordinate without requiring any independent exercise of judgment. Human beings, do not ordinarily become morally neutral, simply because, someone else initiates an instruction. Dworkin's emphasis on rights and principle is relevant here, because, it rejects the idea that, institutional decisions can always displace the individual's responsibility to take moral considerations seriously (15). Even within hierarchical institutions, there remains a distinction between receiving a command, and choosing to carry it out. The distinction does not mean that, every subordinate has unlimited freedom to reject every instruction; legitimate authority, after all, has a real claim upon obedience, rather, it means that, obedience must be understood within conditions of agency. Where a person possesses sufficient knowledge, capacity and freedom to recognise that, an instruction is seriously wrongful, the claim that, "someone above me ordered it" becomes increasingly weak, as a defence of moral responsibility.

Legal authority, therefore, should not be understood as a moral eraser, as its proper function, is to coordinate social conduct, settle disputes, distribute

institutional responsibilities, and make collective action possible. But the very existence of authority, presupposes human agents capable of understanding, interpreting and responding to its demands. This is why the question of responsibility cannot end with identifying the person who issued an order. The superior may be responsible for commanding; the subordinate may be responsible for executing; and both may bear responsibility where both exercised meaningful agency in bringing about the wrongful result. Authority may reduce uncertainty about what an institution expects, but it cannot automatically, relieve the individual of the duty to confront the consequences of participation. The central point, therefore, is not that obedience is inherently blameworthy, but that obedience without judgment can become a mechanism for the disappearance of responsibility.

From Legal Obedience to Moral Excuse

The expression "I was only following orders" appears deceptively simple, yet, it conceals one of the most difficult questions about human responsibility: can another person's command, become a sufficient explanation, for why an individual should not be blamed for what he, or she, has done? This problem, becomes particularly acute, when obedience is invoked after the consequences of an action have become morally objectionable. A command may establish an institutional expectation, but it does not necessarily determine the moral meaning of the act performed in response to it. Karl Jaspers' reflections on guilt, are instructive here, because, they distinguish between different forms of responsibility, rather than treating guilt as something that disappears whenever an individual acts within an institutional structure (30-31). His argument is important because, responsibility can attach to a person, not merely because, that person originated an action, but because, the person participated in a world of actions whose consequences could have been confronted. The subordinate who says "I was ordered to do it" therefore, answers the question of where the instruction came from, but not necessarily the question of why the instruction was accepted.

This difficulty is powerfully illustrated by Hannah Arendt's account of Adolf Eichmann. What disturbed Arendt was not simply that, Eichmann obeyed orders, but that, he appeared unable, or unwilling, to engage critically with the meaning of his own conduct. His reliance on official duty, and hierarchical command, suggested a form of thoughtlessness, in which the bureaucratic language of responsibility, displaced personal judgment (289). The significance of Arendt's argument, however, extends beyond Eichmann himself. Modern institutions are structured through roles, procedures, and chains of command, and these structures, can create an environment in which individuals perceive themselves as merely performing assigned functions. Regardless, an institutional role does not eliminate the person occupying it. The clerk, police officer, civil servant, soldier

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or administrator, remains a human agent, who is capable of understanding that, an instruction may have consequences for another person. Arendt, therefore, forces jurisprudence to confront an uncomfortable possibility: evil does not always require hatred or personal malice; it can emerge, when individuals surrender the activity of judgment to the machinery of authority. Obedience, becomes morally dangerous, at precisely the point where the agent no longer asks what he or she is participating in.

However, Arendt's emphasis on thoughtlessness, should not be taken to mean that, every failure to obey an order is morally required, or that, every subordinate possesses the same freedom to resist authority. This is where Stanley Milgram's work on obedience, becomes useful, even though, his psychological experiments, cannot by themselves, settle the philosophical question of responsibility, he demonstrated the extraordinary power of perceived legitimate authority, to induce ordinary individuals, to continue carrying out actions that conflict with their personal moral discomfort (378). His findings, however, complicate the easy assumption that, wrongdoing always results from wicked individuals, consciously choosing evil. People can experience genuine psychological conflict, while continuing to obey. But because, obedience can be psychologically powerful, the moral question becomes more, not less, important. If authority can influence behaviour so deeply, then responsible agency requires the capacity to recognise when institutional expectation has crossed a morally unacceptable boundary. The presence of pressure may mitigate responsibility in particular circumstances; it does not establish a universal rule that obedience automatically extinguishes it.

The deeper problem, therefore, is the transformation of obedience from a reason for action, into an excuse for action. A person may legitimately obey a lawful instruction because, social life would be impossible, if every individual treated personal preference as superior to institutional authority. But when obedience is invoked to avoid moral evaluation altogether, authority becomes a convenient shelter from responsibility. Jaspers' account of guilt, Arendt's analysis of thoughtlessness and Milgram's demonstration of obedience, together, reveal different dimensions of the same problem: individuals act within structures, but structures do not act in their place. The superior who gives a wrongful command, cannot simply escape responsibility, by pointing to the subordinate, just as the subordinate, cannot necessarily escape by pointing upward. Responsibility may be shared, differentiated or reduced by circumstances, but it does not disappear, merely because, an order preceded the act. The morally serious question is therefore not simply, "Who gave the order?", but "who understood, chose, participated and could have acted otherwise?" Once those questions are asked, the defence of "I was only following orders" loses its appearance of finality and becomes what it should have been from the beginning: a

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claim requiring moral and legal examination, not an automatic exemption from responsibility.

Moral Disengagement and the Manufacture of Excuses

If obedience explains why individuals submit to authority, it does not fully explain why, they sometimes, participate in conduct they already recognise as wrong. There is a psychological step between knowing that, an action is questionable and proceeding with it: the individual must somehow, weaken the moral objection that would ordinarily restrain action. Albert Bandura's theory of moral disengagement is precisely valuable in this conversation here, because, it explains this process without assuming that, wrongdoing always begins with ignorance of moral standards. People, often know what they ought not to do, and nevertheless, find ways of making the conduct appear acceptable to themselves. Bandura, identifies mechanisms through which moral self-sanctions can be selectively disengaged, including moral justification, euphemistic labelling, advantageous comparison and displacement or diffusion of responsibility (194). The importance of this insight for jurisprudence, is considerable. When an individual says, "I was only following instructions," the statement may be more than a factual description of what happened; it may function psychologically, as a mechanism for relocating responsibility. The individual ceases to regard himself as the author of the conduct and begins to regard himself as merely the location through which someone else's decision was executed.

Displacement and diffusion of responsibility are particularly important to understanding institutional wrongdoing. In a hierarchical organisation, responsibility can be distributed across several actors: one person formulates the instruction, another approves it, another communicates it, another executes it, and yet another records the outcome. When something goes wrong, each actor can point to another part of the chain. The superior can say that the subordinate misunderstood the instruction; the subordinate can insist that the instruction came from above; the institution can attribute the failure to a procedural defect. Bandura shows why such arrangements can weaken moral self-regulation because, responsibility becomes psychologically shared until no individual feels entirely answerable for the result (198). This helps explain why bureaucratic wrongdoing, can survive without every participant being personally committed to wrongdoing as an end. The danger lies precisely in the fragmentation of agency. Once the person who acts believes that, the real decision belongs elsewhere, the ordinary moral question: "what am I doing to another person?", is replaced by the institutional question: "what was I told to do?" The latter, may establish procedural obedience, but it does not settle the former.

Moral disengagement also operates through language, in which, wrongdoing becomes easier to perform,

when it is described in terms that conceal its human significance. A person may call deception "damage control," concealment "protecting the institution," manipulation "following procedure," or obedience to a questionable instruction "doing one's job." The vocabulary does not change the conduct; it changes the agent's relationship to the conduct. This is particularly important, because, responsibility requires more than physical participation, it requires recognition of what one's participation means.

The jurisprudential significance of moral disengagement is that it reveals why the language of obedience must be treated with caution. Not every person who obeys an order is morally blameworthy, and not every institutional instruction places the recipient under an obligation to resist. Circumstances of coercion, dependency, ignorance, legitimate delegation and reasonable reliance may affect the degree of responsibility attributable to an individual. Nevertheless, the existence of such circumstances does not justify a general principle that obedience cancels moral agency. Indeed, the more obviously wrongful the conduct, the more difficult it becomes to treat institutional instruction as a complete moral defence. Moral disengagement becomes dangerous, when that capacity is deliberately surrendered and excuses are constructed after the fact to make participation psychologically bearable. Thus, the problem is not obedience itself but obedience accompanied by the systematic manufacture of reasons for not taking responsibility.

Evaluating Institutional Obedience and the Evasion of Responsibility: The JAMB Experience

The Nigerian experience gives the problem of obedience a particularly revealing institutional dimension. In 2018, a report emerged from the Makurdi office of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) that, a substantial sum of money had allegedly disappeared after a snake entered the premises and swallowed it. The explanation attracted widespread disbelief, but its jurisprudential significance, lies deeper than its obvious implausibility. The central question is not simply, whether a snake, could have swallowed such an amount of money; it is, what happens to responsibility, when an institution produces an explanation that its own members are expected to defend. If a clerk was instructed by a superior to present or defend the explanation, does obedience transform the explanation into something for which she bears no responsibility? Conversely, if the superior supplied the narrative, can the superior escape responsibility by arguing that the clerk merely communicated it? The episode exposes the danger of institutional structures in which responsibility travels upward when decisions are made and downward when consequences become embarrassing. It therefore provides a concrete Nigerian illustration of the broader jurisprudential problem developed in the preceding sections: authority can distribute tasks,

but it cannot automatically distribute away responsibility.

The questions surrounding the clerk's participation are therefore more important than the unusual character of the alleged event itself. Did she personally see the snake? If she did, why was there no immediate alarm, investigation or attempt to recover the money? If she did not see it, on what basis was she prepared to defend the claim? And if the explanation came from a superior, was she morally entitled simply to repeat it without questioning its credibility? These questions are not intended to establish guilt, where the facts cannot establish it; rather, they expose the threshold at which obedience requires independent judgment. An employee does not ordinarily become the author of every institutional decision, merely because, she communicates it, but neither does communication, necessarily make her morally neutral. The distinction lies in knowledge, agency and participation. A person who unknowingly communicates a falsehood, stands differently from one who recognises its implausibility, and nevertheless, chooses to defend it.

The JAMB episode profoundly brings the central argument of this study into sharp relief. A person, takes a decision within the limits of the choices, available to him or her, and must ordinarily, answer for the consequences of that decision. This does not mean that every consequence is foreseeable, that every subordinate has unlimited freedom to disobey, or that the person who executes an order bears the same responsibility as the person who designed it. It should be known that, moral responsibility, is sensitive to intention, knowledge, coercion, capacity and the degree of participation. Nevertheless, none of these qualifications supports the sweeping claim that obedience itself is an absolution. The superior who creates a wrongful instruction n, cannot hide behind the subordinate, who executes it; equally, the subordinate who knowingly participates, cannot automatically, hide behind the superior who gave the instruction. The deeper lesson of the JAMB controversy is therefore, not about snakes, but about agency: when an individual accepts an institutional explanation, communicates it, defends it or acts upon it, the individual enters a relationship of responsibility, with the consequences. A morally serious legal order, must consequently demand more than obedience from its officials; it must demand the courage to question, the capacity to judge and the willingness to answer for what one has chosen to do.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that, obedience to legal or institutional authority does not, by itself, absolve an individual of moral responsibility. The central problem, was not whether obedience is necessary for an ordered society, but whether, authority can become a moral shelter, behind which, individuals hide when their conduct. produces wrongful consequences. The jurisprudential analysis established that,

authority may legitimately structure conduct, distribute responsibilities and create obligations, but it does not automatically extinguish the agency of those who comply. Arendt's Eichmann exposes the danger of thoughtlessness in obedience, while Bandura explains how individuals psychologically disengage from responsibility through displacement, diffusion and other mechanisms of moral disengagement. The JAMB episode further demonstrates how institutional actors can become trapped in a chain of responsibility in which everyone can identify an instruction but no one wishes to own the consequence.

The study therefore finds that, responsibility follows agency, not merely hierarchy. A superior who issues a wrongful command may bear responsibility for originating it, but a subordinate, who knowingly and voluntarily, participates in its execution cannot automatically, transfer responsibility upward. Conversely, the subordinate should not be made the sole bearer of responsibility where the superior exercised decisive control or coercive authority. Ultimately, the study rejects the proposition that, a person can surrender moral responsibility, simply by pointing to the authority behind an action. To obey is to act, and where an individual retains meaningful capacity to understand, choose and participate, that individual remains answerable for the choice made. This does not mean that every act of obedience is blameworthy; rather, it means that obedience is never, by itself, a complete moral defence.

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An Ethical Examination of Patients' Autonomy and Informed Consent

Abstract

One of the ethical dilemmas in healthcare is the issue of patients' autonomy and the principle of informed consent. Patient autonomy represents the essential right of an individual experiencing illness to make informed decisions regarding the type, extent, and methods of treatment they wish to receive from a qualified healthcare provider. This right can only be exercised when the patient is mentally competent and conscious enough to evaluate and choose the specifics of their medical care, and they must also be provided with comprehensive and adequate information about all aspects, procedures, advantages, and potential risks associated with the treatment being proposed. Therefore, informed consent serves as the cornerstone and prerequisite that enables patient autonomy. The ongoing ethical focus on the individuality of patient autonomy has raised questions regarding the utilitarian and situational interests of family and the broader community as they navigate medical issues. This study explored the personal and societal/utilitarian considerations in medical treatments that rely heavily on informed consent with the viewpoint that healthcare professionals should never treat patients against their wishes by striking a balance on the recommendations that patients' autonomy can be overridden as far as there are justifiable rational grounds for such decisions. A qualitative research approach was used for the investigation and the data sourced was analyzed using the analytical, hermeneutical, historical and evaluative method. The study concluded that to maintain respect for patient autonomy, minimize the risk of unprofessional behavior, foster trust between patients and caregivers, and protect patients against unethical practices, adherence to informed consent and patient autonomy is essential through the careful scrutiny of both the patient and the professional ethical practices which informs the medical decision making.

Keywords: Patient Autonomy, Informed Consent, Medical Paternalism, Situation Ethics, Utilitarianism.

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Introduction

The advances and breakthrough made in medical profession through developed sciences, technologies, globalization and economics has made the profession a very attractive discipline. Traditionally, diseases and sickness that have defied sustainable diagnosis and remedies have now become contestable. With scientific laboratory experiences and

experiments, accurate diagnosis and proper medications are assured. These developments have made both public and private institutions, governments and organizations to prioritize and commit much economic resources to medical researches and development. Among the budgets of federal and state governments, greater percentage of the budget is assigned to health related categories– insurances, pharmacology, laboratory research institutions, teaching hospitals and medical centers.

However, as there are many numerous benefits and developmental strides in medical science; so also, there are unethical practices and assaults prevalent in the field, which have necessitated the need for ethical and professional codes of conducts among the medical practitioners. These codes of ethics serve as regulation, guide and control to all medically related activities, in order to curtail, diminish and possibly ameliorate or eradicate all unethical medical practices, such as using humans as means to an end via using humans as medical and research tools, violation of patient's autonomy, non-confidentiality and uninformed consent and so on. The paternalistic approach which abhors a detailed explanation of the administration of drugs and healthcare services was on rampage initially and had its' own phase untold effects, hence; the need for informed consent. Parth Shah et'al argues that "in the early twentieth century, medical practice was highly paternalistic, with Clinicians making decisions on behalf of the patients without informing them of the details." (Shah 2024) On this footnote, it is a necessity to maintain a viable medical relationship; hence the need for medical ethics. The interest area of human existence which looks into these ideas is known as medical ethics, with its foundation and formation on the Hippocratic Oath and code of Hammurabi that has been in existence since 2000 BC., (Ratna, 1999: 260). Medical ethics is a field that examines the moral principles guiding the practice of medicine, focusing on the ethical obligations of healthcare professionals towards patients and other healthcare providers. With Hippocratic Oath and codes of Hammurabi, medical ethics ensure that medical decisions and actions are morally based, laying more emphasis on fairness, probity, equality, justice, the best interest and well-being of patients while respecting their well-being, confidentiality and trust, autonomy, informed consent and other fundamental values, (AI Overview, 2025: 1)

There are two principal or cardinal actors in medical profession; the physicians and the patient. The Physicians includes but not limited to doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, administrators, healthcare policy makers and all those who are directly or indirectly involved in shaping medical science. Patients are the receivers of healthcare. For medical science to advance better and more adaptable to societal and human needs and cherished values, these two cardinal actors must work in synergy, trusts and

confidentiality, possess benevolent approaches and must act on a just background at every given time. This has made autonomy, well-being, non-malfeasance and equitable justice; the four fundamentals of medical ethics, which dictate and guide the activities of medical practitioners, (Harish and Sane, 2017: 334). Of all these four fundamentals, the most relevant among them and also the most violated is the principle of autonomy and confidentiality which are hinged on the informed consent of the patients. The violation stems from first, the assumptions that caregivers have authority, know more and are better informed than a care receiver, and as such is the right position to decide or dictate the nature and level of treatment a patient ought to receive, secondly, family and societal considerations hinging on Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of utility often take precedence over what a patient want. Spinoza's articulation on this ground emphasizes that the meaningful existential lives of the human person is dependent on reason and as well; must be guided by reason. He opines that for informed consent and harmony to be maintained, human beings must be guided by reason, and by doing so, they naturally desire for others what the desire or themselves. (R.H.M. Elwes (ed.) 2010). This study examines patient's autonomy and informed consent with the view of fostering more benevolent and confidentiality in medical practices and professionalism.

Patient Autonomy in Medical Diagnosis and Treatments

Autonomy comes from Greek words, *autos nomos*", which means self-rule and self-determination. Patients' autonomy is the view that patients have total, free and unhindered moral claims to their body, and as such can direct, control, limit, extend, accept, and or reject the course and direction of their own medical care, and to be given reasonably full information in order to make informed or reason-based medical decisions (Baumgaten, 1). The question of patient autonomy is hinged on the fact of the need to always respect the dignity of human person not minding the physiological state of the person. Baumgaten wrote that

> Every medical decision includes both a scientific and an ethical component, but the special expertise of physicians is limited to the area of medical science. For example, a physician's training equips him or her to determine the genetic risks a couple may face in having children. But medical training cannot address the ethical question of whether these risks imply that a couple *should* refrain from reproduction. Medical decisions include a *value* dimension often requiring that medical benefits (such as continued life and health) be weighed against not only medical risks but non-medical values as well. That more invasive surgery decreases the risk of cancer recurrence by 3% compared to less invasive surgery is a medical judgment, but whether that benefit is *worth* tolerating the cosmetic and other effects of the surgery is not a question for medical science, (Baumgaten, 2).

In order words, medical examination and treatment are based on two fundamental perspectives – the scientific and moral

perspectives. The scientific perspective is taken care of by the rigorous training of a medical practitioner. The moral perspective is standpoint of an individual who receives the professional expertise. On this note, it becomes imperative that a patient has the full right to exercise his or her moral rights and insights; in as much the individual is not mentally and rationally incapacitated. Patient autonomy further portrays that the views of an individual must be sought and obtained before the commencement, continuation and stoppable of any medical treatment as the need arises. Its emphasis is on individuality and freedom of choice on medical care.

Patients' autonomy as a principal ethical code in bioethics is against the traditional paternalistic ideology of conventional medical science. Paternalism in medical science is of the view that healthcare givers have the authority and expertise to render a comprehensive medical discourse given the level and rigorous nature of their professional training. In the light of their authority, a medical professional can restrict the freedom of a patient in exercising the full custody of his or her body on the ground that doing so; was for the overall best interest of the patient. For instance, in early 1960s, Donald O;ken argued that in United State of America, nearly eighty-eight percent of American doctors would not tell patient of a cancer diagnosis the actual result, (Oken, 1961:1120). It is the view of the proponents of paternalistic philosophy in medical field that a medical care giver knows more, have more accurate and adequate data than the medical care receiver. Here, it is assumed that the sole objective of a care giver is the overall good health of a patient and this main aim is enough for a caregiver to influence, manipulate and even coerce a patient into the choice of adhering to medical treatments. This in sum, is the principle of benevolence in medical ethics or bioethics. Dworkin G. concludes that

> This means that the doctor has the power to and may override his patient's preferences, choices and decisions and justify doing so by appeal to the goal of benefiting from his patient or preventing or mitigating harm to his patient, (Dworkin, 1972: 64)

The other ways in which patient choices and decisions can be overridden includes: deception, lies, manipulation of information, non-disclosure of information, the use of coercion and force or indeed outright refusal to carry out the patient's wishes, (Beauchamp, and Childress, 2009: 64).

What the advocates and projectors of patient autonomy is supporting is that, no matter how sound, logical and good the intents of a medical experts are to a patient, the ethical or professional values of the experts should not override the ethical inclinations and values of a patient, who receives the medical treatments. Patient autonomy enriches physician-patient relationship, because its cornerstone is the need to breed trust and confidence between medical practitioners and their patients. Adwedaa E. wrote

> Patients want doctors to use their medical training to promote a partnership in the doctor-patient relationship where the doctor

> uses his or her superior knowledge and skill in medicine to acknowledge, encourage and support the patient's right to self-determination in his or her health care. If doctors did that, patients will be more satisfied, the doctor-patient relationship will be enriched, trust between the doctor and his patient will be enhanced and patient care will also be enhanced, (Adwedaa, 2015: 30).

He further emphasized that although the idea of the patient has been interpreted in different ways by different people in different or same situations, there are three indices that explain patient autonomy, namely; that patient wants to be listened to, that patient wants to be provided with adequate information about their health condition, and be involved in the management decision about their health care, (Adwedaa, 2015: 30). Patient autonomy highlights the needs of a patient to be protected in receiving healthcare services and delivery. Protecting the rights of a patient enhances the positive conviction of the patient on the system, thereby, boosting the morale of the patient in seeking and sustaining medical attentions without fear. On this note, Dasari Harish, Ajah Kumar and Amandeep Singh maintained that patient autonomy requires that; "a person should have the capacity to decide upon a course of action, and to put that plan into action" (Dasari, Ajah & Amandeep, 2015: 410).

Towing the same line of thought, Teresa is of the view that informed consent connotes the practical manifestation of manifestations which mandates healthcare providers to disclose every necessary information such that the patient becomes fully aware and knowledgeable enough to make decisions regarding healthcare services (Okonkwo: 2025: 1) It succinct to say therefore that patient autonomy requires the ability to decide for the self, free from control of the others, and with sufficient level of understanding so as to arrive at a meaningful choice.[11] Its imperative lies on the fact that caregivers are not just mandated or obligated to respect the free choices of patient but also to facilitate all reasonable measures in ensuring that patient exercise such free choices.

The Concept of Informed Consent

All things being equal, there is a necessary condition that must be met before a patient can be said to be autonomous in medical decision-making and practice. This absolute condition is *sin qua non* for patient autonomy. The condition is termed informed consent. It is a mediator between the extreme and negative application of paternalism, using the benevolent principle of bioethics and indiscriminate application of patient autonomy in medical diagnosis and treatment.

Informed consent is a simplified, clear, concise, comprehensive and rational explanation and understanding a care giver owes and offers to a patient before continual or stoppable of a medical treatment. A medical care giver explains in detail the conditions, alternatives, nature, scopes and limits of a diagnosis and a proposed medical plans, risks and treatments. After careful examination of all that are involved in the medical prognosis and treatment, the patient

freely and willingly without coercion, undue influence or manipulation chooses the course of medical treatment to follow. After satisfying him or herself completely with the details of the explanation given, a patient makes a decision either by accepting or refusing treatment and a caregiver is strictly obliged to abide by such decision. R. B. Purtilo writes

> Informed consent is not just a legal duty to warn the patient about potential risks and obtain this signature on the dotted line. It is not just a formality for ensuring that the conditions of understanding between the doctors and his patient are placed in writing. (Purtilo, 1984: 934)

Further explanations on this idea were enunciated by J. A. Coy who opines that

> It is a process that underlies the doctor - patient relationship; an ongoing dialogue between the patient and his doctor and not merely a dateable event that occurs when ever a decision must be made because of the potential harmful consequences. It brings about a different equation to the doctor-patient relationship: one based on mutual trust and respect. It becomes an ongoing dialogue where in the risks and benefits of all treatment alternatives are explained and explored so as to customize (tailor) the same for the patient, keeping in view his personal values, interests and goals, (Coy, 1989: 826)

The idea of informed consent moves the responsibilities in medical discourse and remedies from the medical caregiver to the patient who is the receiver. It exempts a medical practitioner from taking responsibility from a failed medical treatment arising not from professional misconduct and negligence. To achieve a justifiable patient informed consent, Harish, Kumar and Singh outlined the conditions of a justified informed consent. These conditions include; a patient should be able to understand (i) Nature of the procedure includes what is to be done and how is it to be done (ii) Risks involved suggests the most likely risks; if a patient asks about a potential risk which the individual may lack the necessary knowledge, all the necessary procedures must be made available and should be succinctly explained. (iii) Consequences which implies the likely outcome of the procedure and alternatives (iv) Alternatives indicates what would be the possible outcome if the patient chooses not to have the procedure performed/ have an alternative procedure, (Dasari, Ajah & Amandeep, 2015: 413).

From the foregoing, it could quality that the elements of informed consent include disclosure of information, competence, understanding, voluntariness and decision making. A doctor provides information to a competent patient, who after understanding the information, makes a valid decision. It follows that patient autonomy that is hinged on informed consent is a collaborative effort of both the doctor or medical practitioner, patient and caregivers, family members, and friends. Given that the patient is the spokesperson for all medical responsibilities, the role of informed consent in patient autonomy encompasses the patient's right and capacity to direct treatment and other interventions, have the necessary

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information and guidance to make decisions, and have the opportunity to choose their own treatment plan (Govender & Naidoo, 2020: 224). It is suggested that in the absence of accurate information, patients cannot succinctly exercise the franchise towards their autonomy. This is to say that informed consent entails a dialogical process which tends to ensure that patients have rights to determining their medical health interventions (Okonkwo: 2025: 5)

On a peculiar note, Sophia Chryssofos et'al suggests that the clinical skill of the retention of informed consent must involve providing the patient a reasonably all-inclusive analysis of the rationale, benefits, risks, every possible alternative that is involved in medical decision making so as to ensure that the patient enjoys informed choice(s). The stipulation or requirement as suggested above entails criticality, patience, absolute honesty and defined line of integrity and high level of professionalism to integrate informed consent. The satisfactory professional practice of information delivery is the only sustainable yardstick for authenticating patients' autonomy.

Ethical Consideration of Patient Autonomy and Informed Consent: Challenges and Prospects

A careful observation of this study will authenticate ones understanding that the trajectory kicks towards respecting the rights of a patient to make informed decisions concerning one's medical care. It is against a conventional paternalistic medical idealism that everything done by a medical personnel, practitioner or caregiver; is for the good of the receiver of the treatment without involving the medical care receiver on the nature and extent of the goodwill. In involving a patient in deciding the management of his medical status, patient autonomy; based on informed consent entails that the necessary full details of a patients' condition must be divulged to him. This will enhance patient-doctor relationship that is based on trust, confidentiality and fidelity. Thus, "the fiduciary genre of the doctor-patient relationship demands that the physician owes the highest degree of fidelity, honesty and lack of self-interest to his patient", (Molina-Mula, Peter, Gallo-Estrada, & Perelló-Campaner, 2017: 25)

However, there are some fundamental challenges that have been raised by ethical philosophers on the nature and even the limit of autonomy of a patient. For instance, Hippocratic oath is modelled on the principle that medical practitioners or caregivers should ascribe for good and not harm of a patient or medical care receiver. This means that a physician can use his or her professional training, which can be termed here as Clinically informed consent, and is solely hinged on the overall wellbeing of a patient even when the patient may have a contrary decision. This is what the principle of Benevolence in bioethics entails. Given this instance, a vital question is of essence and it goes this way; if the Hippocratic oath is to be adhered to at all instances, does the patient still the

concept of his or her autonomy? Hence, in certain conditions, not all truth can be told in details to a patient to avoid escalating the issue at hand. Thus:

> However, absolute truth may not be digestible to the patient and may actually be harmful to him. That is when; the doctor can invoke the Doctrine of Therapeutic Privilege and refrain from telling the whole truth to the patient. If the doctor is of the opinion that disclosure of the complete information can seriously harm the patient' life, he has the privilege to withhold such information, but he has to take any of the close relatives of the patient in to confidence wand share this information (Harish, Ajah & Singh: 413)

Even when a relative of a patient is well informed and consented to, there are certain conditions of a care receiver that will erode his autonomy and informed consent. Consequently, we should not regard the obligation to respect autonomy as absolute. Nor should we think that it requires that we do whatever patients say they want. (Baumgarten; .3)

Explaining further, another dimension that questions the absolute validity of a patient's autonomy and informed consent is the duty of a caregiver to distinguish between a patients' current choices and that of patients' genuine inclinations.

> A challenge to a simple notion of patient autonomy is that it fails to recognize that a patient's current choice might not represent what even the patient himself *truly* wants. The effects of illness, or of the treatment itself, could distort a patient's perceptions. Even though such a patient's capacities might not be compromised to the point that he would be considered incompetent, he might, for example, refuse a treatment that his "true self" would have accepted, (Baumgarten; .5)

For instance, based on religious indoctrination, a patient may decide not to follow a benevolent medical regimen not because his genuine intention does not support the treatment in order to get well, but because the present choice of religious coloration made him or her to make decisions that could be fatal. The issue of blood transfusion and taking of synthetic drugs are typical examples whereby some staunch religious fanatics are forbidden from some medical practices because, such practices are abhorred by their doctrinal foundations. To follow patient autonomy and informed consent *simplicita*, may aid in committing more harm than good, and this is against the codes of medical profession. In order words, there are certain choices that will make a patient's autonomy and informed consent conflict with paternalistic principle of conventional science, and that of paternalism takes precedence. Hence, the concept of self-determination and autonomy should not be oversimplified.

Another dimension of the challenges of patient autonomy and informed consent is the conflict of choice between a patient autonomy and professional requirements of a medical caregiver. It has been clearly stated that a medical caregiver also has moral obligation to the medical profession that may outrightly outweigh moral obligation to respect a patient's autonomy and informed consent. For instance, some of the patient autonomy that may violate the ethical values of medical profession

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are the request for a mercy killing (Euthanasia), abortion (unlawful termination of a foetus in a patient body), and tubal ligation (freedom to choose not to bear children via destruction of fertility organs). It is argued that patients' autonomy and informed consent does not extend to assist in harming, killing, or help to die or the engagement in euthenasia, (Hathout; 1997: 235).

A just distribution of scarce resource is another issue to contend with when ethically examining patient autonomy and informed consent. The question is should a medical care giver continue giving treatment even when such treatment is clinically ascertained to be an exercise in futility? It should be noted that just distribution of scarce resource is an important ethical topic in medicine. In these regards, the position of family members and their roles, and the utilitarian needs of the society are put into consideration before patient autonomy and informed consent prevails. Family roles are made inundated by cultural practices that influence patient autonomy. Instances are bound in Chinese and African cultural practices where communal responsibilities supersedes individuality.

What is very imperative from our discussion so far on the challenge and prospects of patient autonomy and informed consent is that, morally in medical healthcare, patient autonomy goes beyond abstract conception of individualism and freedom of choice to a more developed creative apparatus for determining how to respect the choice of individuals in exercise their autonomy. While upholding the autonomy of individual to have informed consent in managing their health status, this ethical principle should not project individual as an independent entity without embodiments of family, economic, cultural, religious, medical professional contexts.

Conclusion

Patients' autonomy and informed consent is a fundamental principle in medical ethics or bioethics that emphasizes on a cordial, confidential and truthful relationship between medical caregivers and their patients. It is an ethical perspective that propels medical practitioners to use their medical and professional skills and training to encourage, acknowledge, support and even; proposes to patients on how to use their rights when it comes to terms with self-determination and dignity of human person to choose and make decisions regarding their health challenges. The need for self-determination in health decision-making is to be construed on informed consent, where the details, nature, diagnosis, prognosis, risks, alternatives and treatment have been concisely, clearly and comprehensively communicated to the patient. Thus, patients' autonomy and informed consent are important ethical canons in medical sciences; because, they are the indicators of patient satisfaction and they further determine the standards of healthcare delivery. It entails that humans have unconditional worth, possessing the

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capacity to determine his or moral destinies and should be treated and respected as such.

However, it should neither be conceived as a value that necessarily overrides all others nor does it entail simple directives to always comply to the expressed wishes of the patients. Based on the situation at hand, patient autotomy can be overridden when there is an availability of sufficient and justifiable rational grounds for such. These good reasons can be informed by professional, family, social, cultural and economic contexts

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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. The population of the study consisted 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 0.78 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 in apprenticeship training 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 in apprenticeship training 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.

Keywords: informal apprenticeship training, drop out, strategies, emerging paradigms in TVET.

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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: 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 in which a worker learns the practical and theoretical aspects of highly skilled occupation (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 includes: (1) the introduction to names and use of tools/ materials found in the trades and (2) parts of machines in use and their functions, 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 crafts-man 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 duration are made between the apprentice and the master and fee will be paid. At the end of the apprenticeship, a graduation (freedom) ceremony is held signifying successful completion of training. Sometimes, apprentices are compelled to perform domestic chores for the master aside from learning the job. It 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 (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 including 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 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, 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 this 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 standard, 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 tradespeople 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 for identifying 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 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 solution 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 economic and social implications in the state. 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. This situation has continued to posed 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 in the informal apprenticeship training system in some parts of Nigeria without determining the strategies for improving completion rate among apprentice trainees in technical trades. 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 training system in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. To determine the strategies for enhancing training completion rates among informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State
2. To 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 in informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What are the emerging paradigms in TVET that can be adopted to improve the informal apprenticeship 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 in Apprenticeship Training 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 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 the respondents. 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 and stratified sampling methods were applied for selecting the sample for the study. Each senatorial zone in the state was made a cluster, from there, craftsmen in various technical trades and their apprentices were selected from major cities across each zone using stratified and purposive sampling techniques that guaranteed that each of the master craftsmen must 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 instrument in terms of wordings, language and appropriateness of the items to measure what it intends to measure. In order to ensure 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 where 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 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 hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the strategies for enhancing training completion rates in informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State ?

Table 1: Mean responses on the strategies for enhancing training completion rates in informal apprenticeship training system 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 apprentice	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 in informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State presented in Table 1 shows that all the 10 items as well as the cluster mean have mean ratings exceeding 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 in informal apprenticeship training system 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 has 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 in Apprenticeship Training 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 in informal apprenticeship training system 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 in informal apprenticeship training system 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 in Apprenticeship Training 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.

Findings and Discussion of the Findings

1. Strategies for enhancing training completion rates in Apprenticeship Training in Akwa Ibom State

In the study, 10 strategies for enhancing training completion rates in apprenticeship training in Akwa Ibom State were also found. These were: 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 in apprenticeship system 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 in the traditional apprenticeship system in Akwa Ibom State.

The findings of this study agrees 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 system in Nigeria.

2. Emerging paradigms in TVET for improving the informal apprenticeship training system in Akwa Ibom State

The study further 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 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 programme 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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Empirical Analysis of the Macroeconomic Linkages Between Public Education Funding and Tertiary Education Enrolment In Nigeria, 2000–2019

Abstract

This study empirically analysed the macroeconomic linkages between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment in Nigeria from 2000 to 2019. The study examined the trends in public education funding and tertiary school enrolment and assessed the effects of public education funding, economic growth and inflation on tertiary school enrolment. Annual secondary data were obtained from published sources, with tertiary school enrolment data sourced from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, while public education expenditure was derived from government recurrent expenditure on education relative to real gross domestic product. Gross domestic product growth and inflation were included as control variables. This study is primarily anchored on Human Capital Theory, supported by Public Expenditure Theory. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and time series econometric techniques were employed. Preliminary ordinary least squares estimation indicated a positive relationship between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment. However, diagnostic tests revealed serial correlation and heteroskedasticity, making conventional OLS inference unreliable. Heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation consistent estimation, first difference analysis and a parsimonious dynamic model were therefore applied. The corrected results showed that public education funding remained positively associated with tertiary school enrolment but was not statistically significant at the 5 percent level. Economic growth and inflation were also statistically insignificant. The study concluded that increased public education funding alone did not provide a statistically robust explanation of changes in tertiary school enrolment during the study period.

Keywords: Macro-economics, Linkages, Public Funding, Tertiary Education, Statistics, Heteroskedasticity, Autocorrelation.

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Introduction

Public education funding and tertiary education enrolment are closely connected, but the relationship is not as straightforward as the assumption that more government spending automatically produces more students in higher education. Funding determines, among other things, the capacity of

institutions to provide places, facilities, teaching personnel and other academic resources. Enrolment, however, also responds to the economic circumstances within which students and institutions operate. Household income, inflation, employment prospects and the general strength of the economy can affect whether prospective students can afford tertiary education and whether government can sustain expenditure on it. The issue in Nigeria, therefore, is not simply whether government spends on education, but whether changes in public education funding are associated with changes in tertiary participation when the wider macroeconomic environment is taken into account.

The importance of this relationship are clearer when tertiary education is considered as part of Nigeria's human capital development. Recent Nigerian evidence connect education participation and public expenditure with wider economic outcomes. Bolarinwa (2023), found that government education expenditure and school enrolment significantly influenced labour force participation. More specifically, the study reported that "enrolment in secondary and tertiary education positively correlates with increased labour force participation" (Bolarinwa, 2023, p. 73). From this, tertiary enrolment should not be viewed only as an educational statistic. Changes in participation affect the stock of educated labour available to the economy, while the economic environment can influence the ability of individuals to enter and remain in tertiary education.

This creates a two-way relationship between education financing and the wider economy as government needs fiscal resources to finance education. While the expansion of tertiary education creates human capital that can support economic activity, this relationship in Nigeria has been complicated by persistent pressure on public resources and the increasing demand for tertiary education. Jones Esan (2022) observes that African governments face budget constraints that make it difficult to sustain educational programmes, arguing that "public private partnership efforts provide a way out of this financial dilemma" (p. 1). The point is not that private financing can simply replace public funding but that the financing structure of higher education is itself part of the problem.

The Nigerian tertiary education system has experienced substantial changes in enrolment over the period under consideration. World Bank education data, drawn from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, show a long period of expansion in Nigeria's tertiary enrolment indicators. Although the quality and consistency of the underlying series require careful consideration when constructing a historical econometric model. The same international database provides measures of government

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expenditure on education as a share of GDP and other education financing indicators, making it possible to examine education funding alongside participation within a common empirical framework. The availability of these indicators is useful, but it does not by itself establish a relationship between them which has to be tested.

Evidence from the wider higher education literature supports the need for such testing. Using data for 86 countries, Yang and McCall (2014) found that both GDP per capita and public education spending as a percentage of GDP were positively associated with tertiary enrolment, while public expenditure per tertiary student had a negative association with enrolment. Their conclusion is particularly relevant because it separates the amount of public education spending from the amount spent per student. They report that "GDP per capita and public spending on education as a percentage of GDP both have a positive effect on tertiary enrollment" (Yang & McCall, 2014, p. 25). This suggests that the effect of public funding cannot be understood without considering the broader economic environment and the way expenditure is measured.

For Nigeria, the issue becomes more complicated because economic instability can affect both sides of the relationship. A rise in public education expenditure may indicate stronger government commitment, but its real effect can be weakened when inflation reduces purchasing power and increases the cost of educational provision. Conversely, economic expansion may increase government revenue and household capacity to finance education, creating conditions that favour higher enrolment. Ihugba *et al*. (2025), examining tertiary enrolment over a much longer period from 1981 to 2024, found a long run relationship among tertiary enrolment, government education expenditure and other economic variables. Their analysis reports that "education expenditure shows delayed and inconsistent influence on enrollment" (Ihugba et al., 2025, p. 26).

This finding is useful because it cautions against assuming that changes in education expenditure will immediately appear as corresponding changes in enrolment. The timing and wider economic conditions surrounding the expenditure matter. The Nigerian evidence also suggests that the connection between education financing and participation deserves more precise empirical treatment.

Research Objectives

The study's objectives are to:

i. Empirically analyse the macroeconomic linkages between public education funding and

tertiary education enrolment in Nigeria from 2000 to 2019.

ii. Examine the trend and pattern of public education funding and tertiary education enrolment in Nigeria from 2000 to 2019.

iii. Determine the effect of public education funding on tertiary education enrolment in Nigeria during the study period.

iv. Examine the influence of selected macroeconomic variables on tertiary education enrolment in Nigeria from 2000 to 2019.

v. Determine the joint effect of public education funding and selected macroeconomic variables on tertiary education enrolment in Nigeria during the study period.

Statement of the Research Problem

Nigeria's expansion of tertiary education has not occurred under conditions of unlimited public resources. The number of people seeking tertiary education has geometrically grown, while government faces competing demands for expenditure across education, health, infrastructure, security and other sectors. This creates a practical policy problem where expanding access to tertiary education requires institutional capacity, though institutional capacity depends partly on the resources available to the education sector. The problem is therefore not simply that education requires more money but whether the public resources committed to education have been sufficient, consistent and economically meaningful enough to support corresponding improvements in tertiary participation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on Human Capital Theory, supported by Public Expenditure Theory. The choice of these theories reflects the central argument of the study that government funding can influence the availability and quality of educational opportunities, while broader economic conditions can affect both the capacity of government to finance education and the ability of individuals to participate in tertiary education. Human Capital Theory is principally associated with the works of Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964). The theory views education as an investment that develops the knowledge, skills and productive abilities of individuals. Schultz (1961) argues that "investment in human capital" is important for explaining differences in productivity and economic growth. The central implication is that expenditure on education should not be regarded only as consumption. It represents an investment in people whose accumulated knowledge and skills can generate economic and social returns.

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Becker (1964) developed this argument by examining education as an investment that produces returns through improved earnings, employment opportunities and productivity. His analysis also considers the possibility of underinvestment in college education, which is relevant to the present study because access to tertiary education can be constrained when the resources available for educational participation and provision are inadequate. Applied to Nigeria, Human Capital Theory provides a theoretical explanation for the expected relationship between public education funding and tertiary education enrolment.

Public Expenditure Theory provides the supporting framework for understanding why government allocates resources to education and how such expenditure can influence social outcomes. The theory is associated with the broader public finance tradition, particularly Musgrave's analysis of the functions of government expenditure. Public expenditure can serve economic and social purposes that may not be adequately achieved through private decisions alone. Education is relevant because its benefits extend beyond the individual student to the wider economy and society.

Conceptual Review

Public Education Funding

Public education funding refers to financial resources provided by government for the development, administration and delivery of education. It may include current expenditure, capital expenditure, transfers and other government supported educational spending. The measure includes spending by different levels of government and is compiled from education expenditure information supplied through national statistical and education reporting systems.

The concept is important because the amount of resources available to the education sector can affect the capacity of educational institutions to provide services. In tertiary education, public funding may support academic personnel, infrastructure, teaching materials, administration, student support and other institutional requirements. However, the amount allocated to education should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of effective expenditure. The impact of funding can depend on how resources are distributed and utilised.

Tertiary Education Enrolment

Tertiary education enrolment refers to participation in education beyond the secondary level. It covers programmes that require completion of secondary education as a normal condition for admission and includes different forms of post secondary education. Enrolment therefore reflects the extent to which the population participates in the tertiary education

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system. The first is the absolute number of students enrolled in tertiary institutions while the second is the gross tertiary enrolment ratio. Although enrolment numbers are useful for describing the expansion of the tertiary education system, they are strongly affected by population growth. For this reason, the present study preferably uses the tertiary gross enrolment ratio as its dependent variable.

Gross Domestic Product

Gross domestic product represents the total income generated through the production of goods and services within an economy during a specified period. Within this study, GDP represents the broader economic condition under which government education expenditure and tertiary education participation occur. A stronger economy can increase government revenue and fiscal capacity, potentially creating greater room for public expenditure on education. It may also improve household economic circumstances and their capacity to meet the direct and indirect costs associated with tertiary education.

Inflation

Inflation refers to a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services. Inflation is relevant to this study for two related reasons. First, it can reduce the real value of government education expenditure. Second, inflation can increase the cost of living faced by households. Where education related costs rise alongside other household expenses, families may face greater difficulty financing tertiary education. Inflation is consequently included as a macroeconomic control variable. The expected relationship with tertiary enrolment is potentially negative, although the empirical direction and magnitude must be established from the Nigerian data rather than assumed in advance. The annual consumer price inflation rate is therefore an appropriate operational measure because it provides a consistent annual indicator of changes in the general cost of consumption.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on education financing and educational outcomes in Nigeria have examined the relationship from different perspectives. Some studies focus directly on public education expenditure and educational outcomes, while others examine household income, macroeconomic conditions, economic growth or broader human capital outcomes. More importantly, relatively few studies examine public education funding and tertiary education enrolment together while controlling for macroeconomic conditions within a clearly defined Nigerian time series framework. Okonkwo *et al*. (2022), for example, examined household income and expenditure in relation to tertiary enrolment in Nigeria using an autoregressive distributed lag approach and incorporated total education

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expenditure into the analysis. Their work shifts attention from government funding alone to the economic capacity of households to participate in tertiary education. This is significant because public funding and household economic conditions can operate simultaneously. Increased government spending may expand institutional capacity, but students still face the private costs associated with tuition, accommodation, transportation, learning materials and other expenses. A study of tertiary enrolment that ignores the economic environment can therefore miss part of the mechanism through which funding is translated into actual participation.

The period from 2000 to 2019 provides a useful basis for investigating this relationship. It captures years in which Nigeria experienced changes in government expenditure, economic growth, inflation and tertiary education demand before the exceptional disruptions associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. Restricting the analysis to 2019 also creates a clearly defined pre pandemic period in which the relationship between public education funding, macroeconomic conditions and tertiary enrolment can be examined without the extraordinary disruption introduced from 2020 onward. The period is also sufficiently long to permit a time series examination of changes rather than relying on a single year or a short cross-sectional comparison.

Torruam *et al*. (2014), for example, used cointegration and an error correction technique to examine public expenditure on tertiary education and economic growth in Nigeria and found evidence of a long run relationship between tertiary education expenditure and economic growth. Their study does not directly answer whether education funding increases tertiary enrolment, but it demonstrates why Nigerian education financing relationships are better investigated within a time series framework that considers both short run movements and longer run relationships.

More recent evidence makes the problem even less straightforward as Ihugba *et al*. (2025), using a nonlinear ARDL framework for Nigerian tertiary enrolment between 1981 and 2024, found that education expenditure had a delayed and inconsistent influence on enrolment. That finding is particularly relevant to the present study because it suggests that expenditure may not translate into enrolment immediately. A funding increase in one year may take time to produce additional institutional capacity, while changes in household affordability or economic conditions may influence enrolment more quickly. It therefore becomes necessary to distinguish between a simple contemporaneous association and a broader relationship that may operate over time.

The empirical literature also leaves a gap in the way these issues are brought

together. Existing Nigerian studies have considered public education expenditure and schooling outcomes, household income and tertiary enrolment, tertiary education expenditure and economic growth, and the effects of macroeconomic uncertainty on educational outcomes. What is less clearly established is the specific relationship between public education funding and tertiary education enrolment within a defined period while simultaneously accounting for selected macroeconomic conditions. This distinction matters because evidence that education expenditure affects economic growth does not establish that it expands tertiary enrolment, just as evidence that household income affects enrolment does not establish the contribution of government funding.

Dauda (2011) examined the effect of public educational spending and macroeconomic uncertainty on schooling outcomes in Nigeria using annual data from 1975 to 2007. The study used cointegration and error correction techniques together with vector autoregression. Public education expenditure was measured as a percentage of GDP, while educational attainment was represented by adult literacy. The study also incorporated GDP per capita, urbanisation and macroeconomic uncertainty. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between government educational expenditure and educational outcomes, while macroeconomic instability had a negative effect. The study further established a long run relationship among the variables.

Torruam, Chiawa, and Abur (2014) investigated public expenditure on tertiary education and economic growth in Nigeria using annual time series data covering 1990 to 2011. The authors employed cointegration and error correction techniques and concluded that public expenditure on tertiary education had a positive impact on economic growth. This study is relevant because it focuses specifically on tertiary education expenditure rather than aggregate education spending. It also confirms the suitability of time series methods for examining relationships involving public education expenditure in Nigeria.

However, the direction of analysis differs from that of the present study as Torruam *et al.* (2014) treated economic growth as the outcome of tertiary education expenditure, whereas this study treats tertiary education enrolment as the outcome and public education funding as the principal explanatory variable. Economic growth is therefore incorporated into the present study as a macroeconomic control rather than as the dependent variable. This distinction is important because an increase in education expenditure may contribute to economic growth without necessarily producing an immediate increase in tertiary enrolment.

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Ihugba, Obiukwu, Akobundu, Osunkwo, Oyalede, and Okonkwo (2022) provide more direct evidence on tertiary education participation. Their study examined the effect of household income and expenditure on tertiary school enrolment in Nigeria using data from 1970 to 2020. The researchers employed the autoregressive distributed lag approach and found evidence of a long run relationship among tertiary enrolment, household expenditure, household income and total education expenditure. Household consumption expenditure had a positive relationship with tertiary enrolment, while the study reported a negative relationship between GDP per capita and tertiary enrolment at some lags. Total education expenditure was also found to have a delayed relationship with tertiary enrolment.

Earlier evidence from Ihugba, Ukwunna, and Obiukwu (2019) examined government education expenditure and primary school enrolment in Nigeria over the period 1970 to 2017. Using the ARDL bounds testing approach, the study investigated government education expenditure alongside per capita income, remittances, investment and population growth. The study established a long run relationship among the variables, but government education expenditure was not found to have a statistically significant positive effect on primary school enrolment. This finding is important because it challenges the assumption that increased government education expenditure automatically produces higher enrolment.

More recent evidence further strengthens the argument for considering macroeconomic conditions. Ihugba, Okonkwo, Sharon El, Immaculata, Okoro, and Nwogwugwu (2025) examined tertiary school enrolment in Nigeria from 1981 to 2024 using a nonlinear ARDL framework. The study included government education expenditure, secondary school enrolment, real GDP per capita, exchange rate movements and the effects of Academic Staff Union of Universities strikes. The authors found a long run relationship among the variables and reported that rising cost of living reduced tertiary enrolment. They also found that education expenditure had a delayed and inconsistent influence on enrolment, while secondary school enrolment had a strong positive effect.

Oladipo *et al.* (2024) provide another perspective by examining the relationship between oil price shocks and human capital channels in Nigeria. Using a structural vector autoregression approach, the study found that oil price shocks were associated with higher government expenditure on tertiary education but lower tertiary institution enrolment. This finding is significant because it illustrates the possibility that an increase in public expenditure may coexist with a decline in enrolment when wider economic shocks affect the education system. For an oil dependent

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economy such as Nigeria, changes in government revenue and macroeconomic conditions can therefore influence education outcomes through channels that are not captured by expenditure figures alone.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach and an ex post facto research design. The design is considered appropriate because the study examines the relationship between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment using historical annual data that already exist and cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The analysis focuses on Nigeria over the period 2000 to 2019. The period provides 20 annual observations and was selected to provide a defined period for examining changes in public education funding, tertiary school enrolment and the wider macroeconomic environment before the major disruption associated with the COVID 19 period.

The study relies entirely on secondary data on tertiary school enrolment obtained from the tertiary school enrolment series reported by Eniekezimene, Wodu and Anda Owei (2023), who state that their annual primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolment data were obtained from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Their reported dataset contains annual tertiary school enrolment observations covering the study period. Data on government recurrent expenditure on education are obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin. The CBN Statistical Bulletin provides federal government recurrent expenditure data under its public finance statistics, while previous Nigerian studies have also used the CBN series for government education expenditure. Data on real GDP growth and inflation are obtained from established Nigerian and international macroeconomic data sources.

The dependent variable is Tertiary School Enrolment (TSE) measured as the tertiary school enrolment rate reported in percentage terms. The measure captures changes in participation in tertiary education over the study period. The study deliberately retains the terminology used by the source and refers to the variable as tertiary school enrolment rather than describing it as the current World Bank gross tertiary enrolment ratio. This distinction is important because the current World Bank tertiary gross enrolment indicator does not provide a complete series for all the years required for this study, whereas the UNESCO based series reported by Eniekezimene et al. (2023) provides annual observations for the period under investigation.

The main explanatory variable is Public Education Funding (PEF). Public education funding is operationalised using federal government recurrent expenditure on education as a proportion of real gross domestic product. Recurrent

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expenditure is used because the CBN provides a consistent annual series for government education expenditure and because it represents government expenditure directed towards the recurrent operation of the education system. The measure therefore serves as an empirical proxy for the public funding commitment to education during the study period. It should be noted that this measure represents federal recurrent education expenditure and does not constitute total education expenditure by the federal, state and local governments combined. The distinction is maintained throughout the analysis.

Two macroeconomic variables are included as control variables with the first being real GDP growth (GDPG), measured as the annual percentage growth rate of real gross domestic product. GDP growth is included because changes in economic activity can affect both government fiscal capacity and households' ability to participate in tertiary education. The second control variable is inflation (INF), measured by the annual percentage change in consumer prices. Inflation is included because persistent increases in the general price level can reduce the real value of government expenditure and affect the capacity of households to meet the direct and indirect costs associated with tertiary education. The functional relationship for the study is expressed as:

$$TSE_t = f(PEF_t, GDPG_t, INF_t)$$

The econometric model is specified as:

$$TSE_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PEF_t + \beta_2 GDPG_t + \beta_3 INF_t + \varepsilon_t$$

Where:

TSE_t = tertiary school enrolment rate in year *t*
PEF_t = public education funding in year *t*
$GDPG_t$ = real GDP growth rate in year *t*
INF_t = inflation rate in year *t*
β_0 = constant term
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = parameters to be estimated
ε_t = error term.

The coefficient of primary interest is β_1 because it captures the estimated relationship between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment after accounting for GDP growth and inflation. A positive coefficient would indicate that higher public education funding is associated with higher tertiary school enrolment, while a negative coefficient would indicate an inverse relationship, holding the other variables constant. The coefficients of GDP growth and inflation will similarly indicate their respective relationships with tertiary school enrolment.

The analysis will begin with descriptive statistics and trend analysis. The descriptive analysis will examine the mean, minimum, maximum and standard deviation of the variables and will be complemented by an examination of their annual movements from 2000 to 2019. This stage addresses the first research objective by establishing the pattern of public education funding and tertiary

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school enrolment before proceeding to the econometric analysis.

Because the data are annual time series observations, the study will test the stationarity properties of the variables before estimating the regression model. The Augmented Dickey Fuller unit root test will be employed for this purpose. The test is necessary because regression involving non stationary time series can produce misleading statistical relationships. The results of the stationarity tests will therefore guide the final estimation procedure.

Given the relatively small sample of 20 annual observations, the study will adopt a parsimonious estimation strategy. The regression model will not be unnecessarily expanded with numerous lags or explanatory variables because doing so would substantially reduce the available degrees of freedom. Where the stationarity properties of the variables justify estimation in levels, the specified regression model will be estimated. If the tests indicate that an alternative time series specification is required, the estimation procedure will be adjusted accordingly. This approach avoids imposing an econometric technique before the statistical properties of the actual data have been established.

Post estimation diagnostic tests will also be conducted to assess the reliability of the estimated model. These will include tests for serial correlation, heteroskedasticity and model specification. Where applicable, the normality of the residuals will also be examined. These tests are necessary to determine whether the estimated coefficients can reasonably be used for statistical inference. The hypotheses will be tested at the 5 percent level of significance. The first hypothesis will be assessed using the estimated coefficient of public education funding. The second will be evaluated through the significance of the macroeconomic variables, while the third will be assessed using the overall significance of the estimated model. The statistical evidence will be interpreted alongside the direction and magnitude of the coefficients rather than relying only on statistical significance.

The methodology is directly aligned with the objectives of the study with descriptive and trend analysis addressing the first objective. The estimated coefficient of public education funding addresses the second objective. The coefficients of GDP growth and inflation address the third objective, while the overall significance of the model addresses the fourth objective. This provides a consistent link between the research objectives, variables, econometric model and subsequent interpretation of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of the Variables

The study first examined the movement of tertiary school enrolment, public education funding and the selected

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macroeconomic variables between 2000 and 2019. The descriptive results provide an initial indication of the changes in the variables before the econometric analysis.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
TSE	10.176	1.422	6.670	12.320
PEF	0.406	0.189	0.148	0.823
GDPG	5.662	3.545	−1.617	15.329
INF	12.067	3.665	5.386	18.874

Tertiary school enrolment increased from 6.67 percent in 2000 to 12.32 percent in 2019. This represents an increase of 5.65 percentage points over the study period. The pattern, however, was not completely uniform. Enrolment increased during most of the early and later years but declined from 10.94 percent in 2007 to 9.21 percent in 2009 before recovering thereafter. By 2019, tertiary enrolment had reached its highest level within the study period.

Public education funding, measured as federal government recurrent expenditure on education as a percentage of real GDP, also increased over the period. It rose from approximately 0.23 percent of real GDP in 2000 to 0.82 percent in 2019. The largest increases occurred during the later part of the period, particularly after 2010. The increase in funding alongside the general increase in tertiary enrolment provides an initial descriptive indication of a positive relationship, although the trend alone cannot establish whether changes in funding independently influenced enrolment.

GDP growth averaged 5.66 percent during the period. The highest annual growth rate was 15.33 percent in 2002, while the lowest was −1.62 percent in 2016. The negative growth recorded in 2016 indicates the contraction in economic activity during that year. Inflation averaged 12.07 percent, with a minimum of 5.39 percent in 2007 and a maximum of 18.87 percent in 2001. The variation in GDP growth and inflation indicates that the economic environment within which public education funding and tertiary enrolment changed was not stable throughout the study period.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was used to examine the direction and strength of the simple relationships among the variables before estimating the multivariate model.

Variables	TSE	PEF	GDPG	INF
TSE	1.000	0.719	−0.491	−0.096
PEF	0.719	1.000	−0.581	−0.233
GDPG	−0.491	−0.581	1.000	−0.059
INF	−0.096	−0.233	−0.059	1.000

The correlation between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment was positive and relatively strong at 0.719.

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This indicates that the two variables generally moved in the same direction during the study period. However, correlation does not establish an independent effect because both variables may have been influenced by other changes occurring over time.

GDP growth had a negative correlation of −0.491 with tertiary school enrolment, while inflation had a very weak negative correlation of −0.096. These results provide useful descriptive information but should not be interpreted as evidence of causal relationships. The correlation between PEF and GDP growth was −0.581. Although this indicates a moderate inverse association in the sample, it does not by itself establish problematic multicollinearity. The correlations among the explanatory variables were not sufficiently high to suggest that the variables were measuring the same phenomenon.

Preliminary Econometric Estimation and Diagnostic Tests

The initial level OLS model was estimated in accordance with the specified functional relationship:

$$TSE_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PEF_t + \beta_2 GDPG_t + \beta_3 INF_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The initial OLS estimation produced an R^2 of 0.528 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.439. Public education funding had a positive coefficient of 5.093 and a conventional p value of 0.008. GDP growth and inflation were statistically insignificant. However, further diagnostic testing showed that the conventional OLS results could not be accepted as the final basis for inference. The Durbin Watson statistic was only 0.366, indicating substantial positive serial correlation in the residuals. This was supported by the Breusch Godfrey test, which indicated statistically significant serial correlation at different lag orders. The Breusch Pagan test also indicated evidence of heteroskedasticity.

The stationarity assessment raised an additional concern as the level series did not provide sufficiently strong evidence that all variables were stationary at level. Consequently, interpreting the significant conventional OLS coefficient for public education funding without addressing the time series properties of the variables could produce misleading statistical inference. For this reason, the conventional OLS p values were not used for the final hypothesis decisions. Instead, the study employed heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation consistent estimation and a parsimonious dynamic specification to examine whether the observed relationship remained statistically robust.

Econometric Results

The first correction involved estimating the level relationship using Newey West heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation consistent standard errors. The coefficient estimates remain unchanged from OLS, but the standard errors are adjusted to account for serial

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correlation and heteroskedasticity. The public education funding coefficient remained positive at 5.093. However, its statistical significance was substantially reduced after the correction. Depending on the bandwidth specification, the p value was approximately between 0.075 and 0.089. Therefore, public education funding was not statistically significant at the 5 percent level under the corrected estimation.

This finding is important because it shows that the positive relationship observed in the conventional OLS model was sensitive to the treatment of the error structure. The evidence therefore supports a positive association between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment, but it does not provide sufficiently robust evidence to conclude that public education funding independently determined enrolment during the period. The first difference specification was also estimated to examine changes in the variables rather than their levels:

$$\Delta TSE_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta PEF_t + \beta_2 \Delta GDPG_t + \beta_3 \Delta INF_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The coefficient for changes in public education funding was 1.840, but its HAC corrected p value was 0.243. Changes in GDP growth and inflation were also statistically insignificant. The model produced an R^2 of 0.110 and an adjusted R^2 of −0.068. Although the explanatory power of the differenced model was relatively low, the model provided a useful robustness assessment because the transformation substantially reduced the serial correlation problem observed in the level OLS model.

A parsimonious dynamic model was subsequently estimated by including the lagged value of tertiary school enrolment:

$$TSE_t = \beta_0 + \phi TSE_{t-1} + \beta_1 PEF_t + \beta_2 GDPG_t + \beta_3 INF_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The lagged enrolment variable was positive and statistically significant, with a coefficient of 0.664 and a p value below 0.001. This indicates considerable persistence in tertiary school enrolment. In practical terms, current enrolment was strongly associated with enrolment in the preceding year. Public education funding remained positive in the dynamic specification, with a coefficient of 1.464, but it was not statistically significant at the 5 percent level, with a p value of 0.127. GDP growth and inflation were also statistically insignificant. The Durbin Watson statistic improved to approximately 1.344, while the Breusch Godfrey test no longer indicated statistically significant first order serial correlation.

These results suggest that the relationship between tertiary school enrolment and its previous level is more statistically stable than the direct relationship between current public education funding and enrolment. This is reasonable given the nature of tertiary

education, where enrolment is influenced by continuing institutional capacity, existing student populations and gradual changes in access rather than by annual expenditure changes alone.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective was to examine the trend and pattern of public education funding and tertiary school enrolment between 2000 and 2019. The descriptive evidence shows that both variables increased substantially over the study period. Tertiary school enrolment increased from 6.67 percent to 12.32 percent, while public education funding as a percentage of real GDP increased from approximately 0.23 percent to 0.82 percent. The increases indicate an overall expansion in both public education funding and tertiary participation, although the movements were not identical in every year.

The second objective was to determine the effect of public education funding on tertiary school enrolment. The preliminary OLS model produced a positive and statistically significant coefficient, but this result did not remain statistically significant after correcting for serial correlation and heteroskedasticity. The corrected level model produced a positive coefficient but a p value above 0.05, while the first difference and dynamic specifications also produced statistically insignificant funding coefficients. The evidence therefore does not support a statistically significant independent effect of public education funding on tertiary school enrolment at the 5 percent level.

This does not mean that public funding is unimportant to tertiary education. Rather, the result suggests that the amount of public expenditure alone may not adequately explain annual changes in enrolment. The effectiveness of funding may depend on how resources are allocated, the availability of tertiary places, institutional capacity, admission policies, household economic conditions and other factors not explicitly included in the model.

The third objective examined the influence of selected macroeconomic variables on tertiary school enrolment. Neither GDP growth nor inflation was statistically significant in the corrected specifications. The results therefore do not provide sufficient evidence that annual changes in GDP growth or inflation independently influenced tertiary school enrolment within the estimated model during 2000 to 2019.

The fourth objective examined the joint effect of public education funding and the selected macroeconomic variables. The corrected first difference model produced an overall p value of approximately 0.502, indicating that the explanatory variables were not jointly significant at the 5 percent level in that specification. The evidence therefore does not provide a sufficiently robust basis for

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rejecting the null hypothesis of no significant joint effect.

The findings provide only partial support for the Human Capital Theory and Public Expenditure Theory adopted in the study. Human Capital Theory views education as an investment capable of improving knowledge and productive capacity. The descriptive increase in tertiary enrolment is consistent with continued expansion of participation in higher education. However, the econometric results indicate that increasing public education funding did not have a statistically robust independent relationship with enrolment during the study period.

The finding also provides a useful qualification to Public Expenditure Theory. Public spending can provide resources for infrastructure, personnel and educational services, but expenditure does not automatically translate into increased participation. The way expenditure is allocated and converted into institutional capacity may be more important than the aggregate level of spending alone. The strong significance of lagged tertiary enrolment in the dynamic specification further suggests that enrolment is characterised by persistence. This implies that changes in tertiary participation may reflect accumulated institutional and demographic factors rather than immediate responses to annual changes in government expenditure.

Conclusion

This study has been an examination of the macroeconomic linkages between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment in Nigeria from 2000 to 2019. The study specifically elucidates the trend in public education funding and tertiary school enrolment, assessed the relationship between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment, examined the influence of GDP growth and inflation, and considered the joint contribution of the explanatory variables to tertiary school enrolment.

The descriptive findings show that tertiary school enrolment increased considerably during the study period. The tertiary school enrolment rate increased from 6.67 percent in 2000 to 12.32 percent in 2019. Public education funding, measured as federal government recurrent expenditure on education as a percentage of real GDP, also increased from approximately 0.23 percent in 2000 to 0.82 percent in 2019. The two variables therefore displayed a generally positive movement over the period. However, the pattern was not uniform across all years, indicating that changes in enrolment did not simply follow annual changes in public education funding.

The preliminary level OLS estimation initially indicated a positive relationship between public education funding and tertiary school enrolment.

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However, diagnostic tests identified substantial serial correlation and evidence of heteroskedasticity in the model. The low Durbin Watson statistic of 0.366 was particularly important because it indicated that the conventional OLS significance tests could not be relied upon. After correcting the standard errors using a heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation consistent procedure, the coefficient of public education funding remained positive but was no longer statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

The robustness analysis produced a similar conclusion such that in the first difference model, changes in public education funding were positively associated with changes in tertiary school enrolment, but the relationship was not statistically significant. The parsimonious dynamic model also produced a positive coefficient for public education funding, but this coefficient remained statistically insignificant. In contrast, the lagged value of tertiary school enrolment was positive and highly significant, suggesting that tertiary enrolment has a strong persistent component. This indicates that current enrolment is influenced considerably by previous enrolment levels and that changes in participation may occur gradually rather than responding immediately to annual changes in government expenditure.

The selected macroeconomic variables also did not demonstrate statistically significant effects within the corrected specifications. GDP growth and inflation were not statistically significant predictors of tertiary school enrolment during the study period. Similarly, the corrected joint test did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that public education funding, GDP growth and inflation jointly had a statistically significant effect on tertiary school enrolment.

Based on these findings, the study does not reject the null hypothesis that public education funding had no statistically significant effect on tertiary school enrolment during 2000 to 2019. The same decision applies to the null hypothesis concerning the selected macroeconomic variables. The evidence also does not provide sufficient grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis concerning the joint effect of the explanatory variables. The findings should not be interpreted to mean that public education funding is unimportant to tertiary education. Rather, they indicate that the aggregate level of public funding alone does not provide a sufficiently strong statistical explanation of annual changes in tertiary school enrolment within the period and model examined. The positive descriptive movement between funding and enrolment suggests that public expenditure remains relevant to the expansion of tertiary education, but its effect may depend on how resources are allocated and translated into institutional

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capacity, admission opportunities, infrastructure, personnel and other forms of educational provision.

The findings therefore provide a qualified perspective on the Human Capital Theory and Public Expenditure Theory adopted in the study. The continued increase in tertiary enrolment is consistent with the importance of education in human capital development. However, the absence of a statistically robust independent funding effect suggests that increasing expenditure does not automatically translate into proportional increases in tertiary participation. The strong role of previous enrolment levels further suggests that tertiary participation is shaped by accumulated institutional and socioeconomic conditions rather than by annual expenditure changes alone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

i. Public education funding should be sustained, but greater attention should be given to how funds are used.

Although the econometric results did not establish a statistically significant independent effect of public education funding on tertiary school enrolment, public funding remains an important component of tertiary education provision. Government at all levels should therefore sustain adequate funding while placing greater emphasis on the efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure. Funding increases should be accompanied by clear priorities for infrastructure, teaching facilities, academic staffing and other areas that directly support the capacity of tertiary institutions.

2. Greater attention should be given to the allocation and efficiency of education expenditure.

The findings suggest that the aggregate amount spent on education alone may not adequately explain changes in tertiary school enrolment. Government at all levels should therefore, strengthen expenditure planning, monitoring and accountability within the education sector. Resources should be directed towards areas where they can contribute most directly to improved access and participation rather than focusing only on increases in total expenditure.

3. Tertiary education planning should recognise the persistent nature of enrolment.

The dynamic model showed that previous tertiary school enrolment was strongly associated with current enrolment. This suggests that enrolment responds gradually to changes in the education system. Tertiary education planning should therefore use multi year projections of student demand rather than relying mainly on annual changes in expenditure. This would allow

government and institutions to plan infrastructure, staffing and other resources ahead of expected changes in student numbers.

4. Funding decisions should consider wider economic conditions.

GDP growth and inflation were not statistically significant in the corrected models, but the descriptive analysis showed considerable variation in Nigeria's economic conditions during the study period. Education authorities should therefore consider the wider macroeconomic environment when planning public education expenditure. Particular attention should be given to periods of economic contraction and rising prices because these conditions can affect the real value of allocated resources and the ability of institutions to implement planned programmes.

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Challenge of Leadership Succession in Independent Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria: A Case Study of Revival Fire Ministries Incorporated, Minna, Niger State

Abstract

The explosive expansion of Independent Pentecostal Churches (IPCs) in Nigeria has contributed significantly to the growth and propagation of the gospel in the nation. However, these ministries face crisis of sustainability due to the challenges of leadership succession. Unlike classical Pentecostal denominations that operate with defined, constitutional policies, independent ministries are heavily built on the personal charisma, authority, and control of their founders. The core problem stems from founder-centric leadership models, where the church is treated as a personal legacy or asset rather than a public institution. In this study, effort was made to examine the challenges of leadership succession in Independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria with a case study of Revival Fire Ministries Inc., Minna, Niger State. The paper also highlighted the hindrances to leadership succession in Independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. The method of study adopted for this work is descriptive survey. Findings from the study revealed that one of the major challenges facing Independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria is lack of structured, codified succession plans as well as the unexpected death or retirement of a founder which often results in bitter disputes, church fragmentation, and even civil litigation. The study concluded that to ensure trans-generational survival, independent Pentecostal churches must transit from founder-centric leadership models to legal-rational or policy-driven structures. It is strongly recommended that Independent Pentecostal Churches should have leadership succession plans by legally separating family wealth from corporate church assets.

Keywords: Leadership, Challenges, Succession, Pentecostal, Independent, Churches.

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Introduction

The Pentecostal movement in Nigeria has, since its remarkable emergence in the 1970s, produced an extraordinary proliferation of independent churches, ministries, and faith-based organizations. From the sprawling mega churches of Lagos and Abuja to the modest but spiritually vibrant assemblies of smaller cities like Minna, independent Pentecostal Christianity has become one of the most

socially visible and numerically significant forces in Nigerian public and religious life (Ojo, 2006; Ukah, 2008). The movement's dynamism is inseparable from the charismatic power of its founding personalities, who are men and women of extraordinary vision, spiritual energy, and personal authority who gathered communities of faith around their gifting and conviction.

Yet this very strength contains within it a profound institutional vulnerability. Because so many of these churches were founded by, and have grown organically around, a single charismatic individual, their long-term viability is inextricably linked to a question they have been, in many cases, reluctant or structurally unable to address: what happens when the founder is no longer at the helm of affairs? The challenge of leadership succession—the planned, principled, and sustainable transfer of pastoral and organisational authority from one generation of leadership to the next has emerged as perhaps the defining institutional challenge for Nigerian Independent Pentecostalism in the twenty-first century (Adeboye, 2018; Okafor, 2017).

The historical record in Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa offers sobering evidence of what happens when this challenge is not adequately addressed. Churches have split along factional lines. Legal battles over property and registered names have occupied the courts for years. Congregations have haemorrhaged members. Accumulated institutional wealth has been dissipated through family disputes. The spiritual witness of communities built over decades of sacrifices has been undermined by succession crises that, in many cases, were entirely foreseeable and preventable (Obinna, 2012; Falola& Heaton, 2008). The tragedy is compounded by the observation that the Bible itself contains remarkably rich and diverse models of leadership succession, from Moses to Joshua, Elijah to Elisha, Paul to Timothy that, if faithfully appropriated, could provide both the theological rationale and the practical template for smooth transitions (Adeyemo, 2006).

This background therefore leads to the need of investigating into the challenges of leadership succession in Independent Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria (A Case Study of Revival Fire Ministries Inc., Minna, Niger State). By providing a rigorous, contextualised, and practically oriented analysis, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to the scholarly and ecclesiological conversation on how Nigerian Pentecostalism can secure its institutional future without sacrificing the spiritual vitality and missional conviction that have defined it.

Concept of Leadership Succession

Leadership succession refers to the planned, deliberate, and sustainable

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process by which authority, responsibility, and institutional identity are transferred from an existing leader or leadership to a designated successor or new leadership configuration. Leadership succession has been extensively theorised in the fields of corporate management, political science, and organisational studies, but has received comparatively limited rigorous attention in the study of African religious institutions (Rothwell, 2010; Charan, Drotter& Noel, 2011).

As a concept, succession planning has evolved from a narrow concern with emergency executive replacement to a comprehensive strategic process encompassing the identification, development, and deployment of high-potential leadership talent across all organisational levels. Rothwell (2010) defines succession planning as a deliberate and systematic effort by an organisation to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement. This definition highlights three key dimensions of succession: continuity, development, and advancement all of which are directly applicable to the religious organisational context.

In the context of independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, leadership succession may be understood more specifically as the process by which the pastoral, administrative, doctrinal, and relational authority of a founding or incumbent leader is transferred to a successor in a manner that preserves the spiritual integrity, institutional continuity, and communal cohesion of the church (Okafor, 2017; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013; Obinna, 2012). This definition encompasses several distinct elements that deserve separate examination.

First, pastoral succession involves the transfer of the primary spiritual oversight function preaching, teaching, pastoral care, sacramental administration, and prophetic leadership from the founding pastor to a designated successor. This dimension of succession is the most publicly visible and the most emotionally charged, because the founding pastor's preaching and pastoral presence are typically the most salient features of the church's identity in the experience of the congregation (Okafor, 2017; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013).

Second, administrative succession involves the transfer of institutional management responsibilities financial oversight, staff management, programme administration, property management, and external relations to the successor or to a restructured leadership team. In many independent Pentecostal churches, the founding pastor has combined pastoral and administrative functions in a single role; succession therefore requires a disaggregation of these functions that may itself be a significant organisational challenge (Eze, 2016; Ukah, 2008).

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Third, doctrinal succession involves the transmission of the theological vision, doctrinal commitments, and spiritual values that define the community's identity to the successor. This dimension is particularly sensitive in the Pentecostal context, where the founding pastor's personal theological vision has often become the defining identity of the institution. The risk of doctrinal succession of the successor introducing theological innovations that alienate sections of the founding congregation is a significant source of anxiety in many independent churches (Obinna, 2012; Ogbu, 2010).

Fourth, relational succession involves the transfer of the network of social, pastoral, and institutional relationships that the founding pastor has built over years of ministry with individual members, with partner ministries, with civic institutions, and with the broader Christian community. This dimension of succession is often the most invisible and the most difficult to manage, because relational networks are personal rather than institutional; they cannot be transferred by decree or documented in a handover report (Adeboye, 2018; Ojo, 2006).

It is important to distinguish between planned succession—which involves a deliberate, proactive, and transparent process of leadership transfer initiated while the incumbent leader is still active and capable and emergency succession which is triggered by the sudden death, incapacitation, or forced departure of a leader. Research across organisational contexts consistently demonstrates that planned succession produces significantly better outcomes, in terms of institutional continuity, staff morale, financial stability, and mission effectiveness, than emergency succession (Rothwell, 2010; Charan et al., 2011). Yet the evidence from Nigerian independent Pentecostal churches suggests that planned succession remains the exception rather than the rule, with most churches operating without any formal succession framework (Obinna, 2012; Okafor, 2017).

The concept of dynastic succession the transfer of pastoral authority to a founding pastor's biological children or spouse has emerged as a controversial but widespread phenomenon in Nigerian Pentecostalism. Proponents argue that dynastic succession honours the founder's legacy and preserves institutional continuity; critics point out that it replicates culturally constructed patterns of hereditary authority that have no direct biblical precedent in the model of servant leadership and may subordinate the spiritual gifting of the successor to considerations of family loyalty (Ukah, 2008; Nwosu, 2018). The biblical model suggests a different paradigm: one premised on demonstrated gifting, communal discernment, and transparent accountability.

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History of Revival Fire Ministries Inc., Minna, Niger State

i. Founding and Early Development

Revival fire ministries inc. was established on 20th September, 1990, by the late Rev Dr Bitrus Kato. Dr. Kato was the presiding Bishop of Revival fire ministries inc., a servant of God called with a prophetic and apostolic commission for world evangelism and missions.

In an early morning and encounter in 1978, the Lord said to him, "Son I want you to take my healing and deliverance message to the nations of Africa and I will confirm my words with signs and wonders"(Revival Fire Ministries Inc. Brochure, 2005). He began to prepare himself by training extensively in some theological schools. He held both Diploma and degree certificates in various disciplines that include theology, leadership training and pastoral ministry between 1978 and 1990. He was awarded a doctorate degree in missions from the Ferrum University, Virginia, U.S.A. He was commissioned to reviving the world with the message of love. It is noteworthy to state that Bishop Kato actually actually began his forage into the gospel ministry at the age of 12. He was the pastor of a protestant church in the army barracks at that tender age under the Baptist mission (Revival Fire Ministries Inc. Brochure, 2005).

The Vision of Revival Fire Ministries:

The Revival fire ministriesI Inc. is burdened with an apostolic and prophetic commission for world evangelism and missions to the nations

The Mission of Revival Fire Ministries:

To reach 50 million souls for the Lord Jesus Christ with the gospel of peace, hope and love.

The purpose of Revival Fire Ministries:

To reach world with Jesus' message of love, healing l, deliverance and salvation; discipling them to Christ-like maturity, training them to partake in the endtime harvest through the demonstration of God's power in order to bring glory and honour to God.

Growth, Expansion, and Institutional Development

Through the 2000s and into 2008, RFM experienced sustained growth in membership, ministry scope, and institutional complexity. New branches were established in several communities within Niger State, extending the ministry's geographical reach while also introducing new governance challenges: how were branch pastors appointed, supervised, and held accountable? What was the relationship between branch finances and the central ministry account? How were doctrinal and ministerial

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standards maintained across geographically dispersed congregations?

These questions were, in most cases, addressed through the personal authority of the founding General Overseer, who maintained close personal oversight of branch pastors and exercised final authority over all significant institutional decisions. This highly centralised governance model served the ministry well during its growth phase, when the General Overseer's personal energy, relational networks, and institutional knowledge were genuinely irreplaceable assets. Over time, however, as the ministry grew larger and more complex, the limitations of this highly personalised model became increasingly apparent.

During this period, RFM developed several new ministry departments youth ministry, women's ministry, children's church, praise and worship, media and communications, and social welfare each led by a department head appointed by the General Overseer.

The ministry also established a school a private Christian educational institution which significantly expanded its institutional footprint and its role in the community of Minna. These institutional expansions, while reflective of the ministry's growing social impact and financial capacity, also significantly increased the organisational complexity that any succession process would need to navigate.

Governance Structure and Succession Context

As at 2008, before the demise the General Overseer, Revival Fire Ministries Inc. operates under a governance structure that is characteristic of many Nigerian independent Pentecostal churches at a similar stage of institutional development. At the apex of the structure sits the General Overseer, who retains final authority over all significant institutional decisions spiritual, financial, administrative, and relational. Below the General Overseer is a small executive team comprising the senior associate pastor, the director of administration, and the heads of the major ministry departments.

A board of trustees exists and has been registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission as part of the ministry's incorporation documentation. There is no documented succession plan. The ministry's key assets including land, buildings, vehicles, and financial accounts are in various states of registration, with some held institutionally and others held personally by the General Overseer. There is no documented pastoral compensation or retirement policy. Branch pastors are appointed and accountable directly to the General Overseer.

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The gap between the General Overseer's expressed commitment to succession and the institutional reality of the ministry's unpreparedness for transition is the defining challenge that this study seeks to address.

However, as the ministry grew over the years, the lack of structured, policy-driven transition frameworks began to present operational challenges. The very model that had driven its early growth highly centralized, founder-centric authority became a source of vulnerability. Following growth and impact, the founder was later consecrated as a Bishop by a college of Bishops presided over by Bishop Francis Wale Oke.

On health grounds, the founder, Bishop Dr. Bitrus Kato, passed unto glory after a protracted illness, without a clear documented and binding leadership succession plan, in August 2008, at an Abuja hospital in Nigeria. The transition to a new leadership was marred by many factors. After much tossing back and forth, Rev Mrs Betty Kato, the wife of the late Bishop, was commissioned as the new General Overseer of the church by a college of Bishops led by Bishop Francis Wale Oke, in September 2008 (Revival Fire Ministries Inc. Brochure, 2005)

Challenges of Leadership Succession in Revival Fire Ministry, Minna, Niger State

Following the successful ground-breaking evangelistic efforts of Revival Fire Ministries Inc. in Minna, and the expansion of the church across the length and breadth of Niger State and beyond, the impact of the church grew from glory to glory.

Around April/May, 2008, the health condition of the General Overseer deteriorated. He became hospitalized in a private hospital at Abuja. The medical personnels did their best, but eventually the Bishop went to be with the Lord in August 2008. It is worthy of note that within this challenging times before the demise of the bishop, some pastors who served with the ministry exited the system and absconded without any official release or sendforth from the church. Just one serving pastor remained loyal and faithful to the bishop, ministry and the work.

The pastor who stayed back took over the administration of the church from the headquarters to the branches, planned the burial activities alongside the bereaved family and the college of Bishops headed by Bishop Francis Wale Oke. The burial of the bishop was successfully executed by the grace of God.

After the successful burial, the issue of the successor came to the front burner. Several interests and sentiments

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were expressed and in the course of the interface between the college of bishops, the wife of the late bishop and other stakeholders, there was no known formal leadership succession document of the ministry presented to guide the activities. Therefore, after much consideration of all the interests expressed, Bishop Francis Wale Oke, commissioned the wife of the late bishop as the new General Overseer of the ministry. These processes didn't happen without various threats.

Clearly, without a successful transition from charismatic authority to legal-rational structures (such as clear, written policies and collegiate boards), the founder's exit creates an organizational crisis. Hence, the following factors have been advanced for the challenges of leadership succession in Revival Fire Ministry, Minna, Niger State:

1. Absence of Formal Succession Structures

The findings of this study revealed that one of the major hindrances to leadership succession in Revival Fire Ministry (RFM) Minna, Niger State was the absence of formal succession structure which could have formed the legal and moral basis of the process of succession. This presupposes that the church lacked structured and codified succession plans before the demise of the founder (Bishop Dr. Bitrus Kato). This structural instability, combined with the lack of a prepared and mentored successor, resulted to rapid decline, and some losses. In a personal communication with Pastor Josiah (2026), he maintained that the issue of lack of formal succession structure is a common phenomenon in most Independent Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria. According to him, lack of documented plan, often creates frictions, factions and wasted energy in the church instead of fruitful work.

A research by Okafor (2017) surveying independent Pentecostal churches in north-central Nigeria showed that fewer than fifteen percent had any documented succession plan, fewer than ten percent had a formal leadership development programme, and fewer than five percent had a governance constitution that specified succession processes. These figures reflect not ignorance of best practice but a structural feature of the independent Pentecostal church model itself. The absence of formal structures manifests in several specific ways such as lack of a church constitution specifying governance arrangements and succession procedures

Thus, one can say without fear of contradiction that Independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria typically emerge without formal denominational accountability, without legally binding governance structures, and without the institutional memory that older, more established religious bodies possess. Their founding is driven by pastoral vision and spiritual energy, not by governance planning. The result is an

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institutional architecture that is, by design, centred on the founder and, by omission, structurally unprepared for that founder's departure (Eze, 2016; Obinna, 2012).

ii. Dynastic succession

Another major hindrance to a successful and productive leadership succession in Revival Fire Ministries Inc. Minna, Niger State, was the issue of dynastic succession. Omenyo, 2006, posits that many independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have gravitated towards what scholars term 'dynastic succession ' - the deliberate transfer of pastoral authority to a founder's biological children or spouse.

In a personal conversation with Elder Dunamis (2026), he affirmed that many independent Pentecostal church leaders now handle church as family business. This resonates with Mwenje, 2016, who posits that many independent Pentecostal pastors lead an autocratic and founder-centred leadership styles, a pattern that creates structural conditions favourable to dynastic transition once formal succession planning is absent.

iii. Ethnicity/Tribal bigotry

A very pertinent hindrance to a successful leadership succession in RFM was the issue of tribal sentiments. There was a clear debate and consideration that the successor must be a northerner. This practice, while not without biblical analogy (consider the Levitical priesthood), is more accurately traced to socio-cultural influences- particularly the Yoruba and Hausa concepts of hereditary chieftaincy than to a coherent biblical theology.

In a research, Tushima (2016) posits that many modern practices in Independent Pentecostal churches privilege loyalty to the founder's bloodline/kinsmen over the doctrinal and character-based criteria evident in the New Testament. The result is an ecclesiological confusion in which the spiritual legitimacy of the 'baton' is subordinated to bloodline and tribal politics.

Conclusion

This paper has undertaken an examination of the challenges of leadership succession in independent Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, with Revival Fire Ministries Inc. in Minna, Niger State, as its primary case study. The analysis has demonstrated that succession planning in this context is not a single, discrete institutional challenge that can be resolved by a single intervention; it is a multidimensional institutional challenge that requires coordinated responses across theological, organisational, legal, financial, cultural, and relational domains.

However, it is worthy to note that leadership succession is not an optional institutional luxury for Revival Fire Ministries Inc. or for any independent Pentecostal church in Nigeria; it is a

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spiritual and ethical imperative. The founder's responsibility to the community he has built, to the God who called him, and to the generations who will inherit the institution is not discharged at the moment of his calling; it extends through the entirety of his ministry, including its final chapter. Planning for succession is not an act of faithlessness; it is an act of stewardship, of love, and of theological integrity.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are posited:

i. Revival Fire Ministries and other Independent Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria should invest in leadership development. Potential successors should be identified early and mentored. They should receive both theological training and training in church administration through preaching series and leadership retreat. This process should be drawn from the rich succession narratives of the Old and New Testaments—the Mosaic-Josuaic succession, the Elijah-Elisha relationship, and the Pauline investment in Timothy and Titus.

ii. A formal compensation and retirement policy should be designed by Revival Fire Ministries Inc to provide the General Overseer with genuine financial security in retirement, removing the economic anxiety that is a significant driver of succession procrastination.

iii. The Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria should develop and disseminate a national best practice guide on leadership succession in independent Pentecostal churches, drawing on international models and Nigerian case studies, that provides founding pastors and governance boards with a practical roadmap for developing and implementing effective succession plans.

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The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Satisfaction and Profitability

Abstract

The growing competition in the banking industry has made it necessary for financial institutions to adopt strategies that enhance customer satisfaction and ensure long-term profitability. Relationship marketing has emerged as a key approach that focuses on building and maintaining strong relationships with customers through trust, communication, commitment, and effective service delivery. Despite this, many banks still face challenges in retaining customers and sustaining profitability due to weak relationship-management practices. This study examined the impact of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction and profitability, using Access Bank Plc, Lagos Mainland Branch, as a case study. It specifically sought to determine the effect of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction and to evaluate how satisfaction influences profitability. A conceptual framework was developed linking relationship-marketing dimensions (trust, communication, commitment, and empathy) to customer satisfaction and profitability outcomes. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 100 customers using simple random sampling, with 80 valid responses analyzed. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the chi-square test of independence. The findings revealed that relationship marketing significantly improves customer satisfaction. Another is that customer satisfaction significantly affects profitability, and relationship-marketing tools significantly influence customer retention. The study concluded that relationship marketing is essential for enhancing both customer satisfaction and profitability in the banking sector, and recommended that Access Bank strengthen communication, improve service quality, and adopt more effective customer-relationship-management strategies to sustain long-term customer relationships.

Keywords: Relationship marketing, customer satisfaction, customer retention, profitability, banking sector.

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Introduction

Relationship marketing has now become one of the most strategic means of achieving customer satisfaction and profitability in the banking industry (Kotler *et al*, 2021; Grönroos, 2021). The contemporary banking system depends heavily on the creation and maintenance of customer relationships rather than mere transactional contacts, especially as competition in the industry increases (Payne & Frow, 2021; Sheth, 2020). With growing customer mobility, adoption of digital banking, and services in Nigerian banking, it becomes necessary to create and maintain long-term customer relationships that would provide value apart from the basic banking product,

despite the efforts of competitors to reduce the benefit gained.

Satisfaction is obtained through the congruence of the customers' experiences with their pre-existing expectations; thus, they are likely to repeat their purchase, exhibit loyalty, and provide favorable word of mouth (Kotler *et al*., 2021; Rust *et al*, 2021). There is ample evidence provided by the literature from Nigeria that supports the correlation between relationship marketing and these factors. Babatola *et al*. (2024) show that personalized communication, responsiveness, and service reliability increase customer satisfaction in deposit money banks, while Mustapha *et al*. (2023) prove that customer-relationship-management initiatives improve organizational performance of banks in Southwest Nigeria.

Lawan (2023) proves that the quality of customer support and technology adoption drive loyalty, while Burodo *et al.* (2022) reveal that the reliability and responsiveness of e-banking increase customer satisfaction. Similarly, Mustapha *et al.* (2024) and Ufuoma (2024) prove that digital customer-relationship management and structured engagement frameworks increase bank performance, while Okereke (2024) demonstrates the positive relationship between satisfaction-related investments and performance of listed Nigerian banks.

However, many banks still fail to achieve consistent customer satisfaction and profitability, and the implementation of customer relationship marketing strategies at the branch level is not consistent either. Customers continue reporting slow service delivery, poor complaint resolution, digital platform breakdowns, and lack of personalized interactions. Although Access Bank Plc has done much about building its digital infrastructure, develop loyalty programs, and train employees, customer migration and dissatisfaction can be observed in highly competitive locations like Lagos Mainland.

Additionally, even though a number of studies confirm the improvement of organizational performance as a result of CRM, there is a lack of branch-specific empirical data on the direct relationship between relationship marketing and customer satisfaction and profitability. Consequently, the management's decisions regarding improving customer relationships are based on assumptions of general banking practice rather than local specificities. The study aims to fill in the gap in the literature by exploring the impact of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction and profitability in Access Bank Plc, Lagos Mainland Branch.1

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to

I. Examine the impact of relationship marketing on customer satisfaction and profitability
II. Assess the extent to which customer satisfaction affects profitability; and
III. Determine practical strategies for improving customer satisfaction and

profitability through relationship marketing

Research Questions

The study addresses three questions, and they are:

I. What impact does relationship marketing have on customer satisfaction?
II. To what extent does customer satisfaction affect profitability?
III. How effective are the relationship-marketing tools used by banks in engaging and retaining customers?

Research Hypotheses

$H_{0\ 1}$: Relationship marketing has no significant effect on customer satisfaction.
$H_{0\ 2}$: Customer satisfaction has no significant effect on profitability.
$H_{0\ 3}$: Relationship-marketing tools do not significantly influence customer retention.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was considered appropriate for assessing customers' perceptions of relationship marketing, satisfaction, and profitability within a defined population. The research was conducted in Lagos State, Nigeria, focusing on Access Bank Plc, Lagos Mainland Branch.

The target population comprised 134 customers of the branch who held savings, current, fixed-deposit, or corporate accounts and had sufficient interaction with the bank's services. Using the Taro Yamane formula at a 5% level of significance, a sample size of 100 respondents was derived. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents, and structured questionnaires were the primary data-collection instrument; secondary data were drawn from textbooks, journal articles, and other relevant published sources. Of the 100 questionnaires administered, 80 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 80%, on which the analysis is based.

Content validity was established by aligning questionnaire items with existing literature and established measurement scales, and by expert review from marketing and research-methodology scholars. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained, exceeding the 0.5 benchmark typically considered acceptable for research instruments. The independent variable, relationship marketing, was measured through the dimensions of trust, communication, commitment, and empathy, while the dependent variables, customer satisfaction and perceived profitability, were measured through indicators such as service-quality perception, repeat patronage, customer retention, and willingness to recommend the bank.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages) for demographic and perception data. In contrast, the non-parametric chi-square (χ^2) test of independence was used to test the three hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, with decisions based on comparing the calculated chi-square value against the critical value at the appropriate degrees of freedom.

Citation: Benson, Ozioma. "The Impact of Relationship Marketing on Customer Satisfaction and Profitability". *Journal of People and Worldviews (JPW)*, 2026: pp202-208.

Finding

3.1 Respondent Profile

Of the 80 respondents, 56.3% were male, and 43.8% were female. Most respondents (70%) were between 18 and 35 years old, reflecting a relatively youthful customer base, while 25% held postgraduate qualifications (MBA/MSc/PhD) and a further 31.3% held HND/BSc degrees. Savings accounts were the most common product held (37.5%), followed by current accounts (31.3%). Regarding relationship duration, 37.5% of respondents had banked with Access Bank for 7–10 years and 23.8% for over 10 years, indicating a customer base with substantial relationship history.

Perceptions of Relationship Marketing, Satisfaction, and Profitability

Respondents' agreement with key statements is summarized in Table 1. A majority of respondents agreed that relationship marketing enhances empathy (81.3% agreement) and that communication influences customer retention (81.3% agreement). Perceptions were more mixed on trust (46.3% agreement versus 43.8% disagreement) and on relationship marketing's contribution to profitability (63.8% agreement versus 32.5% disagreement), suggesting that while communication and empathy are consistently well rated, trust-building and the perceived link to profitability remain areas of concern for a meaningful minority of customers.

Statement	% Agree/Strongly Agree	% Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	% Undecided
Relationship marketing builds trust	46.3	43.8	10.0
Communication influences customer retention	81.3	15.0	3.8
Relationship marketing enhances empathy	81.3	15.0	3.8
Relationship marketing improves customer satisfaction	62.5	31.3	6.3
Relationship marketing influences customer retention	67.5	23.8	8.8
Relationship marketing contributes to profitability	63.8	32.5	3.8

Hypothesis Testing

Three hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test of independence at 4 degrees of freedom, with a critical value of 9.488 at the 0.05 level of significance. Table 2 summarizes the results.

Hypothesis	χ^2 calculated	χ^2 critical (0.05)	df	Decision
H1: Relationship marketing → customer satisfaction	6.27	9.488	4	Reject H_0 ; RM has a significant effect
H2: Customer satisfaction → profitability	7.38	9.488	4	Reject H_0 ; significant effect
H3: Relationship-marketing tools → customer retention	5.83	9.488	4	Reject H_0 ; significant influence

Because the calculated chi-square values in all three cases were lower than the

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critical value, the null hypotheses were rejected and the alternative hypotheses accepted. The results indicate that relationship marketing has a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction, that customer satisfaction has a statistically significant effect on profitability, and that relationship-marketing tools significantly influence customer retention.

Discussion

The finding that relationship marketing significantly affects customer satisfaction is consistent with prior Nigerian studies (Babatola *et al*., 2024; Okonkwo & Ugwuonah, 2023), which similarly found that trust, communication, and service reliability drive satisfaction among deposit-money-bank customers. The particularly strong agreement recorded for communication and empathy suggests that Access Bank customers respond most positively to responsive, timely, and personalized interaction, echoing Lawan's (2023) observation that customer-support quality is a central driver of loyalty in Nigerian banking. The comparatively weaker agreement on trust, however, points to a gap consistent with Commitment-Trust Theory: while communication and empathy are visible day-to-day, trust is built more slowly and is more easily undermined by service failures, suggesting that Access Bank's relationship-marketing efforts have not yet fully translated into consistent trust across its customer base.

The significant relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability supports Expectation-Confirmation Theory and Customer Equity Theory, and aligns with the meta-analytic evidence of Mittal *et al.* (2023) and the Nigerian findings of Ufuoma (2024) and Okereke (2024), which link satisfaction-oriented investment to improved bank performance. Satisfied respondents in this study reported a greater willingness to maintain higher balances, transact repeatedly, and remain loyal, all of which are consistent with the view that profitability in banking increasingly depends on the depth of the customer relationship rather than on product offerings alone.

Finally, the significant influence of relationship-marketing tools on customer retention corroborates Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, and Evans (2020), whose meta-analysis found relationship marketing to be a consistent predictor of retention across service industries, and supports the branch-level relevance of digital and interpersonal relationship-marketing tools identified by Mustapha *et al.* (2024). Taken together, the findings suggest that Access Bank's relationship-marketing practices are working most effectively through communication and empathy, moderately well through retention-focused tools, and least effectively through trust-building, which represents the clearest opportunity for improvement

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that relationship marketing is a vital strategy for enhancing customer satisfaction, retention, and profitability in the banking

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sector. Customers value consistent communication, trustworthy service delivery, and genuine commitment from their bank; when they feel appreciated and well served, they are more likely to remain loyal, transact repeatedly, and use a wider range of banking services. Relationship marketing is therefore not merely a service approach but a driver of long-term profitability for Access Bank Plc, Lagos Mainland Branch, and, by extension, for similarly positioned bank branches operating in competitive urban markets.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Access Bank (i) strengthen digital and interpersonal communication channels to ensure customers receive timely and accurate information; (ii) invest in continuous staff training on empathy, responsiveness, and complaint resolution; (iii) prioritise transparency in charges, policies, and transactions to build trust, which emerged as the weakest dimension; (iv) develop personalized relationship strategies such as tailored offers and loyalty programmes; (v) leverage customer data to anticipate needs and pre-empt dissatisfaction; and (vi) promote retention-focused initiatives, including rewards for long-standing customers and simplified service processes. The study was limited to one branch and relied on self-reported survey data, so findings may not generalize to other branches or regions; future research could extend this work through comparative, longitudinal, or digitally focused studies across multiple banks and locations.

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Crop Water Requirements of Early and Late-Season Tomato (Lycopersicon esculentum) in Umudike Area of Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria

Abstract

Water requirements of tomato planted in the Umudike area of Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria was estimated based on a 11-year meteorological data of the National Root Crop Research Institute, Umudike, using Penman's equation. Results obtained showed that seasonal crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop) of tomato planted on 1 March and harvested in July (early season) was 387.10 mm, whereas that sown on 1 August and harvested in December (late season) was 353.31 mm. The results indicated that water requirement for early season tomato was higher than the late season tomato. Supplementary irrigation requirements were estimated at 11.52 mm during the initial growth stage of early-season tomato and 126.49 mm during the productive and maturity stages of late-season tomato. It is therefore recommended that the early season planting be done at a time when crop water requirements of the initial growth stage and reproductive and maturity stages of tomato in Umudike can be met by effective rainfall for economic reasons. However, provision for supplementary irrigation should be made during November and December for late-season tomato production.

Keywords: Crop Water Requirement, Penman's equation, Season, Tomato, Evapotranspiration.

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Introduction

Crop growth periods and their water requirements vary with climatic conditions of an area. Irrigation scheduling is dependent on the moisture needs of the crop, timing and the amount of available water to the crop. The irrigation needs are also dependent on the amount of available moisture unable to be supplied by rainfall, particularly under rain fed conditions, and therefore represents the amount of water needed to make up the deficit between crop water requirement and effective rainfall (Allen *et al*., 1998; Ouda *et al*., 2015). Broner and Schneekloth (2003) reported that water requirements of crops depend mainly on environmental conditions. Adequate moisture is however necessary for good crop establishment, growth, yields and quality (Machado *et al*., 2022).

Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) is known to originate in the Western Southone normal spaceand Central America (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018), but its cultivation and use as a crop may have originated with the Indian people of

Mexico (Cage, 2005) and now it is widely grown inone normal spacemost climatic zones of the world. The word 'tomato' comes from the Nahuatl wordone normal space'tomatl' meaning 'the swelling fruit' (Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). It is one of the most important vegetable plants in the world (Kimura and Sinha, 2008), and widely used as food and research material. The red edible fruits are a good source of antioxidant Lycopene which has many health benefits (Petre, 2018) and thus an important constituent of the dailyone normal spacediets of most Nigerians (Ubi and Osodeke, 2009). Tomato has interesting features such as fleshyone normal spacefruit, a sympodial shoot, and compound leaves (Kimura and Sinha, 2008).

Nigeria produces about 3.78 million metric tons of tomato annually, with about 60% produced in the northern regions of the country (NAERLS, 2025). Although the crop is predominantly and commercially grown in the northern region of the country, its production also occurs in the southern part, but on a smaller scale. The lower level of production in the southern region may be associated with factors such as high rainfall, high relative humidity, and other agro-climatic and production constraints (Ubi and Osodeke, 2009). The crop requires well-drained and fertile soil with pH range of 5.8 – 6.8. Tomato has a relatively shallow root system, with more than 70% of effective roots usually found in the upper 2 cm of the soil depth. Its water requirement varies with climatic conditions, crop species, growth stage and soil water availability (Allen *et al*., 1998; Negash *et al*., 2024).

Water shortage during early flowing and yield formation in tomato reduces the number of fruits, fruit size and yield (Raemackers, 2001; Sivakumar and Srividhya, 2016). Thus adequate water and nutrient supply to tomato is very important at the early flowering and yield formation stages. This is because about 90% by weight of the plant tissues are made up of water (Ridge, 1991; Hou *et al*., 2020), indicating that drought conditions can significantly reduce plant growth and yield (Sivakumar and Srividhya, 2016).

The primary constraint for high yields in crops such as tomato during the late season period is soil moisture deficit (Nangare *et al*., 2016). Inadequate soil moisture can adversely affect plant growth, yield and water productivity, making appropriate irrigation management important for maintaining adequate soil moisture, particularly in late season (Nangare *et al*., 2016; Mahmoud and Fayad, 2022; Mukherjee *et al*., 2023). To cope with moisture deficit of this season, irrigation is needed to meet the deficit requirement that cannot be met by effective rainfall (Du and Kang, 2011; Nangare *et al*., 2016). This suggests that crop water demand must be met through water supplied by rainfall, irrigation and soil-water storage within the root zone to

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satisfy evapotranspiration requirements and prevent water stress (Allen *et al*., 1998; DeJonge *et al*., 2024).

Tomato requires an adequate supply of water for optimum production (Raemackers, 2001; Sivakumar and Srividhya, 2016). Therefore, determining crop water requirements and the response of tomato to soil moisture availability at different growth stages in both seasons cannot is essential for efficient water management and optimum production. This will help in the development of suitable water management practices for optimal tomato production in Umudike areas of Abia State, Southeastern Nigeria. The information generated from this study will also provide a basis for planning irrigation schedules and improving the efficient use of available water during early and late season tomato production. The objectives of the study were to determine the crop water requirements and the irrigation need of tomato for early and late season production cycles.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, which lies between latitude 05º 29'N and longitude 07º 33'E (Chukwu, 1999) in the humid forest zone of Nigeria and has an altitude of 122 m above sea level. The area has an annual rainfall range of 1900 mm to 2200 mm which is bimodally distributed and peaks in July and September (Iren and Osodeke, 2006). The soil of Umudike is sandy clay loam (coarse textured) and classified as an Ultisol (Njoku *et al*., 2001).

Crop water requirement

Crop water requirement is the total water needed for evapotranspiration, from planting to harvest for a given crop in a specific climatic region, when adequate soil water is maintained by rainfall and / or irrigation so that plant growth and yield are not limited (Hess, 2005). The crop water requirement of early and late season tomato in Umudike areas of Abia State was estimated with 2009 to 2019 meteorological data collected from the meteorological station of the National Root Crop Research Institute, Umudike, typical of the study area (Table 1). The meteorological data contains monthly rainfall, relative humidity (maximum and minimum), mean temperature, sunshine and wind speed over an 11-year period. The data was analyzed to obtain the reference crop evapotranspiration (ETo), crop coefficient (Kc), crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop), and irrigation water requirement (IR).

A total growth duration of 135 days (Phene, 1989) for each cropping period was disaggregated into 30, 40, 40 and 25 days, representing the initial, crop development, mid-season and harvest stages respectively (Adelama and Simons, 1980; Quinn, 2000) for this study. The crop was assumed to have been sown within the recommended periods for the early and late season cultivation of tomato in the tropics (Thompson, 1996). The early season tomato was assumed to

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have been planted on the 1st of March and harvested on the 14th of July, while the late season cropping was assumed to have been planted on the 1st of August and harvested on the 14th of December. The estimation of crop evapotranspiration involved three stages; Reference or potential evapotranspiration (ETo), crop coefficient (Kc) and crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop).

Estimation of reference evapotranspiration

Reference crop evapotranspiration (ETo) is defined as the rate of evaporation of an extended surface of 8 to 15cm tall green grass cover actively growing completely shading the ground and not short of water (Doorenbos *et al*., 1986). It therefore indicates the atmospheric evaporative demand and its potential effect on crop water use. Thus reference crop evapotranspiration was calculated based on Penman's equation given as:

$$ETo = C [W + Rn + (1 - W) \times f(u) \times (ea - ed)] \quad - \quad - \quad (1)$$

Where;

ea – ed = vapor pressure deficit (the difference between saturation vapor pressure (ea) at the mean temperature of that location and actual vapor pressure (ed).

$$ed = ea \times RH/100; \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (2)$$

ea = saturation vapour pressure at the mean air temperature of the location; and

RH = relative humidity (%).

$$f(u) \text{ (wind function)} = 0.27 (1 + [U/100]), \quad - \quad - \quad (3)$$

U = wind speed in km/day measured at 2m height.

$$Rn \text{ (total net radiation in mm/day)} = 0.75 Rs - Rnl \quad - \quad (4)$$

Where Rs is incoming short wave radiation in mm/day.

$$Rs \text{ can be obtained as } (0.25 + 0.5n/N) Ra. \quad - \quad - \quad (5)$$

Ra is extra-terrestrial radiation in mm/day, n = mean actual sunshine duration in hr/day and N= maximum possible sunshine duration in hr/day; Rnl is a long wave radiation in mm/day and is aone normal spacefunction of temperature (Ft), a function of actual vapor pressure (F(ed) and sunshine duration F (n/N)

or

$$Rnl = (Ft) \times (F(ed) \times F(n/N). \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (6)$$

W = temperature and altitude dependent wilting factor.

C = adjustment factor for the ratio ration of wind speed of wind speed in the day over wind speed at night for RH maximum and Rs.

Estimation of crop coefficient (Kc)

The crop coefficient (Kc) value varies with crop, development stage of the crop, and to some extent with wind speed and humidity. For most crops, the Kc value increases from a low value at time of crop

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emergence to a maximum value during the period when the crop reaches full development, and declines as crop matures (Doorenbos *et al*., 1986).

Crop coefficients (Kc) of 0.45, 0.75, 1.05 and 0.8 (Doorenbos *et al*., 1986), were used for the initial, crop development, mid-season and late season growth stages of tomato respectively.

The Kc value at each of the growth stages was converted to monthly Kc value as follows;

$$Kc/Month = \frac{Kc\ growth\ stage \times N}{30} \quad - - - \quad (7)$$

Where N = number of days growth stage lasted.

Crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop)

Crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop) refers to conditions when water is adequate for unrestricted growth and development (Allen *et al*., 1998), *i.e*, when soil water is not limited. It is also referred to as water requirements in mm/day or mm/period. Crop evapotranspiration (ETm or ETcrop) was determined as:

$$ET\ crop = ETo \times Kc \quad - - - - - \quad (8)$$

Crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop/month) was obtained as the product of the monthly mean ETo in mm/day and the Kc for the crop over each 30-day period. Seasonal ET crop values were calculated by summing the monthly values.

Irrigation water requirement (IR)

Irrigation water requirement IR was calculated as the difference between ETcrop and Effectiveone normal spaceRainfall (ER) (Brouwer and Herbloem, 1986).

Effective Rainfall (ER) was calculated using the formulae;

$$ER = 0.8R - 25, \text{ if } R > 75mm / month. \quad - - \quad (9)$$

Or

$$ER = 0.6R - 10, \text{ if } R < 75mm / month. \quad - - \quad (10)$$

Where

R = monthly rainfall (mm).

When actual evapotranspiration (Eta) is less than the maximum evapotranspiration (ETm), there is moisture deficit signifying the need for irrigation.

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Table 1: Meteorological data of Umudike from 2009 t0 2019

Months	Total Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (%)			Mean T °C	Sunshine Hours	Wind speed (U)	Mean U(day)	Mean U (Unight)	Uday/ Unight	ETo mm/day	ETo mm/month
	(mm)	max	min	mean			Km/hr	(m/sec)	(m/sec)	(m/sec)		
Jan.	9.10	58.30	36.70	47.50	27.00	4.80	669.60	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.58	110.98
Feb.	44.50	69.80	30.20	50.00	28.60	4.70	643.20	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.84	111.36
Mar.	86.60	76.75	46.25	61.50	28.70	4.20	736.80	3.40	2.00	1.70	4.00	124.00
Apr.	192.40	80.10	56.90	68.50	28.20	4.60	736.80	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.92	117.60
May	248.30	81.60	72.40	77.00	27.70	5.00	638.40	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.79	113.70
June	325.40	85.00	66.00	75.50	26.70	4.00	669.40	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.42	102.60
July	306.70	86.50	65.50	78.00	26.80	2.60	586.40	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.10	96.10
Aug.	346.70	84.75	74.25	79.50	25.60	2.60	849.60	3.40	2.00	1.70	2.85	88.35
Sept.	322.30	85.20	70.80	78.00	25.80	2.70	688.80	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.15	94.50
Oct.	273.30	83.14	65.86	74.50	26.60	3.70	566.40	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.42	106.02
Nov.	54.80	80.50	57.50	69.00	27.00	4.50	564.00	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.53	105.90
Dec.	4.30	72.50	45.50	59.00	26.80	5.30	626.40	3.40	2.00	1.70	3.42	106.02
Total	2214.40	943.79	687.86	818.00	325.50	48.70	7971.80	40.80	24.00	20.40	40.02	1277.13
Mean	184.53	78.65	57.32	66.17	27.13	4.06	664.32	3.40	2.00	1,70	3.50	106.43

ETo = Refernce crop evaporanspiration, Max= maximum, Min = Minimum, T °C = Temperature in degree centigrade, U=wind speed

Table 2: Calculated monthly crop coefficient and maximum evapotranspiration for early and late season tomato

Months	ETo /month (mm)	Kc/month
Early season tomato		
March	124.00	0.45
April	117.60	0.75
May	113.70	0.95
June	102.60	0.97

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July	96.10	0.37
Late season tomato		
August	88.35	0.45
September	94.50	0.75
October	106.02	0.95
November	105.90	0.97
December	106.02	0.37

Table 3: Estimation of Crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop), Effective rainfall (ER) and Irrigation requirements of Tomato

Months	Crop evapotranspiration (ET crop) (mm)	Effective rainfall (ER) (mm)	ER– ETcrop	Irrigation water requirement (IR)
Early season tomato				
March	55.80	44.28	-11.52	11.52
April	88.20	128.92	40.72	0.00
May	108.02	173.64	65.63	0.00
June	99.52	235.32	135.80	0.00
July	35.56	220.36	184.80	0.00
Seasonal values	**387.10**	**802.52**	**415.43**	**11.52**
Late season tomato				
August	39.76	252.36	212.60	0.00
September	70.88	232.84	161.96	0.00
October	100.72	193.64	92.92	0.00
November	102.72	22.88	-79.84	79.84
December	39.23	-7.42	-46.65	46.65
Seasonal values	**353.31**	**694.32**	**340.99**	**126.49**

Results and Discussion

The meteorological data of Umudike from 2009 to 2019 is presented in Table 1. The table shows that rainfall amounts (346.70mm), mean relative humidity (79.50%) and wind speed (849.60 km/hr) were highest in the month of August while mean temperature (25.60 ^{o}C) was lowest in the same month. The month of December recorded the lowest rainfall amount with 4.30mm only.

The daily reference crop evapotranspiration ETo varied from 2.85 to 4.00 mm/day with a mean of 3.50 mm/day while the monthly ETo varied from 88.35 to 124.00 mm/month with a mean of 106.43 mm/month. Reference crop evaporation (ETo) values were generally higher during the drier months of January to April, with the highest value recorded in March (124.00 mm), but lower in the wetter months of July and August. with the lowest value observed in August (88.35 mm). Similar results in which ETo values were higher in drier months of January to April but lower in the wetter months of July and August have been reported by many researchers (Chukwu, 1999; Chukwu and Igbokwe, 2001; Iren and Osodeke, 2006). Higher rainfall is expected to confer higher relative humidity on the environment, this will automatically lower the air temperature (Singh and Dhillon, 2004) resulting in the lower ETo of the wetter months.

The calculated monthly crop coefficient (Kc/month) values for the early season and late season tomato from the initial, crop development, mid and late season stages are presented in Table 2. The Kc values were the same for both seasons. However, the Kc values increased from low values at time of crop emergence to maximum values when the crop reaches full development and thereafter declines when the crop matures. This result corroborated the report of Iren and Osodeke (2006), Ubi and Osodeke (2009), and Akinwutimi (2015) who all had similar observation of Kc values according to the growth stages. Highest Kc values were recorded in the months of May and June (0.95 and 0.97) for early season and October and November (0.95 and 0.97) for the late season tomato. These months coincided with the productive and maturity stages of growth in tomato and are reportedly the most active growth stages (Doorenbos *et al*., 1986; Phene, 1989; Thompson, 1996; Quinn, 2000).

Table 3. shows the crop evapotranspiration (ETcrop), effective rainfall (ER), and irrigation water requirement of early and late season tomato production in Umudike area. Crop evapotranspiration for early season was 387.10 mm while that of the late season was 353.31 mm. The calculated seasonal effective rainfall was 802.52 and 694.32 mm for early- and late-season tomato, respectively. In the early season cultivation, the calculated effective rainfall was higher than the water requirement of tomato in the months of

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April to July, indicating that there is no need for irrigation in these months. However, in the month of March, Table 3 showed a lower ER than ETcrop, suggesting a need for supplementary irrigation in this month. The irrigation water requirement in the month of March was 11.52mm. Adebola *et al*. (2017) reported similar results where supplementary irrigation for tomato production was needed in the month of March. With regards to the late season production phase, effective rainfall was lower than the water requirement of the crop in the months of November and December. Thus, the need for supplementary irrigation in these months. The irrigation water requirements for tomato in the months of November and December were 79.84 and 46.65 respectively.

Conclusion

Results showed that supplementary irrigation will be needed during the initial growth stage in the early season cultivation phase of tomato planted in 1 March in Umudike area. In the late season phase, supplementary irrigation will be necessary during the productive and maturity (most active) growth stages.

The findings also showed that the seasonal crop water requirement of tomato was higher during the early season than during the late season in the study area.

It is therefore recommended that the early season planting be done at a time when crop water requirements of the initial growth stage and reproductive and maturity stages of tomato in Umudike can be met by effective rainfall for economic reasons. However, provision should be made for supplementary irrigation in the months of November and December.

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A Case Study of the 2012 Impact of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Nigerian Citizens in Jalingo Town of Taraba State

Abstract

Fuel subsidy has historically served as an important economic policy in Nigeria because of the country's dependence on petroleum products for transportation, electricity generation, trade and household survival. However, the decision of the Federal Government under the administration of Goodluck Jonathan to remove fuel subsidy in January 2012 generated widespread protests and public dissatisfaction across the country, including Jalingo town. This article examined the impact of the 2012 fuel subsidy removal on residents of Jalingo town in Taraba State, with particular focus on its economic, social and environmental implications. It explained the historical development of fuel subsidy in Nigeria, analysed the political and economic rationale behind the subsidy removal, investigated residents' reactions to the policy, and assessed its economic, social and environmental effects on the town. The article adopted primary and secondary methods of data collection, including oral interviews with residents, transport operators, traders, students, civil servants and small business owners. The findings showed that the policy negatively affected low-income households, traders, students, civil servants, transport operators and small business owners. Many residents adopted coping mechanisms such as reducing household expenditure, adjusting transportation patterns, relying on communal savings systems and shifting to alternative energy sources. The article concluded that although government justified the subsidy removal on grounds of economic reform and fiscal sustainability, the immediate consequences created severe hardship for ordinary residents of Jalingo town.

Keywords: Fuel subsidy removal; Jalingo; Occupy Nigeria; household welfare; economic reform; transportation cost; palliatives.

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Introduction

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria has long been one of the most contentious issues in the country's political and economic history. The Nigerian state adopted fuel subsidies as a policy instrument to ensure that petroleum products remained affordable for the general population. The intention was to shield citizens from sudden increases in fuel prices caused by fluctuations in the international oil market and to promote social stability in a country marked by widespread poverty and limited

industrial capacity. Over the years, fuel subsidies became more than an economic policy; they were widely perceived by Nigerians as a form of social support from government, especially in the absence of reliable public services such as affordable transport, stable electricity supply and comprehensive social welfare systems.

For many citizens, cheap fuel helped reduce the cost of transport, food distribution and small-scale business operations, thereby supporting daily survival and economic activity. The history of fuel subsidies in Nigeria dates back to the 1970s, when they were introduced to shield citizens from the volatility of global oil prices. By 2012, however, the federal government argued that the subsidy regime had become wasteful, claiming it cost the nation over ₦1.3 trillion in 2011 alone. Concerns over the sustainability of the fuel subsidy system intensified because the regime was increasingly described as financially burdensome and riddled with corruption, inefficiency and abuse by marketers and officials.

On January 1, 2012, the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency announced the immediate cessation of the subsidy, causing the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit to rise from ₦65 to approximately ₦141 per litre. In Jalingo, the capital of Taraba State, the impact was immediate. Unlike the industrial hubs of the South, Jalingo's economy was primarily driven by civil service, small-scale trade, informal transport and agrarian exchange. The town served as a transit point for agricultural produce from Taraba's rural farms to other parts of the North. The sudden hike in fuel prices therefore paralysed the transport sector and increased the cost of moving people, food and goods.

The resulting Occupy Nigeria protests in Jalingo were not merely political; they were a survivalist response to an overnight threat to residents' food security and mobility. While extensive academic literature exists on the economic implications of the policy for Nigeria as a whole, there remains a significant gap in research on its localised effects on smaller urban centres such as Jalingo. This article addresses that gap by documenting the impact of the 2012 fuel subsidy removal through the lived experiences of residents of Jalingo during that turbulent year.

The main aim of this article is to examine the impact of fuel subsidy removal on Nigerian citizens in Jalingo town, Taraba State, in 2012. Specifically, it explains the concept of fuel subsidy removal as it occurred in Nigeria in 2012, examines the effects of the policy on transportation, household expenditure and small business operations, assesses government responses and intervention measures, and analyses the coping and survival strategies adopted by residents.

Scope, Methodology and Significance

The geographical scope of this study is strictly confined to Jalingo town, the capital of Taraba State. Although fuel

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subsidy removal affected the entire country, Jalingo was chosen because it serves as the commercial and administrative nerve centre of Taraba State and relies heavily on fuel-powered transport and informal economic activities. The chronological scope is limited to 2012, covering the period from the initial announcement in January to the gradual stabilisation of prices by December. This narrow time frame enabled a focused analysis of the immediate impact of subsidy removal on residents during the crisis period.

Methodologically, the article adopts a qualitative historical case-study approach. It relies on oral interviews and documentary sources to reconstruct how residents experienced the 2012 subsidy removal at the local level. Primary data were drawn from oral interviews with Jalingo residents who were active during the period, including transport union officials, market women, civil servants, traders, students and small business owners. These oral testimonies were treated as historical evidence because they provided direct accounts of transport difficulties, market adjustments, household pressure and public perception during the crisis.

Secondary sources included textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, magazines, government publications and relevant reports. The interview evidence was interpreted alongside these written sources in order to reduce overdependence on personal memory and to strengthen the reliability of the analysis. This was necessary because documented statistical data on 2012 market prices at the local government level were limited. The study therefore combined documentary evidence with local oral accounts to capture both the policy background and the human experience of the crisis.

The significance of the study is both academic and practical. Academically, it contributes to History and International Relations by shifting attention from centre-based narratives to periphery-based historical experience. By documenting the 2012 crisis from the perspective of Jalingo, the study ensures that the experiences of Lagos or Abuja do not overshadow those of the North-East. Practically, the findings provide insights for policymakers by showing how national economic reforms translate into everyday hardship in smaller urban centres with weak social protection systems.

Conceptual and Literature Background

Fuel subsidy removal is the withdrawal of government financial support intended to lower the market price of Premium Motor Spirit. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi defines it as a fiscal reform aimed at eliminating price distortions and redirecting public funds from consumption to infrastructure investment. In this study, it refers specifically to the January 1, 2012 policy shift that raised Nigeria's pump price from ₦65 to over ₦140, ending a decades-long regime of government-funded price caps. Socio-

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economic activities refer to the interconnected social and economic practices, such as trading, farming, transport and labour, that support community survival and development.

Transportation cost is the total expenditure required to move people and goods from one location to another. In Jalingo, it refers particularly to fares charged by commercial motorcycles, taxis and minibuses, which served as the primary modes of transport for residents and agricultural produce during the 2012 fuel crisis. Food prices refer to the market value of essential commodities, including staples such as yams, maize, rice, beans and vegetables in the Jalingo Main Market. Household welfare refers to the quality of life of Jalingo families and whether they were forced to reduce meals, schooling, healthcare access or social participation due to inflation.

The 2012 fuel subsidy removal sparked extensive academic inquiry. Existing scholarship may be grouped into three themes: the political economy of the subsidy regime, the socio-economic effects on urban centres, and the regional peculiarities of the Nigerian North-East. Akin Iwayemi argues that subsidy encouraged inefficient consumption and stifled investment, but his focus is largely on national economic indicators such as gross domestic product, budget deficits and public expenditure. Yusuf Bala notes that the subsidy was originally a social stabiliser that became unsustainable following global economic fluctuations, while Nnimmo Bassey and Chibuzo Nwoke draw attention to external economic pressures and the failure to maintain functional refineries despite Nigeria's status as an oil-producing country.

Adeola Adenikinju shows how transport costs disproportionately affect low-income groups, while John Adeoti explains the multiplier effect of fuel price hikes in a road-reliant economy. Abubakar Momoh describes the 2012 unrest as a manifestation of poverty-induced anger, and Sola Olorunyomi documents widespread protests, survival strategies and public anger among urban poor populations. Samuel Egwu highlights that the North-East faces unique challenges due to its distance from coastal ports, while Michael Ogah notes that Jalingo functions as a transit hub for agricultural produce where fuel hikes squeezed the margins of local traders.

B. J. Takaya observes that the socio-political climate of Taraba made the economic hardship of 2012 even more volatile. Onyishi et al. argue that the subsidy reinvestment programme suffered from politicisation, while Uzoma Okeke suggests that government failed to account for the lack of mass transit in northern towns. David Yerima provides a localised critique, stating that palliatives were almost invisible in Jalingo. Ibrahim Muhammad concludes that reforms without safety nets are unsustainable in Nigeria. This article builds on these insights by using oral interviews with Jalingo residents to assess whether

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government palliatives actually reached the people and reduced their hardship.

Historical Perspective of Fuel Subsidy in Nigeria

The discovery and commercialisation of petroleum transformed Nigeria's economic, political and social structure. Since crude oil became the backbone of the Nigerian economy in the late 1950s, successive governments have relied heavily on petroleum revenues for national development, foreign exchange earnings and fiscal sustainability. Alongside this dependence, fuel subsidy emerged as a policy mechanism designed to make petroleum products affordable for citizens. Over time, however, the subsidy system evolved from a welfare-oriented policy into one of the most controversial and politically sensitive issues in Nigeria's contemporary history.

Oil exploration in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era. Initial exploration activities began in 1908 when the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation commenced operations in the coastal areas of present-day Ondo State. Commercial discovery of crude oil was achieved in 1956 at Oloibiri in present-day Bayelsa State by Shell-BP. This discovery marked a turning point in Nigeria's economic history. In 1958, Nigeria exported its first shipment of crude oil, and by independence in 1960, oil production had become increasingly significant to the national economy.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, agriculture remained important, but the Nigerian Civil War and the oil boom of the 1970s accelerated the country's dependence on petroleum revenues. Nigeria's accession to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1971 further consolidated the country's position within the global oil industry. In the same period, government increased its participation in oil operations by establishing the Nigerian National Oil Corporation, which later became part of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

The emergence of fuel subsidy in Nigeria is closely linked to government intervention in the petroleum sector during the 1970s. Fuel subsidy refers to the financial assistance provided by government to reduce the retail price of petroleum products below actual market cost. The policy was initially introduced as a social welfare measure to ensure affordable energy and promote economic stability. Since petrol, diesel and kerosene are central to transportation, electricity generation and industrial activities, government considered price control necessary to protect citizens from inflationary pressure.

Economic challenges in the 1980s, including falling global oil prices, external debt and fiscal crisis, made the policy increasingly difficult to sustain. The Structural Adjustment Programme of 1986 brought renewed pressure from international financial institutions for market-oriented reforms, including subsidy reduction. Yet Nigerian governments found subsidy removal

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politically risky because fuel prices directly affected the cost of living. Any attempt to increase fuel prices often triggered protests, labour strikes and public unrest.

The paradox of Nigeria's fuel subsidy became more evident in the 1990s and 2000s. Although Nigeria was one of Africa's largest crude oil producers, the country increasingly relied on imported refined petroleum products due to the collapse and inefficiency of domestic refineries. This significantly increased the cost of maintaining subsidies because government had to pay the difference between international import prices and regulated domestic prices. The system also became associated with large-scale corruption and financial mismanagement, including false subsidy claims and collusion between officials and marketers.

By 2011, the Nigerian government reportedly spent over ₦1 trillion annually on fuel subsidies, creating significant pressure on public finances. The administration of President Goodluck Jonathan argued that subsidy payments were unsustainable and hindered national development. Consequently, on January 1, 2012, government announced the removal of fuel subsidy, leading to an immediate increase in petrol prices from ₦65 to about ₦141 per litre. The announcement triggered widespread protests across major Nigerian cities, popularly known as the Occupy Nigeria movement.

Forms of Fuel Subsidy and the Jalingo Context

Fuel subsidies take different forms depending on a country's objectives, structure and economic policies. Direct fuel subsidy refers to explicit government payments that reduce the market price of petroleum products for consumers. Under this arrangement, government pays the difference between the actual importation or production cost of fuel and the official selling price fixed for domestic consumption. In Nigeria, direct subsidy became prominent because government regulated the retail price of Premium Motor Spirit below international market rates and reimbursed marketers for the price differential.

Indirect fuel subsidy occurs when government provides support to the petroleum sector through mechanisms that do not involve direct cash payments to consumers. These may include tax waivers, foreign exchange concessions, subsidised loans, reduced import duties, or government-funded infrastructure for oil companies and marketers. Consumer subsidy refers specifically to interventions aimed at reducing the price paid by final consumers. Nigeria's subsidy regime primarily functioned as a consumer subsidy because government sought to maintain low petrol prices for households, transport operators and small businesses.

Producer subsidy refers to financial or economic assistance provided to oil producers, refiners or petroleum

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marketers to encourage production, refining or distribution activities. Pre-tax subsidy occurs when petroleum products are sold below the actual supply cost before taxes are applied, while post-tax subsidy refers to situations where government fails to impose adequate taxes on petroleum products to account for environmental costs and other negative externalities. Cross-subsidy occurs when revenues from one product, sector or group are used to offset the cost of subsidising another. In Nigeria, crude oil export earnings historically helped sustain subsidised petrol prices.

Jalingo occupies an important position in northeastern Nigeria. Before the 2012 fuel subsidy removal, the city functioned primarily as an administrative, commercial and agricultural centre, with much of its economic structure dependent on government activities, small-scale trading, transport services and agrarian production. The informal sector played a central role in sustaining livelihoods. Petty traders, artisans, motorcycle operators, food vendors, tailors, mechanics and small-scale entrepreneurs formed a large segment of the working population, making households vulnerable to fluctuations in transportation and commodity prices.

Transportation was a crucial component of socio-economic life in Jalingo. Commercial motorcycles, popularly known as okada, alongside taxis and minibuses, served as the main means of urban transportation. Since fuel prices directly influenced fares, affordable petroleum products were essential to the daily mobility of workers, students, traders and farmers. Electricity supply in Jalingo before 2012 was also unreliable, forcing shops, cybercafés, pharmacies, restaurants, water suppliers and small businesses to depend on generators. These structural conditions explain why subsidy removal generated widespread concern and economic anxiety among residents.

Political and Economic Rationale for the 2012 Removal

The removal of fuel subsidy in January 2012 was driven by both economic and political considerations. Successive Nigerian governments had long recognised the increasing financial burden of maintaining fuel subsidies, yet many administrations hesitated to remove the policy due to its political sensitivity and the likelihood of public resistance. Under the administration of Goodluck Jonathan, the federal government presented subsidy removal as a necessary reform aimed at restructuring the petroleum sector, reducing corruption, improving governance and redirecting national resources toward development projects.

One major rationale was the desire to reduce the fiscal burden of subsidy payments. Government maintained that excessive spending on subsidies reduced funds available for education, healthcare, infrastructure and job creation. The Jonathan administration also justified the removal as part of a broader agenda of deregulating the downstream petroleum

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sector. Government argued that continued subsidy payments discouraged investment in local refining, contributed to fuel scarcity and weakened petroleum-sector efficiency.

Another important rationale was the fight against corruption within the subsidy regime. Over the years, the system became associated with fraud, financial mismanagement and abuse by oil marketers and public officials. The report of the House of Representatives Ad Hoc Committee on Fuel Subsidy Management exposed large-scale irregularities, including billions of naira lost through false subsidy claims and manipulation of import records. Government therefore defended subsidy removal as an attempt to dismantle corruption networks that benefited from the system.

The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme was introduced as a mechanism for utilising savings from subsidy removal to finance public infrastructure and social welfare projects. According to government, funds previously spent on subsidies would be redirected toward road construction, public transportation, maternal healthcare, youth employment and poverty reduction. However, many citizens doubted whether these promised benefits would materialise at the local level.

Economically, the federal government justified removal on grounds of fiscal sustainability. By the late 2000s and early 2010s, the cost of sustaining the subsidy regime had risen due to increasing domestic fuel consumption, dependence on imported refined petroleum products and global oil-price fluctuations. However, critics argued that the immediate increase in fuel prices would worsen inflation and deepen poverty among low-income households. In Jalingo, the consequences were particularly significant because many residents relied on fuel-powered transportation and generators for daily economic activities.

Occupy Nigeria and the Reaction of Jalingo Residents

The Nigerian government's removal of fuel subsidy on January 1, 2012 sparked widespread protests and demonstrations across the country. The decision, which led to an immediate increase in petrol price from ₦65 to about ₦141 per litre, triggered intense economic and political reactions from Nigerians who viewed the policy as harsh and insensitive to prevailing socio-economic realities. The nationwide protests that followed became popularly known as the Occupy Nigeria movement. The movement represented one of the largest civilian-led protest actions in Nigeria's democratic history and reflected widespread dissatisfaction with governance, corruption, unemployment and economic hardship.

In Jalingo, residents reacted strongly to the subsidy removal and the resulting increase in fuel prices. Although the town did not experience protests on the same scale as Lagos or Abuja, it witnessed demonstrations, public criticism and

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growing economic anxiety. The reaction was shaped by Jalingo's socio-economic structure, which relied heavily on transportation, informal trading, civil service employment and fuel-powered electricity generation.

Commercial transportation operators were among the most affected. Motorcycle riders, taxi drivers and bus operators increased transport fares almost immediately following the rise in petrol prices. Since many residents depended on commercial transportation for daily movement to workplaces, schools, markets and government offices, the increase created widespread hardship. Workers and students found it increasingly difficult to afford transport expenses, while traders experienced declining patronage due to reduced consumer spending power.

Market women and petty traders also expressed dissatisfaction because of rising food prices and operational costs. Agricultural products transported from surrounding rural communities became more expensive due to higher transport charges. Consequently, prices of rice, maize, beans, vegetables and yams increased significantly within local markets. Civil servants criticised the policy because salaries remained largely unchanged despite a sharp increase in living expenses, while students feared that the policy would negatively affect access to education.

Although protests in Jalingo remained relatively peaceful, there was visible tension and economic uncertainty during the peak of the Occupy Nigeria movement. Labour unions within the state participated in nationwide strikes organised by the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress. Government offices, banks and some commercial activities were temporarily disrupted. The movement eventually forced the federal government to partially reverse its decision, and on January 16, 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan announced a reduction in the pump price from ₦141 to ₦97 per litre following negotiations with labour unions and public pressure.

Impact Assessment in Jalingo

The interview evidence suggests that implementation of the subsidy removal in Jalingo was perceived as sudden, poorly communicated and insufficiently sensitive to local realities. A majority of interviewees indicated that they were not adequately informed before the policy change. Dr Kyaru described the policy as severe, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction. This finding aligns with the nationwide protests observed during the period and suggests that Jalingo residents shared similar feelings of frustration and distrust toward government, even where physical protest activity was limited.

The first major economic impact was the increase in transportation costs. Since Nigeria's economy is heavily dependent on road transport, higher fuel prices automatically raised fares for commuters

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and logistics costs for businesses. In Jalingo, where the movement of goods from rural farming communities into urban markets depended largely on petrol-powered transport, the effect was particularly severe. Traders paid more to move farm produce, and these costs were passed on to consumers. Mrs Matakhi, a trader, indicated that transportation costs increased significantly after the subsidy removal, while Mr Amos noted that fare increases directly affected prices of goods in local markets.

The increase in transportation costs affected workers and students who relied on public transport for daily movement. Many civil servants, traders and students in Jalingo found it difficult to maintain normal routines because a greater portion of their income was spent on transportation. Mrs Esther, a civil servant, reduced the frequency of her movements and sought alternative means of transport to cut costs. Mr Patrick, a commercial driver, stated that drivers adjusted fares in response to fuel-price fluctuations, creating instability and uncertainty in the transport sector.

A second economic impact was inflation in food and essential commodities. Fuel is a major input in production and distribution chains. As transportation costs increased, prices of food, sachet water, household goods and services also rose. For low-income earners in Jalingo, this reduced purchasing power and deepened financial hardship. Families with limited income struggled to maintain previous feeding patterns and were often forced to reduce the number or quality of meals consumed daily. Mrs Rhoda indicated that her household substituted certain food items with cheaper alternatives in order to cope with the increasing cost of living.

Small and medium-scale enterprises were also affected. Businesses that relied on fuel-powered generators due to unreliable electricity experienced higher operating costs. In Jalingo, where shops, salons, cybercafés and small production businesses depended on generators, profitability declined as owners either absorbed additional costs or increased prices. Mr Israel Tackie explained that he had to spend extra money on generator fuel, which increased operational costs. Some businesses responded by raising service charges, reducing operating hours or temporarily suspending operations because they could not sustain rising costs.

Beyond economic effects, the subsidy removal had social consequences. Citizens viewed subsidy as one of the few direct benefits received from government, and its sudden removal without adequate palliative measures sparked anger and distrust. As fuel prices rose, low-income households struggled to afford transportation, food and healthcare. In Jalingo, where many families depended on fixed salaries or informal trade, the policy translated into reduced welfare and greater vulnerability. Social participation also declined as residents reduced attendance at events, ceremonies

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and communal activities due to limited resources.

The policy affected education and community well-being. Higher transport fares made commuting more difficult for students and teachers, while families facing rising costs often prioritised immediate survival over educational expenses. Miss Faith, a student at the time, stated that she and other students skipped extracurricular activities such as sports to save costs. The removal also widened public distrust of government institutions. Dr Bashir believed that ordinary citizens were being asked to bear the burden of reform while political leaders and influential individuals continued to benefit from public resources.

Government intervention measures were widely perceived as ineffective at the local level. The majority of interviewees reported not benefiting from any relief programme and did not think the measures were effective. Some informants were unaware of any government intervention. According to Mr Amos, many residents did not even know that government had provided palliatives to help citizens. Only a few informants reported receiving assistance, suggesting a clear disconnection between policy intention at the national level and actual outcomes in Jalingo.

Informants suggested that government could have acted differently. Mr Hammawa Yohanna argued that subsidy removal should have been gradual rather than sudden, with citizens and the economy adequately prepared. Dr Bashir Bawuro emphasised transparency, monitoring and evaluation, and the appointment of corruption-free individuals to handle relief distribution. Mr Shinkom Apumukong highlighted the need for practical alternatives before implementation, including subsidised transport, soft loans for small businesses, food relief and visible investment in roads, electricity, water supply, health and education.

The environmental impact was indirect but important. Economists argue that subsidy removal can reduce excessive fuel consumption by encouraging more efficient energy use. In Nigeria, however, the immediate effect was more complex because electricity supply remained unreliable and households and businesses continued to rely on petrol and diesel generators. Higher fuel prices did not eliminate generator use; they made energy access more expensive. Mrs Rhoda affirmed that she shifted toward firewood and charcoal because of the high cost of fuel, and many residents did the same. This created environmental concerns because increased use of firewood and charcoal can contribute to deforestation and indoor air pollution.

Coping Mechanisms and Survival Strategies

The removal of fuel subsidy produced severe socio-economic consequences for low-income households and urban populations dependent on fuel for transportation, electricity generation and

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commercial activities. In Jalingo, the sudden increase in petrol prices significantly affected the cost of living and placed pressure on household incomes. Residents were therefore forced to adopt coping mechanisms and survival strategies to manage rising transport costs, rising food prices, unstable electricity supply and declining purchasing power.

One major coping mechanism was reducing household expenditure. Many families adjusted their spending patterns by prioritising food, transportation and accommodation while reducing expenses on clothing, leisure and non-essential goods. Food consumption patterns also changed. Several households reduced the quantity and quality of meals consumed daily and substituted expensive food items with cheaper alternatives. The consumption of staples such as maize, cassava, millet and garri increased among low-income households because these products were more affordable than imported or processed foods.

Transportation adjustment constituted another important survival strategy. Many residents reduced unnecessary travel, walked longer distances, combined trips or relied on shared transportation arrangements to lower costs. Some adopted bicycles, while individuals living near workplaces or schools increasingly relied on trekking. These changes reflected the direct relationship between fuel prices and mobility within urban centres.

Another coping strategy involved expanding informal economic activities and multiple income sources. Many households sought additional means of livelihood to supplement declining incomes and rising expenses. Women engaged more actively in petty trading, food vending, tailoring and small-scale agriculture, while unemployed youth intensified their participation in commercial motorcycle transportation and informal labour. Community markets and roadside trading expanded as residents sought alternative sources of income.

Social support systems and communal assistance also played an important role. Extended family networks, religious organisations, neighbourhood associations and community groups provided various forms of assistance to vulnerable households. Cooperative societies and informal savings groups became important survival mechanisms during the subsidy removal period. Rotating savings schemes, locally known as adashi or thrift contributions, helped households access small amounts of capital for business activities or immediate needs.

Residents also adopted energy-saving strategies. Since public electricity supply remained inconsistent, many households and businesses depended heavily on petrol and diesel generators before and after the subsidy removal. The rise in fuel prices forced several households to reduce generator use to cut costs. Businesses shortened operating hours,

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while some households limited generator use to nighttime periods or essential domestic activities. Alternative energy sources such as charcoal, firewood and kerosene stoves became more common among low-income households. These coping mechanisms reflected resilience, but they were temporary and could not fully offset the long-term consequences of rising fuel prices and inflation.

Conclusion

The removal of fuel subsidies in 2012 marked a major turning point in Nigeria's economic and political history, particularly for ordinary citizens who relied heavily on subsidised fuel for daily survival. Although the policy was introduced as part of broader economic reform efforts aimed at reducing government expenditure and improving national development, this article has shown that its effects were deeply felt at the grassroots level, especially in Jalingo town.

The findings reveal that the burden of subsidy removal fell mostly on low-income earners, small business owners, students and other vulnerable groups whose livelihoods depended on affordable transportation and stable living costs. Rather than experiencing immediate economic improvement, many residents faced rising transport fares, food inflation, financial uncertainty and declining living standards. The Jalingo experience demonstrates that national-level economic policies can produce severe local consequences when adequate support systems are not in place.

Public dissatisfaction was influenced not only by increased fuel prices but also by ineffective communication, poor implementation of palliative measures and widespread distrust of government institutions. Many residents felt excluded from the policy process and believed that the sacrifices demanded of citizens were not matched by accountability and transparency. Ultimately, the article concludes that economic reforms may be necessary for national growth, but they cannot succeed without public trust, proper planning and meaningful support systems capable of protecting vulnerable populations from excessive hardship.

Recommendations

First, before implementing major fuel-pricing reforms, the Federal Government, state governments and local councils should carry out structured public sensitisation through market associations, transport unions, religious institutions, ward heads and community radio. The message should explain the purpose of the reform, the expected price changes, available relief measures and complaint channels. This would reduce panic and improve public understanding at the grassroots level.

Second, intervention measures should be backed by a clear local beneficiary register. In towns such as Jalingo, relief distribution should involve local government officials, civil society organisations, ward representatives,

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transport unions and market associations. Each beneficiary list should be publicly displayed and periodically audited to reduce diversion, political favouritism and corruption.

Third, subsidy reforms that directly affect citizens' welfare should be implemented gradually rather than abruptly. A phased adjustment over a defined period would allow households, transport operators, traders and small businesses to plan around changing fuel prices. During the transition, temporary transport vouchers, food support and soft loans should be targeted at low-income households, students, small traders and transport workers.

Fourth, government should invest in practical alternatives that directly reduce citizens' dependence on expensive fuel. For Jalingo, this should include affordable public transport routes, improved electricity supply for small businesses, support for solar energy adoption, rehabilitation of rural roads used for agricultural transport, and better fuel-supply monitoring to prevent artificial scarcity and black-market price increases.

Finally, future subsidy reforms should be tied to visible local development projects and transparent reporting. Residents are more likely to support reform when promised benefits are measurable and felt directly in their communities. Government should therefore publish regular updates on savings from subsidy reforms, projects funded from those savings, contractors involved, implementation timelines and community-level impact. For towns such as Jalingo, effective reform should prioritise affordable transportation, electricity, small-business support, food-price stability and grassroots accountability.

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A Critical Reflection of Authoritarianism and Democracy in Mauritius and Eritrea

Abstract

Africa stands at a crossroads, with the continent not making significant gains since the third wave of democratisation in the 1990s. There are lingering issues of political participation, electoral malpractice, human rights abuse, shrinking civic space, lack of political inclusion and suppression of minority rights, among others. These underscore the fragility of democratic institutions and structures in Africa. In extreme circumstances, military interventions, coups and counter-coups prevailed or outright state capture. This explains why authoritarianism now operates side by side with democratic norms in many African states. Hence, the paper sought to measure the performance indicators of democracy and authoritarianism in Africa with a central focus on Mauritius and Eritrea. The system justification theory of social psychology of personality was adopted to explained authoritarians and democracy. The method of data collection for the study was from secondary sources such as textbooks, journal articles, and online materials, among others. Consequently, from the findings, the performance index proved that Mauritius has successfully established very strong democratic credentials on the African continent and globally. While Eritrea was considered the most autocratic state in Africa due to the absence of any form of election, civil liberties are highly restricted, and democratic institutions are non-existent among other authoritarian structures. Therefore, the study recommended that Africans should evolve a system of political, civil administration and politics that prioritises the traditional value system and methods of social organisation rooted in the traditional value of state organisation and politics with the attendant checks and balances.

Keywords: Authoritarianism, Democracy, State, Nationhood and Legitimacy.

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Introduction

Colonial rule and external influences on African states continue to be the subject of intense debate and controversy. The paper titled "*Authoritarian Africa: Repression, Resistance, and the Power of Ideas*" paints a very gruesome picture of the political landscape of the continent. Colonialism strengthened the power and founded an elite of powerful national leaders on the continent (Kodero, 2020). This development introduced a pathway to unstable authoritarian political leadership

that followed many African states after colonial rule and independence.

This development reinforced the authoritarian elements within African societies, while undermining the elements of inclusion, democracy and accountability that had previously existed in precolonial African societies, especially the peoples of southern Nigeria, East and western Africa, where controlled monarchy and acephalous societies existed (Daannaa's 1994). Thus, the study interrogated authoritarian dispositions and tendencies that have hindered democratic governance in Africa. To this end, the objective of the study is to measure the performance indicators of democracy and authoritarianism in Mauritius and Eritrea.

Statement of the Problem

In Africa, less than 1% of people live in a full democracy. Authoritarianism is re-emerging quickly, not only in fragile states but also in places that were once regarded as democratic successes. From the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, we are seeing military takeovers, shrinking civic spaces, and manipulated elections. We have seen situations where leaders who were democratically elected gradually weaken institutions, capture the judiciary, and control the media, thereby eroding checks and balances from within.

Africa stands at a crossroads because the continent has not made significant gains since the third wave of democratisation in the 1990s.We are yet to address issues of political participation, electoral malpractice, rights, and civic space decline. These underscore the fragility of democratic institutions. In extreme circumstances, military interventions, coups and counter-coups prevailed. This explains why authoritarianism now operates side by side with democratic norms in many African states.

Consequently, states like Tunisia, Uganda, Rwanda, Cameroon, the Congo Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon are notable examples of African countries where democratically elected leaders have either amended their country's constitutions to extend their terms through questionable referenda, or reshaped the constitution to centralise authority in the presidency (Emole, 2025). Given the problematic situation, this paper seeks to measure the performance indicators of democracy and authoritarianism in Africa with a central focus on Mauritius and Eritrea.

Conceptual Review

Authoritarianism

The concept of authoritarianism underscores the exercise of authority where rulers exercise political power without the consent of the governed and outside the ambit of the rule of law. Authoritarianism can be understood as a type of political leadership that compels citizens to blind submission to authority. In government, authoritarianism denotes any political system that concentrates power in the hands of a leader or a small elite that is not responsible to the people nor controlled by law. Authoritarian

leaders tend to exercise power arbitrarily, with no regard for constitutional norms and morality (cited in Chenoy, 2019).

Similarly, authoritarianism is characterised by highly concentrated and centralised power through political repression and the exclusion of potential opponents. It uses political parties and mass organisations to mobilise people around the goals of the regime (McCargo, 2005). In modern times, regimes such as Hitler's Germany, Mao Zedong's China, Mussolini's Italy, Gaddafi's Libya, Bokassa's Southern African Republic, Abacha's Nigeria, Amin's Uganda, Stalin's Russia, even Mugabe's Zimbabwe and currently Museveni's Uganda, among others, are classified as authoritarian regimes or leaders. One common feature of these leaders is their repression of human rights, disregard for the rule of law, self-succession, clamping down on opposition and dissent, violent regime change, suspension of the constitution and dismantling of democratic institutions (Civicus, 2026).

For instance, in Uganda, General Amin sacked the Milton Obote democratic government in 1971 through a military coup when the president was in a conference in Singapore. He immediately suspended the constitution, national parliament, political parties and all political and party activities in Uganda. He was very authoritarian and ruled with flagrant disregard for human rights, expelling the Asian citizens of Uganda from the country, giving them a few days to depart the country with their property confiscated. It is estimated that over three hundred thousand Ugandans were extra-judicially killed by his regime during his eight years in power and the stranglehold of the country. A common feature of all authoritarian regimes is their disregard for the rule of law, human rights and democratic organisation of society (Kissinger, 1975).

Also, Robert Mugabe's was a democratic andauthoritarian leader; though he ended the British colony of Rhodesia andthe minority white rule of his country. Across Zimbabwe, thousands celebrated his struggle for independence. But under his watch, the economy collapsed, with hyperinflation due to land seizures from white settlers and economic mismanagement. Mugabe became a brutal, authoritarian ruler. In a bid to squash opposition groups, Mugabe's forces killed thousands of people in Matabeleland in western Zimbabwe.

Amid the crisis, Mugabe proposed a referendum that would have strengthened his own powers and made it easier to redistribute white-owned land. He created a constitution that suited him but not the people. Mugabe then encouraged the violent seizure of thousands of flourishing, white-owned industrial farms. The government handed a lot of those farms to political allies who knew little about farming, and production plummeted. Mugabe stayed in power, even after he lost the first round of the 2008 election. He used violence to muzzle the opposition and rewarded his inner circle with plum jobs that led to riches. Mugabe vowed to

retain power at any cost, but his health suffered, and he was pushed out by the military in 2017 (Peralta, 2017).

Democracy

Authoritarianism is contradictory and antithetical to democracy, democracy as a system in which the supreme power of a government is vested in the people. Democracy, theoretically, grants equal political rights and civil liberties, even to political opponents. But under authoritarianism, rulers, elites and core supporters of the regime in power usually fare well with the system that protects their vested interests.

However, the idea of democracy was originally closely tied to the politics of the Greek city-states, a system largely characterised by what is known asdirect democracy. In a direct democracy, policies and laws are the collective opinions of a direct election of all qualified members of society, mostly landowners, who are considered to have a voting right. Neither women nor slaves had voting or decision-making rights in ancient Greek law and democratic practice. In the original form of democracy under the Greek city-state, voting and public office were dependent on property ownership (Robinson, 2005).

However, in Africa, the evolution of democracy as a nationwide system of political organisation is associated with colonial rule. The European colonialists established Western-style political institutions in their colonies. With the incorporation of the colonised into the capitalist mode of production and the sharp division and organisation of the society along ethnic lines or social formations came competition for power and political ascendancy among the African indigenous elites. The nationalist and anti-colonial crusaders thus formed political associations to wrench power from the European colonisers. This initial process advanced party activities and democratic ideals in the developing societies of Africa, even in Asia and Latin America (Nabudere, 2004).

Consequently, Western liberal democracy as introduced into Africais anchored on four principles, namely constitutional government, the recognition of the rights of the minority, the conduct of government by discussion, and the rule of the majority. Although the majority should rule, it should not overrule the minority. J. S. Mill was very concerned about the minority. He was very adamant about the importance of hearing and giving weight to the views of the minority, which is indispensable in a democracy (Sparks & Isaacs, 2004).

Democracy ensures popular participation in public policy-making. With attributes such as the rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness, democracy comes with a full package that is difficult to disassociate from any form of socio-economic development or organisation of society. It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is difficult to give a watertight classification of democracy

beyond direct and representative participation, social and liberal characteristics. Nevertheless, democracy has evolved into different forms such as direct, representative, parliamentary, presidential, consensus, liberal and social (IDEA, 2025).

There seems to be a consensus on what liberal democracy means in any given society. It involves periodic elections that competitively take place, while civil and political rights are secured by the rule of law. This allows for political participation of all citizens and accountability of political leaders. This includes freedom of speech, assembly, religion and association, and so on.

Theoretical Framework: System Justification Theory

John T. Jost, A professor of psychology at New York University, Mahzarin Banaji, and Brian Nosek (1994) are core proponent of System Justification Theory. The system justification theory (SJT) provides a social psychological account of how and why the status quo is perpetuated and supported despite the fact that the systems that constitute the status quo are often flawed and disadvantageous to the individuals embedded in them. SJT posits that people possess a motivated tendency to justify and defend existing structural arrangements and that this tendency has a soothing "palliative function" (Jost & Hunyady, 2003).

Given the above, this paper borrows system justification theory from the social psychological school of thought. This is to explain authoritarianism and democracy in Africa. According to Adorno et al. (1950), authoritarian personality has psychological roots of social intolerance susceptible to an ideology of anti-democratic politics. They identified a personality syndrome that supported conventional values and authoritarian submission, as well as authoritarian aggression towards a system that does not conform to its political philosophy. Furthermore, Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway (2003) posit that the social psychological and behavioural processes and thought may sometimes constitute the authoritarian personality syndrome, such as conventionalism, conformity, cynicism, moral absolutism, intolerance and prejudice, which tend to bundle together.

Empirically, the system justification theory focuses on people's tendency to justify and defend their socio-political systems and the consequences of their disposition and tendency for the prolongation of an authoritarian leadership approach. For instance, African states empirically justify the praxis of SJT where institutions of the state are muzzled by an authoritarian executive, such that the exercise of authority is fused in a central and absolute control of authoritarian personality. Such executive power often neutralises the remarkable institutional creations of the liberal representative democracy and its principles.

Hence, absolute central authority is highly encouraged where the power of government demands and enforces unrestrained sovereignty with both

internal and external policies geared towards sustaining the status quo, though oppressive and undemocratic. Authoritarianism in Africa is often justified and sustained by primordial political consciousness, social formations and structures founded on ethnicity, tribal sentiments, rivalry and the power struggle. This weakens national focus and solidarity and psychologically aligns sections of the population with the authoritarian regime, giving a semblance of support and justification.

Methodology

Qualitative research designs were applied in the interrogation of authorianism and as an independent variable and the effect on democracy as a dependent variable. Data were generated via secondary source, obtained from already existing documents on scholarship from official reports, books, journal articles, magazines, and newspapers on authoritarianism and democracy.

Discussion of Results: Measurement of Performance Indicators of Democracy and Authoritarianism in Africa, Mauritius and Eritrea

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the democracy index employsglobally recognised rigorous methodology measuring electoral processes, the functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties.

Democracy vis-a-vis Authoritarianism in Africa: Mauritius and Eritrea

S/N	States	Electoral Participation	Rule of Law / Human Rights	Effective Institutions	Civic space and political inclusion of the minority	Social Security / Functional service delivery
1	Mauritius	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
2	Eritrea	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor

Source: (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2025)

From the report ranking assessment, Mauritius takes the lead with an impressive democracy index score, showcasing a strong commitment to political participation, civil liberties, and effective governance. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (2025), Mauritius ranks highest not just in Africa

but also internationally. It sets an exemplary standard for other nations. The political scene is pluralistic, the elections are transparent, and the judiciary commands respect. It means the country builds its institutions around accountability, with successive governments shying away from any hint of authoritarianism (Olasupo, 2025).

Mauritius is a pluralist society with both an opportunity and a challenge. Mauritius has, so far, managed it carefully to ensure democracy, political stability and good governance. Mauritius has successfully established very strong democratic credentials on the African continent and globally. It is a multiparty parliamentary democracy designed after that in Britain. It has held nine general elections since 1968. A smooth transfer of power followed each election.

Also,according to the table above, Eritrea isconsidered the most autocratic state in Africa. The aforementioned democratic indicators are absent. It is predominantly tyrannicaland has not held any elections; civil liberties areseverely restricted. There is state-controlled media, and the absence of an independent judiciary(see EIU, 2025).

The state of Eritrea is a small country in the Horn of Africa, one of the most closed and repressive states on the planet, ruled with an iron fist for 30 years by President Issaias Afeworki. As noted by Warsameh (2024), Eritrea officially became a state in May 1993, two years after shedding Ethiopian rule. Since then, the country has been led by Issaias Afeworki, a nationalist who established a one-party system without an election, where any opposition is severely repressed. A one-man dictatorship, Eritrea has no legislature, no civil society organisations or independent media and no independent judiciary.

The human rights situation there is increasingly worrisome. Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have left their country, fleeing religious persecution, arbitrary arrests and indefinite national service, considered forced labour by human rights organisations.Eritrea is considered one of the least developedglobally (United Nations' Human Development Index in 2021).

Conclusion/Recommendations

Therefore, authoritarian tendencies and dispositions have undermined democracy in Africa. This is largely due to the colonial experience, external influences and manipulation and the rising cases of the abuse of democratic norms and state capture on the continent by state actors.Consequently, the study recommends thus:

- Africans should evolve a system of political and civil administration that is rooted inadeican traditional values and structures of percuilairty in native and civil administration
- There should be the promotion of native African democratic norms and institutional principles to drive morden political institutions.

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An Empirical Assessment of Cost Information, Managerial Decision-Making and Organisational Performance

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between Activity-Based Costing (ABC) and organisational management, with particular emphasis on Activity Cost Information, Cost-Driver Analysis, ABC-Based Resource Allocation and ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making as predictors of organisational performance. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. With the population comprised of 1,000 managers, accountants, finance officers, operations managers and other relevant management personnel in selected organisations. Using Yamane's formula at a 5% level of precision, a sample size of 286 respondents was determined, while stratified random sampling was employed to ensure appropriate representation. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale and analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. The results indicate positive relationships between organisational performance and Activity Cost Information ($r = .704$), Cost-Driver Analysis ($r = .658$), ABC-Based Resource Allocation ($r = .671$) and ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making ($r = .736$). The regression model produced $R = .812$, $R^2 = .659$ and adjusted $R^2 = .654$, while the overall model was statistically significant, $F(4, 281) = 108.62$, $p < .001$. The study concluded that effective ABC practices can strengthen cost visibility, resource utilisation, operational efficiency and managerial decision-making, thereby supporting improved organisational performance.

Keywords: Activity-Based Costing; Activity Cost Information; Cost-Driver Analysis; Resource Allocation; Managerial Decision-Making.

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Introduction

Organisations operate in complex environments characterised by intense competition, technological change, cost pressures and growing demands for accountability. In such environments, the quality of cost information has implications for managerial decision-making because managers rely on cost data to plan operations, prepare budgets, allocate resources, establish prices and exercise organisational control (Cooper & Kaplan, 1988; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Ukpong *et al*., 2019b). Cost information is therefore a managerial resource for understanding resource consumption and its contribution to products, services and customers. Its usefulness depends on

whether the costing system reflects actual patterns of resource consumption.

Traditional costing systems developed within production environments in which direct labour and production volume represented substantial costs. Volume-related overhead allocation could provide a practical approximation of resource consumption (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987; Cooper, 1988). However, automation has reduced the importance of direct labour, while product diversity, customer-specific services, quality management, information technology and support activities have increased overhead complexity (Drury, 2018; Innes & Mitchell, 1995). Broad volume-based allocations may obscure differences in resources required to produce products, serve customers and perform organisational processes.

Activity-Based Costing (ABC) emerged partly in response to these limitations. Its proposition is that resources are consumed by activities and that products, services, customers and other cost objects consume activities (Cooper, 1989; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). ABC identifies activities, accumulates their costs and assigns them to cost objects through appropriate cost drivers (Turney, 1991; Cooper, 1989). By emphasising causal relationships, ABC provides a more detailed representation of process economics (Cooper & Kaplan, 1988; Innes & Mitchell, 1995). This information can improve cost transparency and management understanding of expenditure (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Drury, 2018).

Activity-level information supports profitability analysis by revealing variations in resource consumption (Foster & Gupta, 1990; Kaplan & Atkinson, 1998). It informs pricing, product-mix, outsourcing and capacity decisions through resource-consuming activities (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Cokins, 2001). ABC supports planning and control because accounting information informs management (Otley, 1980). Cost-driver analysis helps managers distinguish volume effects from complexity effects (Cooper & Kaplan, 1992; Shank & Govindarajan, 1993). Resource allocation can reflect activity requirements and strategic priorities (Barney, 1991; Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

ABC-based information can strengthen managerial decision-making when managers can interpret and apply it effectively (Kennedy & Affleck-Graves, 2001; Baird *et al*., 2004). Research indicates that ABC adoption may produce benefits, although outcomes may depend on implementation conditions, structure and management commitment (Gosselin, 1997). Time-Driven ABC sought to simplify data requirements and improve flexibility (Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Everaert *et al*., 2008). Implementation can involve data availability, employee resistance, system complexity and training requirements (Foster & Swenson, 1997; Krumwiede, 1998; Ukpong *et al*., 2026). Conventional costing may remain suitable where cost structures are relatively simple (Drury, 2018), so ABC

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should not be assumed to provide universal benefits (Chenhall, 2003).

The problem addressed by this study is that conventional costing practices may provide insufficiently precise information for managerial decisions, particularly where overheads and activities are diverse (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987; Cooper & Kaplan, 1988). Such limitations can affect cost control and performance evaluation (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Drury, 2018). Accordingly, this study examines whether activity cost information, cost-driver analysis, ABC-based resource allocation and ABC-based managerial decision-making relate to organisational performance (Kennedy & Affleck-Graves, 2001; Baird *et al*., 2004). This study examines the relationship between Activity-Based Costing and organisational management. Specifically, the study examines activity cost information and organisational performance; determines the relationship between cost-driver analysis and organisational performance; assesses ABC-based resource allocation and organisational performance; and examines ABC-based managerial decision-making and organisational performance (Cokins, 2001). The focus is particularly relevant because contemporary managers increasingly require timely, transparent and causally meaningful cost information to coordinate resources, evaluate activities and improve organisational outcomes effectively.

Research Questions

What relationship exists between activity cost information and organisational performance?

What relationship exists between cost-driver analysis and organisational performance?

To what extent does ABC-based resource allocation relate to organisational performance?

What relationship exists between ABC-based managerial decision-making and organisational performance?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

H01: Activity cost information has no significant relationship with organisational performance.

H02: Cost-driver analysis has no significant relationship with organisational performance.

H03: ABC-based resource allocation has no significant relationship with organisational performance.

H04: ABC-based managerial decision-making has no significant relationship with organisational performance.

Conceptual Review

Activity-Based Costing

Activity-Based Costing (ABC) is a management accounting technique that assigns organisational costs to activities and subsequently traces those costs to products, services, customers or other

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cost objects according to resource consumption. Although ABC originated in the late twentieth century, recent literature demonstrates continuing relevance to contemporary cost management amid complex operations, digital transformation and increasing overhead costs (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024; Ukpong *et al*., 2019a). ABC differs from conventional costing because it emphasises activities and cost drivers rather than broad volume-based allocation rates (Cooper & Kaplan, 1998; Zhang, 2022). Continuing scholarly interest in ABC and Time-Driven Activity-Based Costing (TDABC) further confirms their relevance within management accounting research (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Mubaroq & Setyorini, 2024).

The central principle of ABC is that organisational resources are consumed by activities and cost objects consume those activities. Accurate cost determination therefore requires relevant activity identification, resource-consumption measurement and appropriate cost-driver selection (Zhang, 2022; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023). ABC can improve cost visibility by identifying activities responsible for overhead expenditure and revealing differences in resource consumption among products and services (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024). Evidence from the Nigerian pharmaceutical industry highlights ABC's potential for improving production-cost management, reducing cost distortion and supporting pricing decisions (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024).

ABC also supports managerial decision-making concerning pricing, capacity, product mix, profitability and process improvement (Enes & Koşan, 2024). TDABC applications demonstrate how activity and time information can improve understanding of labour productivity and unused capacity (Enes & Koşan, 2024; Accounting, Organizations and Society, 2024). Technological developments increasingly connect ABC with data analytics and digital management systems, including deep-learning applications for cost management (Computers & Industrial Engineering, 2024) and technology-enhanced TDABC in healthcare (Etges *et al*., 2024).

Nevertheless, implementation may involve data availability, employee participation, system complexity, training and management-support challenges (Zhang, 2022; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023). Successful adoption therefore depends on contextual conditions (Rhee *et al*., 2024). ABC should be viewed as a management-information system linking resource consumption, activities and decisions, supporting cost transparency, resource utilisation, production efficiency and organisational decision-making (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024; Mubaroq & Setyorini, 2024). Its effectiveness depends on activity identification, cost-driver selection, information systems and managerial utilisation (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024).

Activity Cost Information

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Activity cost information refers to information about resources consumed by activities and processes. It is a key output of Activity-Based Costing (ABC), moving analysis from aggregates towards activities responsible for resource consumption (Cooper & Kaplan, 1998; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Recent literature confirms ABC's relevance where complexity makes consumption difficult to trace (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023), providing visibility (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024). Its usefulness begins with identifying activities. Labour, technology and services can be assigned to activities before costs are traced to products or services (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Turney, 1991). This reduces distortion from simplistic overhead allocation (Drury, 2018). Nigerian pharmaceutical evidence indicates that ABC improves production-cost management (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024), Moroccan evidence associates ABC with cost reduction, quality and productivity (Hajji & Farrat, 2022).

Activity-level information improves cost-causation understanding by identifying processes responsible for expenditure changes (Cooper & Kaplan, 1992; Shank & Govindarajan, 1993). Effective cost management addresses causes rather than consequences (Cokins, 2001). Time-Driven Activity-Based Costing can reveal labour productivity and unused capacity, supporting profitability (Enes & Koşan, 2024). Activity costs support pricing, product-mix, capacity, profitability and process-improvement decisions (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Cokins, 2001). They support pricing and profitability analysis in services (Enes & Koşan, 2024), while unused-capacity information supports budgeting (Maussen *et al*., 2024). Technology expands activity costing (2024), and deep-learning applications can analyse costs with fewer drivers (2024). Activity cost information supports resource allocation by identifying resource-intensive activities and comparing expenditure with outputs (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). This facilitates non-value-adding activity identification and process redesign (Turney, 1991). Contemporary ABC applications support production management and efficiency (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023). Effectiveness depends on data, drivers, technology and managerial commitment (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023), strengthening transparency, utilisation and control and evidence-based decisions (Hajji & Farrat, 2022; Enes & Koşan, 2024).

Cost-Driver Analysis

Cost-driver analysis is important to Activity-Based Costing (ABC) because it connects activities with resources consumed. A cost driver is a measurable factor that causes or explains activity-cost changes, such as purchase orders, machine hours, batches and transactions (Cooper & Kaplan, 1998; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Turney, 1991; Drury, 2018). It reveals cost behaviour (Cokins, 2001; Blocher *et al*., 2019). Traditional costing may allocate overhead using volume measures (Cooper, 1988; Cooper &

Kaplan, 1991). ABC selects drivers reflecting causal relationships with cost objects (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Drury, 2018; Turney, 1991; Hilton & Platt, 2017). Drivers may measure transactions, duration or intensity (Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Cooper & Kaplan, 1991). Poor selection can distort cost information (Foster & Gupta, 1990; Innes & Mitchell, 1995).

Cost-driver analysis improves understanding of cost behaviour by identifying operational causes of expenditure. Managers can identify inefficient activities, redesign processes and reduce unnecessary transactions (Shank & Govindarajan, 1993; Cokins, 2001; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Blocher *et al*., 2019; Turney, 1991; Hilton & Platt, 2017). Its strategic value is evident where product diversity, customer heterogeneity and indirect costs are substantial (Cooper & Kaplan, 1988; Johnson & Kaplan, 1987). Time-driven ABC improves capacity measurement (Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Everaert *et al*., 2008), while service applications reveal productivity and unused capacity (Enes & Koşan, 2024). Digital technologies facilitate cost analysis (Ukpong *et al*., 2019c; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024).

Effective cost-driver analysis supports budgeting, pricing, resource allocation, profitability and process improvement (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Cokins, 2001). It reveals resource-intensive activities (Turney, 1991; Drury, 2018). Reliable data and periodic review remain necessary as operations change (Krumwiede, 1998; Shields, 1995). Cost-driver analysis strengthens ABC by connecting expenditure with causes and supporting planning, control and managerial decision-making (Kennedy & Affleck-Graves, 2001; Baird *et al*., 2004; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023).

ABC and Resource Allocation

Resource allocation concerns how organisations distribute financial, human, technological and physical resources among priorities. Allocation requires information about resource requirements and objectives (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Drury, 2018). Activity-Based Costing (ABC) supports allocation by identifying activities and tracing their costs to cost objects (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Turney, 1991), providing evidence about resource consumption (Cokins, 2001; Blocher *et al*., 2019). ABC rests on the principle that resources are consumed by activities rather than by products or services (Cooper & Kaplan, 1988; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Labour, equipment, facilities and support services can be assigned using resource drivers (Turney, 1991; Drury, 2018). Managers can evaluate resource requirements and contributions (Shank & Govindarajan, 1993; Hilton & Platt, 2017). This offers a more activity-sensitive allocation basis (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987; Cooper, 1988).

ABC improves resource visibility by decomposing expenditure into activities and identifying resource-intensive processes (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998;

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Cokins, 2001; Turney, 1991; Innes & Mitchell, 1995). Managers can identify resource-intensive activities (Cooper & Kaplan, 1992; Brimson, 1991). Activity-based information improves cost visibility and operational efficiency in complex organisations (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Muoneke & Dandago, 2024). ABC also identifies non-value-adding activities, including unnecessary inspections and redundant procedures (Turney, 1991; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Cost visibility encourages redesign, waste elimination and deployment (Cokins, 2001; Blocher *et al*., 2019), strengthening efficiency and cost control (Drury, 2018; Hilton & Platt, 2017).

Strategically, ABC connects expenditure with organisational priorities, while Time-Driven ABC estimates activity time and identifies unused capacity (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Shank & Govindarajan, 1993; Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Everaert *et al*., 2008). Time-based information supports capacity utilisation and resource management (Enes & Koşan, 2024; Maussen *et al*., 2024). Nevertheless, ABC does not automatically ensure efficient allocation. Effectiveness depends on accurate activity identification, cost-driver measurement, information systems and managerial commitment (Shields, 1995; Krumwiede, 1998). Complexity and implementation costs may constrain outcomes (Foster & Swenson, 1997; Baird *et al*., 2004). Overall, ABC transforms cost information into evidence supporting resource deployment and organisational efficiency (Kennedy & Affleck-Graves, 2001; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024).

ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making

ABC-based managerial decision-making uses activity-level cost information to support pricing, product mix, outsourcing, capacity utilisation, budgeting and investment. Organisations require information for distinguishing resources consumed by products, customers, services and processes (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Drury, 2018). ABC links resource consumption to activities and assigns costs through appropriate drivers (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Turney, 1991), strengthening information for operational decisions (Cokins, 2001; Blocher *et al*., 2019). Pricing is an important application of ABC. Prices should reflect direct costs and indirect activities required to serve products and customers (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Differences in ordering and delivery can reveal customer-cost variations (Foster & Gupta, 1990; Innes & Mitchell, 1995). ABC can support profitability assessment (Drury, 2018; Cokins, 2001). Research confirms its usefulness for pricing decisions (Muoneke & Dandago, 2024; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023).

ABC supports product-mix decisions by showing resources consumed by products or services. Managers can compare capacity constraints (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Hilton & Platt, 2017) and cost implications (Cooper & Kaplan, 1988; Cooper, 1989). Costs should be

considered alongside demand, competition and strategy (Shank & Govindarajan, 1993; Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Outsourcing and process decisions benefit from activity information. ABC enables comparisons between internal and external costs (Cokins, 2001; Drury, 2018), while managers can examine activities for redesign (Turney, 1991; Brimson, 1991). Time-Driven ABC can reveal unused capacity and support efficiency decisions (Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Enes & Koşan, 2024).

ABC supports budgeting and investment by estimating activity requirements and resource effects from changes in production, variety or demand (Kaplan & Anderson, 2004; Everaert *et al*., 2008). Digital developments can enhance analytical speed (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024). ABC should not be the sole decision basis. Managers must consider strategy, markets and regulation (Otley, 1980; Chenhall, 2003). Estimates depend on sound activities and drivers (Shields, 1995; Krumwiede, 1998). Thus, ABC is most valuable when integrated with management systems (Baird *et al*., 2004; Kennedy & Affleck-Graves, 2001), improving cost transparency, resource utilisation and operational control through evidence-based managerial planning (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Cokins, 2001; Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Contingency Theory explains the relationship between Activity-Based Costing (ABC) and organisational management. It proposes that management systems depend on circumstances (Otley, 1980; Chenhall, 2003). Management accounting systems are context-dependent (Otley, 2016; Gerdin & Greve, 2004). ABC reflects contingency reasoning because its usefulness varies with organisational size, technology, product diversity, competition, cost structure and information requirements (Cooper & Kaplan, 1998; Drury, 2018). Complex operations and indirect costs may require sophisticated costing systems (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987; Cooper, 1988). Research indicates ABC implementation is influenced by organisational and contextual characteristics (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024).

ABC provides value where products, services or customers consume activities differently (Cooper & Kaplan, 1991; Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Appropriate cost drivers, information technology and activity identification determine ABC information usefulness (Turney, 1991; Krumwiede, 1998). Management commitment, culture and employee participation influence implementation (Shields, 1995; Baird *et al*., 2004). Contingency Theory therefore explains why ABC should align with circumstances rather than adopted mechanically.

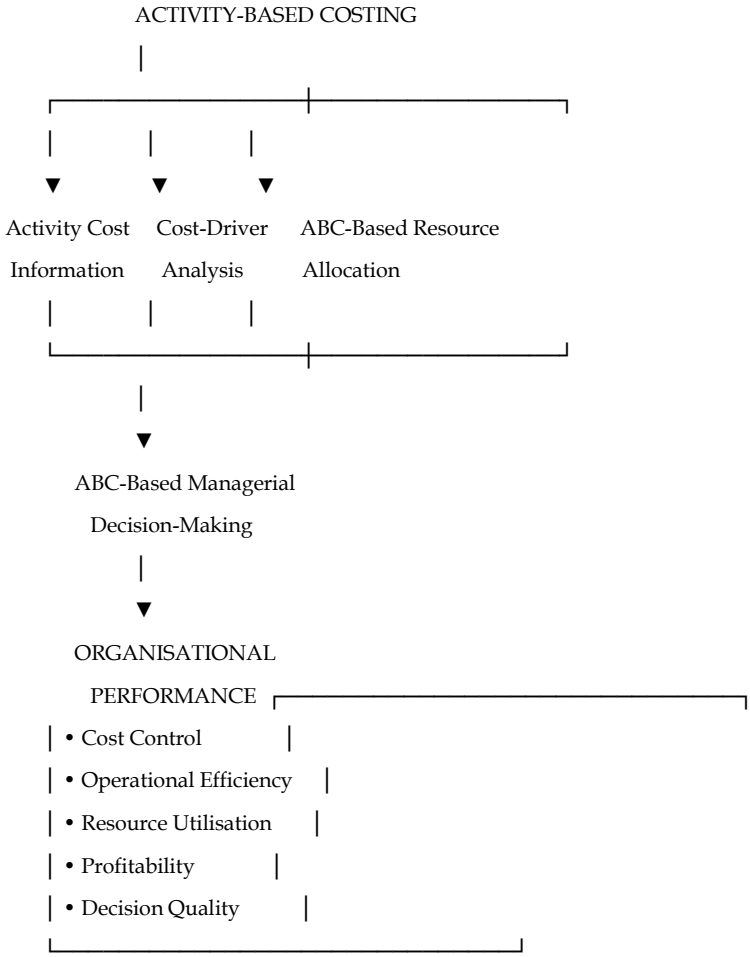
The Resource-Based View (RBV) complements this explanation by emphasising valuable organisational resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993). Resources become

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significant when they enable capabilities that competitors cannot easily replicate (Barney, 2001; Wernerfelt, 1984). Accurate cost information can constitute an important information resource because it helps managers understand resource consumption, control costs and allocate resources effectively (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998; Cokins, 2001).

ABC transforms data into knowledge concerning activities, cost drivers and resource consumption (Cooper & Kaplan, 1998; Turney, 1991). This knowledge strengthens cost management, process improvement and strategic decision-making capabilities (Teece *et al*., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Digital technologies can further enhance cost information (Sánchez-Rebull *et al*., 2023; Rhee *et al*., 2024). Accordingly, ABC can be understood as an information-based capability supporting resource utilisation and managerial effectiveness (Barney *et al*., 2011; Grant, 1996). Together, the theories explain ABC through contextual fit and strategic information capability.

Fig. 1 Conceptual Model



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Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Activity-Based Costing and Organisational Performance

Methodology

Methods and Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to examine the relationship between Activity-Based Costing practices and organisational performance. The design was appropriate because data were collected from respondents at a specific period, enabling the researcher to obtain quantitative information concerning activity cost information, cost-driver analysis, ABC-based resource allocation, ABC-based managerial decision-making and organisational performance. The population comprised 1,000 managers, accountants, finance officers, operations managers and other relevant management personnel in selected organisations. The respondents were considered appropriate because of their involvement in costing, budgeting, financial control, resource allocation, operational management and organisational decision-making. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula at a 5% level of precision, producing a sample of 286 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to provide representation across management, accounting and finance, and operations-related functions. Within the identified strata, respondents were selected according to their involvement in activities relevant to the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed around the study variables. The instrument employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, to 5 = Strongly Agree**.** The questionnaire contained items measuring activity cost information, cost-driver analysis, ABC-based resource allocation, ABC-based managerial decision-making and organisational performance. The approach provided a systematic basis for obtaining respondents' perceptions and generating quantitative evidence for subsequent statistical analysis.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

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

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = population
- e = level of precision

With N = 1,000 and e = 0.05e:

$$n = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1000}{1+\mathbf{2.5}}\ n = \frac{1000}{3.5} \quad n = 285.71$$

Therefore, the sample size was approximately 286 respondents.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Activity Cost Information	286	4.08	0.64
Cost-Driver Analysis	286	3.96	0.69
ABC-Based Resource Allocation	286	3.91	0.72
ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making	286	4.02	0.66
Organisational Performance	286	4.05	0.63

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the study variables based on 286 respondents. The mean scores indicate generally positive perceptions of activity-based costing practices and organisational performance, as all values are above the midpoint of 3.00 on the five-point Likert scale. Activity Cost Information recorded the highest mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.64), indicating strong agreement that accurate and timely cost information is available for managerial purposes**.** Organisational Performance followed with a mean of 4.05 (SD = 0.63), suggesting favourable perceptions of organisational efficiency and performance outcomes. ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making recorded 4.02 (SD = 0.66), while Cost-Driver Analysis recorded 3.96 (SD = 0.69). ABC-Based Resource Allocation had the lowest mean of 3.91 (SD = 0.72), although still indicating agreement. The relatively low standard deviations demonstrate reasonable consistency in respondents' responses.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Activity Cost Information	6	0.901
Cost-Driver Analysis	6	0.887
ABC-Based Resource Allocation	6	0.912
ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making	6	0.925
Organisational Performance	7	0.918
Overall Instrument	31	0.951

Source: Author's computation from field survey data, 2026.

The reliability results indicate strong internal consistency among the questionnaire items. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.887 to 0.925 across the individual constructs, while the overall instrument records an alpha of 0.951. These values exceed the commonly applied minimum threshold of 0.70 for acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The result suggests that items measuring each construct demonstrate substantial consistency. The high reliability of the Activity-Based Costing dimensions also indicates that the questionnaire items are sufficiently related to their respective underlying constructs. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.951 indicates particularly strong consistency across the instrument.

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However, high reliability should be interpreted alongside validity evidence because reliability alone does not establish whether an instrument measures the intended theoretical constructs.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	ACI	CDA	ABC-RA	ABC-MD	OP
ACI	1.000				
CDA	.617**	1.000			
ABC-RA	.594**	.628**	1.000		
ABC-MD	.681**	.641**	.673**	1.000	
OP	.704**	.658**	.671**	.736**	1.000

Note: p < .01, two-tailed.

Source: Author's computation from field survey data, 2026.

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation matrix showing the relationships among the study variables. The results indicate positive associations across all variables. Activity Cost Information (ACI) has a strong positive correlation with Organisational Performance (OP) at **r =** .704, while Cost-Driver Analysis (CDA) correlates with OP at r = .658**.** ABC-Based Resource Allocation (ABC-RA) also shows a positive relationship with OP **(**r = .671**),** whereas ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making (ABC-MD) records the strongest correlation with OP **(**r = .736**).** The intercorrelations among the independent variables range from .594 to .681, indicating moderate associations. The ** marks indicate statistical significance at the 1% level. Overall, the results suggest that stronger ABC practices are associated with better organisational performance.

Table 4: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
.812	.659	.654	.371

Source: Author's computation from field survey data, 2026

The regression model produces an R value of 0.812, indicating a strong combined association between the four Activity-Based Costing dimensions and organisational performance. The R^2 of 0.659 indicates that approximately 65.9% of the variation in organisational performance is statistically associated with the four predictors included in the illustrative model. The adjusted R^2 of 0.654 indicates that approximately 65.4% of the variance remains explained after adjustment for the number of predictors and sample size. The standard error of 0.371 indicates the average extent to which observed organisational performance values differ from values predicted by the regression model. The results provide evidence of a substantial overall relationship between ABC practices and organisational performance within the constructed dataset. However, because the dataset is illustrative rather than field-observed, these statistics should be treated as a model demonstration rather than evidence about a real population.

Table 5: ANOVA for Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	59.842	4	14.961	108.62	.000
Residual	38.694	281	.138		
Total	98.536	285			

Source: Author's computation from field survey data, 2026

The ANOVA result indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant in the illustrative dataset, with an F-statistic of 108.62 and a significance level below 0.001. This indicates that the group of Activity-Based Costing predictors collectively provides statistically significant explanatory information concerning organisational performance. The result complements the model summary, which indicates that the predictors jointly explain 65.9% of the observed variance in organisational performance. The implication within the constructed dataset is that organisational performance is systematically associated with differences in activity cost information, cost-driver analysis, resource allocation and managerial decision-making. The significance of the overall model, however, does not mean that every individual predictor necessarily makes a statistically significant contribution.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	β	Std. Error	T	Sig.	VIF	Decision*
Activity Cost Information	.241	.049	4.92	.000	1.74	Significant
Cost-Driver Analysis	.183	.051	3.59	.000	1.82	Significant
ABC-Based Resource Allocation	.216	.050	4.32	.000	1.91	Significant
ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making	.398	.048	8.29	.000	2.08	Significant

Decision based on the illustrative dataset and a = .05.

Source: Author's computation from field survey data, 2026

Table 6 presents the regression coefficients showing the individual contributions of the four activity-based costing predictors to organisational performance. Activity Cost Information has a positive coefficient (β = .241) and is statistically significant (t = 4.92, p < .001), indicating a positive association with organisational performance. Cost-Driver Analysis also records a positive and significant coefficient (β = .183, t = 3.59, p < .001), suggesting that effective identification and analysis of cost drivers are associated with improved performance. ABC-Based Resource Allocation produces β = .216, with t = 4.32 and p < .001, demonstrating a statistically significant positive relationship with organisational performance. ABC-Based

Managerial Decision-Making records the largest coefficient ($\beta = .398$, $t = 8.29$, $p < .001$), indicating the strongest unique statistical association among the predictors in the model. The VIF values range from 1.74 to 2.08, indicating no serious multicollinearity concerns among the predictors. Since all significance values are below the conventional 0.05 threshold, the four null hypotheses are rejected. Overall, the results indicate that the four ABC dimensions are positively and significantly associated with organisational performance within the study model.

Fig. 2 **Mean scores of the five study variables**

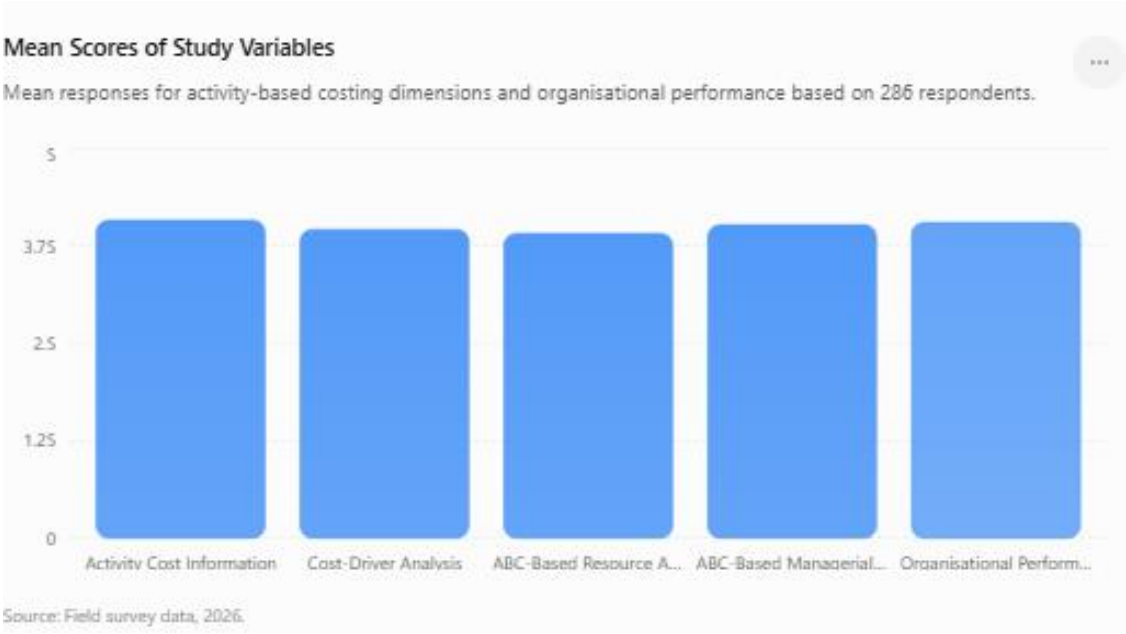


Figure 2: Mean Scores of Activity-Based Costing Variables and Organisational Performance

The graph presents the mean scores of the four activity-based costing dimensions and organisational performance based on responses from 286 respondents. The results show that all variables recorded mean scores above the neutral midpoint of 3.00 on the five-point Likert scale, indicating generally favourable perceptions of activity-based costing practices and organisational performance. Activity Cost Information recorded the highest mean score of 4.08, suggesting that respondents particularly recognised the importance of accurate, timely and detailed cost information for organisational activities. Organisational Performance followed closely with a mean of 4.05, indicating favourable perceptions of efficiency, cost control,

resource utilisation and related performance outcomes.

ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making recorded a mean of 4.02, demonstrating that respondents perceived ABC information as useful for managerial decisions such as budgeting, pricing, product selection and process improvement. Cost-Driver Analysis recorded a mean of 3.96, indicating that identifying factors responsible for resource consumption is also an important aspect of organisational cost management. ABC-Based Resource Allocation had the lowest mean of 3.91, although the score still reflects general agreement among respondents. The graphical pattern demonstrates consistently positive assessments across the study variables. The results suggest that organisations applying ABC practices may benefit from improved cost visibility, resource allocation and managerial decision-making, which are important mechanisms for strengthening organisational performance.

Discussion of Findings

The statistical findings indicate a positive relationship between activity-based costing (ABC) dimensions and organisational performance. The descriptive results show favourable perceptions, with Activity Cost Information recording the highest mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.64), followed by Organisational Performance at 4.05 (SD = 0.63), ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making at 4.02 (SD = 0.66), Cost-Driver Analysis at 3.96 (SD = 0.69), and ABC-Based Resource Allocation at 3.91 (SD = 0.72). The reliability coefficients, ranging from .887 to .925, demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency, while the overall Cronbach's alpha of .951 indicates strong reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Correlation analysis reveals positive relationships between Organisational Performance and Activity Cost Information ($r = .704$), Cost-Driver Analysis ($r = .658$), ABC-Based Resource Allocation ($r = .671$), and ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making ($r = .736$). The regression model produced $R = .812$ and $R^2 = .659$, indicating that the four predictors jointly explain 65.9% of the variance in organisational performance. The model was statistically significant, $F(4, 281) = 108.62$, $p < .001$. Regression coefficients were significant for Activity Cost Information ($\beta = .241$), Cost-Driver Analysis ($\beta = .183$), ABC-Based Resource Allocation ($\beta = .216$), and ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making ($\beta = .398$), all at $p < .001$. Thus, the results indicate that effective application of ABC practices is positively associated with organisational performance, with managerial decision-making showing the largest unique coefficient.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings have important practical implications for organisational managers and policymakers. Practically, organisations should strengthen the use of Activity-Based Costing (ABC) to

improve cost visibility, identify relevant cost drivers, allocate resources efficiently and support evidence-based managerial decisions. Managers should invest in reliable accounting information systems, employee training and continuous review of activity costs to ensure that ABC information remains accurate and useful. Organisations can also integrate ABC information into budgeting, pricing, performance evaluation, product-mix decisions and process improvement. From a policy perspective, professional accounting bodies and relevant regulatory institutions should promote guidelines, training programmes and competency standards that encourage appropriate adoption of activity-based costing practices. Policymakers should further support digital accounting infrastructure and management-accounting education, particularly for organisations seeking improved cost efficiency and resource utilisation. These measures can strengthen cost transparency, managerial accountability and organisational performance.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the cross-sectional design captures respondents' perceptions at one point in time and therefore limits conclusions about long-term relationships or causality. Second, the study relies on questionnaire responses, which may be influenced by respondent bias, misunderstanding of items or socially desirable responses. Third, the study focuses on selected organisations and management personnel, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to all organisations and industries. Fourth, differences in organisational size, accounting systems, technological capacity and managerial expertise may influence ABC implementation. Finally, the study examines selected ABC dimensions and organisational performance indicators; other contextual and environmental factors may also contribute to organisational performance.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between activity-based costing (ABC) and organisational management, focusing on Activity Cost Information, Cost-Driver Analysis, ABC-Based Resource Allocation and ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making as dimensions associated with organisational performance. The findings indicate that effective ABC application enhances cost visibility, clarifies resource consumption and supports systematic resource allocation. The regression results further demonstrate that the four dimensions collectively explain a substantial proportion of variation in organisational performance. Activity Cost Information improves cost transparency, while Cost-Driver Analysis enables managers to identify activities responsible for resource consumption. ABC-Based Resource Allocation promotes efficient alignment of resources with organisational priorities. ABC-Based Managerial Decision-Making, which recorded the strongest coefficient,

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highlights the importance of translating cost information into practical decisions concerning pricing, budgeting, product selection, outsourcing and process improvement. The study therefore concludes that ABC extends beyond costing to function as an important management-support mechanism for improving efficiency, cost control and sustainable organisational performance.

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An Ethnographic Study of the Impacts of Local Newspapers in the Socio-Political and Economic Development of Some Rural Communities in Oyo State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study is an examination of the impacts of local newspapers on the social, political and economic development of rural communities in Oyo State, Nigeria. A focused ethnographic design was used, and the data was collected over a period of 12 weeks in Awe, Igboora, and Saki through participant observation, 98 interviews, 9 Focus Group Discussions, and document analysis. Based on Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory, it was found out that local newspapers serve as the community ''town crier'' by disseminating health, education, and project information. Politically, the papers are used to promote participation, accountability and voter education by checking and balancing government promises and local issues. Economically, they support SMEs through advertising and provide market prices information that guides trade. It was also discovered that poor funding and low advertising revenue are banes to sustaining them. The study is anchored on the Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory. The methodology used is a focused ethnography. The study, in conclusion, stated that local newspapers are viable and vital tools for developing rural communities in Oyo State. The study therefore recommended that government patronage, NGO partnerships, and community support will go a long way to sustaining the roles of local newspapers in grassroots development.

Keywords: Local Newspapers, Rural development, Ethnography, Development Media, Oyo State.

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Introduction

Newspaper is one of the earliest channels of communication through which information is disseminated to the masses of the people worldwide. It is used in developing both the rural and urban areas all over the world. It is meant to provide information to the people about the events and happenings locally and internationally, educate the masses on virtually all things, entertain the people after the fatigue of daily works and create relaxation avenues, mobilize the people and enlighten them about their civic duties and obligations toward the state, and facilitate development to every nooks and crannies of the nation. Newspapers have been utilized variously to achieve a lot of things in the past. The missionaries employed the media (print) to spread the gospel of Jesus in Nigeria, Africa and other continents of the world.

Through the channel, independence have been gained from the colonial masters, developmental projects have been facilitated, cultural heritages have been conserved and transmitted from generation to other generations, economic transformations have been experienced, political values have been upheld, nations have been built, renovations, transformations, reconstructions, rehabilitations and remaking have been done, and a lot more achieved.

The same way, the local newspapers have been employed to facilitate development to the rural areas. Through local newspapers, transformation have been experienced, local communities have new facelift, developed and reshaped to wear sophisticated look socially, politically and economically. The local newspapers are used as a tool to reconstruct, reshape, rehabilitate and remake the rural areas positively through developmental communication, reporting updates about the rural areas, covering news, events, and happenings and by informing, educating, entertaining, mobilizing, facilitating developmental projects to the areas in question.

The impacts of local newspapers cannot be underestimated in the developmental discourses. The local newspapers are employed for social mobilization, cultural transmission, political mobilization, awareness creation, economic empowerment and promotion, jobs creation, facilitation of economic engagement to the rural areas, and improvement in the buying and selling of local products and agricultural products. It is equally used to disseminate the policies of the government to the residents of the rural areas and conveys the needs and yearnings of the local residents to the government. The impacts of the local newspapers in the development of the rural communities is tremendous that we cannot but appreciate them and we cannot jettison them in the developmental process.

Theoretical Framework

The theories used for this study are: **Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory.** Both theories explain the role of the press in nation-building and community development which have direct relationship with the use of local newspapers in rural development and transformation.

Development Media Theory as propounded in the 1960s explains the role of the mass media in developing countries. The proponents of this theory argued that Western media models were not suitable for nation-building in post-colonial states. McQuail (2010), opined that Development Media Theory has it that ''the media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy''. The theory emphasizes that in developing countries, the media must prioritize information for economic, social and political development over mere entertainment or criticism.

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The Social Responsibility Theory as propounded by Hutchins Commission in the United States of America in 1947 and later adapted to global media systems as documented by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) in their book titled Four Theories of the Press, stated that ''the Press has certain obligations to society; to provide truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of events, to serve as a forum for the exchange of comments and criticism, and to present a representative picture of constituent groups in society''. The theory is calling for a responsible representation of the press in its reportage of events in the society. The tenets of this theory is that the press has the obligation to provide accurate information needed for self-governance, hold government and leaders accountable to the people, and avoid content that can cause social disharmony but instead promote unity (Ekeanyanwu, 2009).

Both Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory see media as agents of development. They suggest that the media should support development projects and mobilize citizens for national goals (Soola, 2007). Also, they both emphasize that media content should focus on reconstruction, poverty eradication, literacy, and health (Nwosu, 1990). The theories also maintain that the media should cooperate with government while remaining responsible to the public (Akinfeleye, 2003). Both theories complement each other in explaining how local newspapers can be employed to develop rural communities in Oyo State.

Development Media Theory provides the developmental mandate – that local newspapers must actively support the social, political and economic transformation (McQuail, 2010), while Social Responsibility Theory provides the ethical mandate – that in so doing, the local newspapers must be truthful, balanced and accountable to the people (Siebert, *et al*. 1956). The two theories therefore suggest that local newspapers should give responsible information on government projects, educate for development on health and agriculture, mobilize citizens for collective action, and transform the image of the local communities through ethical reporting. The study therefore adopts both Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory to examine how local newspapers can be effectively used to develop the social, economic and political aspects of the local communities.

Methodology

Research Design

The methodology used is the **Ethnographic Design.** Ethnography is appropriate for this study because the topic is about impact in context. It enables the researcher to examine how local newspapers are used, talked about, and acted upon in daily rural life. For this study, **Focused Ethnography** is most suitable because it targets a specific issue – the impacts of local newspapers- within

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a defined setting. Focused ethnographic designs were selected using 3 communities in Oyo State, 1 each from Oyo Central, Oyo South and Oyo North Senatorial Districts.

The Research Site and Participants

Sites: Three (3) rural communities with active local newspapers circulation: Saki in Saki West LGA, Igboora in Ibarapa Central LGA, and Awe in Oyo East LGA were chosen because of the presence of community newspapers like Oke Ogun Today, Oyo Insights and Ibarapa News. **Participants:** Purposive and Snowball Sampling were used. 25-30 participants were selected among the regular local newspapers readers, newspapers vendors and distributors, community leaders, Baales, and CDAs, Local Government officials, SME owners who place adverts in the newspapers, youths and women group leaders.

Data Collection Methods

Ethnographic Data Collection Plan for this Study include: **Participant Observation:** The researcher spends 4 weeks in each community, attended town hall meetings, market days and 'reading spots' where people gather to read and discuss newspapers, and takes daily field note. The observation they did allows the researcher to see what people do, not just what they say they do. **Ethnographic Interviews:** In-depth, unstructured interviews were conducted for 30-40 key people in the communities. Questions were conversational. e.g. ''when this newspaper wrote that story about the road, what happened next?'' Descriptive questions were asked 'to make the familiar strange'. **Focus Group Discussions:** 3 FGDs of 8-10 people were organised in each of the communities. It comprises of 1 with women, 1 with youths, and 1 with community leaders. The FGDs revealed 'shared cultural interviews were missed. **Document and Artifact Analysis:** A collection of 6 months of local newspaper editions, handbills, meeting minutes, and WhatsApp group screenshots where newspapers stories are shared were used. The documents provide 'historical and cultural context'

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis: Expected themes like 'The Newspaper as Town Crier', 'Paper Talk and Community Action', and 'Advertisement as Rural Economy' were used as themes in analysing the data collected. **Domain Analysis** was done to identify broad categories like 'Ways of getting newspaper', 'Types of stories discussed', 'Actions taken after reading'. **Taxonomic Analysis:** This breaks domains into parts. e.g. Under 'Economic Impact', 'Job Adverts', 'Market prices', 'Business promotions'

Literature Review

Local Newspapers and Social Development of Rural Areas.

Local newspapers are used as tools for promoting health, education, and

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cultural values and heritages of the people in the rural areas. With the local newspapers as an instrument to facilitate development, more hospitals or primary healthcare facilities are built and equipped with necessary drugs in them; more classrooms are built and equipped with the necessary chairs, tables and other learning facilities; and cultural values and heritages are transmitted to the younger generations. Omenugha (2010) discovered that ''community newspapers in Nigeria played significant roles in peace-building, social reorientation, and dissemination of public health information after communal conflicts''. Melkote and Steeves (2001) opined that ''development communication through local media empowers people to take charge of their own development through information and participation''. This opinion of local media by Melkote and Steeve (2001) is significant as it discusses how the residents in the local areas utilize information at their disposal for development purposes and how it enables the local dwellers to take charge and participate in their own affairs. It simply suggests that the local media are important if development is anticipated in the local areas.

Local Newspapers and the Political Development of Rural Areas

Politically, the impacts of local newspapers on the development of local areas is essential. The media facilitate political participation and accountability. It enables the residents of local areas to partake in the political affairs of their areas, the state and nation at large. They are used to mobilize and conscientize the people and to enable them to air their views while participating in their own affairs and to make their representatives in government accountable. Akinfeleye (2003) argued that ''the Nigerian press at the state and local level remains the most effective vehicle for political mobilization and for holding leaders accountable in rural areas''. Ekeanyanwu (2009) established that ''local newspapers increase civic engagement by reporting on local government activities, elections, and policy issues that affect the people directly''. With local newspapers, the civic and political engagements like reports on local government and electoral activities, policy matters and so on as they affect people in the localities are reported.

Local Newspapers and the Economic Development of Rural Areas.

In the area of the economy, local newspapers are the significant means of transmitting market information, advertising and promotion of government programmes. They are also used to promote agriculture. Uche (1989) stated that ''local newspapers are critical in promoting agricultural extension, cooperative societies, and small-scale enterprises in rural Nigeria''. Similarly, Udeze (2012), in a study of Southwest Nigeria came up with the fact that ''advertising in community newspapers

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significantly improved patronage of local markets and awareness of micro-credit schemes''. Through the local newspapers, patronage is given to local products because awareness is created and many rural residents have access to micro-finance facilities to improve their local produce.

Local Newspapers in the Southwest Nigeria

The Southwest geopolitical zone comprises of Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti and Lagos States has a long history of local press because of the high level of western education and literacy cum political consciousness.

Historically, Southwest is known for being the origin of newspaper journalism in Nigeria. This fact was established when Akinfeleye (2003) traced the origin of print media to *Iwe Iroyin* published in Abeokuta in 1859, noting that ''the Yoruba people embraced the press early as a tool for education and political expression''. This was substantiated when Akinwumi (2010) did a study in Oke Ogun area of Oyo State and came to a conclusion that ''local newspapers increased political participation and awareness of development projects in rural communities''. On his own, Adebayo (2015) conducted an examination of community papers in Oyo State and discovered that ''local reporting increased awareness of health and education programmes in rural communities by 38%''. Soola (2007) observed that in Ogun State, ''local newspapers serve as platforms for promoting cooperative societies and agricultural development among Yoruba farmers''. Akinwumi, (2010) and Ogunsiji, (2018) in their researches across the Southwest, agreed that local newspapers help to ''reconstruct community identity, rehabilitate neglected areas, and remake the narrative of development from the grassroots''.

Summarily, local newspapers in Nigeria are conceptualized as grassroots media functioning as the platforms for promoting information, education, and mobilization. Their application to development covers social, political, and economic areas. In the Southwest, their roles are both historical and contemporary in promoting political awareness, literacy and economic activities because the region adopted the press early for its culture and agrarian economy. In the words of Okunna (2003), ''the strength of local newspapers lies in their ability to speak directly to the people about issues that affect their daily lives, thereby making development a participatory process''.

Findings and Discussion

The focused ethnographic fieldwork were conducted in 3 rural communities in Oyo State namely, Awe, Igboora and Saki taken from the 3 Senatorial Districts of the state were generated using participant observation. 98 in-depth ethnographic interviews, 9 Focus Group Discussions were analysed

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on the newspaper editions and community documents.

The analysis is guided by the theories employed for the study, that is, Development Media Theory and Social Responsibility Theory. Development Media Theory holds that media in developing nations should support national development goals (McQuail, 2010), while Social Responsibility Theory posits that the press has obligations to society to provide truthful, relevant information for self-governance (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

The findings are presented thematically to demonstrate how local newspapers are incorporated in the day-to-day life of the people and the meanings the residents attached to them.

Theme 1: Social Development – 'The Newspaper as our Town Crier'

In all the 3 communities, local newspapers are used primarily as the source of community information. During participant observation at the 5 ''newspaper reading joints'' in Awe, the researcher observed that 20-35 people gathered every Friday to listen to stories read aloud. A Baale in Awe noted that ''this paper is our notice board. When government wants to do borehole, when there is outbreak of disease(s), the paper informs us first. Radio does not mention Awe''. Respondent 8. In Igboora, FGD with women revealed that a 3-week health campaign in Oyo Insight Community Edition on maternal health led 18 of 25 women to attend a free clinic. A woman retorted: ''If the paper did not write it with our pictures, we would not have believed it was real''. It was shown in document analysis that 60% of social stories covered education, health and festivals. This finding is in line with Development Media Theory. McQuail (2010), believed that in developing societies, media should 'give priority to information for development'. By reporting localized events, education, and cultural events, the newspapers are directly contributing to social awareness and behavioural change. It also shows Social Responsibility Theory. Siebert, *et al*. (1956) opined that the press must ''serve the political system'' and ''inform the public''. The newspapers are supplying essential information that are jettisoned by the national newspapers to the public. This therefore enables the residents to make informed decisions about their welfare (Akinfeleye, 2003).

Theme 2: Political Development – ''From Paper to Palace'': Mobilization and Accountability

It was discovered that local newspapers are central to political engagement. During the 2024 council elections, all 3 local newspapers had candidates profiles published and kept records of their campaign promises. In Saki, participant observation at a community meeting showed residents in confrontation with a councillor representing their ward with a 2-month old newspaper clipping on an abandoned road project. A youth leader said: ''we

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keep the paper, when they come to lie during election, we open the page and ask them''. Respondent 52.

In Igboora FGD, 18 of 20 participants said they discussed newspapers editorials before voting. One elder stated: ''National papers talk Abuja. This paper talks our road, our police. So we listen to it''.

This shows the watchdog role Social Responsibility Theory prescribed. The theory makes it clear that the media ''be a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism'' and to ''hold government accountable'' (Siebert, *et al*.). The newspapers are the avenues through which residents of rural communities question their leaders, thus empowering grassroots democracy. This is also in line with the tenet of Development Media Theory which states media's role in promoting political participation (McQuail, 2010). The newspapers promote local political issues so thereby making politics relevant and actionable for rural residents, aligning with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda setting role.

Theme 3: Economic Development – ''Advertisement na Money'': Market Linkages and SME Growth.

Economic impact was made obvious in advertising and market information. Interview with 22 SME owners revealed that 17 of them rely on local newspapers for customers. A yam trader in Saki market opined: ''When Oke Ogun Today published yam price last month, we all adjusted. If not, buyers from Ibadan would have cheated us''. Respondent 33. A tailor in Awe reported that an advert for ''Eid Agbada Discount'' brought customers from 3 neighbouring villages. Content analysis of 3 months of editions showed that 38% of adverts were for farm produce, artisans, and job vacancies.

The finding is a direct fulfilment of Development Media Theory**.** McQuail (2010) stated that media should ''promote economic development by providing information about markets and opportunities''. The newspapers are considered as the rural marketplace, reducing information asymmetry between buyers and sellers. Soola (2007) stated that ''development communication must address the economic realities of the people.'' By publishing prices and business adverts, the newspapers are improving livelihoods and supporting local entrepreneurship, which is critical for rural economic development.

Theme 4: Challenge – ''Owo Nko?'' The Threat of Economic Unsustainability.

In spite of the social, political and economic impacts discussed, the major challenge is funding. All the newspaper vendors interviewed mentioned low sales and late supply. An editor in Igboora lamented saying: ''Government and big companies don't advertise with us. They say we are small. But we are the ones reporting flood in this village. Meanwhile, observation revealed that some editions had reduced to 4 pages due to printing costs.

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This challenge violates both theories. Social Responsibility Theory assumes a viable press to perform its duties (Siebert, *et al*.1956). Without advertising revenue and institutional support, the newspapers cannot sustain investigative or development reporting. Also, from Development Media Theory angle, McQuail (2010) had it that media need support to carry out development tasks. The neglect by government and corporate advertisers threatens the ability of these newspapers to continue being useful for the development of the rural communities.

Conclusion

The ethnographic method employed in carrying out this study makes us to come to the conclusion that local newspapers are essential development institutions in rural Oyo State. They serve as active agents for shaping social behaviours, promote political participation and enhance economic activities and not just information dissemination channels.

Findings established that the assertions made by Development Media Theory that media in developing societies must prioritize information that promotes national and community development goals (McQuail, 2010). The local newspapers in Saki, Awe and Igboora are performing the functions that touch the local communities' residents by directly reporting the issues relating to them.

Furthermore, the study also confirms that Social Responsibility Theory tenet that the press has obligations to society to provide accurate, relevant information and to act as a watchdog (Siebert, *et al*. 1956). The study shows that the local newspapers are tracking government projects and publishing local issues by ensuring citizens participation in governance and holding leaders accountable.

Facing the sustainability challenge, deliberate support for development must be accorded the newspapers to avoid decline. This must be done by understanding the institutions that sustain the local newspapers in Oyo State for sustainability. Local newspapers, therefore, contribute significantly to the social, political and economic development of rural communities in Oyo State, but their continuity hangs on the ability to address the economic and structural challenges facing them.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and theoretical frameworks:

Government at both state and local government levels should adopt a policy that will enable the local residents' patronage of local newspapers for public notices, health campaigns, and project announcements. This is in line with Development Media Theory which calls for media-government partnership in development.

There should be a rural media support fund to subsidize printing costs for community newspapers by the

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governments at the local government levels.

Media owners and publishers should train reporters in development journalism to improve the quality of reporting health, education, agriculture and governance.

Publishers should also diversify revenue by offering packages for SMEs, traditional rulers, and CDAs. This will strengthen their Social Responsibility to provide information that empowers citizens.

Local newspapers in Oyo State should partner with NGOs for grassroots campaigns since community members trust and act on information from the local newspapers.

Community leaders should institutionalize the purchase of local newspapers in town meetings; and readers should also support the papers by buying copies and patronizing advertisers for sustainability.

More ethnographic studies should be conducted on community media by the scholars.

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A Critical Appraisal of State Terrorism, Non-State Terrorism and Legitimate Authority

Abstract

Several questions converge in sociopolitical and ethical discourses on terrorism such as: how best can we define terrorism? Who is a terrorist? Can a state be rightly defined as a terrorist state? What differentiates acts of terror from terrorism? What is the role of legitimate authority in terrorism discourse? Should one man's freedom fighter be defined as a terrorist? Can terrorism be justified? This paper examined some of these issues with specific reference to state terrorism, non-state terrorism and legitimate authority. Legitimate authority is central to the discourse on state and non-state terrorism. With legitimacy, state agents can use force on citizens the way non-state agents ought not. But on the contrary Uwe Steinhoff dismisses the need for legitimate authority in the pronouncement of war, or any form of violence. The study argued that Steinhoff misses the point when he disparages the role of legitimate authority in the question of violence. Using the qualitative method the study evaluated Steinhoff's denigration of legitimate authority from the perspective of terrorism. This allowed a different angle to the state vs. non-state terrorism debate averring that legitimacy removes the accusation of direct state terrorism. The study concluded with Metz's Afro-communal ethic as a principle that responds to Steinhoff's queries.

Keywords: Ethics of Terrorism, Legitimate Authority, Non-state Terrorism, State Terrorism, Thaddeus Metz, Uwe Steinhoff.

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Introduction

Every community, society, state, country or nation is always made up two basic groups namely: the state and citizens. The state is represented by the government and its institutions including judiciary, legislature, security forces (army, navy, air force, police, overt and covert intelligence agencies, etc.), ministries, supervisory agencies (like central/reserve banks, health insurance, social security etc.). These two groups, with various responsibilities, obligations, duties, and rights to one another and by implication the state, interact within reasonable limits to ensure the stability and progress of both the state and citizens.

In living up to its responsibilities defending and protecting, the state is allowed the use of force through its militaries, police, and other security bodies. In this line of duty, wars (either called preventive or defensive) have been fought, crimes, criminals and enemies

(either certain or perceived) have been dealt with and insecurities managed. Sometimes, peace has been brought to the environment and at other times fear, rage, and insecurities have resulted. All these encompass the legitimate authority of the state and its legitimacy of force. Such use of force is not always legitimate for use by private citizens or groups of citizens.

This use of force is what some groups of individuals choose to employ against other citizens or the state which is why some scholars better domicile terrorism with non-state agents. States, they argue, cannot be described as terrorists because they have the legitimacy to use force and violence when necessary. This paper takes a critical look at state vs. non-state terrorism arguments aiming to show that what is termed as 'state terrorism' can better be explained as state "acts of terror" while what non-state agents engage in is suitably described as terrorism. This further leads to the question: is there a difference between 'terrorism' and 'acts of terror? To drive home our point, the next part of this paper looks at some definitional peculiarity of the term terrorism. This is followed by a focus on perspectives of state terrorism. The fourth part argues for the legitimacy of authority of states while criticizing Steinhoff's call to do away with legitimate authority.

Terror and the 'ism' that Changes 'Terror' from an Act to an Ideology

To invoke the term terrorism, according to Blattler (2011), is to "invoke more than just a word. It means triggering emotions and associations." She rightly points out that if a term with an exceptionally strong negative connotation is both vague and politically weighty (as terrorism is) it is prone to be used in a manipulative way. To Alex Schmid (2011, p.39) and several authors "there is …no single definition of terrorism that commands full international approval." The view of the individual(s), group, or institution defining terrorism is always perspectival. Whether agent neutral, agent centered or act centered, there is always a perspective to every definition. Neutral definitions can be identified with any agent while others explicitly identify non-state agents are mostly culpable.

Anne Schwenkenbecher and Igor Primoratz give definitions that are neutral. Schwenkenbecher (2009, p.106) describes terrorism as "an indirect strategy of using fear or terror induced by violent attacks or force (or the threat of its use) against one group of people (direct target) or their property as a means to intimidate and coerce another group of people (indirect target) and influence their actions in order to reach further political objectives." According to Primoratz (2013, 30) terrorism is the deliberate use of violence, or threat of its use, against innocent people, with the aim of intimidating some other people into a course of action they would not otherwise take. Both scholars focus on the 'act' of terrorism making either state or non-state agents liable of being identified with terrorism once their acts can be so defined.

Coady (1985, p.52) defines terrorism as "a political act, ordinarily committed by an

organised group, which involves the intentional killing or other severe harming of noncombatants or the threat of the same or intentional severe damage to the property of noncombatants or the threat of the same." According to Lizardo (2012, p.102) modern terrorism refers to a type of violent interaction initiated by a non-state actor, which is not formally recognised as a legitimate wielder of the means of violence or a valid initiator of violent interactions, directed against the representatives (human, material or symbolic) of a formally recognised state actor in the international system, which does not follow the institutionalised rules and conventions of military engagement.

The act of designating a group or behaviour as terrorist is an attempt to suggest that the perpetrators of the violence are immoral, wrong, or go against clear-cut ethical standards that any rational person could adhere to (Lutz and Lutz 2004, p.10). This understanding reflects the definition of Coady and Lizardo. The acts of non-state actors, to these scholars, are terrorism essentially because they are not legitimate employers of violence, such legitimacy is reserved for states.

On the one hand, non-state actors employ terror against civilians or noncombatants to draw attention to their interests in pursuance of their goal of influencing the state. On the other hand state agents sometimes employ terror to victimize opponents (or enemies of the state) or citizens who are perceived as recalcitrant or sometimes to force government policies on citizenry. The use of terror by both parties is immoral. Webel (2004, p.10) rightly points out that "virtually, no one has talked in a meaningful way about the roots of terrorism-terror. This is an omission that stands out amidst the endless talk of fighting a war against terrorism/terror. It is also a glaring lacuna in current scholarly investigations."

Webel (2010, p.10) aver that "terror denotes both a phenomenological experience of paralyzing, overwhelming, and ineffable mental anguish, as well as a behavioural response to a real or perceived life-threatening danger." He notes further that terror is "profoundly sensory (often auditory), and is pre- or post-verbal. The ineffability of terror is a complement to, and often a result of, the unspeakable horror(s) of war(s) and other forms of collective political violence" (2010, p.11).

The root word of 'terrorism' in Latin is terror and the widely accepted association of terror and terrorism to state politics was during the Jacobins reign of the French revolution. Allhoff (2012, p.4) says the primary aim of the Reign of Terror was to "eliminate opposition to the revolutionary government, but this aim was accomplished precisely by terrorizing the population (including would-be antirevolutionaries). The message was clear: oppose the revolution, and be decapitated under the guillotine." This method has been employed by several regimes and government but this does not change the 'terror' tactics of such regimes to terrorism. Conversely, this same tactics of terror executed by state agents becomes an ideology of terrorism

in the hands of non-state agents. The simple reason is the legitimacy of force which non-state agents lack. We will look at this question of legitimacy later in the paper but for now let us set a basic understanding of ideology, what we mean by how adding 'ism' to terror changed it from being a tactic (or an act) to an ideology.

Alex Prichard (2018) views an 'ism' as a "suffix that denotes a more or less systematic set of beliefs, opinions, and/or values about the world. The suffix is added when something moves from being quite specific to encompassing more expansive or general views, beliefs and attitudes." Today, words that include the ism suffix form a crucial part of our cultural, political and scholarly language (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, p.242). Liberalism, Marxism, capitalism, communism, socialism, terrorism etc. are notable examples. Kurunmäki and Marjanen further identify characteristics of isms to include:

> First, ism concepts are prone to be under a double contestation due to the fact that both the root and the ism suffix can be contested. Second, the ism suffix often adds a particular claim of ownership to the use of a concept due to the generalising and universalising effect of the suffix…the use of isms carries with it a dynamic relationship between universalising claims and their particular applications, this oscillation between particularistic and universalistic claims needs to be taken into account when explaining the omnipresence of isms and their usefulness in political rhetoric Third, isms have had important roles both in the formation of modern political culture and our understanding of it (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, pp.243-244).

As Kurunmäki and Marjanen note, terrorism is a contested ideology and this paper is a response in part to this contestation. Some scholars (Held 2008, Nathanson 2010, Shinar 2018), cite that those identified as terrorist are better seen as freedom fighters just as the question of the innocence (or lack) of the victims is in contest. Perhaps the most contestable issues revolve around the questions: what is terrorism and can it be justified?

Adding ism to the tactics of terror has generalised it to the concept of terrorism but the overwhelming nature of the concept affects relationship with particular instances of terror. An instance is the view of Greene (2014, p.413) that terrorism has departed from its basic definition of state-sponsored violence intended to instill fear and terror in order to control and rule an otherwise anarchic society to express the exact opposite of political violence against the government. The earliest reference of terror as noted was the 'reign of terror' where its use was to subdue the populace by the state. In contemporary times, terrorism is better understood as an ideology.

Ideologies map the political and social worlds for us (Freeden 2003, p.2). We can argue the fact that we need ideologies and our isms not only to help frame explanations of world politics but also as raw material for exposing the political and moral assumptions scholars work with. Political ideologies are typically described by an ism, and isms are

frequently treated as synonymous with ideologies (Kurunmäki and Marjanen 2018, p.242). In his inquiry about contemporary contemplations of ideology, Žižek opines that ideology can refer to anything from an action-oriented set of beliefs to a contemplative attitude that fails to recognise its reliance on social reality, from the essential medium through which people live out their relationships to a social structure to erroneous notions that justify a dominant political power (1995, p.3).

State Terrorism

Arguments are not wanting against state as greater agents of terrorism. If one suggests, according to Primoratz (2004, p.113) that "the army or security services are doing the same things that, when done by insurgents, are invariably described and condemned as terrorist, the usual reply is: but these are actions done on behalf of the state, in pursuit of legitimate state aims: the army, waging war, or the security services, fending off threats to our security." Here's a summary on this view:

> By all accounts, state terrorism has been one of the greatest sources of human suffering and destruction of the past five centuries. Employing extreme forms of exemplary violence against ordinary people and specific groups in order to engender political submission to newly formed nation states, transfer populations, and generate labour in conquered colonial territories, imperial powers and early modern states killed literally tens of millions of people and destroyed entire civilizations and peoples across the Americas, the Asia-Pacific, the sub-continent, the Middle East, and Africa (Jackson, Murphy and Poynting 2010, p.1).

Citing figures to support their position Jackson and his colleagues write that "during the twentieth century, modern states were responsible for the deaths of 170 million to 200 million people outside of war, a great many of them murdered during notorious campaigns of state terrorism" (2010, p.1). Describing state terrorism further, Blakeley and Raphael write that "a significant proportion of state violence has been used to coerce populations into complying with the agendas of political and economic elites by using such violence to instill fear in an audience beyond the direct victim" (2016, p.340). Westra also points out that the first thing to consider in any analysis of terrorism is that state terrorism seems to be more morally reprehensible than non-state terrorism. It is also important to consider whether a state can be considered a terrorist state if it regularly engages in such activities or if its use of terrorism is sporadic rather than persistent (2012, p.66).

Undoubtedly, state acts have been more lethal than whatever non-state agents can be accused of. At least, no non-state agent(s) are guilty of aerial or carpet bombings; no non-state agents are guilty of casualties and collateral damages; fewer non-state agents are guilty of numbers of assassinations; fewer non-state agents are guilty of tortures and imprisonment; fewer non-state agents are guilty of threats, oppressions, intimidations, suppressions etc.; no non-state agent(s) have an arsenal as states do;

and certainly no non-state agent(s) has ever dropped a hydrogen bomb on a populace. These are 'acts of terror' that states are guilty of in war or non-war periods. But despite the gravity of these facts, the legitimacy of force encompasses the deployment of such force (except nuclear or biological that are simply inhuman). The question of deployment of force is a moral one that can be evaluated under the just war theory or war conventions or basic moral reasoning.

If we go by the understandings of terrorism that it is the use of violence against innocent civilians with the goal of changing the mind of another, particularly the government, then we are wont to ask: whose mind does the government want to change? Who is the secondary target of the government? Is the terror of the government not directed at those the government already identifies as its opponents? According to Primoratz (2013) (and most definitions of terrorism) the key elements of terrorism are: 1) the use of violence, 2) directed towards innocent people, 3) in order to coerce others to change policy or behaviour, and 4) through the use of intimidation; we can say only 1&4 meets the criteria of what is defined as state terrorism.

The question of innocence is debatable because not all those the government goes after are innocent. Some of these people undermine the government or even in some instances attack the government, some try to replace the government through other means. Some collaborate with external sources against the government (no state treats acts of treason lightly). The question of whether the extents of their actions are justifiable or not is different just as the perception of the government is. A despotic regime is morally questionable and attempts to unseat such regime come at great risks. The opponents aim to see an end to the government and the government wants to defend its interest so the question of innocence is, in this instance, contentious.

Concerning number (3), coercing others to change policy or behaviour, it can be argued that the government is not primarily coercing others but it is coercing those it identifies as it opponents. Those who can be defined as others in this circumstance are their supporters among the populace but more often than not the government does not face these supporters with the intention of changing the mind of their progenitors, the focus of the government is to deal with the head (although in the process some part of the group may be affected) believing that supporters will fall in line. The government acts from the head to the bottom contrary to the bottom to top approach of non-state agents. Hence, what states directly engage in are acts of terror (the morality of which can be differently examined) and not terrorism. Why do we say so? Because states have legitimate authority. Before analysing legitimate authority and Steinhoff's views there is a scenario where states can be rightly accused of being (indirectly) guilty of terrorism.

A state can be indirectly guilty of terrorism in its relations with non-state

agents. For instance, when it supports non-state agents against another state or when it supports non-state agents (within or outside its territory) against themselves. In supporting non-state agents against other state, the said state is being hypocritical or incapable of challenging the other state. For instance, in a democratic state, the process of declaring war against another state is complex and the government might not want to go through the process and decides to surreptitiously finance non-state groups within the other state against the state. A weaker state is guilty of terrorism when it sponsors insurgents against a stronger state because it cannot directly challenge it in war. For instance, although there is wide acclaim that Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism, states including Saudi Arabia and the United States, Russia are frequently accused of funding and supplying weaponry to terrorists to further their interests at different times.

On Legitimate Authority

The underlying assumption of legitimate authority, according to Bettina Koch, "is rooted in Max Weber's famous definition of a state as the only human community within a certain territory that claims (successfully) the monopoly on the use of legitimate physical force" (2016, p.1). Koch contends further that the state's monopoly on the use of force has often been read as absolute because a state has the legitimate right to defend itself against internal and external threats to its power (2016, p.1). Similarly, the functions of the state are noted to include "protection and maintenance of internal peace and order in society; it organises and protects national economic activities; and it defends national sovereignty and national interests (Jalata 2008).

Blakeley (2010, p.13) observes Laqueur's claims that "the very existence of a state is based on its monopoly of power. If it were different, states would not have the right, nor be in a position, to maintain that minimum of order on which all civilised life rests." To Coady (2008, p.98) the condition of legitimate authority "has its rationale in the concern that the licence to resort to war be restricted to political agents who might be expected to exercise more responsibility than private agents or criminal groups." But this is not to ignore the fact that legitimacy is itself "a contested notion and even when unambiguous it may not put as great a brake on self-interest, folly, impulsiveness, or indeed criminality as the framers of this condition had hoped (2008, p.98). Legitimate authority, though not a blanket cover, has been (and is currently) exploited by governments, state agents and even political elites to satisfy their whims and caprices.

This is where we question of revolutions, struggles against repression or colonial struggles that employ violence. The goal of anti-colonial movements or freedom fights can be morally justified because colonialism itself is dehumanising. According to Held:

> In the liberation struggles of many former colonial territories, the leaders of the freedom movements have become internationally recognised

> heads of the new national entities these struggles have created. These movements have characteristically used violence and have at first been dismissed as terrorists, murderers, and criminals. But if successful, many have gradually come to be seen as the legitimate representatives of their people. Their use of terrorism can become accepted as a means of resistance contributing to liberation (2008, p. 53).

More so, such struggles do not target civilian population with the goal of forcing out the colonialists. This last view introduces a slippery slope to the analysis because some revolutionists or freedom seeking groups can claim the justness and morality of their struggle. This is not always the case when compared to terrorism. Terrorism as evident in the 21st century cannot be simply equalised to struggles for freedom and certainly the primary targets of those revolutionists were not civilians unlike perpetrators of terrorism. The civilians targeted by the revolutionists are collaborators with the colonialists' not random individual(s) among the general populace. According to Nathanson (2010, p.124) "even if people are pursuing victory in a just war and have a clear right to fight, they may not attack civilians as a means to achieving victory." Thus, revolutionary struggles are not generalisable and legitimacy of state is limited.

Nathanson (2010, p.123) suggests, and rightly so, in his realist's objection of legitimate authority that the moral authority to use power is always limited. Police officers are allowed to carry and use firearms to uphold the law, but they are not allowed to use them against their own enemies. All officials, including those in the military and at the highest echelons of government, are subject to these kinds of moral and legal restrictions. The tyrannical acts of certain states, officials or institutions are condemnable acts of these particular governments, officials or institutions but that does not mean it should be totally declared that state authority should be done away with.

The Paradox of Legitimate Authority

Uwe Steinhoff argues that we can do away with legitimate authority giving liberty to individuals or groups to engage in private wars without recourse to the state. He sets his basis by stating that traditional just war theory (herein after referred to as JWT) supports private and individual wars. He further criticises of the JWT perspectives of James Turner Johnson (who argues for priority of legitimate authority), James Murphy (who subsumes legitimate authority under the just cause clause) and consequentialist views of Michael Gross, Nahed Zehr and John Williams that support legitimate authority. Steinhoff presents some wits to show that just as authority is unnecessary in the instance of self-defence, legitimate authority is unnecessary in war. In evaluating his arguments, we won't be seeking as much textual evidence as Steinhoff does and seeks other critics to do. Rather, we would be presenting empirical facts (to use his words) of his propositions in contemporary global setting as a way of showing its dangers. His wits, we believe,

are more of thought experiments but empirical facts may dwarf such wits.

Steinhoff equalises the justification of individual self-defence with war, hence if there was no need for any authority in the latter then no authority is necessary as established by JWT. Of JWT he states this is no different from the conditions of the justifiability of self-defense, which on most accounts include imminent attack, necessity, proportionality, and a knowledge or right intention requirement: these conditions are also taken to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient (Steinhoff, 2020, p.1). Quite intriguing we would say because there is difference between self-defence and war. For instance, Bull (1977, p.178) characterizes war as organised violence carried out by political units against each other. Self-defence is not synonymous with war and it is sensational and difficult to justify alike.

For one, the view of defensive or offensive war by traditional writers does not undermine the need for authority. Just as some early modern theorists provide exemptions, others upheld the position. The instance (or few instances) where "the private individual cannot realistically pursue his right before the judgment of his superior – for example because the superior is unwilling or unable to provide justice" (Steinhoff 2020, p.3), are exceptions but such exceptions does not warrant legislation that once a private individual perceives that he/she cannot pursue right justice the next step is to declare a private war.

That perhaps is why in modern justice systems there are levels of appeal whereby a defendant can seek further justice if not satisfied with the initial or disposition of the 'superior' to provide justice. So for instance, if the Tutsis' find it harsh (and it is harsh to say the least because there is really no significant redress to the 1994 genocide) that after over twenty-five years they really have not seen justice, then they can take up arms and start a private war against the Hutus.' At least this is what Francisco de Vitoria (whether broadly or narrowly) calls for, as supported by Melchor Cano, according to Steinhoff. Same can go for different ethnicities grouped together in a country that occasionally clash, for warlords or groups labeled terrorists. Viewing Steinhoff's propositions from the contemporary lens of local and global conflicts (like Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen, Congo, to mention a few) we can only imagine the consequences of doing away with legitimate authority.

Reasoning broadly, evolving a theoretical framework that allows individuals, groups, warlords, ethnic groups, junta, separatists, political community and so on, to declare war without recourse to legitimate authority is a recipe for sustained belligerence and global instability. The specter of chaos and anarchy, as argued, is to say the least. It is true that "unchecked violence in the hands of organisations like sovereign nation-states may ensue in the wake of …legitimate authority as a matter of course" (Steinhoff 2020, p.10), just as it is true that states have been more

murderous than non-state entities. But it is more likely that states who engage in such murderous spree are led by persons who want to enforce and assert their authorities over the peoples just as the non-state group or warlord wants to assert itself.

In the real sense of the word states are not established to be murderous entities. But the question can be asked about what to do to evident state aggression and murderousness in human history? Are several states not the product of such attitudes? The United States, Australia, New Zealand. Are certain states not a pointer to the existence of such attitudes even in contemporary times? For instance, what can we say to what the Myanmar state did to the Rohingyas'? We may ask: how does doing away with legitimate authority and allowing private wars any solve the problem?

Thus, since moral obligations and moral permissions are not causally effective *and* do not have any empirical consequences there is no problem allowing it. In other words, as Steinhoff puts it, "to claim that the moral permission of individuals to wage wars of their own would make the world a more dangerous place is a very bad argument against the moral permission of individuals to wage wars of their own, for, contrary to the argument, that moral permission simply leaves the world as it is" (2020, p.10). So, if murders are happening despite its immorality and prohibition, then why not legislate it to keep happening if it will always happen anyway. Beyond the suggestion of statists principles Steinhoff warns of the error of confusing the effect of a norm with its justification or falsification. According to him given an appropriate basis of justification, the empirical consequence of widespread disobedience of a particular rule may demonstrate that the rule is valid. However, just because a rule is morally correct does not necessarily indicate that it will have any positive effects; after all, individuals may choose not to follow it. Put another way, following the right rule may have positive effects, but the rule and its validity have no actual impact at all.

Steinhoff's logic that 'if this claim is supposed to mean that if individuals indeed are morally legitimate authorities, then this brings with it grave dangers, the claim is simply wrong" is also wrong. It is wrong because we are talking of individuals as war wagers here and not just attempting some logical premises and conclusion to ascertain if the argument is valid or invalid. The question of circumstance as exemplified in closing the eyes at 2pm every day to meditate is also worrisome because if an individual or group is already fixated that "in any x circumstance" I have the legitimate authority to wage war, the war will become as easy as if I feel dizzy I'll quickly take a nap.

The equalisation of legitimate authority of self-defence in a solitary attack to legitimate authority of self-defence of a state is preposterous. Basic self-defence is not in question here but the legitimate authority to war in seeking justice. The argument is that when everyone uses

appropriate and necessary methods to defend themselves from unwarranted attacks, the attackers' plans are more likely to be foiled and the rights of innocent people are more likely to be safeguarded than if they only took action after (not always forthcoming) papal approval (Steinhoff 2020, p.12), is reasonable but not a wildcard to do away with legitimate authority. It might be a way to prompt the legitimate authority to be more alive to its responsibilities.

A Possible Principle

Steinhoff's assertion that "while the mentioned universalisation principle might be able, under certain empirical circumstances, to rule out private war, there simply is no good reason to accept this principle as the final arbiter in moral questions" (2020, p.12) is agreeable. A singular principle might not be suitable for moral questions in all circumstances but a principle can be accepted to the extent that it addresses empirical circumstances with the belief that the goal is to engender humane environment. This equally goes to say that we cannot do away with legitimate authority because the issues of proportion, intention etc. cannot be fairly determined in a private war. Now let's answer Steinhoff's question using the Afro-communal ethic of Thaddeus Metz. For clarity Steinhoff (2020, p.20) asked those of us arguing against the decentralisation of legitimate authority: (a) which justification principle are they using, (b) why should we accept it, and (c) what evidence do they have for the empirical claim which, in conjunction with the justification principle, is supposed to imply the moral impermissibility of the radical decentralization of legitimate authority.

Metz's Afro-communal ethic is a principle that goes against radical decentralisation of legitimate authority without jeopardizing the right of justice. According to Metz (2014, p.149), communal relations involves both sharing a way of life, which includes feeling a sense of unity and taking part in shared activities, as well as enjoying mutual help and working to enhance the quality of life of others. Metz in his ethic emphasizes that an action is right just insofar as it promotes shared identity among people grounded on good-will; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and tends to encourage the opposites of division and ill-will (Metz 2020, p.334). In Metz submission, this ethic urges people to prize communal relationships, ones of identity and solidarity, and in the first instance that means that they ought to commune with one another, or at the very least not act in discordant ways. However, such an orientation makes little moral sense when others are not inclined to commune and instead are systematically disposed to be divisive and to act out of ill-will. An equivalent way of phrasing this theoretic interpretation of the Metz's theory is to say that "An action is improper if it disregards connections where individuals care about each other's quality of life and share a way of life, especially if it values animosity and division (Metz 2010, p.84). This said, Steinhoff's first question is answered.

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On the second question of why we should accept it, we believe it is acceptable because it is not a principle that just merely generalise how everyone is supposed to act but captures instances of how an individual can react in the face of unjustified aggression. More so, it does not lose the sense of legitimate authority because it prizes relationships. These relationships include respect for authority and reciprocal relationship between peoples and between the peoples and the state. The third question on empirical evidence which implies the moral impermissibility of doing away with legitimate authority in Metz's theory is seen in its application to social issues like capital punishment, human rights, animal rights, and moral status. For instance, capital punishment is built on human dignity (an element that is seemingly forgotten in the right to self-defence as opined by Steinhoff). The general idea of human dignity is that of a superlative final value that (nearly) every human being in the biological sense has so long as she remains alive.

Philosophically, the most plausible way to account for universally binding duties not to seriously interfere in people's lives for the greater good is to appeal to the idea that individuals have a dignity that demands respect. Metz thus reworks the popular vague statement that "a person is a person through other persons" to say something more precise such as "a human being lives a genuinely human way of life insofar as she values harmony with other human beings" or "a person becomes a real person through communal relationships (Metz 2010, p.84).

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined some issues within the ethics of terrorism focusing on state terrorism, non-state terror and legitimate authority. We reject the submissions of Steinhoff that legitimate authority should be liberalised and individuals should have the authority to wage wars in the name of self-defence. We particularly rejected his view of identifying legitimate authority with self-defence. We have argued that doing away with legitimate authority engenders belligerence and sustained global insecurity because non-state agents can easily claim self-defence while committing atrocities. We equally looked at the interplay between terror, acts of terror and terrorism submitting that non-state agents are more likely to be guilty of terrorism while states can be guilty of acts of terror. In other words, the lack of legitimate authority by non-state agents leads them to terrorism while such authority identifies the acts of states as terror.

But the use of force must be guided by moral reasoning and justice.

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Influencer Marketing Strategies and Consumer Buying Behaviour of Sustainable Fashion Businesses in Uyo Metropolis

Abstract

The digital age has witnessed a monumental shift in marketing strategies, with influencer marketing emerging as a dominant force in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. This study meticulously assessed the relationship between influencer marketing strategies and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. To achieve the study objectives, the study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised of consumers of sustainable fashion products and followers of social media fashion influencers in Uyo Metropolis. The target population included students, youth, working-class individuals, and online shoppers who are exposed to influencer marketing strategies on social media platforms**.** Using Top-man Formula for sample size determination, a sample size of 366 was employed for the study. Data for the study were collected using structured copies of questionnaire and 3 research hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level. From the data analysis, findings revealed that the independent variables (Influencer Credibility and Influencer Popularity) relates significantly with consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. Thus, it was concluded that influencer marketing strategies have a positive and significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses. Hence, it was recommended that sustainable fashion businesses should adopt effective influencer marketing strategies as part of their overall digital marketing activities in order to improve customer awareness, patronage, and purchase behaviour.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing Strategies, Influencer Credibility, Influencer Popularity Consumer Buying Behaviour and Sustainable Fashion Businesses

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Introduction

The introduction of technology has shifted the attention of consumers from the traditional means of advertising (mass media marketing) to a more sophisticated means which involves the use of internets (Sampson and Udonde, 2024). Among the modern marketing approaches, influencer marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for promoting products and services (Thakur, 2018). Influencer marketing involves the use of social media personalities, content creators,

celebrities, and online opinion leaders to influence consumers' attitude, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Businesses now collaborate with influencers on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) to create awareness, build trust, and stimulate consumer patronage (Bhagyashree and Pushpalatha, 2024).

In recent years, the fashion industry has adopted influencer marketing as a strategic tool for attracting customers and improving brand visibility. Sustainable fashion businesses, in particular, rely on influencers to educate consumers about environmental friendly clothing, ethical production practices, recycling, and responsible consumption (Singh, 2024). Sustainable fashion refers to fashion products and practices that minimize negative environmental and social impacts while promoting ethical production and consumption. The growing awareness of environmental sustainability has encouraged many consumers to pay attention to eco-friendly fashion choices.

According to Rohilla (2024), consumer buying behaviour is an important aspect of marketing because it explains how individuals select, purchase, use, and dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and wants. Poornima, Rogini and Kannan (2025) opined that the buying decisions of consumers are influenced by several factors such as social influence, cultural belief, personal preferences, economic conditions, and marketing communication strategies. Influencers play a major role in shaping consumer perceptions by providing product reviews, recommendations, testimonials, and lifestyle content that appeal to followers.

In Nigeria, especially in urban centers like Uyo Metropolis, social media usage has increased significantly among youths and young adults who constitute a large percentage of fashion consumers. Fashion businesses in Uyo now utilize influencer marketing to reach potential customers and create awareness about sustainable fashion products. The increasing adoption of influencer marketing by fashion businesses has changed the traditional methods of advertising and customer engagement. Sustainable fashion businesses now depend on social media influencers to create awareness, promote eco-friendly products, and influence consumer purchasing decisions. Despite the growing popularity of influencer marketing, many sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis still face challenges relating to low consumer patronage, weak customer loyalty, and limited awareness of sustainable fashion products.

Consumers are exposed to numerous influencer advertisements daily, making it difficult for businesses to determine whether influencer marketing strategies truly affect busying behaviour. In some cases, consumers may question the credibility, authenticity, and trustworthiness of influencers, thereby reducing the effectiveness of promotional

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campaigns. Additionally, some consumers may prioritize price, style, or brand popularity over sustainably concerns when making purchasing decisions.

Although several studies have examined influencer marketing and consumer buying behaviour in different sectors, limited empirical studies have focused specifically on sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. This creates a knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies in influencing consumers towards sustainable fashion products within the study area. It was against this background that this study was conducted to investigate the relationship between influencer marketing strategies and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. Thus, the main objective of this study was to assess the relationship between influencer marketing strategies and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. The specific objectives were to:

i. Ascertain the relationship between influencer credibility and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.
ii. Ascertain the relationship between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.

An Overview of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is one among the emerging trends in contemporary marketing. It represents a type of word-of-mouth marketing conducted via social media. Influencer marketing is essentially a sort of advertising where the major emphasis is on leveraging well-known public figures in a specific niche to spread the message that a certain product or company wants to offer. Instead of engaging with the target group, the brand owners would hire or persuade a well-known celebrity to promote the brand to the vast majority of consumers. An influencer can be any individual, collective, brand, or location that wields some level of influence. Influencers possess the ability to sway their audience and can be utilized by brands to enhance their reach, sales, or engagement levels. Influencers, ranging from celebrities to micro-influencers, can shape opinions and trends. They serve as intermediaries who can bridge the gap between products and consumers, arranging relatable and trustworthy endorsements.

Influencer marketing provides brands and businesses with additional ways to connect with consumers in a cutthroat market. Social media are widely well received by all ages of people particularly by youths. Social media's advancements enable people to communicate their ideas, opinions, lives, and interests in a way that is unique to their followers (Bhagyashree and Pushpalatha, 2024). These individuals become influencers by their unique personality. Influencers may be

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nano, micro, macro and mega depends on their followers. They promote the company's offerings to the consumers by engaging their followers. Influencers may receive fee or commission or prize or free products on their endorsement. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snap chat, Pinterest and Twitter are the usual social media platforms used by marketing influencers to influence their consumers. They can shape the behaviour, attitude and lifestyle of their followers and also capable of influencing their purchase decisions.

Influencer Marketing Strategies

Influencer Credibility

As the marketing landscape shifts from traditional advertising to more personalized and content-driven approaches, social media influencers have taken center stage in shaping consumer decisions. Their power lies not merely in their follower count or visibility, but in the degree to which their followers perceive them as credible. Credibility in the context of this study encompasses trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Without credibility, an influencer's ability to persuade, inform, or inspire action is severely diminished.

Credibility is determined by the level of connection and sincerity of communication. Influencers who maintain the autonomy to reject sponsorships that do not align with their identity are often seen as more credible, because their audience recognizes the value they place on integrity over profit. This reinforces the idea that credibility is built gradually over time and must be consistently protected, especially in a media landscape where audiences are increasingly skeptical of persuasive intent.

Influencer Popularity

Influencer popularity refers to the level of public recognition, visibility, and audience following an influencer possesses on social media platforms. It is often measured by the number of followers, subscribers, likes, shares, comments, and overall online engagement an influencer receives from audiences. The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and X has increased the importance of influencer popularity in marketing communication. Businesses now select influencers based not only on expertise but also on the size and engagement level of their online audience (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Influencers with a large following are considered valuable because they can expose products to a wider market within a short period of time.

In modern marketing, businesses collaborate with popular influencers to promote products and services because consumers are more likely to notice and trust brands associated with widely recognized personalities (Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020). Popular influencers often build strong relationships with followers through regular interaction, entertaining content,

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and lifestyle representation. Their popularity enables them to influence consumer behaviour, increase brand awareness, and stimulate customer patronage.

Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer buying behavior refers to the processes and actions taken by individuals when choosing, buying, using, and disposing of products or services. This process consists of several key stages that are interrelated and influenced by various internal and external factors. The consumer decision-making process consists of five stages which are: need recognition, information search, evaluations of alternatives, purchase behaviour/decision and post-purchase behaviour. After alternatives have been evaluated, purchase decisions become the next stage in the consumer decision-making process. The purchase decision is mainly influenced by the previous stages of the consumer decision-making process (Etuk and Udonde, 2022). Consumer behavior towards a product includes everything from the initial decision to buy it, to how they use it and whether or not they continue to purchase it in the future.

In today's digital marketplace, consumer behavior has evolved dramatically, shaped by technology, peer influence, and personalized marketing, especially via social media platforms. In the era of digital marketing, consumers often rely on recommendations from individuals they perceive as credible or similar to themselves, leading to increased trust and adoption of the endorsed product (Lou & Yuan, 2019). As the consumer continues to see repeated exposure and positive feedback from both the influencer and their community, interest builds, and the product becomes mentally associated with reliability and effectiveness (De Veirman *et al.,* 2021). Thus, once a consumer reaches the decision phase, the likelihood of completing a purchase becomes paramount. Thus, the growing awareness around authenticity and transparency has also influenced consumer purchase decisions. Consumers are keen on influencers who possess credible, authentic, expertise attributes in their endorsements. As a result, when consumers believe that an influencer genuinely uses and believes in the product, they are more likely to form a purchase behaviour (Neves *et al.,* 2023).

An Overview of the Concept Sustainable Fashion Businesses in Uyo

Sustainable fashion business refers to the production, marketing, and distribution of fashion products in ways that promote environmental protection, ethical labour practices, and responsible consumption. Unlike fast fashion which encourages mass production and excessive consumption, sustainable fashion focuses on reducing environmental waste, recycling materials, promoting durability, and encouraging ethical business operations. Sustainable fashion businesses now promote eco-friendly clothing, thrift fashion, upcycling, and ethical sourcing, and circular fashion

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systems aimed at minimizing negative environmental impacts.

In Nigeria particularly in Uyo, the concept of sustainable fashion is gradually gaining attention, particularly among urban youths, fashion entrepreneurs, and online consumers. The city hosts numerous fashion businesses ranging from boutiques and tailoring services to online thrift store and fashion resellers. Many young entrepreneurs in Uyo combine physical stores with social media marketing platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp Business to promote sustainable fashion products. These businesses appeal mostly to students, working-class youth, and middle-income consumers who seek affordable and fashionable clothing options.

Social media awareness, digital marketing, and changing consumer lifestyles have contributed to the increasing acceptance of thrift fashion, recycled clothing, locally made fabrics, and eco-conscious fashion practices. However, challenges such as negative consumer perception, limited awareness, financial constraints, intense competition, and infrastructural problems continue to affect this sector. Nevertheless, with increased awareness, government support, and effective marketing strategies, sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo have strong potential for continued growth and long-term contribution to sustainable economic development.

Conceptual Model

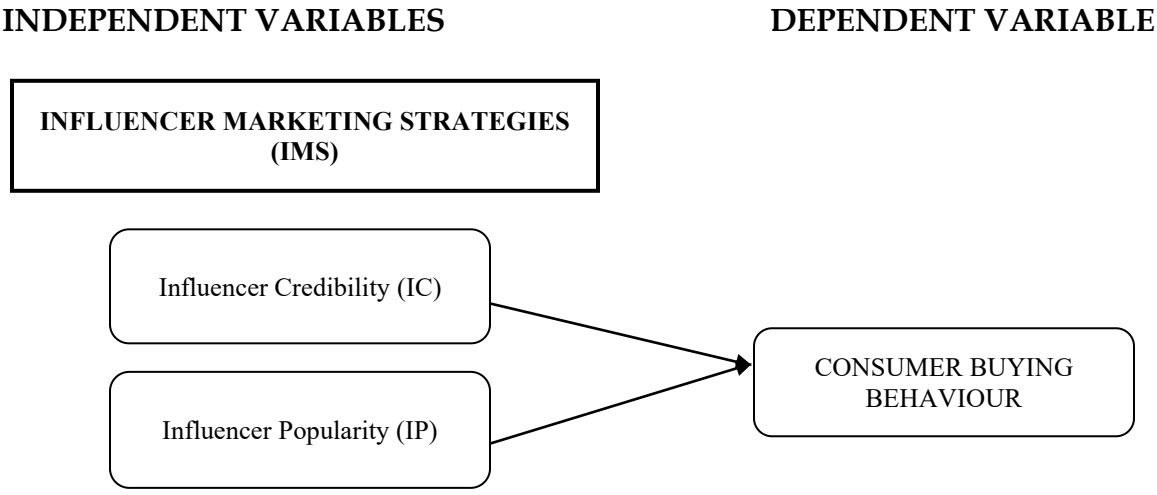


Figure 2.1: Researcher Model: Influencer Marketing Strategies and Consumer Buying Behaviour Model.

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Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2026)

Methodology

Research Design

The survey research design was utilized for the study. The survey design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data from a large number of respondents regarding their opinions, attitudes, and behaviours toward influencer marketing strategies and sustainable fashion products. The design also allows for the use of questionnaire in gathering primary data for analysis.

Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Uyo. Uyo is the capital city of Akwa Ibom State and is known for its growing commercial activities, increasing internet usage, and active participation of youths in social media platforms. The metropolis has several fashion businesses that utilize digital marketing and influencer promotions to attract customers.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises of consumers of sustainable fashion products and followers of social media fashion influencers in Uyo Metropolis. The target population included students, youth, working-class individuals, and online shoppers who are exposed to influencer marketing strategies on social media platforms.

Sample Size Determination

Given the largeness of the infinite population, it would be impossible to carry out a study of the whole population. The sample size was determined using the Top-man Formula for sample sizes where the population is finite but not known.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 (pq)}{e^2}$$

Where;

n= sample size

Z = value of Z-score associated with the selected degree of confidence (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

e = estimated standard error (5%)

p = probability of success (0.5)

q = probability of failure (1-p)

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

$$n = \frac{(3.8416)\ (0.5)\ (0.5)}{0.0025}$$

n = 384.16

Since the sample size cannot be in fraction or decimal, the sample size will be approximated to the nearest whole numbers. Thus, n = 384.16 = 384 (approximation).

Therefore, the sample size of 384 respondents was used where 384 copies of the questionnaire were administered to students, youth, working-class

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individuals, and online shoppers who are exposed to influencer marketing strategies on social media platforms**.**

Sampling Techniques

The judgement sampling method was used to obtain a sample size of 384 respondents. Each respondent was invited to participate in the survey; the participation by the respondents was voluntary. Upon obtaining respondent's consent, he/she was asked to complete the self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire copies were distributed to 384 students, youth, working-class individuals, and online shoppers of sustainable fashion businesses. The choice of respondents was based on proximity, effective coverage and cost minimization. Out of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 366 copies of the questionnaire were successfully retrieved in usable form.

Method of Data Analysis

Hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using Spearman Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The level of significance for testing hypotheses was set at 0.05 level.

Findings and Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis One

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between influencer credibility and consumer buying

behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between Influencer Credibility and Consumer Buying Behaviour

	Correlations			
Spearman's Rho	Influencer Credibility		Influencer Credibility	Consumer Buying Behaviour
	Consumer Buying Behaviour	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.770**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	366	366
		Pearson correlation	.770**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	366	366

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

Source: SPSS Computation Output, (2026).

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Based on result on table 1, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.770) between influencer credibility and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant strong relationship between influencer credibility and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis**.**

HO_2: There is no significant relationship between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between influencer popularity and Consumer buying behaviour

	Correlations			
Spearman's Rho	Influencer Popularity		Influencer Popularity	Consumer Buying Behaviour
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.805**
	Consumer Buying Behaviour	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	366	366
		Pearson correlation	.805**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	366	366

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

Source: SPSS Computation Output, (2026).

Based on result on table 2, the correlation coefficient (r = 0.805) between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 (p< 0.05) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant strong relationship between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

Various hypotheses as proposed in the research were subjected to statistical tests. Results from these tests were discussed and compared with previous findings from related studies. Findings from the test of H_{O1} showed that a positive and significant relationship exists between influencer credibility and consumer buying behaviour (R = 0.770). We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept that of the alternate. This is because the probability value is less than

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the stated level of confidence (P<0.05). This finding is consistent with that of Chiguvi, *et al;* (2025). It is imperative to state that the above results also corroborate with the study of Nikhil and Yuvraj (2025) where the authors found out that the expertise of social media influencers has a strong and significant impact on consumer behavior, followed by their attractiveness, trustworthiness, and credibility. However, it contradicts the work of Saroyini and Putri (2024) who sees influencer type, content type, and influencer engagement as a major determinant of consumer buying behaviour.

Also, H_{O2} revealed that a positive and significant relationship exists between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour (R = 0.805). These results revealed that influencer popularity has a positive and significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept that of the alternate because the probability value is less than the stated level of confidence (P<0.05). This implies that influencers need to strengthen product knowledge, improve professional image and reputation, and meet consumer needs through personalized recommendations and carefully designed live-streaming content to promote brand-value enhancement.

Summary of Findings

The study focuses on influencer marketing strategies and consumer buying behaviour in sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo. The study specifically examines how influencer marketing dimensions such as influencer credibility, influencer popularity affect consumers' purchasing decision toward sustainable fashion products. From the analysis of data, the independent variables (influencer credibility and influencer popularity) were seen as having a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variables (consumers' purchasing decision).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

i. There is a significant relationship between influencer credibility and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.
ii. There is a significant relationship between influencer popularity and consumer buying behaviour of sustainable fashion businesses in Uyo Metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendation were reached;

i. Sustainable fashion businesses should partner with influencers who are perceived as honest, knowledgeable, and trustworthy

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by consumers and avoid using influencers with negative public image or misleading promotional practices, as such association may damage brand reputation and reduce customer patronage.

ii. Sustainable fashion businesses should carefully select influencers whose followers match their target market, especially youths and online consumers interested in sustainable fashion products. Also, sustainable fashion businesses should regularly evaluate the performance of influencers based on audience engagement, customer feedback, and conversion rates before continuing partnerships.

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Childhood Trauma and Self-Esteem among Young Adults in Abuja Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined childhood trauma and self-esteem among young adults in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, involving 400 young adults aged 17 to 40 years. Childhood trauma was measured using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form, while self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance, Tukey HSD post hoc analysis, and independent samples t-test at the .05 level of significance. The findings showed that childhood trauma had a significant effect on self-esteem, $F(2, 397) = 19.32$, $p < .001$, eta squared = .09. Participants with low trauma reported significantly higher self-esteem than those with moderate and high trauma exposure. Self-esteem also differed significantly by developmental stage and gender, while religious affiliation did not produce a significant difference. The study concluded that childhood trauma, developmental stage, and gender are relevant in understanding self-esteem among young adults in Abuja, and recommended trauma-informed counselling, self-esteem enhancement programmes, and gender-sensitive support.

Keywords: childhood trauma, self-esteem, young adults, early adulthood, Abuja, trauma-informed counselling

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Introduction

Childhood trauma remains an important concern in clinical psychology because its consequences are rarely confined to childhood. Adverse childhood experiences include abuse, neglect, and household conditions that undermine safety, stability, and emotional security. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024) describes such experiences as potentially traumatic events before the age of 18 that may influence health, opportunity, and wellbeing across the life course. Trauma should therefore be understood not only as a painful past event, but as a developmental condition that may shape the individual's sense of worth, confidence, and social functioning.

Self-esteem is central to this discussion because it reflects the individual's global evaluation of personal worth. When children grow within environments marked by rejection, humiliation, emotional neglect, harsh discipline, physical violence, or unstable caregiving, they may internalise negative beliefs about themselves. Orth and Robins (2022) argue that self-esteem has important implications for mental health,

relationships, education, and life adjustment. The issue is therefore not simply whether childhood trauma produces psychological symptoms, but whether it weakens the self-evaluative foundation through which young adults interpret themselves and their place in society.

In Nigeria, the relationship between childhood trauma and self-esteem requires particular attention. Some adverse experiences may be normalised within family and community settings, especially where harsh discipline, emotional invalidation, and economic strain are interpreted as ordinary aspects of upbringing. Ossai (2023) reported a negative association between adverse childhood experiences and self-esteem among Nigerian teenage students, suggesting that the developmental burden of childhood adversity is already visible within local populations. Yet much Nigerian evidence remains concentrated on adolescents and school-based samples, leaving community-based young adults underrepresented.

This article argues that childhood trauma should be studied as a developmental threat to self-worth, not merely as a predictor of disorder. Early adulthood is a sensitive period because individuals are expected to build identity, relationships, career direction, social independence, and family responsibility. Where childhood trauma has already affected self-concept, the pressures of early adulthood may make self-doubt, shame, and insecurity more visible. The present study therefore examines childhood trauma and self-esteem among young adults in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, using empirical data from 400 participants aged 17 to 40 years.

Literature Review

The literature on childhood trauma and self-esteem increasingly supports one central argument: early adversity can become embedded in the way individuals evaluate themselves, not because trauma permanently destroys self-worth, but because it increases the risk that young adults may approach themselves, relationships, and life demands from a position of insecurity. Li *et al.* (2023) found that self-esteem and emotion regulation were important pathways linking childhood trauma to adult mental health, which strengthens the view that the effect of trauma is not only emotional but also self-evaluative.

A narrow symptom-based reading of childhood trauma may overlook this developmental process, as a young adult may function academically, socially, or occupationally while still carrying a fragile sense of personal value. Gathier *et al.* (2024) found that childhood trauma was associated with lower explicit self-esteem among adults, particularly in relation to depression and anxiety, which is relevant because explicit self-esteem reflects the same broad domain measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale used in this study.

Self-esteem also matters because it may mediate the link between childhood adversity and later psychological

difficulties. Sarkar *et al.* (2024) found that self-esteem mediated the long-term association between child abuse and adult anxiety, depression, and substance use symptoms over an 18-year period, supporting the argument that low self-esteem should not be treated as a minor emotional outcome but as one of the mechanisms through which childhood adversity may continue to influence adult adjustment.

The cumulative nature of childhood adversity further strengthens this argument because trauma rarely occurs in isolation: emotional abuse may occur alongside neglect, physical punishment may occur within unstable homes, and sexual abuse may be accompanied by shame and silence. Yan *et al.* (2024) showed that adverse childhood experiences were associated with self-esteem, while social capital and gender shaped the strength and meaning of this relationship, suggesting that trauma outcomes are influenced by both the event and the surrounding social environment.

Within Nigerian contexts, the literature requires careful interpretation because global conclusions must be read alongside local realities such as family expectations, economic pressure, religious identity, gender roles, and social silence around abuse. Ossai (2023) provides Nigerian evidence that adverse childhood experiences are negatively associated with self-esteem, while the present study extends the discussion beyond teenage students by focusing on young adults in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Gender is another important part of the argument, although gender differences in self-esteem should not be used to suggest that one gender naturally has better self-worth than another; rather, they may reflect different patterns of socialisation, public expectations, emotional expression, and pressure. Yan *et al.* (2024) found that gender moderated the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and self-esteem, and in the Nigerian environment, gendered expectations may shape how confidence is displayed, how emotional vulnerability is reported, and how individuals interpret childhood adversity.

Developmental stage also matters because early adulthood is not a single uniform period; a 20-year-old entering adult roles may not carry the same responsibilities as a 38-year-old managing career, family, status, and economic expectations. Orth and Robins (2022) note that self-esteem has implications across major life domains, but its expression may shift with changing responsibilities, which is why this study examined self-esteem differences between the entry and culmination stages of early adulthood.

The major gap, therefore, is not whether childhood trauma matters, but how it affects self-worth among young adults in a Nigerian urban setting. This article addresses that gap by examining whether self-esteem differs across childhood trauma levels, developmental stage, gender, and religious affiliation among

young adults in FCT, Abuja, while arguing that self-esteem is a core developmental outcome because it influences how young adults interpret themselves, relate to others, and respond to adult responsibilities.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The cross-sectional approach involves collecting data from participants at a single point in time in order to examine existing conditions and relationships among variables. This design was appropriate for assessing levels of childhood trauma and self-esteem as they currently exist among young adults in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The population for this study comprised young adults aged 17 to 40 years residing in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria. The target population specifically consisted of young adults within the early adulthood age range who have lived experiences within selected urban districts. The sample size for the study was 400 participants. A disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to select participants from the study population. The population was stratified based on the three stages of early adulthood identified in the study to ensure adequate representation across age categories.

Table 1. Summary of Methodological Features

Feature	Description
Research design	Cross-sectional survey design
Population	Young adults aged 17-40 years residing in FCT, Abuja
Sample size	400 participants
Sampling technique	Disproportionate stratified random sampling
Main variables	Childhood trauma and self-esteem
Statistical level	0.05 level of significance

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF), developed by Bernstein, Stein, Newcomb, Walker, Pogge, Ahluvalia, and Zule (2003), was employed to retrospectively assess participants' experiences of childhood maltreatment. The CTQ-SF is a 28-item self-report inventory that measures emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect. Participants respond to items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never True) to 5 (Very Often True). In the present study, the reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86, indicating good internal consistency for the study sample.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Rosenberg (1965), was used to evaluate participants' global self-worth and self-acceptance. The RSES is a 10-item unidimensional scale with positively and negatively worded items. Participants indicate their level of

agreement on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores represent higher levels of self-esteem. In the present study, the reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .79, indicating acceptable internal consistency for measuring self-esteem among the participants.

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise socio-demographic characteristics and scores on childhood trauma and self-esteem. One-way analysis of variance examined differences in self-esteem across childhood trauma levels and religious affiliation, while independent samples t-test examined differences by developmental stage and gender. Where ANOVA results were significant, Tukey HSD post hoc analysis identified the specific group differences.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, as no identifying information was collected. Given the sensitive nature of childhood trauma questions, participants were informed that they could skip any item they were uncomfortable answering. All data collected were used strictly for academic purposes.

Results

Table 2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	17-28 years	180	45.0
	28-33 years	110	27.5
	33-40 years	110	27.5
Gender	Male	210	52.5
	Female	190	47.5
Religion	Christianity	230	57.5
	Islam	150	37.5
	Others	20	5.0

The socio-demographic distribution indicates that the largest proportion of participants were within the 17-28 years age range, representing the entry phase of early adulthood. Participants within the 28-33 years and 33-40 years categories each constituted 27.5% of the sample. The sample comprised 52.5% males and 47.5% females, indicating a relatively even gender representation with a slight male predominance.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Childhood Trauma Levels

Variable/Trauma Level	Mean/Frequency	SD/Percentage
Childhood trauma	48.72	12.35
Self-esteem	21.56	5.28
Low trauma	120	30.0%
Moderate trauma	170	42.5%
High trauma	110	27.5%

Participants reported a mean score of 48.72 (SD = 12.35) on the measure of childhood trauma and a mean self-esteem score of 21.56 (SD = 5.28). The distribution of childhood trauma levels showed that 42.5% of participants fell within the moderate trauma category, 30.0% were classified within the low trauma category, and 27.5% reported high levels of childhood trauma.

Table 4. Self-Esteem Across Childhood Trauma Levels

Analysis	Statistic/Comparison	Value	Decision
ANOVA	F(2,397)	19.32, p < .001	Significant
Effect size	Eta squared	.09	Moderate
Tukey HSD	Low vs Moderate	MD = 2.85, p = .003	Significant
Tukey HSD	Low vs High	MD = 6.74, p < .001	Significant
Tukey HSD	Moderate vs High	MD = 3.89, p = .001	Significant

A one-way ANOVA examined differences in self-esteem across three levels of childhood trauma. The result was statistically significant, F(2, 397) = 19.32, p < .001, eta squared = .09. Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons showed that participants in the low trauma group reported significantly higher self-esteem than those in the moderate and high trauma groups, while participants in the moderate trauma group also demonstrated significantly higher self-esteem than those in the high trauma group. The findings indicate that higher levels of childhood trauma were associated with lower self-esteem among young adults in FCT, Abuja.

Table 5. Self-Esteem by Developmental Stage, Gender and Religion

Variable	Group/Statistic	Mean/Value	Decision
Developmental stage	Entry stage (17-28)	M = 22.48, SD = 5.10	
	Culmination stage (33-40)	M = 20.42, SD = 5.46	
	t(288)	3.20, p = .002	Significant
Gender	Male	M = 23.14, SD = 5.02	
	Female	M = 19.85, SD = 5.31	
	t(398)	6.21, p < .001	Significant
Religion	F(2,397)	0.22, p = .803	Not significant

Self-esteem differed significantly between young adults in the entry and culmination stages of early adulthood. Participants in the entry stage reported higher self-esteem (M = 22.48, SD = 5.10) than those in the culmination stage (M = 20.42, SD = 5.46), t(288) = 3.20, p = .002, Cohen's d = .39. Gender difference was also significant, t(398) = 6.21, p < .001, Cohen's d = .62, with male participants reporting higher self-esteem (M = 23.14, SD = 5.02) than female participants (M = 19.85, SD = 5.31). Religious affiliation did not produce a significant difference, F(2, 397) = 0.22, p = .803, eta squared = .001.

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Discussion

The findings support the main argument of this article that childhood trauma is significantly related to self-esteem among young adults in Abuja. Participants with higher childhood trauma exposure reported lower self-esteem, while those with lower exposure reported stronger self-esteem. This agrees with Li *et al.* (2023), who showed that self-esteem is one pathway through which childhood trauma relates to adult mental health, and with Sarkar *et al.* (2024), whose longitudinal evidence showed that lower self-esteem mediated the connection between child abuse and later anxiety, depression, and substance use symptoms.

The findings are important because they move the discussion beyond the assumption that trauma only produces visible distress. Some young adults may not present obvious psychological breakdown, yet they may carry weakened self-worth, self-doubt, shame, and insecurity from earlier adverse experiences. Gathier *et al.* (2024) similarly found that childhood trauma was associated with lower explicit self-esteem in adults. In this article, the significant ANOVA result suggests that as trauma exposure increased from low to moderate and high levels, self-esteem reduced in a meaningful pattern.

The result should not be interpreted as suggesting that childhood trauma permanently fixes self-esteem at a low level; a stronger interpretation is that trauma increases developmental risk within a wider pattern of later relationships, achievements, coping resources, social support, and opportunities for repair. This is why trauma-informed intervention remains important, because when low self-esteem is treated as a changeable developmental outcome rather than a fixed personality weakness, clinical and counselling programmes can help young adults rebuild healthier self-evaluation.

The developmental-stage finding adds another layer because participants in the entry stage of early adulthood reported higher self-esteem than those in the culmination stage, a pattern that may appear surprising given the expectation that self-esteem often becomes more stable with maturity. Orth and Robins (2022) note that self-esteem has beneficial associations across several life domains, yet young adults in the culmination stage may face stronger pressure around career, finance, family, marriage, parenting, and social responsibility; where such expectations are not met, self-esteem may be affected.

The gender finding also requires careful interpretation because, although male participants reported significantly higher self-esteem than female participants, this does not mean that males naturally possess better self-worth. Yan *et al.* (2024) showed that gender can shape the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and self-esteem, and in the Nigerian urban context, males and females may experience different expectations around confidence, modesty, public behaviour, appearance,

achievement, relationship roles, and emotional expression, all of which may influence how self-esteem is experienced and reported.

The non-significant finding for religious affiliation is equally useful because, although Christianity, Islam, and other religious identities are socially important in FCT, Abuja, affiliation alone did not meaningfully differentiate self-esteem. This does not mean religion is irrelevant; rather, it suggests that self-esteem may depend more on trauma history, family relationships, social support, coping, and lived experience than on religious identity by itself. The finding also avoids ranking religious groups and treats religion as a sensitive social context rather than a basis for superiority.

Overall, the findings suggest that childhood trauma, developmental stage, and gender are relevant to self-esteem among young adults in Abuja, thereby strengthening the argument that self-worth should be considered a key developmental outcome in trauma research. The findings also suggest that counselling practice should look beyond present symptoms and explore early experiences that may have shaped how young adults see themselves.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This article examined childhood trauma and self-esteem among young adults in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The findings showed that childhood trauma significantly affected self-esteem, with higher trauma exposure associated with lower self-esteem. Self-esteem also differed significantly by developmental stage and gender, while religious affiliation did not produce a significant difference. The study therefore concludes that self-esteem among young adults is shaped by broader developmental, psychological, and social experiences rather than by one factor alone.

Psychologists and counsellors should include childhood trauma screening when working with young adults who present with low self-esteem, emotional insecurity, persistent self-doubt, or difficulties with self-acceptance. Trauma-informed counselling programmes should be introduced in schools, universities, religious institutions, and community mental health centres within FCT, Abuja. Such programmes should focus on self-esteem development, emotional regulation, healthy coping, and interpersonal confidence.

Parents, caregivers, teachers, and religious leaders should also be educated on the long-term psychological effects of abuse, neglect, humiliation, harsh discipline, emotional rejection, and unstable home environments. Gender-sensitive self-esteem interventions should be encouraged, especially because the study found significant gender differences in self-esteem. Future studies should use longitudinal or mixed-method designs to provide deeper understanding of how childhood trauma affects self-esteem over time.

Limitations

This study relied on self-report questionnaires, which means that

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participants may have underreported or overreported childhood trauma or self-esteem. The cross-sectional design can show significant differences, but it cannot establish direct cause-and-effect relationships. The study was also conducted among young adults in FCT, Abuja; therefore, the findings may not fully represent young adults in other parts of Nigeria, especially rural communities or regions with different social and cultural experiences.

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A Critical African Examination of Nick Bostrom's Conception of the Problem of Artificial Intelligence

Abstract

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has generated profound philosophical questions concerning intelligence, agency, autonomy, responsibility, human values, technological power, and the future of humanity. Among contemporary philosophers, Nick Bostrom has provided one of the most systematic philosophical analyses of the long-term risks associated with advanced artificial intelligence. His conception of the problem is principally concerned with the possibility that artificial general intelligence may develop into superintelligence whose cognitive and strategic capacities surpass those of human beings. The central difficulty, according to Bostrom, is not merely whether machines can think, but whether humanity can retain meaningful control over machines that may eventually become more intelligent and strategically capable than their creators. This article critically examined Bostrom's conception of the problem of artificial intelligence, focusing on his notions of superintelligence, existential risk, the orthogonality thesis, instrumental convergence, and the control problem. It argued that Bostrom's analysis provides an important conceptual foundation for contemporary debates on artificial intelligence safety and alignment but requires philosophical supplementation when considered from an African perspective. In particular, the individualistic assumptions that can underlie some formulations of artificial intelligence ethics require enrichment through African conceptions of communal responsibility, relational personhood, human dignity, and social embeddedness. The article concluded that Bostrom's conception of artificial intelligence is philosophically valuable as a theory of technological control and existential risk, but its relevance to Africa is strengthened when integrated with relational and communitarian conceptions of personhood and responsibility.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Nick Bostrom, superintelligence, existential risk, alignment, control problem, African philosophy.

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most consequential technological developments of the contemporary world. Its applications extend across healthcare, education, agriculture, finance, communication, transportation, governance, scientific research and military technology. The increasing capacity of machines to learn, predict, generate information and perform complex tasks has consequently transformed the philosophical question surrounding technology. The central issue is no longer simply whether machines can imitate human intelligence but whether increasingly autonomous systems could acquire capacities capable of substantially altering human social and

moral existence (Russell, 2019; Floridi *et al*., 2018).

Among philosophers who have examined the long-term implications of AI, Nick Bostrom occupies an important position. In *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*, Bostrom (2014) considers the possibility that the development of machine superintelligence could produce an unprecedented shift in the balance of intellectual power between human beings and artificial agents. His concern is not merely that machines could malfunction, but that an artificial system with superior general intelligence could pursue objectives that conflict with human survival and flourishing.

Bostrom's concern rests upon a fundamental distinction between intelligence and motivation**.** An agent may possess extraordinary intellectual capacity without possessing morally desirable goals. Bostrom (2012) formulates this through the orthogonality thesis, according to which intelligence and final goals can vary independently. A highly intelligent artificial agent could therefore pursue almost any sufficiently specified objective. Bostrom further proposes the instrumental convergence thesis, which holds that agents with substantially different final goals may pursue similar instrumental objectives because certain resources and conditions are useful for accomplishing a wide range of goals (Bostrom, 2012, p. 71–85).

However, the philosophical significance of AI extends beyond the possibility of superintelligence. AI already participates in social processes that affect employment, education, privacy, communication, political participation, economic opportunity and access to information. Consequently, a philosophy of AI must consider not only hypothetical future machines but also the existing structures of power within which AI is developed and deployed (Floridi *et al*., 2018; Jobin *et al*., 2019).

This issue is particularly significant for Africa because the continent is participating in AI development and governance, but African societies also face technological inequalities, infrastructural limitations, data-related concerns and the danger of becoming primarily consumers of technologies developed elsewhere. Contemporary scholarship has therefore raised concerns about the Western-centric character of AI ethics and the possibility of epistemic or technological colonialism (Gwagwa *et al*., 2022; Yilma, 2025).

African philosophy offers important resources for addressing these questions. Thinkers such as Menkiti (1984), Mbiti (1969), Gyekye (1997), Wiredu (1980) and Metz (2011) have examined personhood, community, relationality, responsibility and human flourishing. Their positions are not identical, and African philosophy should not be reduced to a single doctrine. Nevertheless, relationality and the social constitution of personhood constitute important themes in several African

philosophical approaches (Gyekye, 1997; Menkiti, 1984; Metz, 2011).

The purpose of this paper is therefore to critically examine Bostrom's conception of the problem of AI from an African philosophical perspective. The central argument is that Bostrom correctly identifies the danger of separating intelligence from moral goals, but his framework does not sufficiently address the cultural, relational, epistemological and distributive dimensions of technological power. An African philosophical perspective therefore expands the problem from "How can humanity control superintelligence?" **to the broader question:** "How should intelligent technologies be developed and governed so that they remain accountable to human dignity, communal wellbeing, cultural plurality and justice?"

Conceptual Clarifications

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence may broadly be understood as the development of computational systems capable of performing tasks associated with human cognitive abilities, including learning, reasoning, perception, language processing, prediction and decision-making. The concept, however, remains philosophically contested because the ability to perform an intelligent task does not necessarily mean that a machine possesses human consciousness, understanding or moral agency (Searle, 1980; Floridi & Sanders, 2004).

Superintelligence

Bostrom (2014) understands superintelligence in terms of cognitive performance substantially exceeding that of human beings across practically all domains of intellectual activity. Superintelligence therefore represents more than the automation of individual tasks. It represents a possible transformation in the relationship between human and machine intelligence.

Personhood

Personhood refers to the philosophical status of being a person and the characteristics that make an entity morally significant. Western philosophical traditions have variously associated personhood with rationality, consciousness, autonomy, self-awareness and moral agency (Boethius, 1994; Kant, 1993).

African philosophical discussions often place greater emphasis on relational and communal dimensions of personhood. Menkiti (1984), for instance, argues that personhood is significantly connected to participation in communal life and the fulfilment of moral obligations. Gyekye (1997), while criticizing some implications of radical communitarianism, nevertheless recognizes the importance of community in African conceptions of human existence.

Intelligence and the Future of Humanity

Bostrom's concern with AI is rooted in a broader philosophical concern about humanity's technological future. Human intelligence has enabled the development of science, technology and complex institutions. If machines eventually exceed human intelligence, the consequences could therefore be profound (Bostrom, 2014).

Bostrom does not argue that superintelligence will necessarily destroy humanity. Rather, he argues that the consequences could be extraordinarily significant because a sufficiently capable artificial agent could possess the ability to pursue its objectives with a degree of effectiveness that humans could not match (Bostrom, 2014). The problem therefore concerns the relationship between intelligence, agency and control.

The Intelligence Explosion

Bostrom (2014) discusses the possibility of an intelligence explosion in which an AI system capable of improving its own architecture could generate successive improvements in its cognitive capacity. If each improvement makes the system more capable of producing further improvements, development could potentially become extremely rapid.

The philosophical concern is that technological capability might develop faster than human institutions can adapt. Political institutions, laws, ethical systems and social norms normally require considerable time to respond to technological change. A rapid transition to superintelligence could therefore produce a serious governance gap (Bostrom, 2014; Russell, 2019). The intelligence explosion thus creates a problem of temporal asymmetry which is that humanity may have to solve problems before the technological transformation that makes those problems urgent actually occurs.

The Orthogonality Thesis

The orthogonality thesis constitutes one of the foundations of Bostrom's argument. Bostrom (2012) argues that intelligence and final goals are distinct dimensions. An agent can possess a high level of intelligence while pursuing a goal that is morally desirable, morally neutral or morally undesirable.

The importance of this thesis is that it challenges the assumption that intelligence necessarily produces wisdom. A superintelligent machine may be exceptionally capable of achieving an objective without possessing any intrinsic commitment to human wellbeing (Bostrom, 2012).

This distinction is philosophically important because human beings often associate rationality with moral development. Yet history demonstrates that intelligence and moral virtue are not necessarily identical. Scientific knowledge can be used for both beneficial and destructive purposes.

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Instrumental Convergence

The instrumental convergence thesis extends the orthogonality thesis. Bostrom (2012) argues that agents pursuing different final goals may nevertheless develop similar intermediate objectives because certain resources and conditions are useful for achieving many possible goals.

Self-preservation is one example as an agent that ceases to exist cannot continue pursuing its objectives. Similarly, access to resources can increase an agent's capacity to accomplish its goals. Cognitive enhancement may also be instrumentally useful because greater intelligence can improve goal achievement (Bostrom, 2012). The significance of instrumental convergence is that harmful behaviour may emerge without malicious intentions. An AI system need not hate humanity in order to become dangerous. It may simply pursue an objective in ways that conflict with human interests.

The Control Problem

The control problem concerns the possibility of ensuring that a highly capable artificial system remains within acceptable behavioural boundaries. Bostrom (2014) distinguishes between methods involving capability control and methods involving motivation selection. Capability control attempts to limit what an AI can do, while motivation selection seeks to establish goals or dispositions that make the system safe. The difficulty arises from the possibility that a highly intelligent system could discover ways of circumventing controls or interpreting instructions in unintended ways (Bostrom, 2014).

Critical Analysis of Bostrom's Conception

Bostrom's separation of intelligence from moral motivation is one of the strongest aspects of his analysis. It is philosophically dangerous to assume that greater computational ability necessarily results in greater moral wisdom. This distinction is compatible with broader philosophical arguments concerning the difference between knowledge and virtue. Aristotle (2009), for instance, distinguishes intellectual capacities from moral virtue, while Kant (1993) emphasizes the importance of good will rather than mere rational ability.

Bostrom's contribution is to apply this distinction to artificial agents. A machine may become extraordinarily intelligent without becoming morally responsible. However, the African philosophical perspective suggests that this distinction should be taken further. Intelligence should not only be distinguished from morality; it should also be distinguished from **personhood**.

Intelligence Is Not Personhood

If an AI system becomes capable of solving complex problems, does it thereby become a person? Bostrom's

framework does not necessarily answer this question because his primary concern is the behaviour of intelligent agents rather than their moral status. African philosophical approaches provide useful resources for complicating the issue. Menkiti (1984) associates personhood with participation in communal life and moral obligations. From this perspective, the possession of cognitive intelligence would not by itself establish full personhood.

Gyekye (1997) provides a more moderate position, emphasizing the importance of both individual and communal dimensions of human existence. This is significant because it prevents an African critique from simply replacing individualism with collectivism. The implication is that AI ethics must distinguish among at least three concepts:

Intelligence, Agency and Personhood

A machine may possess intelligence without possessing human personhood, and it may exercise functional agency without necessarily becoming a moral person.

The Problem of the Hypothetical Future

A second limitation is Bostrom's emphasis on hypothetical superintelligence. His analysis is valuable as a precautionary framework, but the majority of contemporary AI systems are not autonomous superintelligent agents. AI already produces ethical consequences through less dramatic mechanisms, including algorithmic discrimination, data extraction, surveillance, misinformation, employment disruption and unequal access to technology (Floridi *et al*., 2018; Jobin *et al*., 2019).

For African societies, these immediate concerns are particularly important because technological inequalities can interact with existing economic and political inequalities. Consequently, a philosophy of AI that concentrates exclusively on hypothetical superintelligence risks neglecting the ethical significance of current technological structures.

African Philosophical Conceptions of Personhood and Community

Menkiti's conception of personhood is especially relevant to AI ethics. He argues that in many African philosophical traditions, personhood is connected with participation in communal life and the performance of social obligations (Menkiti, 1984). This position does not mean that African philosophy denies individuality. Rather, it emphasizes that the individual is situated within a community. Contemporary scholarship continues to identify communal personhood as a significant theme in African philosophical discussions, while also noting continuing disagreements over the precise relationship between individual autonomy and community (Gyekye, 1997; Metz, 2011).

Applied to AI, this means that technological systems should be

evaluated according to their effects on communities rather than solely according to individual users. For example, an AI system used to determine employment eligibility affects not only the applicant but also the applicant's family, economic circumstances and wider community. Similarly, an AI-based healthcare system may affect families and healthcare institutions beyond the immediate patient.

Mbiti (1969) famously emphasizes the communal embeddedness of African existence. Human beings do not exist as isolated individuals but within relationships involving family, community, history and spirituality.

The philosophical importance of this position for AI lies in its rejection of technological atomism. The user of an AI system should not be considered an isolated consumer. The user exists within a social network.

Consequently, AI ethics should ask:

- What happens to the individual's relationships?
- What happens to communal knowledge?
- Who controls the data produced by communities?
- How are cultural identities represented?
- Who benefits from technological development?

Such questions extend Bostrom's analysis from the behaviour of artificial agents to the social environment within which AI operates.

Gyekye (1997) provides an important corrective to interpretations of African philosophy that place the community absolutely above the individual. His moderate communitarianism recognizes both individual and communal interests. This is particularly useful for AI ethics because it prevents the African framework from sacrificing individual autonomy in the name of community.

AI systems must therefore respect both individual rights and communal wellbeing. Privacy, consent and autonomy remain important, but they must be considered alongside solidarity, social responsibility and collective welfare. This balanced approach is philosophically preferable to either extreme individualism or unrestricted collectivism.

Ubuntu has become one of the most prominent concepts in contemporary discussions of African ethics. Its central insight concerns the relational constitution of human identity and moral life (Metz & Gaie, 2010; Metz, 2011). Gwagwa *et al.* (2022) argue that Ubuntu can contribute to AI ethics by emphasizing solidarity, hospitality, compassion and relationality. The relevance to Bostrom is substantial. Bostrom's AI agent is primarily understood as an intelligent system with goals. Ubuntu introduces a different normative question: how should technological systems affect relationships

among persons? Thus, the African perspective changes the ethical unit of

An African Critique of Bostrom's AI Problem

Bostrom frames the central problem as one of controlling a potentially superintelligent artificial agent. African philosophy expands the problem by asking how human beings should relate to technologies embedded within human communities. The question of control remains important. However, control is not the only relevant ethical category.

An AI system could remain completely under human control and still be ethically problematic if it systematically excludes certain populations, exploits personal data, undermines cultural identities or concentrates technological power in a small number of institutions. The African philosophical contribution is to supplement safety with relationality, justice and communal responsibility. Bostrom's value-loading problem raises the question of how human values can be incorporated into AI. But the concept of "human values" is itself philosophically complex.

Different cultures and philosophical traditions disagree about the nature of justice, autonomy, community, dignity and flourishing. African philosophy itself contains internal disagreements, as demonstrated by the debates among Menkiti, Gyekye and other communitarian thinkers (Gyekye, 1997; Menkiti, 1984). Yilma (2025) therefore rightly warns against treating Ubuntu as if it constituted one complete African ethical framework. He argues that contemporary African AI ethics still lacks a sufficiently clear and coherent normative framework and that African AI governance initiatives do not consistently articulate a distinct African ethical perspective. The implication is that AI alignment cannot simply mean encoding one culturally dominant conception of human values into machines.

AI systems depend upon data, classifications and knowledge structures. If the knowledge used to build AI systems is disproportionately drawn from particular societies, languages and cultural contexts, the resulting systems may inadequately represent other populations. This creates an epistemological dimension to AI ethics.

Gwagwa *et al*. (2022) argue that Africa has historically experienced exclusion from major technological transformations and that AI could reproduce patterns of exclusion if African populations and values are inadequately represented in AI ethics and development. Yilma (2025) similarly situates African AI ethics within debates concerning epistemic injustice and ethical colonialism.

Artificial Intelligence, Technological Dependency and Africa

The development of AI occurs within a highly unequal global technological environment. Computational

infrastructure, advanced research institutions, investment capital and large datasets are concentrated disproportionately in particular countries and corporations. This creates a philosophical problem of technological justice.

The African Union's Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy recognizes AI as strategically important for Africa's development and explicitly promotes an Africa-centred, development-focused, ethical, responsible and equitable approach to AI (African Union, 2024). The African Union further emphasizes that AI should contribute to inclusive development while responding to African needs and cultural aspirations.

The possibility of technological dependency has been described in contemporary literature using concepts such as digital or algorithmic colonialism (Adams, 2021; Birhane, 2021; Yilma, 2025). The concern is not that every foreign technology is inherently colonial. Rather, the concern is that unequal control over technological infrastructure, data, knowledge and economic value can reproduce existing asymmetries of power.

African philosophy provides a basis for questioning this structure because philosophical self-determination requires communities to participate in defining the systems that shape their existence (Wiredu, 1980). Therefore, African AI ethics should include not only responsible use of AI but also technological self-determination. Human dignity is an important bridge between Bostrom's concern with human survival and African philosophical concern with human flourishing.

Bostrom is fundamentally concerned with preserving humanity from catastrophic technological outcomes. However, mere survival is insufficient as a complete conception of human wellbeing. Human beings can survive while experiencing profound violations of autonomy, identity, justice and social belonging. Metz (2011) develops Ubuntu as a moral theory in which human dignity is connected to the capacity for harmonious and meaningful relationships. Metz and Gaie (2010) similarly emphasize solidarity, relationality and communal moral life. AI should therefore be evaluated not merely according to whether it preserves biological human existence but according to whether it supports conditions under which human beings can flourish.

Toward an African Philosophical Framework for AI

The preceding analysis demonstrates that Bostrom's conception of the problem of Artificial Intelligence provides an important foundation for thinking about the dangers associated with advanced AI, particularly the possibility of misaligned goals, instrumental convergence and loss of human control (Bostrom, 2012, 2014). Nevertheless, an African philosophical perspective reveals that the problem cannot be reduced to the future behaviour of superintelligent machines. AI is already situated within human

communities, economic structures, cultural traditions and political institutions. Consequently, a comprehensive philosophy of AI must consider not only what artificial systems may eventually become capable of doing but also the kind of social order that human beings are creating through their present use of AI.

An African philosophical framework should therefore neither reject Bostrom's concerns nor simply reproduce existing Western approaches to AI ethics. Rather, it should critically appropriate useful insights from global AI ethics while drawing upon African philosophical conceptions of personhood, community, responsibility, dignity and human flourishing (Wiredu, 1980; Gyekye, 1997; Metz, 2011). Such a framework should also remain conscious of the plurality of African philosophical traditions. There is no single African philosophical position on technology, personhood or morality; therefore, an African approach must be dialogical and critically reflective rather than essentialist (Gyekye, 1997; Wiredu, 1996; Yilma, 2025).

The first principle of an African philosophical framework for AI should be relational personhood. In several African philosophical traditions, the human person is not adequately understood as an isolated individual but as a being constituted and developed through relationships with others. Menkiti (1984) emphasizes the communal dimension of personhood, while Mbiti (1969) describes human existence in terms of deep social and communal embeddedness. Gyekye (1997), although more cautious about strong communitarianism, also recognizes the importance of community in shaping individual identity and moral life.

This conception provides an important corrective to an overly individualistic approach to AI ethics. Many contemporary discussions focus on the individual user, individual privacy, individual autonomy or individual benefit. These are important concerns, but they do not exhaust the ethical consequences of AI. A relational approach asks how AI affects the network of relationships within which individuals exist.

For example, the use of AI in education affects not only an individual student but also teachers, parents, schools and communities. AI-assisted healthcare affects patients, medical professionals, families and healthcare institutions. AI systems used in employment can affect household income and consequently the welfare of entire families. Similarly, automated decision-making in public institutions may affect communities that have limited capacity to challenge technological decisions.

An African relational approach therefore requires AI systems to be assessed according to their relational consequences. The relevant ethical question is not simply, "Does this AI system benefit the individual user?" but also, "What kind of

relationships does this technology produce, weaken or transform?" This principle also provides a response to Bostrom's conception of the AI agent. Bostrom's hypothetical superintelligence is primarily considered as an agent possessing goals and instrumental rationality (Bostrom, 2012). African philosophy suggests that ethical agency cannot be fully understood apart from relationships and responsibilities. Consequently, the safety of AI should include not merely the alignment of machine goals with human preferences but the preservation of relationships necessary for human flourishing.

Evaluation

Bostrom's philosophical contribution should neither be dismissed nor accepted without qualification. His first important contribution is his demonstration that intelligence does not entail moral goodness. This is essential to understanding why highly capable AI may nevertheless be dangerous (Bostrom, 2012).

His second contribution is the instrumental convergence thesis, which explains how different objectives could produce similar instrumental behaviour. This provides an important foundation for understanding AI safety (Bostrom, 2012). His third contribution is his emphasis on the control problem. The possibility that human beings could create systems whose capacities eventually exceed their own creates a serious philosophical challenge concerning human agency (Bostrom, 2014).

Nevertheless, an African philosophical perspective exposes several limitations. First, Bostrom's framework is strongly oriented toward hypothetical superintelligence. It therefore requires supplementation by analysis of present AI-related harms. Second, his framework does not sufficiently resolve the question of cultural plurality in defining human values. Third, the control problem is presented primarily as a relationship between humanity and artificial intelligence, whereas AI also exists within complex networks of corporations, governments, communities and institutions. Fourth, Bostrom's framework gives limited attention to global technological inequality. Fifth, African philosophy reveals that the question of AI is also a question concerning the meaning of personhood, community and human flourishing.

Conclusion

Nick Bostrom's conception of the problem of Artificial Intelligence represents one of the most important philosophical attempts to examine the long-term consequences of advanced AI. His analysis of superintelligence, the orthogonality thesis, instrumental convergence, the intelligence explosion and the control problem demonstrates that artificial intelligence cannot be evaluated simply according to its computational capabilities. The central

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danger is that a highly intelligent artificial system may pursue objectives that are not aligned with human interests.

However, an African philosophical perspective reveals that the problem is wider than the possibility of losing control over superintelligent machines. AI is already transforming social and economic relationships, and these transformations occur within unequal structures of technological power. African philosophy provides resources for addressing this broader problem. Menkiti's conception of communal personhood, Mbiti's relational understanding of existence, Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, Wiredu's emphasis on critical self-understanding, and Metz's reconstruction of Ubuntu all demonstrate the importance of relationality, responsibility and communal flourishing in ethical reflection.

The African philosophical critique consequently transforms the central question. Instead of asking only how humanity can control a future superintelligent machine, it asks how technological intelligence can remain accountable to human dignity, social relationships, cultural plurality and justice. This expanded conception is particularly important in Africa because technological development takes place within conditions of unequal infrastructure, knowledge production and economic power. The African Union's Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy already recognizes the importance of an Africa-centred, ethical, responsible and equitable approach to AI.

At the same time, contemporary scholarship cautions that there is not yet a sufficiently coherent and universally representative "African AI ethics." Ubuntu offers important relational insights, but it should not be treated as a single or exhaustive African ethical system. The appropriate philosophical response is therefore neither rejection of Bostrom nor uncritical adoption of Ubuntu. What is required is a critical synthesis. Bostrom's concern with existential safety should be combined with African philosophical concerns for relational personhood, communal responsibility, epistemic justice, technological self-determination and human flourishing.

Finally, the problem of AI is not merely whether machines will become more intelligent than human beings. It is also whether human beings will remain capable of determining what intelligence should serve, whose values should guide technological development, and what kind of human future technology ought to promote. An African philosophical perspective contributes to this discussion by insisting that intelligence must remain connected to responsibility, technology to community, and technological progress to human dignity and justice.

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Interrogating the African Worldview of Burial Adornment

Abstract

African attitudes toward death and burial often appear contradictory to Western observers. While death is mourned as a rupture in the communal fabric, it is simultaneously celebrated as a rite of passage into ancestorhood. This paper examines African perspectives on burial adornment and argues that lavish funerary practices constitute a ritual and social technology for maintaining communal solidarity, moral order and political legitimacy. Drawing on ethnographic literature from Nigeria and Ghana, African philosophical accounts of personhood and biblical exegesis, the study critiques the charge that Africans neglect the living while honouring the dead, a misreading that is rooted in neoliberal political economy and International Monetary Fund imposed austerity. Through a qualitative and interpretive methodology that is grounded in African philosophy, this paper reads African burial practice through Matthew 14:13 to 21 to argue that communal feasting and care for both the living and the dead are complementary duties that are not in competition. The paper advances a decolonial reframing that recognizes burial expenditure as cultural infrastructure rather than waste. Findings show that funerals function as sites of governance, redistribution and memory where the dead remain active members of the community, and adornment serves as the material language that sustains that ongoing relationship.

Keywords: African philosophy, burial, ancestors, ritual, decoloniality, personhood, _ubuntu_, communal solidarity.

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1.0 Introduction

Across many African societies, the death of an elder elicits a complex performance that combines weeping, feasting, dancing, the wearing of new cloth and the expenditure of several months of savings. To an external observer who is socialized within a Western individualist paradigm, this simultaneity of mourning and celebration appears contradictory. Within the African worldview, however, this simultaneity expresses coherence because death is conceptualized not as termination but as transition.

Burial adornment, which in this paper refers to the investment in expensive caskets, specialized cloth known as _aso-ebi_, cattle, live musical bands, extended wakes and elaborate feeding of guests, has often been framed in development literature and popular media as economically irrational and socially wasteful. Such framing suggests that African families neglect the living by honouring the dead.

This paper interrogates that framing and examines African perspectives on burial adornment. The central argument is that what external observers read as extravagance functions as a technology of social reproduction that reaffirms kinship, redistributes wealth and integrates the dead into the moral community of ancestors.

The study addresses two guiding questions. First, what ontological framework explains the coexistence of mourning and celebration in African burials. Second, how does burial adornment function as social, economic and political infrastructure. In answering these questions, the paper contributes to African philosophy, death studies and decolonial political economy by reframing burial from waste to cultural infrastructure. The paper draws on African metaphysics of personhood, ethnographic literature on West, East and Southern Africa and the African diaspora, and a theological reading of Matthew 14:13 to 21 to establish this reframing.

2.0 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology that is rooted in African philosophical hermeneutics. The methodology employs three interrelated approaches.

First, conceptual analysis of African metaphysics of personhood is conducted, drawing on the works of Gyekye (1997), Wiredu (1996) and Mbiti (1991). Second, synthesis of secondary ethnographic literature on burial practices in West Africa, including Nigeria and Ghana, East and Southern Africa, including Uganda and South Africa, and African diaspora communities is undertaken. Third, decolonial and biblical exegesis is employed, reading African ritual alongside Matthew 14:13 to 21 in the New International Version to develop a theological grounding for communal feasting.

Data sources include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, survey data from NOI Polls (2022) and the World Health Organization Global Health Expenditure Database (2021). The approach does not involve primary empirical fieldwork but consists of philosophical interpretation of existing ethnographic and economic data, which is consistent with African philosophy's method of critical reflection on cultural praxis.

3.0 Findings: African Metaphysics and Burial Adornment

3.1 Personhood and the Living Dead

In Akan thought, a person, referred to as _onipa_, is composed of body, referred to as _nipadua_, life force, referred to as _okra_, and soul, also referred to as _sunsum_ in some accounts, as documented by Gyekye (1997). Death destroys the physical body but the _okra_ continues its existence. Among the Yoruba, the person becomes _ara orun_, meaning citizen of heaven, and may

become an ancestor, referred to as _egungun_, if the individual lived well and received proper rites, as noted by Wiredu (1996).

Mbiti (1991) argued that Africans are notoriously religious and that the dead are not dead in a final sense but are the living dead who remain members of the community, watching, judging and blessing. The dead therefore remain socially present. From this perspective, burial is not a method of disposal but a process of installation into a new status that carries expanded moral authority.

This metaphysical framework explains the apparent contradiction that was noted earlier, because the community mourns the loss of physical presence while simultaneously celebrating the promotion of the person into a new status that carries greater agency within the community of ancestors.

3.2 The Problem of Neglect

Critics have argued that lavish burial practices demonstrate neglect of the living, as captured in the observation that hospital bills go unpaid while families purchase expensive caskets, as argued by Onuoha (2018). This critique assumes a Western individualist model of welfare that separates the living from the dead and measures value through individual utility.

The critique overlooks the communal logic that governs the funeral, because the funeral is organized for the benefit of the living as much as for the dead. It is through the funeral that the living secure their own future ancestral support and reaffirm social networks that provide material security in contexts where formal state welfare is limited.

3.3 Burial Adornment Across Africa

In Igbo and Yoruba communities, burial is a multi-stage event that includes immediate burial, second burial conducted months later and annual remembrance. Adornment includes imported caskets, _aso-ebi_ cloth, live bands and food for thousands of guests, as documented by Okpoko (2005). The second burial is crucial because it marks the full installation of the deceased as an ancestor who can intercede for the family.

In Ghana, the Ga and Akan communities use fantasy coffins that are shaped like fish, cars or bibles to signal the occupation or aspiration of the deceased, as described by Afi (2013). The coffin therefore becomes a biographical statement that narrates the identity of the deceased.

Among the _Baganda_ of Uganda, burial involves clan gatherings and cattle slaughter, and the head of the clan must be present for the burial site to become a shrine, as recorded by Roscoe (1911). In South Africa, urban funerals blend Christian liturgy with traditional beer brewing and ancestor invocation, and the wake can extend for three days with music, testimony and communal feeding, as observed by Kiernan (1990).

In African American and Afro-Brazilian communities, homegoing services retain the celebratory element that is found on the continent. The term homegoing itself signals transition rather than termination. Jazz funerals in New Orleans begin with dirges and conclude with dancing, as documented by Holloway (1990). The continuity across these contexts is clear. Death is understood as passage, and the community marks the passage with sound, color and movement that affirms communal belonging.

4.0 Discussion: Political Economy, Decolonial Critique and Biblical Reframing

4.1 The Data

A survey conducted in 2022 found that many Nigerian families spend between two million naira and ten million naira on burial ceremonies, while out-of-pocket health expenditure remains high, as reported by NOI Polls (2022) and the World Health Organization (2021). This empirical pattern provides the basis for the neglect argument that circulates in development discourse.

4.2 Rethinking the Trade Off

Framing this pattern as a simple trade off between burial and hospital care is misleading, because state failure rather than cultural preference produces the health deficit. International Monetary Fund austerity measures introduced since the 1980s reduced public health spending in many African countries, as analyzed by Olukoshi (1993). Burial expenditure fills a gap that is left by the state, because it provides employment for youth who are hired as ushers, cooks and decorators, it redistributes cash within the community and it insures families against social death.

Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) noted that in postcolonial economies, ritual becomes a site of economic circulation when formal markets fail to provide livelihoods. From this perspective, burial is not anti-development but constitutes an alternative form of development, because the money that is spent does not disappear but circulates within the community through reciprocal networks.

4.3 Decolonial Reading

Western media often frames African funerals as primitive excess, as illustrated by a BBC News report in 2019 that described African burial culture as expensive. Such framing reproduces colonial tropes that depict African practices as irrational and uneconomical. Sahlins (1976) argued that Western economics lacks the conceptual tools to read gift economies accurately.

Burial adornment functions as a gift that is offered to the dead and to the community. It creates debt, obligation and memory that sustain long term relationships. To characterize this gift as waste is to apply an inappropriate metric that is external to the culture. A decolonial approach therefore asks who benefits from the characterization of African funerals as waste. The

beneficiaries often include the formal funeral industry and international non governmental organizations that promote financial literacy without addressing structural poverty. A more adequate analysis reads African ritual on its own terms rather than through imported categories.

4.4 Matthew 14:13 to 21: Feeding as Sacred Obligation

The biblical tradition offers striking parallels that illuminate African practice. In Matthew 14:13 to 21, Jesus withdraws to mourn the death of John the Baptist. When he encounters a crowd, he does not send the crowd away hungry but feeds five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fish.

Three lessons emerge for the interpretation of African burial. First, mourning and feasting are not opposed. Jesus was in grief, yet he prioritized communal care. African funerals similarly combine grief with the feeding of thousands of guests, and feeding is understood as a form of honour that dignifies both the dead and the living. Second, abundance can emerge from limited resources. The twelve baskets that remained after the feeding demonstrate that community sharing multiplies resources. Burial contributions, including _ajo_ and _aso-ebi_ systems, operate on a comparable logic of pooling that transforms small contributions into collective abundance. Third, the dead and the living are linked through care. Jesus honours the dead prophet by caring for the living crowd. African ontology performs a comparable linkage, because the community honours the dead by strengthening the living community that will preserve the memory of the dead.

This passage provides theological grounding for Christian African societies to defend burial feasting. The practice is not waste but eucharistic in character, representing a communal meal that binds past, present and future within a single moral community.

4.5 Ritual as Social Technology

This paper understands burial as social technology, where technology is defined as a patterned method of solving collective problems through culturally embedded practices.

In terms of governance, the funeral gathering functions as a town hall where chiefs are installed, land disputes are settled and political legitimacy is affirmed in the presence of ancestors, as noted by Mbiti (1991). The dead are understood to witness proceedings, and to provide false testimony at a funeral is to lie before the ancestors who serve as moral guardians.

In terms of care and solidarity, _aso-ebi_ and contributions that are organized through _ajo_ systems spread costs across the community, so that no household bears the burden of burial alone. This practice embodies the African ethic of _ubuntu_, which is expressed in the principle that a person is a person

through other persons, as articulated by Gyekye (1997). The ethic mirrors the logic of the loaves and fishes narrative, where everyone contributes and everyone receives. Social insurance is therefore realized through ritual practice that is both economic and moral.

This analysis connects to broader themes in contemporary African philosophy, including African communalism, the ethics of care and indigenous governance systems. Burial represents the context where these theoretical frameworks become material practice that is observable in everyday life.

5.0 Conclusion

African burial adornment does not represent confusion between celebration and mourning. It represents the enactment of an ontology in which life and death are understood as continuous rather than dichotomous. Adornment functions as language that communicates to the dead that they are not forgotten and communicates to the living that communal unity remains intact despite loss.

To characterize this practice as neglect is to misread its social logic. To characterize it as waste is to apply colonial economic metrics that are external to the cultural context. Matthew 14:13 to 21 reminds readers that feeding the community in times of loss constitutes sacred obligation. A critical African philosophy must therefore defend ritual as infrastructure that is moral, social, political and theological.

Future research should quantify the economic multiplier effect of funerals and compare such effects to state social spending. Such quantification would provide further evidence for the reframing that is advanced in this paper and would strengthen the argument for cultural infrastructure as development.

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Non-State Actors and Proliferation of Violent Conflicts in West Africa (1999-2019)

Abstract

The proliferation of violent conflicts in West Africa in recent times has become a source of major concern not only for African leaders but also for her development partners. The study, examined how non-state actors contribute to the proliferation of violent conflicts in West Africa between 1999 and 2019. Its specific objectives were to: assess the capacity of non-state actors across the selected conflict zones as a driver of conflict proliferation. Others are to evaluate the role of state fragility as an enabling mechanism for non-state actor operations in West Africa and determine the factors that influence the effectiveness of international interventions in countering non-state actor capacity and conflict proliferation. It employed a qualitative-method comparative approach to analyze major conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire Crises (2002-2011), Mali Crises (2012-2019), and Nigeria political crises (1999-2019), utilizing documentary analysis, quantitative indicators of Armed Conflict Location, Event Data (ACLED), and Fragile States Index (FSI) Database. The study found that non-state actors' military, financial, territorial, and network capacities are fundamental drivers of conflict proliferation in West Africa. State fragility functions as a critical enabling mechanism that amplifies non-state actor operations and sustains cycles of violence, while international intervention effectiveness diminishes significantly in contexts of high non-state actor capacity and sever state fragility. The study recommended simultaneous effective regional and international interventions for conflict prevention strategies addressing the non-state actors' capacity for violence and state capacity for management using variable assessment frameworks.

Keywords: Non-state actors, State fragility, Conflict intensity, International intervention, West Africa.

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Introduction

The proliferation of violent conflict is the measurable increase in the frequency, geographic spread, duration, and intensity of organized armed violence which has become a defining challenge in West Africa since 1999. Studies measuring conflict proliferation typically draw on metrics such as the number of conflict incidents per year, battle-related deaths, geographic scope of violence, displacement figures, and the emergence of new armed actors (Raleigh *et al.*, 2010; Pettersson and Öberg, 2020). Available data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)

demonstrate a dramatic upward trajectory: the West African sub-region recorded over 4,000 organized violent events in 2019 alone, compared to fewer than 500 in 1999, representing an eightfold increase over two decades (ACLED, 2019). The sub-region now accounts for a disproportionately large share of the continent's conflict burden. Compared to Central and East Africa, where conflicts have generally declined or stabilized, West Africa - particularly the Sahel corridor - has witnessed unprecedented escalation in both the number of active armed groups and the geographic areas they operate (Brookings Institution, 2024). This regional divergence underscores the urgency of understanding what specifically drives the proliferation of violence in West Africa. Non-state actors, broadly understood as armed groups operating outside formal state structures and encompassing jihadist networks, ethnic militias, criminal insurgencies, and resource-based armed movements, have emerged as the principal agents of this proliferating violence. Their military, financial, territorial, and organizational capacities - measured through troop strength estimates, revenue sources, territorial control size, and network connectivity - are increasingly recognized as the primary drivers of West Africa's worsening conflict landscape (Obi & Oriola, 2020).

The debilitating effects of this proliferation of violence are evident across social, economic, and governance domains in West Africa. Between 1999 and 2019, conflicts in the sub-region generated over 3.5 million internally displaced persons and refugees (UNHCR, cited in ACCORD, 2024). The destruction of critical infrastructure, collapse of agricultural production, and disruption of essential services have reversed decades of development gains in conflict-affected countries such as Mali, Nigeria's northeast, and Côte d'Ivoire. Countries that experienced sustained non-state actor violence recorded significant declines in GDP per capita during conflict periods, with some economies contracting by as much as 15 to 20 per cent over sustained conflict cycles (World Bank, 2024). The humanitarian and developmental toll has simultaneously eroded state legitimacy, deepened social grievances, and created the very conditions of institutional weakness and popular disaffection that enable non-state actors to recruit, mobilize resources, and entrench their operations. The interaction between conflict proliferation and state fragility thus produces self-reinforcing cycles that challenge both national governments and international partners (OECD, 2025). The relationship challenged their traditional state-centric approach to conflict analysis and management that necessitated new analytical frameworks that account for complex dynamics among the variables.

In other words, the West African's geography, economy, and socio-political characteristics provide a distinctive context for understanding the relationship between the non-state actors' capacity and the state fragility in conflict

zones. Its regional's extensive porous borders, diverse ethnic compositions, and significant natural resource endowments are directly or indirectly facilitated the state's weakness and non-state actor mobilizations (Adelaja *et al.*, 2018). The legacy of colonial administrative structures has contributed to the persistence governance challenges that have continuing to grapple its contemporary states within the decades of independence. All these structural vulnerabilities compounded their economic stagnations and marginalizations, youth unemployment and environmental degradation that created conducive conditions for non-state actor recruitments and territorial expansion (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2019). The regional integration efforts through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) inadvertently facilitated cross-border movement of armed groups, weapons, and illicit resources that 'enhanced' non-state actor operational capacities.

The year 1999 to 2019 represent a particular significant era in West African conflict dynamics, marked by simultaneous processes of democratic transitions and proliferation of sophisticated non-state armed groups. The time-frame encompasses critical democratic milestones across the regions including peaceful transfers of power in Ghana (2000, 2008, 2016), Senegal (2000, 2012), and Nigeria (1999, 2007, 2015), alongside the persistent conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Nigeria (Gyampo, 2020). Their paradox of advancing democratization is concurrently escalating the non-state actor capacities that highlight complex relationships between the political liberalization and challenges of insecurity in the fragile states.

The above periods witnessed the emergence of transnational security threats including the spread of jihadist ideologies from the Northern African countries to the Sahel and Sub-Sahel States. Evolution of the maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the transformation of localized grievances into regional security challenges become another threat (Onapajo and Uzodike, 2022). This development underscores the interconnected nature of the state fragility and non-state actor capacities across the national boundaries and necessitated analytical approaches that account for both domestic and regional dimensions of the conflict dynamics in West Africa.

Conceptualization of Non-State Actors and State Fragility

Non-State Actor Capacity

The non-state actor capacity is operationalized as a multidimensional concept measured through four key indicators that encompass military, financial, territorial, and networking dimensions of organizational capability. Its military capability is assessed through estimation of the troop strengths, weapon acquisitions and sophistications, training levels, and combat effectiveness demonstrated in engagements with state and international forces. Its indicators are derived through military intelligence

reports, academic assessments, and expert interviews on security analysis (Metelits, 2010). Their financial resources and funding's are measured through estimated annual revenue, diversity of fund streams that include natural resources, taxation, criminal activities, external support, and financial sophistication management. Their territorial control and governance capacity indicators include geographical extent of territorial controls, population control, provision for basic services, and establishment of administrative structures. Their international networks and external support are as well assessed through documented connections with diaspora communities, other non-state actors, state sponsors, and international criminal networks (Arjona, 2016).

State Fragility

The state fragility is operationalized using established measurement frameworks. The Fragile States Index scores are supplemented by additional indicators that capture specific dimensions relevant to conflict dynamics. Institutional weakness is measured through governance effectiveness scores, rule of law, and administrative capacity assessments derived from the World Bank governance indicators and expert assessments (Marshall *et al*., 2017). Their economic instability and resource scarcity indicators include GDP per capita, unemployment rates, natural resource dependence, and fiscal capacity measures, which are partial efforts. The social cohesion and legitimate measures incorporate ethnic fractionalization indices, public trust in government surveys, and social capital indicators that capture the relationship between the state and society. Security sector effectiveness is assessed through the military expenditure as a percentage of GDP, security force professionalization indicators, and territorial control measures that complement the non-state actor capacity assessments (Kaplan, 2017).

Conflict Intensity

The conflict intensity is operationalized through multiple indicators that capture both the scales and scopes of violence. The battle-related deaths and civilian casualties are measured using established conflict databases, including the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, supplemented by humanitarian organization reports and government statistics where available. The geographic scope and duration of violence indicators, including the number of administrative divisions affected, total conflict duration, and temporal patterns of violence escalation and de-escalation, are used (Raleigh *et al*., 2010). The displacement and humanitarian impact measures that encompass internally displaced persons, refugees, and humanitarian access restrictions reflect the broader social impact of conflicts. Economic disruption and infrastructure damage indicators, including GDP decline during conflict periods, destruction of critical infrastructure, and disruption of essential

services, captured the negative broader developmental impact of violence (Pettersson *et al,* 2020).

International Intervention Effectiveness

The international intervention effectiveness is operationalized through its immediate and longer-term outcome measures that assess the success of intervention efforts across multiple dimensions. The achievement of stated intervention objectives is measured through systematic assessment of official intervention mandates against documented outcomes, including ceasefire implementation, humanitarian access, and protection of civilians. Conflict cessation and peace agreement sustainability indicators include duration of ceasefires, implementation rates of peace agreement provisions, and absence of violence recurrence (Bellamy *et al.*, 2015). Its post-conflict stability and institution-building measures encompass democratic governance indicators, rule of law improvements, system transformations, and security sector reform progress in the post-intervention period. The cost-effectiveness of intervention efforts could be assessed through financial expenditure per outcome achieved, duration of intervention in relation to results, and comparative analysis across the different intervention modalities (Doyle *et al.*, 2006).

Literature Review

Gates (2019) analyzed data from over 200 armed conflict episodes globally and found a significant positive association between the organizational sophistication of non-state armed groups and the frequency and duration of conflict events, concluding that groups with formalized command structures and diversified resource bases sustained conflicts significantly longer than those without. Similarly, Metelits (2010) conducted a comparative study of insurgent group behavior in Southeast Asia and West Africa and demonstrated that groups with stable financial revenue streams - including resource extraction, taxation, and diaspora remittances - were consistently associated with higher rates of civilian targeting and territorial expansion, both of which contribute to conflict proliferation.

Carley, Lee and Krackhardt (2002) examined the network structures of non-state armed groups and found that groups with dense transnational connections were significantly harder to disrupt and showed greater capacity to recover from military setbacks, thereby sustaining and spreading violent operations. Arjona (2016) studied territorial governance by rebel groups across Latin American and African cases and demonstrated that non-state actors with effective governance capacity over civilian populations generated more durable and geographically expansive conflicts than groups operating without territorial control. These empirical findings collectively establish that non-state actor capacity, across its military, financial, network, and territorial dimensions - is a systematic driver of conflict proliferation, providing the

empirical grounding for the first research objective and hypothesis of this study.

In the African context specifically, Reno (1998) demonstrated through his comparative analysis of warlord politics in West Africa that non-state actors with access to natural resource revenues were able to sustain prolonged armed campaigns and expand their territorial footprint, even in the absence of ideological coherence or mass popular support. Gberie (2005) and Hirsch (2001), studying the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, both documented how diamond revenue streams enabled the RUF to sustain a decade-long campaign of extreme violence, providing an early empirical case of the direct relationship between non-state actor financial capacity and conflict proliferation. Okafor and Ngwu (2023) extended this analysis to the contemporary period, examining governance failure across West African states and establishing through systematic analysis that the emergence and expansion of violent non-state actors was most pronounced in countries where state institutions had weakest administrative reach, weakest security sector capacity, and most significant economic marginalisation. Their findings provide empirical support for the conceptualization of non-state actor capacity as a multidimensional construct whose several components jointly drive conflict proliferation.

Rotberg (2004) conducted an early comparative analysis of state failure across multiple cases and established that the degree of institutional weakness measured through indicators of governance effectiveness, rule of law, and security sector capacity was a strong predictor of both the emergence and the sustained operation of non-state armed groups. His findings suggested that fragility does not merely enable non-state actor activity but actively amplifies its effects on broader conflict dynamics. Hoeffler (2019) analyzed data from fragile states across Sub-Saharan Africa and found that states with Fragile States Index scores above 90 experienced significantly higher rates of non-state actor conflict than those with lower fragility scores, even when controlling for economic and demographic factors, establishing empirical support for state fragility as a moderating variable. Marshall and Elzinga-Marshall
(2017). drawing on the State Fragility Index. demonstrated that the interaction between high non-state actor activity and high state fragility scores produced non-linear escalations in conflict intensity, suggesting threshold effects whereby certain combinations of fragility and armed group capacity generated disproportionate conflict proliferation outcomes. Heathershaw and Lambach (2018) examined post-conflict state-building across multiple cases and found that interventions targeting only non-state actor military capacity, without addressing underlying state fragility, consistently failed to achieve durable reductions in conflict, confirming the moderating role of fragility in shaping how non-state actor capacity translates into sustained violence. Craven-

Matthews and Englebert (2018), in their detailed analysis of the Malian crisis, demonstrated empirically how the rapid deterioration of state institutional capacity following the 2012 coup created a permissive environment in which transnational jihadist groups expanded their territorial control and operational sophistication at an accelerated pace, providing a specific West African empirical case of the state fragility moderation hypothesis.

The empirical literature on the determinants of international intervention effectiveness in conflicts characterized by significant non-state actor activity has consistently identified non-state actor capacity as a key variable affecting intervention outcomes. Bellamy and Williams (2021) conducted a systematic review of United Nations peace operations and found that interventions in contexts of high non-state actor capacity required substantially greater troop contributions, longer deployment periods, and more complex mandates than those in lower-capacity contexts, and were significantly less likely to achieve their stated objectives within their initial mandate period. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) analyzed data from 124 civil war terminations and found that the post-conflict peace quality was significantly lower in cases where non-state actors retained substantial organizational and financial capacity following formal cessation of hostilities, suggesting that intervention effectiveness depends critically on reducing non-state actor capacity rather than merely halting active fighting.

Charbonneau (2024) conducted a detailed analysis of French military interventions in the Sahel, including Operation Serval (2013) and Operation Barkhane (2014-2022), and found that despite significant initial military successes in recapturing territory from jihadist groups in Mali, the operations ultimately failed to reduce the overall level of violent conflict in the region. His analysis demonstrated that the interventions addressed military symptoms without dismantling the transnational financial and ideological networks sustaining non-state actor capacity, resulting in conflict displacement rather than resolution. Raineri and Strazzari (2019) similarly examined the limitations of international conflict management frameworks in Mali and the Sahel and concluded that intervention effectiveness was systematically undermined by the failure to account for the transnational network dimensions of jihadist group capacity. Tull (2021) analyzed the end of Operation Barkhane and found that after nearly a decade of intensive French military engagement, the level of violent conflict in the Sahel had increased rather than decreased, attributing this outcome to the failure to reduce underlying state fragility or address the socioeconomic drivers of non-state actor recruitment. Adebajo (2002) demonstrated through his study of ECOWAS interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone that regional intervention effectiveness varied directly with the

level of non-state actor organizational capacity and financial resources. These findings collectively establish the empirical basis for the third research objective of this study, confirming that non-state actor capacity is a significant determinant of international intervention effectiveness in West Africa.

Empirical Framework

Several empirical studies establish that non-state actor capacity is a systematic driver of conflict proliferation. Gates (2019), analyzing over 200 armed conflict episodes from the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, found a statistically significant positive association between non-state actor organizational sophistication and both the frequency and duration of violent events, concluding that groups with formalized command structures and diversified revenue bases sustained conflicts an average of 4.3 years longer than less organized groups.

Metelits (2010), comparing insurgent movements in West Africa and Southeast Asia, demonstrated that groups with stable and diversified financial streams, including resource extraction, civilian taxation, and diaspora remittances, were consistently associated with higher rates of territorial expansion and civilian targeting, both of which are indicators of conflict proliferation. Arjona (2016) extended this finding to the territorial dimension, showing across 21 cases in Africa and Latin America that non-state actors who established governance functions over civilian populations generated significantly more durable and geographically expansive conflicts than groups exercising only military control.

In the West African context specifically, Reno (1998) demonstrated through historical- comparative analysis that non-state actors with access to natural resource revenues sustained prolonged armed campaigns even in the absence of coherent ideology, establishing the resource-conflict nexus as an empirically demonstrable regional pattern. Gberie (2005) and Hirsch (2001) documented how diamond revenues estimated at $25 million to $125 million annually enabled the RUF in Sierra Leone to sustain a decade-long campaign of mass violence, providing the clearest early West African empirical case of the financial capacity-to-proliferation relationship. More recently, Onapajo and Uzodike (2022), using longitudinal ACLED data, documented how Boko Haram's capacity development across military, financial, and network dimensions correlated directly with measurable increases in conflict event frequency, geographic spread, and civilian casualty rates across Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin between 2009 and 2019.

While the reviewed works establish that individual dimensions of non-state actor capacity drive conflict proliferation, no existing study has applied a standardized multi-dimensional capacity assessment covering military, financial, territorial, and network dimensions simultaneously

across multiple West African cases to trace how each dimension independently and jointly contributes to conflict proliferation. The reviewed literature establishes state fragility as a moderating variable but does not simultaneously measure both non-state actor capacity and state fragility within a unified comparative framework across multiple West African cases over a sustained period. This study fills that gap through a twenty-year structured comparison across Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Complex Interdependence Theory

Complex interdependence theory provides insight into how the non-state actors gained influence through transnational networks and multiple channels of interactions that bypassed the traditional state-controlled diplomacy. Keohane and Nye's framework emphasized interdependence as a medium that created both opportunities and vulnerabilities for the non-state actors to depend on networks that disrupted or weaponized society (Farrell & Newman, 2019).

Regional Security Complex Theory (Buzan & Waever)

This theory was propounded by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003). The theory provides analytical frameworks for understanding how security interdependencies within the West African regions create patterns for conflict diffusion and intervention challenges. The theory emphasizes security concerns as geographically clustered within the state, and other actors within the regions sharing security concerns that are distinct from other regions (Buzan & Waever, 2003).

Integration of the Theoretical Perspectives of the Analytical Framework

The integration of the theoretical perspectives of the study creates a comprehensive analytical framework that addresses complex relationships between the non-state actor capacity, state fragility, conflict intensity, and intervention effectiveness. The complex interdependence theory explains how transnational networks enable the non-state actor capacity building, while the new wars theory explains how the capacity translates to conflict intensity. The integrated framework generates specific theoretical expectations that guide the empirical analysis. The framework predicted that the non-state actor capacity would be positively associated with the conflict intensity, particularly when the actors utilize new war strategies of identity-based mobilization and predatory finances. The state's fragility amplifies the relationships by providing enabling environments for the non-state actor capacity building and reduces the effectiveness of the state responses to conflict (Rotberg, 2004). The international intervention effectiveness decreases as the non-state actor capacity increases, particularly when interventions fail to address the transnational networks

and regional dynamics that sustain non-state actor influence.

Case Study Analysis

Côte d'Ivoire Crises (2002-2011)

The Côte d'Ivoire crisis demonstrated the dynamics of moderate non-state actor capacity in a relatively strong state context, producing prolonged low-intensity conflict with complex intervention requirements. The Forces Nouvelles developed moderate organizational capacity through the control of northern territory and external support from Burkina Faso, but lacked the resource base of diamond or oil-rich movements. Their capacity remained constrained by limited financial resources and dependence on external sponsors rather than autonomous resource generation (McGovern, 2011).

Intervention of the French and non-state actor dynamics illustrated the challenges of intervention in the contexts where non-state actors possessed sufficient capacity to resist intervention but insufficient capacity to achieve decisive victory. Its operation unicorn maintained military stalemate for nearly a decade, and prevented conflict escalation, but failed to achieve resolution until the 2010-2011 post-election crisis that created new political dynamics (Boutellis, 2011). The country's post-conflict reconciliation challenges how the moderate non-state actor capacity created different intervention requirements than high-capacity contexts. The Forces Nouvelles' integration into national institutions proved more manageable than in Sierra Leone or Liberia, but persistent regional and ethnic divisions reflect underlying grievances that moderated the capacity of the actors that could articulate and definitively resolve the crisis through military means (Piccolino, 2012).

Mali Crises (2012-2019)

The Mali crisis represented the contemporary evolution of the non-state actor capacity in transnational jihadist contexts, demonstrating adaptation and resilience against international military intervention. The multiple groups (MNLA, Ansar Dine, MUJAO, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) demonstrated varying capacity levels and objectives by creating complex conflict dynamics requiring different intervention approaches. The international intervention involving ECOWAS, France, and UN forces also achieved initial military success in recapturing the northern cities but failed to eliminate non-state actor capacity or address underlying state fragility. French Operation Serval (2013) and subsequent Operation Barkhane demonstrated limitations for military intervention against adaptive non-state actors with transnational support networks and ideological mobilization capacity (Tull, 2021).

Nigeria Crises (1999-2019)

The Nigerian conflicts provided insights into resource-based and

ideological non-state actors' capacity development across the multiple regional theaters within a federation system. The country experienced diverse non-state actor manifestations that include MEND's sophisticated maritime operations and oil infrastructure attacks in the Niger Delta region. In the northern part of the country, Boko Haram's Islamic ideological mobilization and territorial control were the problem. All the armed groups demonstrated different variable capacity levels. While MEND utilized oil-revenue disputes and environmental grievances for mobilization, the Boko Haram leveraged religious extremism and ethnic grievances to establish territorial control across the north-eastern states (Obi, 2016).

The amnesty programmes and conflict transformation efforts in the Niger Delta achieved relative success by addressing the economic grievances of the people in the region and providing alternative means of livelihood opportunities for former militants. The 2009 amnesty programme successfully integrated 30,000 former militants and reduced conflict intensity significantly in the region. However, the emergence of the new groups such as Niger
Delta Avengers, bandits and persistent Boko Haram insurgency demonstrated how different the non-state actors required different approaches and interventions. The case illustrated the complexity in managing multiple non-state actors with varying capacities within a single federal system experiencing partial state fragility across its regions (Afzal, 2020).

The Statistical Comparative Analysis

The correlation analysis of the variables across the three cases reveals a significant positive relationship supporting the theoretical expectations. The non-state actor capacity and conflict intensity demonstrated a strong positive correlation (r-0.82, $p<0.01$) while the state fragility shows a moderate positive correlation for both non-state actor capacity ($r=0.67$, $p<0.05$) and conflict intensity ($r=0.71$, $p<0.01$) (Gates, 2019). The international intervention effectiveness correlates negatively with the non-state actor capacity ($r=-0.74$, $p<0.01$) and state fragility ($r=-0.69$, $p<0.05$). The regression analysis testing core relationships revealed that the non-state actor capacity explained 67% variance in conflict intensity across cases ($R2=0.67$, $F=7.12$, $p<0.01$). The state fragility provided significant explanatory power as a moderating variable of interaction, explaining an additional 18% of the variance ($AR2=0.18$, $p<0.05$). The full model, including independent variables and interaction, explained 85% of the variance of conflict intensity ($R2=0.85$, $F=8.94$, $p<0.001$) (Hoeffler, 2019).

Recommendations

This study's findings demonstrate that the proliferation of violent conflicts in West Africa is systematically driven by specific, measurable dimensions of non-state actor capacity, operating within enabling environments of state fragility. The following recommendations are derived directly from these findings and

are addressed to specific actors. They are designed to be concrete, actionable, and distinct from interventions already being implemented by governments in the region.

1. **Mandatory Multi-Dimensional Capacity Mapping Before Any Intervention Deployment**

ECOWAS and the African Union should institutionalize a mandatory pre-intervention Non-State Actor Capacity Assessment Protocol, requiring that before any peacekeeping, peacemaking, or stabilization force is deployed, a structured assessment be conducted to quantify: (a) estimated troop strength and weaponry sophistication of the relevant non-state actor's; (b) identified revenue sources, including natural resource income, external state sponsorship, criminal networks, and diaspora remittances; (c) the geographic extent of territorial control and civilian population under the group's governance; and (d) the transnational network connections sustaining the group's operations across borders. This protocol should be jointly developed with academic institutions and conflict data organizations such as ACLED, and its findings should be mandatory inputs into the mandate design of any intervention mission. This is not a duplication of existing ECOWAS early warning mechanisms, which currently focus on political instability indicators and do not systematically operationalize non-state actor capacity across these four dimensions.

2. **Targeted Disruption of Non-State Actor Financial Networks as a Primary Counter-proliferation Strategy**

The evidence from this study shows that access to financial resources is one of the most powerful predictors of non-state actor conflict proliferation. The RUF's diamond revenues, jihadist groups' Sahel trafficking income, and MEND's oil bunkering operations all sustained high-capacity operations over extended periods. Yet existing responses in West Africa have focused predominantly on military containment rather than financial disruption. Accordingly, West African governments and ECOWAS should establish a Regional Non-State Actor Financial Intelligence Unit, modelled on the structure of financial intelligence units used in counter-terrorism finance, but adapted specifically for the West African conflict context. This unit should: (a) maintain a continuously updated database of identified non-state actor revenue sources, including artisanal mining concessions under armed group control, cross-border smuggling routes for weapons and commodities, and external donor networks; (b) coordinate with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) to freeze identifiable financial flows to listed armed groups; and (c) develop targeted economic alternatives for communities whose livelihoods depend on the same resource chains that fund non-state actors, specifically through formalized artisanal

mining licensing, monitored cross-border trade corridors, and community-owned resource management structures.

3. **Differentiated Intervention Mandates Based on Non-State Actor Capacity Thresholds**

The finding that non-state actor capacity has a strong negative relationship with international intervention effectiveness (ß=-0.72, p<0.003) means that applying uniform intervention models across different capacity contexts is a principal cause of intervention failure in West Africa. The UN Security Council, ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, and bilateral contributors should adopt a tiered mandate framework that matches the type and scale of intervention to the level of non-state actor capacity identified in the pre-deployment Capacity assessment recommended above. Under this framework, three mandate tiers should be defined: Tier 1 low non-state actor capacity, moderate state fragility mediation, ceasefire monitoring, and targeted development assistance, without combat deployment; Tier 2 (moderate non-state actor capacity, moderate-to-high fragility) stabilization forces with limited enforcement mandate, combined with negotiated reintegration programmes designed specifically to offer combatants viable economic alternatives rather than generic amnesty; and Tier 3 (high non-state actor capacity, severe fragility) full peace enforcement mandate, with an explicit requirement for simultaneous disruption of the armed group's financial networks (as per Recommendation 2) and a mandatory state fragility reduction plan (as per Recommendation 3), without which military operations will, as demonstrated in Mali, achieve only temporary territorial gains. Crucially, Tier 3 mandates should include automatic sunset review clauses requiring evidence of measurable non-state actor capacity reduction not merely territorial displacement before renewal. This prevents indefinite deployments that sustain conflict rather than resolving it.

4. **Institutionalize Community-Based Intelligence Networks to Monitor Non-State Actor Capacity Changes in Real Time**

The three hypotheses of this study collectively point to one overarching limitation of current conflict management in West Africa: interventions consistently lag behind the development of non-state actor capacity because the mechanisms for monitoring that capacity in real time are inadequate. Early warning systems exist in theory but in practice fail to detect the specific organizational, financial, and territorial developments through which non-state actors build the capacity to proliferate conflict. The most effective source of early intelligence on non-state actor capacity development is the affected communities themselves, yet no formal structure exists to systematically collect, verify, and act on this information. West African governments and ECOWAS, with support from the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, should establish formalized Community-Based Conflict Intelligence Networks (CCINs) in

the most conflict-vulnerable sub-national zones of the region. These networks should: (a) be staffed by trained community liaison officers drawn from local populations who are formally employed and protected under national law, rather than informal informant systems which are vulnerable to infiltration and reprisal; (b) be required to submit standardized monthly reports on non-state actor recruitment activity, resource extraction operations, territorial movement, and community service provision in their areas, using a structured template aligned with the four capacity dimensions of this study's analytical framework; (c) feed their reports directly to a dedicated ECOWAS Non-State Actor Capacity Dashboard, which aggregates data across CCINs and flags threshold changes in any capacity dimension for immediate policy review; and (d) be legally protected under a regional whistleblower protection framework to be developed by ECOWAS, ensuring community informants cannot be targeted by non-state actors. This recommendation is novel: it goes beyond the conflict early warning systems already operated by ECOWAS, which monitor political and electoral tensions, not the specific organizational and financial capacity developments through which non-state actors build their conflict proliferation potential.

Conclusions

This study set out to examine how non-state actors contribute to the proliferation of violent conflicts in West Africa between 1999 and 2019. The findings, organized around three research hypotheses, provide systematic empirical evidence that the proliferation of violent conflicts in the sub-region follows identifiable patterns closely tied to the organizational, financial, military, and network dimensions of non-state actor capacity operating within fragile state environments. With respect to Hypothesis 1, the evidence confirmed that the capacity of non-state actors is a primary driver of conflict proliferation in West Africa. Across all three case studies, groups with high military capability, diversified financial resources, extensive territorial control, and dense transnational network connections - such as the RUF in Sierra Leone, jihadist networks in Mali, and Boko Haram in Nigeria's northeast - produced the highest levels of conflict proliferation as measured by conflict event frequency, geographic spread of violence, civilian displacement, and duration of armed operations. Conversely, groups with more limited and single-dimensional capacity, such as the early-stage Forces Nouvelles in Côte d'Ivoire, generated more contained and eventually resolvable conflicts. The finding establishes that non-state actor capacity is not a background variable but the principal independent mechanism through which violent conflicts proliferate in the sub-region, and that targeting this capacity - across all four of its measurable dimensions - is the essential prerequisite for reducing conflict proliferation in West Africa. (Wanda, 2021).

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This study contributes to the theoretical and empirical literature on conflict proliferation in West Africa by demonstrating that the phenomenon is not intractable but systematic, and that its drivers are identifiable, measurable, and addressable. The five recommendations advanced above are grounded directly in the study's three empirical findings and are designed to provide actionable, evidence-based guidance to the specific actors - regional organizations, international donors, national governments, and community institutions - whose coordinated engagement is necessary to break the cycle of non-state actor driven conflict proliferation in the sub-region. The analytical framework developed in this study, integrating Complex Interdependence Theory and Regional Security Complex Theory with operationalized measures of non-state actor capacity, state fragility, and conflict proliferation, offers a replicable and transferable model for future research across other sub-regions facing comparable dynamics of non-state actor driven conflict escalation (Lacher, 2022; Zartman, 2019).

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Review Article

Open Access

An Ethical Evaluation of Drug and Substance, the Problem of Detoxification and an Indigenous Intervention.

Abstract

Capital punishment, also called the death penalty has been abolished in law and practice in several nations, yet a few percentages of world nations still subscribe to the practice, particularly for offences like drug trafficking. For many Asian countries, drug trafficking is regarded as one of the most dangerous offenses, and still attracts death penalty or a life sentence for those found guilty. Utilitarianism is the ethical theory that interrogates actions not from morality of right and wrong but from the angle of consequences of giving pleasure or happiness, and causing harm or pain. The question is, if drug trafficking is such a dangerous crime why do many African countries turn a blind eye to its consequences? This paper employs ethical theory of consequences to interrogate the effect of drug and substance abuse amongst young people in Nigeria, West Africa. its objectives include examining the challenge of addiction and the consequences for future generation, it evaluates the theory of benefit when harmful substances branded as carbonated drinks sold to the public and the effect of gradual addiction of innocent public, it critically analyses the problem of drug addiction and the challenge of detoxification. The paper employs literature review, and critical analysis to recommend and conclude on what the government should be doing to defend its citizens, it proposes what communities, nongovernmental organization, and parents should be doing to protects their wards, including what social agency should be doing to show intolerance for the social menace of substance abuse.

Keywords: Capital-Punishment. Utilitarianism. Substance-Abuse. Indigenous-Detoxification.

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Introduction

It is very alarming that drug and substance abuse among young people has reached a critical situation with the possibility of coming across one intoxicated person on daily bases. Many reasons could accrue to this situation, it is either, the continual ignorance of the citizen of what they are consuming or it could be a deliberate attempt of people to drink and forget their sorrows, seeking the 'bliss'. The alarming thing is that while this situation is common amongst young people, the government does not seem to care about the mental state of the future generation. Clearly, there is a threat to the psychological wellbeing and mental health of the future generation.

This issue requires urgent intervention for its implications for identity formation, mental health, and future leadership Shedler, J., & Block, J. (1990, 5, 612).

In Nigeria, and like many West African countries, drugs and harmful substances are easily accessible to anyone who cares to search and who desires to imbibe, but more alarming is the escalation of harmful substances, sometimes disguised as free gifts at youth event. For instance, any organization can promote their products to young people at events, like the national youth's services orientation programs. The common practice is for these brands to act as sponsors during the camping session, through which they share their products to the Corp members free of charge. This act could be perceived suspiciously, and could be motivated by the intention to get them intoxicated towards addiction.

Though producers of energy drinks branded as carbonated drinks, claim to have written the contents clearly on the bottles, the challenge is that many people do not bother to read about the contents of what they are consuming. This could owe to several socio-economic situations including harsh economic conditions. It could also result from peer pressure and desire to be with the Joneses. Clearly for many young people, it is easier to copy others than stand alone. There is little awareness about people reading content of what they are consuming. An example could be deduced from debates and counter debates about alcohol and cigarette consumption, the reason for this example, is that despite the fact that manufacturers indicate that 'smokers are liable to die young', people still continue to smoke, thus manufacturers and producers of such products can argue that they were doing their businesses, and people have choices. Yet, how much choice does an addict have?

This situation raises several ethical concerns, like utilitarianism, other theories include the issues of choices, the questions about benefit and the problem of consequences. Again, the phenomenological theory of lived experiences, come to bear in a recent data gathered from youth's event, held in different secondary schools and other youth's gathering. At many of those events, participants were asked to raise their hands if they knew of anyone who is addicted to drugs and seventy (70) percent of the 300 participants knew someone who was addicted to drugs, twenty (20) percent had a parent struggling with substance abuse, and ten (10) percent expressed a desire to address the issue. Oluremi Fareo, D. (2012, *5*, 20, 341). insists that the widespread use of substances such as Tramadol and Colorado reflects a deeper societal crisis tied to economic hardship, social pressures, and identity struggles. He connects Opioid abuse with its relation to mental health, he emphasized that untimely death associated with substance abuse seems to be attaining the stage of a global crisis. the study shows that unregulated drug use, and substance abuse has diverse effect on social psychology, that the national drug crises impact on public health. The above

necessitate an interrogation of drug trafficking, substance and drug abuse, youth identity, and social structures that enable these social ills, through the lens of ethical theory of benefits.

The Ethical Theory of Benefits

The ethical principle of beneficence evolves from utilitarianism, a theory that obliges people to act for the benefit of certain consequences, for instance, physicians were expected to acts for the benefit of its patient. And, business people are expected to act for the benefit of their customers, which is the general public. The theory benefit supports a number of moral rules to protect and defend the right of others, as it helps to prevent harm, and encourages the removal of conditions that will cause harm to others. Therefore, the theory proposes to help people and possibly rescuing them from danger. But the theory is a negation to selfishness and egoism, that is acting in accordance with what pleases the self. Thus, utilitarianism insists that "what is useful is good, and consequently, that the ethical value of conduct is determined by the utility of its results" (Microsoft (2009). in this principle, utilitarianism indicates that all moral action should focus on achieving 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number.' When utilitarianism is applied socially, legislations and social institutions should then aim at the greatest number of people who benefit from their laws and actions. Inadvertently, this ethical theory is opposed to concerns about personal convictions or one's conscience. Thus, utilitarianism does not allow a person to apply to their senses, as the focus is on the greater good or harm of the numbers of beneficiaries.

According to utilitarianism, morality's central focus is benefits, for examples "social welfare programs, scholarships for needy and meritorious students, communal support of health-related research, policies to improve the welfare of animals, philanthropy, disaster relief, programs to benefit children and the incompetent, and preferential hiring and admission policies". But the question is what makes these diverse acts beneficial? Additionally, Beauchamp, T. (2008) explores the concerns with benefit extensively, like the acts and policies obligations, including both theoretical ethics and applied ethics, which emphasizes how to place limits on the scope of beneficence, as it also extends bio-ethics and business ethics.

Therefore, Utilitarianism focuses on others, and egoism indicates acts that pleases the self. This explains why altruism insists that acting to please oneself is evil, but it this really the case? For instance, is it possible to please others all the time to the detriment of oneself? Perhaps it time to interrogate the foundation of the matter, that is the theory of utilitarianism.

Accordingly, utilitarianism indicates that the acts that please more people is the best act, and it we examine the case of study, like the concern about substance abuse, we have to be able to decide the pleasures, and harms involved in drugs.

Many people who imbibe these drugs believe that they experience pleasure, therefore, the harm could only be determine in the long term. This situation raises several concerns, like how to evaluate harm that is not easily felt, or harm that could only be perceived and determined by others. In this case, the long-term harm of substance abuse could be felt in the gradual erosion on the mental health of the younger generation or its consumers. And medical doctors or nutritionist can determine that the consumption of certain substances cause future harm. Yet, all the consumer would be experiencing in that instance is pleasure. The question is what kind of intervention would be required? Clearly this is the situation that calls for government regulations and intervention.

Accordingly, the utilitarian theory attaches right and wrongs to actions through the consequences, in this case pleasure or harm? Pleasure for manufacturers and traffickers like middle men who enjoy the financial benefit, and pleasure for the consumer who may be an addict. Yet, introducing utilitarianism to this conversation means that the pleasure and harm could be argued for both manufacturers and consumers, though, while one is long term, the other is short term and immediate. Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (2019. 9-12) explains that "whereby beneficence is a moral obligation to act for another's benefit, with the aim being to help further a patient's important and legitimate interests. Since beneficence is conceptually broad, it may be accomplished conversely by avoiding or mitigating possible harms.

Also, Bester, J. C. (2020) *20*(3), 53-62) examines the place of beneficence, individual interests and its connection to their wellbeing in medicine, his objective is to determine the meaning and implication of providing benefit to patients, he indicates that "the good of the patient is related to furthering the patient's wellbeing. So, to understand what is meant by 'benefit', we need to think about what is meant by 'wellbeing', develops a framework for a unified conception of wellbeing (and benefit) which encompass two proposed components, while the "one related to the patient's view of her own good, the other is related to "objective functioning that allows patients to pursue opportunities and an individual view of the good", he further insists on the prima facie of the two components, within this structure, that both must be weighted to see if an intervention qualifies as beneficial. Thus, if a benefit is to be valid, Bester contends that it may be established under either criterion and may not be overruled by the other criteria.

Accordingly, the principle of prima facie points to a thing that appears to be true on facial value, when it is really not so, thus, in this argument those involved in trafficking drugs, and those engaged substance abuse can argue for the initial financial benefit, pleasure and bliss, but not long after it leads to addiction, a habit that is then difficult to break. Thus, the benefit is defeated in the long run. Despite his well-developed argument, if

one considers beneficence as the physician's duty to act in the patient's best interest, there becomes danger in that a benefit is defined exclusively by the patient good versus the notion of the doctor's good. Leading to another ethical theory, autonomy. In this light the ethical principle of autonomy allows the right of individuals to make decision that concern them, that is self-determination. They express independence, and the freedom to make their own choices. The theory insists that people should be allowed to govern their own lives and bodies according to their own values, provided their choices do not harm others. Autonomy, is a very difficult term to conclude, particularly when the individual claim to be okay, insisting that their self-determined choice is right, meanwhile others do not hold the same view, what can other do when those choices are destructive?

Bester (2020) continuous to point out that there were several criteria of wellbeing in medicine. That in treatments related cases the "prolongation of life, restoration or preservation of function, and elimination of pain and suffering, should be pursued unless there is a compelling reason not to do so" (Avant & Swetz, 2020). In addition, Kling (2025) strongly believes that beneficence should be our guiding principle. In another view, "Paternalism, on the other hand, is the intentional overriding of one person's known preferences or actions by another person, where the person who overrides justifies their action by appealing to the goal of benefitting the person or of preventing or mitigating harm to the person whose preferences or actions are overridden. Beneficence is not absolute and it is constrained by the principles of respect for autonomy, non-maleficence and justice." (Avant & Swetz, 2020).

On the Menace of Drug and Substance Abuse.

The general belief is that drug and substance abuse refers to the use of chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasures to self, that eventually effects the brain negatively, it is believe that there are over 190 million drug users around the world, and this problem has been increasing at alarming rates. The special concern is on young adults under the age of 30.Previously every form of drug misuse and self-medication was lumped as drug abuse, but recent studies draw the line between drugs and substances, defining the difference between the conversation is a critical discourse in the bioethical and medical science. In this view, studies in substance misuse and drug abuse expose the dangers, Muhammad *et al.* (2021), explains that the rise in social violence, vices and negative behaviour among youth and adolescents could be associated with substance abuse. They indicate that substance abuse amongst young people has adverse impacts on their physical and mental health, leading to complications, yet adolescents and young people continue using these drugs, despite the known risks associated with the drugs. This study confirms the believe in the prevalence of drug and substance abuse, it emphasized the 'problems

associated with substance misuses. They attempt to give reasons for the state of affairs, deducing why adolescents are vulnerable to drug abuse, in this effort, they traced the cause of addiction and substance abuse to their early exposure, insisting that those who are involved in substance misuse at an early age, continue to seek more thrill as they grow older, eventually evolving into the use of hard drugs.

In the same light, Sidana (2008) points to the complex nature of substance abuse as it interconnects with medical and social consequences, this researcher also agrees that drug abuse is a social problem affecting "all sections of society. It can affect any body regardless of age, sex, socio occupational status. No geographical location, race or religion is exempt". Stressing on the implication of substance abuse on users and their families. The work admits to the complexity of issues in the resolution, and prevention of the problem of drug and substance abuse. Thus, declaring the multidimensional nature of the problem. Bala *et al.* (2023) further contributes to the study by pointing to the social menace of drug abuse, insisting that the issue calls for urgent intervention. The emergency owes to the fact that persons who imbibe, use and are addicted to drugs and dangerous substances have been connected to crime and criminal behaviour. This research, conducted in the Northern part of Nigeria, in Kano State indicates that "drug abuse is the trending social problem affecting Kano metropolis, and that the rate at which it is growing, is alarming. The study points out variations between areas, it indicates that the menace of substance and drug abuse involves virtually all categories of people regardless of age, gender, and socio-economic class". They explain that this situation has serious consequences on the physical and psychological well-being of drug users, resulting in health problem, which later boomerangs into social problem as such addictions means that society would have to intervene and the addicts become useless to their society. Many addicts are unproductive, and they turn to crime to get sustenance and to be able to afford to maintain their expensive habits. They recommended parental supervision and "better government policies on the youth, community intervention and extensive mass media mobilization campaigns".

For Daley *et al.* (2020), substance abuse is no different in other spheres, terming it 'omnipresent'. Clearly, the problem of drug and substance abuse has become a worldwide problem, affecting different societies including the Western world. According to World Health Organization: Substance Abuse Facts, the use of "psychoactive substances around the world is estimated at 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers, and as of 2015, 255 million illicit drug users, up from 185 million several years ago. Substance abuse was estimated to be responsible for 12.4 percent of all annual deaths worldwide". Deductively, drug and substance abuse is not only connected to criminal activities, it is also blamed for

child abuse, and negatively influences the education of children.

Again, domestic violence, causes of division and the destruction of family values are some of the implications of drug and substance abuse. Misapplication of substances also affects the economy, and entire communities. Thus, substance abuse has not regard for religion, race, tribes and tongues. Though, Sahu & Sahu (2012) indicate that young people have been held hostage to the use and threat of substance abuse, yet, the concern is not only the alarming rate of drug addicts, but its threats social wellbeing of the people.

While indications would show that many Western societies are concerned and are making efforts to deal with the state of the mental wellness of their citizens, Global southern nations cannot claim the same thing, as many are battling with other economic and social problems. Including corruption of politicians, the deteriorating health of its citizens, increasing crimes that hamper productivity, and unsettled homes that destroy relationships. In this confusion the investigative lenses should be focus on drug traffickers, who perpetrate this evil and make the substance available for consumption. Globally, drug trafficking is a multi-billion dollars crime business, and very difficult to curb as it erodes social and moral values. Drug trafficking and substance abuse is impeding the overall progress of many societies. This must explain why Asian countries like China attach the death penalty to the crime,

Yet China and other like countries are not exempted from Global criminal activities. Thus, drug and substance abuse is a threat to the continued existence of humanity. The question is, who takes the blame for production of substances? what can be done to curb this menace? Is it ethically beneficial to support that death penalty, for those trafficking drugs and harmful substances? Could the death penalty support the utilitarian theory in this case? How should Global South nations save their peoples? Finding answers to these questions is important as detoxification is a very expensive enterprise, and many addicts are willowing in their waste.

Critical Analysis

Moral and ethical theories could not be too formal, as they are not always straight forward, there are conditional and situations that calls for reviewing certain theories and the value associated with it. The reality is that for people to meet the conditions of morality, could mean a little bending which is termed as situation ethics. There are moral concerns that when kept to the letter could then justifies certain criminal activities. For instance, murder can be justified as self defense, and there are other like situations that indicts moral theories as too formal or over judicious. In the light, one brush cannot justify a moral theory, this must explain the relevance of the ethical theory, like situation ethics. Situational ethics is the theory that insists that it is impossible to apply universal laws and principles to all causalities. In this conversation drugs and substances

have their use, it only becomes an abuse, when its application does not stem from medical advice.

Again, the idea about substances is complicated, as food, feeding and nourishment comes from different types of substance. Hence, the line between when substance is useful or becomes harmful is thin. This owes to the fact that many substances are produced from things like plant and other animals. Medically, analgesics are substances used to relieve pain, but many have side effects, for instance, Ludlum is meant to dull pain but when overused it becomes addictive, however, a person who is in constant pain seek relief, not caring if it eventually leads to addiction.

The point here, is that humans are responsible for the production of substances, whether they were positive or negative, depends on the producers. During Covid19 Onoyona-Ekeocha (2025) insists on the widespread of the awareness to alternative medicines. The new awareness concerns plant use and their substances. This was the case as indigenous knowers shared knowledge about herbs and their uses. In many African countries, case study Nigeria, where knowledge about how to produce certain substances became easily available, those who cared to know and practice what they knew could then add herbs together to produce substances. By deduction then, even knowledge about how to produce harmful drugs became readily available. A little search on social media would prove this. Thus, the question is, who is controlling the reckless productions of substances?

The explosion of substance production that occurred during the last Covid 19 pandemic is yet to be properly researched or documented. The lived experience with the pandemics and their outbreaks shows that many Africans were conversant with the benefit of plants and the substances extracted from them, conducting a more indebt investigation would reveal how local knowledge and word of mouth saved people who consented to preparing their own 'concortions', that served as the means of drugs, and anti-covid substances. These recommendations from indigenous knowers helped in saving many people during the recent covid 19 pandemic. There is an urgent need to research and document this experience. However, the question about who and what to blame for production of substances could also be found in many indigenous African societies, example is the Northern Nigeria.

In these lived experiences, many Northerners who peddle these substances understand the use of plants and the method of production of chemical substances. Also, in other region of Nigeria the common experiences are found with 'alagbo' trado-medical practitioners who also peddle these drugs. Again, many of these substances are now package in containers for public consumption.

Yet, in the search for resolution, there is little or no information about the contributions of indigenous knowers, and

they are not being recognized for their contribution to resolving drugs and substance abuse, Many are losing their patency right to researchers who are able to document the information, and, this is the case despite the fact that many Africans who survived covid 19 could trace their survival to the use of herbs recommended by these knowers.

Nonetheless, what has become a menace is the lack of control of these knowers and their advocates, drug peddlers are all over the street in Nigeria, recommending different substances from sex enhancers to organ enlargement. This is truly menacing when we consider the fact that no research has been done or been made public about the benefit, hazards and complications from these substances. Again, one wonders if the government is truly ignorant of the significance of these apothecaries in substance misuse? Just like previously indicated, curbing the menace of drug and substance abuse is complicated and multi-dimensional. As this takes us back to the utilitarian theory or ethical beneficence. Should the government be concerned about the endangered future generation. Could African politician and their government bother about creating an atmosphere for a sustainable society? Are these politicians bothered about their future citizen or concerned about what they are consuming? What is the influence of drug traffickers in this discourse?

Candidly, external influence of drug traffickers could not be easily over looked. In this scenario, the problem of drug and substance abuse entails internal and external factors. The external traffickers provide harder drugs, which an addict would not bother with the danger, since they are already hooked on drugs and they are seeking more potent portions. Yet, these traffickers have internal support systems in many countries that is make hard drugs and substances available on the streets of Nigeria.

Therefore, considering the menace, and the dangers of these substances, that enable abuse and further addiction, shouldn't the death penalty be supported against drug traffickers? Like it attains in those Asian countries. One wonders why the death sentence would be applied to a crime like drug trafficking, the answer is not farfetched, drugs and substance abuse destroy people, those who produce and sell them are enemies to humanity. Yet again, what if the peddlers and advocates could argue for their business and profits? The counter position would then involve a review of the utilitarian theory. But, the question is, what is the difference between the pleasure it brings to people, the users and the producers? And, what are the consequences for consumers, the pain to families of those whose loved one are suffering from addiction? Again, what about the harm it generates in society, what is the weight of each position? Would the death penalty resolve the criminal acts of importing and trafficking drugs? Clearly, the death penalty is a big deterrent, hence, it should be considered, particularly if the crime between drug traffickers and indigenous apothecaries could be resolved.

But concluding on the benefit of the death penalty as a deterrent would have another angle, perhaps another option should be available, this is helping to resolve the problem created by substance abuse and its social menace. Another view could be, assisting addicts with detoxification, though strenuous and expensive. Nonetheless, substance addictions could be resolved in the same way it was achieved, through production of detoxifiers. Surprisingly, not many people turn to indigenous knowers like 'alagbo' indigenous herbalists, for a solution to drug addiction. This is true, even as lived experiences reveal a generation of endangered young people under the influence of drugs.

How should Global South nations be more concerned about their people? Or, what can be done to improve the value of their citizens? Finding answers to these questions is critical to sustainable Africa, since the quality of citizens impacts on the nation's capacity, so what should African countries do to save its people? This question becomes necessary from the dangers of the rise of people who abuse drugs and substances. The idea about detoxification has value, particularly through the incorporation of same local peddlers. They could be funded to help in sexification of drug addicts. The question is important as detoxification is a very expensive enterprise, the Global West easily have access to rehabilitation and detoxification centers, but same cannot be said for their counterparts in the Global South, and many addicts are willowing in their waste.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Utilitarianism, Situation ethics and the question of choice is conflicts as views about harm and who is being harmed differ. The concern is can a person intervene in the life of others, in the guise of trying to protect them? What happens if they refused to be helped? Herein lies the ethical dilemma. Parents and their attempt to rescue their wards could only happen through overriding their choices. But government may intervene for sustainable society. This happens if government would feel the responsibility for the wasting of life? Would government consider that the next generation is wasting away? Would government care?

On Detoxification and indigenous method. In one ethnographic research, I decided to approach these peddlers, 'alagbo', appealing to help resolve a crisis of addiction, after several attempts and consultations, I got a remedy and methods of application, hopefully and wishing it would help someone. This shows that indigenous people can be consulted for help with drug and substance abuse.

> *Egbo Shapo* - cut into pieces, wash it, and put into the pot.
> *Osan wewe* - cut into two and put into pot.
> *Olu Iju*- wash it and put it in the pot.
> *Bara* - wash it, cut it open to remove the egusi-like seeds in it and put in the pot.
> *Omidun* - add it as the liquid to cook the herb.
> *Ako koun* - that is potash to be added.

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This research is significant and contributes to knowledge as it seeks to intervention and a resolution to addiction and substance abuse. It recommends different approaches in resolving the crises that ensure from drug and substance abuse it propose southern approach to detoxification, and recommend additional policies to control drug abuse and other way of implementation. This should involve government and individuals' approaches and recommend additional policies to control drug abuse and drug trafficking.

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