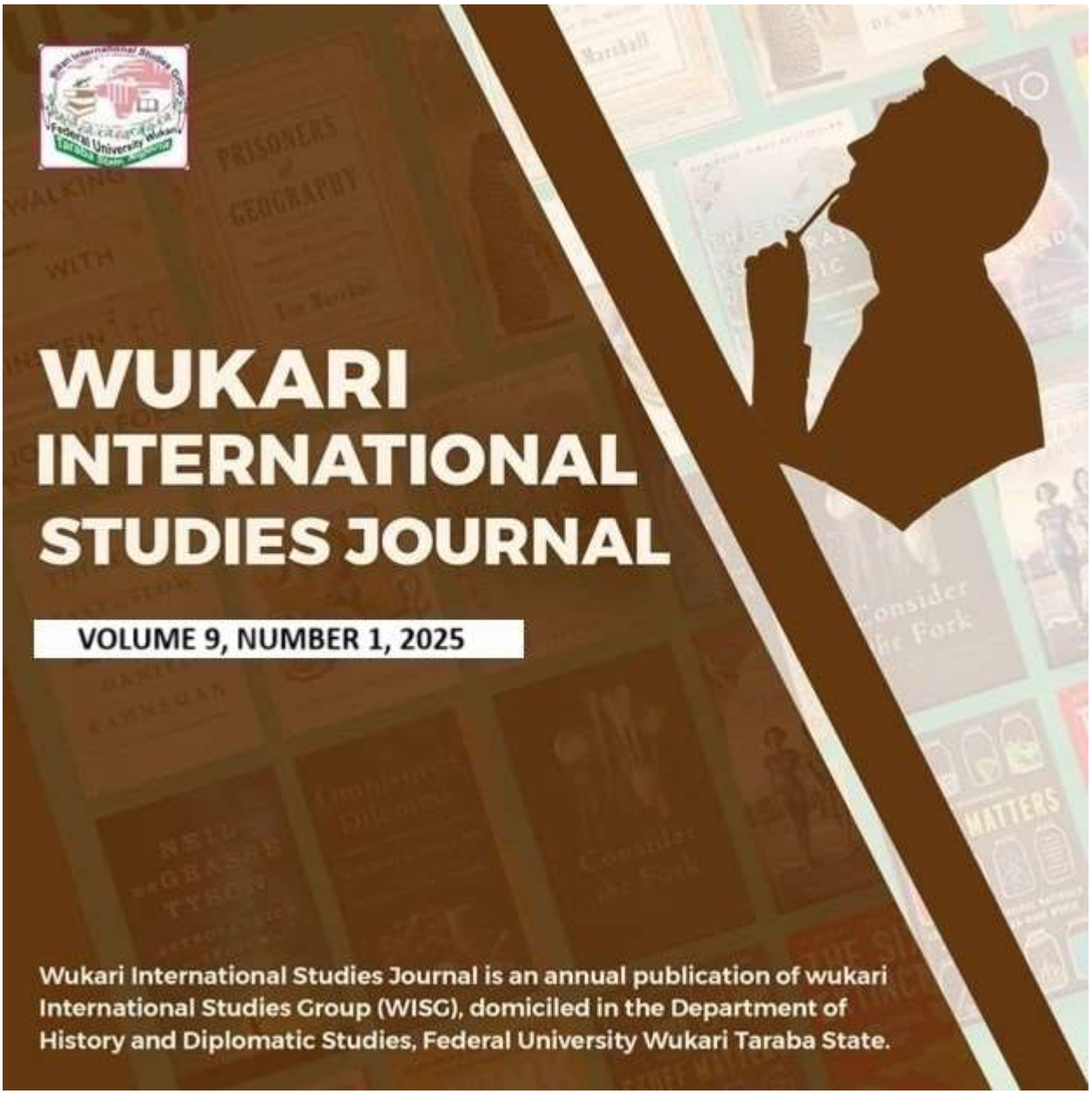
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IMPACT OF PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN DELTA STATE

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KEYWORDS
Impact, Presidential Amnesty, Security Challenges

ABSTRACT
The Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the Amnesty Policy in 2009 to address security challenges in the Niger Delta, particularly in Delta State, where militant activities had resulted in widespread destruction of lives, properties, and critical infrastructure, notably within the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. This study critically examines the impact of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) on security in Delta State, with a focus on its Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) components. While previous studies have largely assessed the PAP's short-term effectiveness in curbing militancy, this research contributes to the literature by providing a nuanced analysis of the programme's long-term implications for security and economic stability. Using the Frustration-Aggression theory, the study argues that decades of neglect and underdevelopment in Delta State fueled grievances that catalyzed militancy. Unlike previous research, which often measures security improvements through statistical crime reduction, this study incorporates qualitative insights from ex-militants and local stakeholders to assess how sustainable peace is contingent on addressing the underlying socio-economic issues. Data was gathered through a qualitative research approach, utilizing both primary and secondary sources. Findings suggest that while the Amnesty Programme has contributed to improved security and increased crude oil production, its failure to address the structural drivers of conflict—such as poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation—poses a risk of renewed unrest. This study, therefore, advances the discourse by emphasizing the limitations of security-focused interventions and recommending a more holistic approach that integrates economic and social reforms for lasting peace in Delta State and the broader Niger Delta region.

Introduction

The discovery of crude oil in Nigeria's Niger Delta in 1958 marked a significant turning point for both the region and the nation. Prior to oil exploration, the Niger Delta was an unspoiled ecosystem that sustained indigenous livelihoods through farming, fishing, and artisanal crafts such as pottery and mat-making (Afinotan, 2019). However, with the first commercial oil discovery at Oloibiri in 1956 by Shell-BP, oil quickly became Nigeria's primary economic resource, contributing over 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings (Aaron, 2010; Owugah, 2018). While the Nigerian state celebrated oil as a catalyst for economic growth, the local populations in the Niger Delta perceived it as a source of hardship. The consequences of oil extraction—environmental degradation, resource depletion, and socio-economic marginalization—led to a paradox where oil wealth at the national level coexisted with extreme poverty and disenfranchisement in oil-producing communities (Omotola, 2017; Owugah, 2018).

The causes and consequences of Niger Delta militancy is the persistent neglect of host communities, coupled with environmental pollution, including violent resistance against both the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies (Owugah, 2018; Omotola, 2017). The formation of militant groups, from the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) in 1966 to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in 2006, is widely attributed to grievances stemming from land dispossession, political exclusion, and economic deprivation (Aaron, 2021; Eseduwo, 2020). Previous research has established that the violence in Delta State and other parts of the Niger Delta significantly disrupted oil production, exacerbating national security challenges (Alagoa, 2016). Additionally, the role of multinational corporations in exacerbating local discontent has been well documented, with scholars like Watts (2019) highlighting the extractive industry's complicity in socio-political instability.

The Nigerian government, under President Umaru Yar'Adua, introduced the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) in 2009, adopting the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) framework (Berdal, 2020). DDR had previously been used successfully in post-conflict settings such as Rwanda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to reintegrate former combatants and promote regional stability (Muggah, 2021). The Amnesty Programme in Nigeria aimed to restore security in the Niger Delta by pacifying militant groups, rehabilitating ex-combatants, and reintegrating them into society (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2020; United Nations, 2020). However, while several studies acknowledge the program's short-term successes in reducing violence and increasing crude oil production (Aghedo, 2013; Ukiwo, 2016), gaps remain in assessing its long-term sustainability. Critics argue that the program failed to address the root causes of militancy, including widespread poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation (Ibaba& Okolo, 2021).

This study extends the existing scholarship by critically analyzing the Amnesty Programme's impact on security in Delta State. While prior research has focused on macro-level assessments of the PAP, this study employs a qualitative approach that integrates perspectives from ex-militants, local community members, and government officials. By applying the Frustration-Aggression theory, the study highlights how socio-economic deprivation remains a persistent driver of insecurity, despite the amnesty initiative. Unlike previous studies that emphasize the DDR framework's technical effectiveness, this paper interrogates the deeper structural challenges that undermine lasting peace in the region. The research argues that the continued failure to address these fundamental issues could lead to a resurgence of militancy, posing renewed threats to both national security and economic stability. By bridging this gap in the literature, this study not only critiques the amnesty model but also contributes to the discourse on sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict regions.

Statement of the Problem

While the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) has been credited with reducing militant violence and stabilizing crude oil production in the Niger Delta, its long-term effectiveness remains uncertain. The deployment of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) to restore order and secure economic activities has yielded limited success, as militant groups continue to exploit gaps in governance and security frameworks. One of the primary concerns is the inadequacy of the disarmament and demobilization process, which prioritizes the physical surrender of weapons without addressing the deeper socio-political and economic drivers of militancy. The

absence of a sustainable reintegration strategy leaves ex-combatants vulnerable to rearmament, recruitment by political factions, or re-engagement in violent activities.

Furthermore, multinational oil companies, often accused of exacerbating environmental degradation and human rights abuses, have not fully addressed local grievances related to compensation, resource control, and community development. Despite the introduction of the Amnesty Programme in 2009, many parts of Delta State continue to suffer from persistent insecurity, economic stagnation, and uncompleted development projects. These unresolved issues raise critical concerns about the long-term viability of PAP as a conflict resolution mechanism and its capacity to foster sustainable peace.

This study, therefore, interrogates the structural weaknesses of the Amnesty Programme, specifically its implementation in Delta State, and examines its implications for security, governance, and economic stability. It also analyses the disconnect between short-term disarmament strategies and the broader socio-economic realities of the Niger Delta, and contributes to existing scholarship by critically assessing the limitations of DDR in addressing deep-rooted conflicts. The research ultimately argues that unless the underlying grievances of Niger Delta communities—poverty, environmental destruction, and political exclusion—are addressed, the region remains at risk of renewed violence, undermining national security and economic stability.

Clarification of Concepts

Security

When considering the concept of security, it it is essential to ask: what exactly is security? This question is far from trivial, as it assumes that security is a tangible condition that exists independently of the way it is discussed in everyday conversations. Security, therefore, refers to an actual state of existence, which has been understood in various ways throughout history. For instance, in the field of International Relations, the debate between Realism and Idealism has framed security as either a relative condition in the present or an absolute state to be achieved in the future. In both cases, security is presented as something objective that can be defined, measured, and improved.

From this perspective, security is often considered a condition where the likelihood of threats to certain values is low. Baldwin (2021) defines security as “a low probability of damage to acquired values,” while Krause and Nye (2020) describe it as “the absence of acute threats to the minimal acceptable levels of the basic values that a people consider essential to its survival.” These definitions capture the essence of security, emphasizing its role in safeguarding essential values. However, security can be understood in various ways depending on the context. The key question for studying security is: security for whom? It may refer to individuals, states, or even non-human entities such as animal life or environmental protection. In contemporary discourse, security is often treated as a "good" that societies should actively work toward, as it is seen as vital for the survival and well-being of both individuals and states.

Amnesty

Amnesty is often viewed as a political instrument of reconciliation granted by a sovereign authority to individuals who have committed acts against the state, such as treason or rebellion. O'Shea (2021) defines amnesty as a political tool that offers immunity from criminal or civil consequences for politically motivated crimes, including treason and sedition. Similarly, Epiphany (2020) describes amnesty as a government action that grants immunity to individuals or groups involved in criminal activities that threaten the sovereignty of the state. This immunity allows the government to “forgive” past wrongs before legal prosecution can take place.

Mallinder (2020) further elaborates on amnesty, suggesting that it is a form of trade-off that sacrifices some aspects of justice in the interest of fostering transition, peace, reconciliation, and truth. Amnesty is often granted in situations where the state seeks to end violent conflict or promote stability, as seen in the Niger Delta, where peace was a central goal of the amnesty program. The Niger Delta Amnesty Program, launched in 2009, aimed to reduce militancy and ensure the continued exploitation of oil resources, which are vital to Nigeria's economy and the interests of both the federal government and multinational oil corporations. In this context, amnesty becomes a crucial tool for promoting peace and enabling the development of the region, despite concerns over the fairness and completeness of the process.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method to explore the impact of the Presidential Amnesty Programme on security in Delta State. The study population includes ex-militants, Amnesty Programme officials, security personnel, and community leaders directly affected by the programme. A sample size of 30 key informants was determined based on data saturation, ensuring that responses provide comprehensive insights into the research problem. The study utilizes a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, to select participants with firsthand experience and deep knowledge of the Amnesty Programme's implementation and effects. This approach ensures the inclusion of individuals who can provide rich, detailed narratives. Data were conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to capture in-depth perspectives. Thematic analysis was used for data interpretation, identifying patterns and key themes related to security, reintegration challenges, and governance issues in Delta State.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Framework: Frustration-Aggression Theory

This study adopts the Frustration-Aggression Theory, originally developed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939), which posits that frustration often leads to aggression when individuals perceive obstacles to achieving their goals. The theory has since been expanded by scholars such as Berkowitz (1969, 1989), who argued that frustration does not always lead directly to aggression but increases the likelihood of aggressive responses under certain conditions.

Unlike previous studies that have applied the Frustration-Aggression Theory to general conflict and violent uprisings in Nigeria (e.g., militancy in the Niger Delta or Boko Haram insurgency), this studyextends the theory's application by specifically analysing the Amnesty Programme as a state response to aggression born out of frustration in Delta State. It critiques the theory's assumption that aggression ceases once frustrations are addressed, demonstrating how unresolved socio-economic grievances continue to fuel insecurity despite the disarmament process.

Militancy in the Niger Delta

The term *militancy* has been defined in various ways. According to Quamruzzaman (2021), it refers to the acts of individuals, groups, or organizations that engage in violence, typically driven by a cause—whether political, religious, ideological, economic, or social. In contemporary discourse, the term "militant" is often used interchangeably with "terrorist." Ashimolowo and Odiachi (2012) suggest that the motive behind militancy is often the desire for justice or the demand for rights. When negotiation fails, militancy becomes a means of using force to challenge the authorities in power. More recently, militancy is understood to involve individuals who may be either forced or voluntarily recruited into a militia or militant organization.

Chindah and Braide (2021) define militancy as a combative state or disposition to fight for a cause or belief. It is often a violent response by an individual or group in reaction to claims of political oppression, underdevelopment, or social injustice. For those involved in militant activities in the Niger Delta, the cause is often rooted in demands for political autonomy, economic equity, and social rights.

A critical aspect of the Niger Delta conflict is the perceived political oppression faced by the ethnic minorities in the region. This sentiment of political marginalization has been voiced by many within the region. Kowa (2021) highlights that the roots of militancy in the Niger Delta predate the discovery of oil. He explains that the early resistance, including the AdakaBoro revolt, was a reaction to political exclusion, as the minority groups in the region were dominated by the majority ethnic group in the Eastern region, particularly the Igbos. Kowa argues that these struggles for political autonomy and justice in the Niger Delta began long before oil became a central factor in the region's development.

Militancy in Delta State is not a recent phenomenon; however, it has been suppressed intermittently through various government policies and military interventions. The establishment of institutions like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, the Amnesty Program, and the operations of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) has all been part of efforts to manage and curtail militant activities in the region. Despite these measures, militancy remains a significant challenge in the state, driven by deep-rooted

grievances over political and economic marginalization.

The Amnesty Programme and DDR in Delta State

The economic potential of the Niger Delta is starkly contrasted with the underdevelopment experienced by its people. Despite the immense oil wealth generated by the region, over 90% of Nigeria's revenue comes from this region. The Delta State and surrounding areas remain characterized by poverty, environmental degradation, and poor infrastructure (Eke, 2021). The state, rich in resources, suffers from a long-standing crisis of neglect, worsened by the failure of the government and multinational corporations to invest in the welfare of the people who bear the brunt of resource exploitation (Obi, 2019).

Delta State, part of the larger Niger Delta, faces these challenges more acutely. Communities reliant on fishing and farming for their livelihoods have seen their environment devastated by oil spills, gas flaring, and the constant expansion of oil infrastructure. While successive governments have attempted to address this, including through the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, the impact has been minimal. Local youth, disenfranchised and marginalized, have been at the forefront of militant movements, pushing for political autonomy and environmental justice (Akinola, 2020).

The emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta, particularly in Delta State, has been fueled by the perceived political oppression and economic exclusion of ethnic minorities. Groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) have engaged in violent actions including pipeline vandalization, hostage-taking, and sabotage of oil facilities as a form of resistance. These militant actions, while disruptive, are rooted in deeper issues of systemic injustice, neglect, and the struggle for resource control (Aghalino, 2021).

In response, the Nigerian government introduced the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) in 2009, with the aim of addressing the underlying causes of militancy through a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) framework. The initiative, set in motion by then-President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, sought to provide militants with an alternative to violence by offering amnesty, vocational training, and financial support. In the first phase, around 26,358 militants accepted the amnesty offer, significantly reducing violent activities in the region (Kuku, 2020). However, the implementation of the programme in Delta State and the broader Niger Delta has been criticized for its limited impact on long-term peace and development.

The DDR process in Delta State included the disarmament of militants, rehabilitation programs, and reintegration into society through vocational training and education. Although thousands of ex-combatants were trained in various fields such as welding, maritime services, and oil and gas technology, many expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and duration of the training (Oluwaniyi, 2020). Some former militants even reported instances of mismanagement and the failure of training centers to provide adequate resources, leading to frustration and a renewed sense of betrayal (Oluwaseun, 2020).

Despite the relative cessation of hostilities following the amnesty, challenges remain. The long-term reintegration of ex-militants into society has been sluggish, and the broader issue of systemic underdevelopment persists. While the amnesty programme succeeded in temporarily pacifying militant groups and securing oil production, it has failed to address the root causes of militancy in Delta State with obvious economic inequality, environmental degradation, and political exclusion. Furthermore, the continued military presence in the region has contributed to the fragility of the peace (Ahon, 2020). The Nigerian government, while focusing on oil production and maintaining security, has not sufficiently invested in sustainable development programs that could prevent future violence (Eke, 2021).

A critical perspective on the Amnesty Programme, especially from groups like MEND, is that the initiative served more as a means of quelling unrest and facilitating uninterrupted oil exploitation than as a genuine effort to address the social and economic injustices faced by the people of Delta State (Bayagbon, 2020). As argued by Nwajiakwu-Dahou (2021), the government’s approach to the region has been reactive rather than proactive, with peace efforts such as the amnesty largely seen as temporary measures that fail to address long-term development needs.

In light of these shortcomings, the current debate surrounding the amnesty and DDR process in Delta State revolves around whether the peace it has brought can be sustained. Scholars like Otite and Umukoro (2021) suggest that for any meaningful peace to take root, there must be a comprehensive and inclusive development plan for the region—one that not only addresses infrastructural deficits but also ensures political empowerment and environmental justice for the people of Delta State. On the whole, while the Presidential Amnesty Programme succeeded in temporarily reducing militant activities, it has not provided a lasting solution to the Niger Delta conflict. The region, including Delta State, still faces significant challenges related to the development of human capital, environmental recovery, and the equitable distribution of oil wealth. Until these issues are meaningfully addressed, militancy in Delta State and the broader Niger Delta remains a complex and ongoing challenge.

Conclusion

This study has examined the impact of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) on security and stability in Delta State, situating its analysis within the Frustration-Aggression Theory. The findings align with previous studies that link militancy in the Niger Delta to historical marginalization, environmental degradation, and economic exclusion. However, unlike prior research that views the PAP primarily as a successful security intervention, this study critiques the programme's long-term effectiveness by highlighting the persistence of unresolved socio-economic grievances.

Conceptually, the study reinforces the Frustration-Aggression framework by demonstrating that while state interventions such as the PAP's Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) strategy can reduce immediate threats, they do not eliminate the underlying frustrations that drive militant activities. Theoretically, the study extends previous applications of the Frustration-Aggression Theory by illustrating how economic and environmental frustrations, if left unaddressed, create conditions for cyclical violence.

The study's findings show that short-term pacification strategies are insufficient for sustainable peace. Unlike prior studies that focus on the PAP's role in restoring oil production, this study reveals that the lack of structural reforms in governance, economic inclusion, and environmental justice continues to threaten stability in Delta State. Therefore, long-term peace requires a paradigm shift from security-driven responses to comprehensive socio-economic transformation, ensuring that ex-militants and their communities' benefit from the region's oil wealth in a meaningful and sustainable manner.

Recommendations

1. The skill acquisition components of the Amnesty Programme offer potential benefits for both local communities and oil companies if properly implemented. Oil multinationals operating in Delta State should prioritize the employment of trained ex-militants by reserving job quotas for local inhabitants. This would foster a sense of inclusion and partnership, reducing hostility toward the companies.

2. The government should reopen the Amnesty Programme to accommodate militant groups in Delta State that were initially excluded or failed to accept the offer due to mistrust. Many aggrieved youths who missed the initial window have continued to demand inclusion, and integrating them into the programme would help consolidate peace.

3. Deploying military forces, armored vehicles, and police helicopters in Delta State has often escalated tensions rather than resolving conflicts. Instead of militarization, the government should prioritize dialogue, community engagement, and sustainable development as tools for long-term peacebuilding.

4. The success of the Amnesty Programme requires coordinated efforts between the federal government, Delta State government, local authorities, oil companies, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and other intervention agencies. These stakeholders must actively contribute to the programme, particularly in skill acquisition, employment creation, and economic empowerment initiatives.

5. The government should implement a comprehensive development plan for Delta State, particularly in the oil-producing communities of Warri Southwest and Burutu. Just as Abuja was rapidly developed through targeted government investment, a similar model should be applied to the Niger Delta to ensure the provision of modern infrastructure, clean water, quality healthcare, and improved educational facilities.

By implementing these recommendations, Delta State can move beyond a temporary ceasefire to achieve long-term peace, stability, and economic prosperity. Addressing the root causes of militancy means eradicating marginalization, environmental degradation, and lack of opportunities, these remains the only sustainable path toward a peaceful and prosperous Delta State.

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ARMED BANDITRY IN ADARALAND: A STUDY OF HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND THE PLIGHT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

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ABSTRACT
This article titled "Armed Banditry in Adaraland: A Study of Humanitarian Crisis and the Plight of the Internally Displaced Persons" dissects incidences of banditry and the experiences of the internally displaced persons in Adaraland. It explores the level of displacement of persons in various villages and the numbers of people who ran away as seen on the field through extensive research carried out in the affected areas. The research shows, in relative detail, the villages affected by the activities of banditry and the plight of the deprived persons. The study finds, among other things, that banditry in these areas was a ploy to destabilise Adaraland and open it up to occupation by non-Adara people. The paper uses oral interview as primary sources of data collection by meeting people who were directly affected or witnessed the events. The study concludes that the media has down played the level of destruction of lives and properties in Adaraland, through under reporting and inadequate publicity as against similar attacks/happenings in other areas of Kaduna State facing similar menace.

Introduction

This paper examines humanitarian crisis and the plight of the internally displaced persons from Armed Banditry in Adaraland. Before going further, it is therefore, important to undertake an in-depth exploration of the notion of humanitarian crisis deployed in this study. Humanitarian crisis which is often referred to as "humanitarian disaster" is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a vast expanse of land. This form of disaster calls for immediate response by local, national and international partners. There are diverse kinds of humanitarian crises and each is caused by different factors. As a result, each requires unique response. This response depends on the level of damage – whether it is short- term or long –term damage. Humanitarian crisis ranges from natural disasters, man – made disasters or complex emergencies. This, by implication, means that complex emergencies occur as a result of several factors or events that

prevent a large group of people from accessing their fundamental needs such as food, clean water, safe shelter, education, freedom of worship among other things.

As explained earlier, there are diverse kinds of humanitarian crisis which are caused by different factors. The concern of this study is with the one caused by armed conflicts or armed banditry. The violent armed conflicts happen with serious and attendant consequences on the lives and properties of people. The result of this is this unfortunate situation that leaves many as refugees, internally Displaced persons and, in the context of this study, a high -level displacement seeing within Kaduna state.

The Russian-Ukrainian example will further help in situating Humanitarian Crisis as a global phenomenon. The Russian war on Ukraine is bridging the gap of insecurity seen in Europe since the Second World War. The Russian attacks on Ukraine are not only causing serious humanitarian crises in Ukraine but are also affecting the whole of Europe. An estimated population of Refugees of 18,217,000, flee into neighbouring countries of Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova, leaving the country shattered by artillery bombardment and large- scale displacement and separation of families within the country. This has created a picture of serious humanitarian crisis and, invariably, means that a large amount of money is required to rebuild the country and resettle citizens. This does not include the refugee crisis in Syria which has seen its citizens loitering the borders of Europe making risky journeys on the Mediterranean Sea and the refugee situations around the US / Mexican border mostly from Southern Americans countries.

In the context of Africa, the Libyan crisis has continued since the Arab spring in 2011, leaving the country under warring war-lords even after series of negotiation by the UN has woefully failed. These warlords exploit the resources from Libya to get arms from the black market to execute their agenda. They also create more problem for arms and ammunition control in the Sahel region. Moreso, the situation in the former single country now divided into South-Sudan and Sudan is quite worrisome. The internal rivalries between the main ethnic groups in the South-Sudan is still a tensed one, with sometimes pockets of clashes that leave many deaths affecting humanitarian access and aids. Although after the ousting of the sit-tight dictator Al-Bashir, Sudan (Khartoum) has now recently descended to statelessness cum fragility due to intense rivalry between factional generals in charge of large formations of personnel and weapons for the control of Khartoum, this conflict has led to the death of 9,430 people, and has displaced over 13,500,000 people as IDPs. The result of this crisis is the exile of many Sudanese from the country many of whom are roaming the borders of Chad. This experience has birthed fears of the prevalence of the Libyan experience in the Horn of Africa, West Africa and the Sahelian region in terms of large cache of arms and ammunitions in getting into wrong hands. This fear informs the concern of this study on the humanitarian crisis in Adaraland.

This Seminar looks at the issue of insecurity caused by the activities of Fulani herdsmen/bandits/armed militia that has become a topical issue in North-West Nigeria. This Banditry has led to the death and displacement of thousands of people and the consequent introduction of the ransom payment introduced by these elements in Adaraland. The area has made headlines in several news media for experiencing one of the worst attacks and unfortunate death of its indigenous people. Unfortunately, many of such attacks were under reported. It is on this account that the present study brings out the coordinated humanitarian crisis experienced in the land. This is done to bridge this gap by presenting a near factual picture of the incidents as reported by indigent victims of the carnage. The study shows, in clear term, the level of displacement of people in Adaraland.

The Proliferation of Armed Banditry in Adaraland

It is important to begin by asking these pertinent questions: what is/banditry and who are the bandits? In the context of Nigeria, bandits are a group of self-styled, guerrilla-killer herdsmen, Fulani militias or Fulani armed men that introduced killing spree like no other comparable only to the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. The modus operandi of these killer groups involves the use of motorcycles with three people on each one storming communities at night their hundreds or more and ambushing their victims in such inhuman manner. They, in the process, kill able bodied men and kidnap humans who they consider as their gold mine for ransom.

The activities of these Fulani killer herdsmen, Fulani militias or Fulani armed bandits started as farmers and herders clashes at the initial stage and eventually reached the extent that they do not only revenge supposed maltreatment meted out on them by farmers but took over communities in Adaraland. At the height of their activities, the bandits surrounded and took over parts of Adaraland by cutting off the link between Kajuru, and Kachia Local Government Areas which make up the Adara Chiefdom.

The activities of bandits reached a worrisome level that they did not only attack villages, communities and towns but educational institutions. During the period under review they attacked and kidnapped more than 800 students in Government Science Secondary School Kankara, The Bethel Baptist School, Federal College of Agricultural Mechanizations and the Greenfield University. These examples demonstrate the danger bandits posed to the area and how they have metamorphosed into a deadly group. According to a BBC Hausa reporter, these armed groups display of terror reached the heights that the Governments of Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina States could not use the state security apparatus any more to challenge them but rather appealed to them to accept mouth-watering amnesty on the terms of the armed group to cease their destructive activities on these States. More so, they patrolled communities considered as frontline in some Local Government Areas imposing levies and collecting same from farmers/vulnerable members of the communities. In some cases, they compelled some farmers to pay ransom to either avoid attacks or for permission to access their farmlands before harvesting their farm produce. Reports have it that these killer Fulani herdsmen, Fulani militias or Fulani armed bandits have extended their territories outside North- West, and North-Central Nigeria known as their theatre of operations down to South-Western and South-Eastern parts of the country with pockets of killings and abduction cum kidnappings.

Southern Kaduna in general and Adaraland in particular have had terrible experiences of the activities of banditry. Within Southern Kaduna, Kajuru and parts of Kachia Local Government Areas are considered to be the frontline- areas for bandits. The banditry in Kajuru; a suburban settlement in Adaraland began by the end of December 2015. Although the crises in this community has several historical root causes. What began as farmers/herders clashes which the government, print, and electronic media presented at the initial stage, transformed into a full blown conflict that claimed many lives. Some reports have it that the situation started with the armed confrontation in Maro (a farming community known as the most fertile in Adaraland) between a Fulani community and the indigenous Adara speaking people. The crisis was primarily traced to an illegal trespassing on farmlands and settlements by the former through their route of North-South annual movements/migration. As the banditry persisted, several lives were lost, properties destroyed and people were displaced. The alarming incident reached a point where dialogue failed at all levels. There was a gradual transition from a face-to - face confrontation to guerrilla warfare which led to the attack on many indigent communities. Despite these, none of the culprits have been brought to justice. The state government have deployed blame-game narrations to justify the attacks which has boosted the morale of the attackers. Governor Nasir Ahmed El Rufai, in explaining the reason for the attacks affirmed that the attacks on Southern Kaduna ethnic groups (which Adara people are included) was was a response to the attacks by the communities of Southern Kaduna on the Fulani during the post-election crises in 2011. Thus, the governor went further to advance that it was a debt incurred by the people of Southern Kaduna.

This overt support for these killer herdsmen by government of the day created the foundation for subsequent campaign against other people by the Fulani ethnic group after any form of perceive grievance and even the resuscitation of age long bitterness. For instance, after the 2011 elections, a band of pastoral Fulanis who were moving from Bauchi through Plateau State via Oagworok (Kagoro) coincidentally met with the clashes of the 2011 post-elections violence in Southern Kaduna. They felt threatened by the youth mobilized in these areas and so in their quest to disperse these young men, resorted to exchange of gun shots which led to the death of over three persons at the spot. Giving the already tensed atmosphere, the community mobilized themselves and launched a reprisal attack against the killer Fulani men who lost over thirty people with their herds of cattle dispersed and killed by the rampaging youth. This became the new norm whenever the Fulani ethnic group are questioned over their over-bearing tendencies on villages /communities where they either reside or travelled along. These attackers storm

villages and communities at night shooting sporadically and killing people unchallenged, those that were not killed by gun shots were either hacked to death with machetes or stabbed with knives and left to die from severe injuries. The activities of the dreaded Fulani attackers led to the death of over 4,320 people in Adaraland and displacements of 321,314 persons

The Impact of Banditry and the Displacements on Adaraland

As the research has enumerated earlier, that Adaraland comprises two local governments areas of namely: Kajuru Local Government and Kachia Local Government. They comprised of several other ethnic populations. Kachia local government housed the Stool of Agwom Adara, with historical and archeological evidences found. The level of displacements of communities will be examined local government after another, taking it to ward level and then the village stead.

Kachia Local Government Area

The villages under Kachia Local Government where the villagers are displaced and their villages deserted as a result of the activities of these dreaded armed Fulani militia/bandits/herdsmen are;

(i) Doka Council Ward

Some villages under Doka Council Ward were overrun by armed wielding Bandits on Feb 9,2016. The operation lasted for over three weeks. They continually attacked the villages and retreated into nearby forests at will until the last village was burnt down.

The first villages attacked on February 9, 2016 include Chikwale, Idum, Muruchi, Kwasau Legede, Kafeyawa and Amale. On getting to Chikwale Unguwan Pa, they met strong resistance by some youths who organised themselves but because they were using superior machine guns they overcame them and moved to Gidan Sambo, then to Gidan Para, Unguwan Muruchi, Unguwan Dutse, Baware kasa, Gidan Duna and made a final onslaught on Sabon. This attack left some gory images of man's inhumanity to man. The attackers used machetes, knives and daggers to chop their victims to death. Other villages such as Gida Duna, Opase, Gidan Sunday, Gidan Yarima, Gidan Auta, Bakin Garma, Gidan Ladan, Maigari, Gidan Wakili, Pago, Oshowodo and Gidan Peter were weakened by the experiences of other nearby villages and offered no resistance especially that such villages had more youths to mobilize in their defence than them.

(ii) Ankuwa Council Ward

On Sunday 15 September 2016, the villages within this council ward experienced movement of large number of bandits around the Ankwuwa axis. However, Ungwan Pah was the only village attacked which led to the displacement of locals largely because the village is isolated from other villages nearby.

(iii) Bishini Council Ward

The rate of attack on Koron, Ungwan Gwari and Kurmin Iya villages of Bishini Council Ward was so severe. This is because the villages are on the route where these bandits mobilize men and resources to their hideouts. These villages share borders with Niger State.

(iv) Kateri Council Ward

Rishi is the only village that came under attacked in this council ward. The attack that happened on Thursday 20 October 2016 saw many villagers displaced into Doka main town. Although there was no significant incidence during the attack, the villagers chose to remain in Doka as IDPs for the fear of the bandits. Most of the IDPs are now residing in the General Hospital, and in the Junior Secondary School, Doka.

Kajuru Local Government Area

Kajuru Local Government Area have also witnessed devastating attacks of these dreaded Fulani militias or Fulani armed bandits. The contestation over the local governments site of power between the indigenous Adara people and the Hausa/Fulani settler groups have dated back to over forty years. More so, what gives the attacks in Kajuru villages and in other parts of Adaraland the coloration of ethnic cleansing, is the brutality with which they are executed their crime. They will storm into indigenous Adara people's villages not only to kill but also to destroy every of their possession. While they do so, Hausa/Fulani settlements remain untouched.

Most times, the attackers will pass through these Hausa/Fulani settlements to perpetuate these attacks without any threat to the settlers whatsoever.

(i) Kallah Council Ward

The villages attacked in Kallah Council Ward include Kihoro-Libere, Bakin Kogi, Umiko,Magunguna, Idazo, Ungwan , Galadima, Ungwan Guza, Etiss, Ungwan Ma'aji, Ungwan Dantata, Ungwan Araha 1 & 2. These attacks occurred many times between March 21-April 2017. After the Adara Development Association and the Southern Kaduna Peoples Union called for a national rescue of their people, the bandits retreated to their hideouts in the forests bordering Laduga and the route to Saminaka. On the early morning of October 16 ,2017, Ungwan Goshi, Ungwan Shaban, Ungwan Jibo, Ungwan Maijama'a, Ungwan Sako, Ungwan Maidoki and Ungwan Masaba came under fierce attacks. The media reported the happenings three days after the attack. The bandits razed telecommunication mast, electricity installations and cut down big logs of wood to block the major access roads which, they knew, the security forces might use to locate them via the Kachia – Ungwan Maidoki road.

The paper notes that on 1st June, 2021, a few men from Idazo, Ungwan Shaba and Magunguna villages took risks and went back to clear their farmsland, after it was established that the occupying armed herdsmen have left. Unfortunately, they went missing and were never seen or heard of to this day. This was the fate of past attempts to return to the village which were met with death.

(ii) Tantatu Council Ward

On 28 June, 2018 Ungwan Makware was the only village attacked where people were displaced as a result. The attack was to destroy the only major feeder telecommunication mast located in the village. This mast covers the adjoining lowland villages of Magunguna Mai Albarka.

(iii) Idon Council Ward

The villages under Idon council ward that came under attack are Edanu, Ungwan Mudi, Ungwan Rana, Ifele and Ungwan Gora. This attack which occurred on Friday 23 January 2019 was the last experienced within Kajuru Local Government Area. The bandits intentionally left these villages because they compelled them to give them food stuffs and other items such as yams, beans, goats and cows. In addition to this, they spared them because they have fertile land for animal husbandry and cattle breeding. Before emergence of banditry these villages were known for having the largest pastural incursions for cattle breeding and less of crop farming. These incessant attacks made herders and other large cattle breeders to run away and leave large stray cattle wandering the large expanse of land.

The activities of the dreaded bandits on Adaraland have left scores of villages displaced, their farmland disserted and their livelihood abandoned. The aftermath of this activities is the proliferation of IDPs in Adaraland and several other camps in Southern Kaduna, and other parts of the state. According to reports the IDPs from Adaraland have occupied six major camps. This distribution can be seen below;

Kachia Baptist camp by NASI (a Nigerian Army) has over 26,340 IDPs leaving by the former site of this military formation who ran away from identified wards of Kallah and Tantatu wards of Kajuru Local government and settled in this camp in Kachia town.

Doka Camp: This camp has over 19,670 officially registered IDPs who are mostly from villages under Doka, Ankuwa and Bishini council wards.

Gonin Gora by Assemblies of God Camp Ground: this camp has non -resident IDPs because the people are scattered in parts of Gonin Gora especially in unoccupied houses, dilapidated buildings and schools. They only converge thrice a day to get food, supplies and medical attentions. The number of registered IDPs in this camp is 14,256 persons.

Maraban Kajuru SOKAPU Camp: this is the most populated IDP camp in Adaraland. Record has it that the camp hosts well over 128,900 persons most of whom are women and children. This camp still maintains such number as these people are still afraid of returning to their villages.

Those in these IDP camps receive supports from religious organisations, SOKAPU, RADI and other aids agencies with no support from the Kaduna State Government, KADSEMA, NEMA or any agencies of the Federal Government of

Nigeria. This has often generated debate on the intentions of the state government on the armed banditry in Adaraland. The failure of the Responsibility to Protect as it relates to Adaraland in spite of incessant attacks, and displacement of the indigenous Adara people and reoccupation of their villages by these bandits implies a ploy to take over this land through the instrumentality of banditry.

It is a fact that nobody chooses to be displaced from their homeland but for situations beyond one's control. During any violent conflict, war or crisis, women, children and the elderly suffer the most. This is so because they constitute large populations of the vulnerable group in society. The attackers sacked indigenous Adara people of the above category from their villages and communities between 15 November 2015 when the first organised banditry attacks took place at Maro and Fadan Ashi (Rijana) villages to December 2020 which is the period that this research covers. Most of these sacked villages enumerated above are either occupied by these dreaded attackers or resided by Fulanis that were pastoralised around these indigenous people. Some of the villages/communities taken over by these elements such as Koron, Ungwan Gwari and Kurmin Iya have become haven for kidnapped victims of these armed dreaded Fulani attackers. This is because these places are border towns which are not only in the hinterlands but also serve as strategic towns for their activities. These facts are drawn from reports by ransom takers, victims of the kidnapped student of the Greenfield University and other emanating sources such as residents who at the Kasuwan Magani market attest that they saw some Fulani people wearing their clothes and even riding their abandoned motor- cycle while they were escaping from an attack at Kallah village. When they drew the attention of the securities agencies, the criminal elements ran away.

Plights of these Internally Displaced Persons in Adaraland

The victims of violent conflicts are usually not the cause of the conflict as these persons are caught in between the conflict. Conflict, crises and violence know not one status, race, ideological background and sex. This situation brought out an imagery of people who have lost everything that they have laboured for years painstakingly. Some IDPs interviewed in the course of this study described how they were made to watch their loved ones killed. The children and parents interviewed attested that they were made to watch their loved ones killed in cold blood by the dreaded Fulani armed men. This brings out the brutal manner with which these bandits operate. Some IDPs in trying to run away from their attacked villages and communities fell victims to snakes bites leading to loss of lives and deformation due to the venom.

A group of informants also mentioned that some of them who ran away from their communities live in bushes, some in opened field, which left them exposed to other forms of danger such as bites from snakes, mosquitoes and other harmful insects. Some that were fortunate ran into neighbouring communities and were harboured in schools, churches, which are more safer than their former place.

Many women are made widows with children to feed in this deprived condition where their houses are burnt and displaced with nothing to support them. According to report over 73,400 children are out of school, because of insecurity. Schools in such communities are either shutdown or closed between 2016 to 2022 when the bandits attacks and siege intensified. Furthermore, the old ones among them were abandoned and as a result, are either killed or lost their care givers to the attackers. Those who survived are left unattended to and at the mercy of village scouters and good spirited individuals.

Most of the IDPs are expose to severe hunger. They are, as a result, traumatized and some died of starvation. There are instances where the IDPs do not even get one ration of food in a day. This state of severe hunger has led many children to malnutrition and suffer from kwashiorkor and few others die because of malnutrition.

In addition to these, most of the Adara populations were isolated and inaccessible the result of which is the prevalent food security situation Adaraland and Southern Kaduna is faced with today. These people who once lived in plenty are now reduced to a beggarly state due to the activities of these bandits.

There are reports that the activities of these armed bandits have led to the displacement 234,567 people living in IDP camps and other host communities in Adaraland. Most of these people have no access to safer water supply.

According to an informant, they are left without basic amenities, since most of them have lost their homes and are in another place. Most of them practice opened defection, which is posing another health risks to them. They have inadequate access to clean water for drinking talk more of bathing.

Conclusion

The activities of banditry in Adaraland have been under reported in both the print and electronic media. As a result of this they have been neglected by the State and Federal government and other donor agencies responsible for humanitarian assistance. The armed Fulani organized banditry left thousands of indigenous Adara people death, displaced thousands of people are thrown out of their ancestral homes. They bare reduced to sleeping in tents which are later infiltrated by bad elements and also their attackers who sneak in to further torment them. These internally displaced persons have become strangers in other places facing severe hardship, with no one to assist them.

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GIRLS AND SCHOOL-RELATED GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

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Girls, School Related Gender Based Violence, Africa

ABSTRACT
Over the years, the disproportionate effect that gender-based violence (GBV) has on women and girls and the identified need to tackle it has gained global attention. In this paper, concentration is on a common form of GBV; School –Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV), which the United Nations asserts as affecting millions of children and adolescents all over the world. Although schools are expected to enhance learning and personal development, every year, millions of girls worldwide are victims of SRGBV. Apart from being a human rights infringement, SRGBV considerably limits the achievement of gender parity and constrains the attainment of the sustainable development goal of quality education targeted at effective learning outcomes for girls. Studies on SRGBV against girls has been focused on specific countries, resulting in a lack of comprehensive research that examines the prevalence of this issue across various regions in Africa. This paper fills this gap and contributes to the existing scholarship on SRGBV by shedding light on the distinct forms of SRGBV which is often underestimated, experienced by primary and secondary school girls across countries in Africa. It sheds light on the unique challenges faced by these girls who have been subjected to victimization. This paper proposes intervention strategies, such as implementing high-level awareness campaigns led by governments at all levels, to effectively address this pressing issue.

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the issues that has gained global attention as a result of the devastating effects that it has not only on victims, but also the economic and social costs it has on countries. It is considered a pandemic that needs to be addressed, particularly because of its diverse manifestations and risks it portends for its victims and society at large. GBV has been tagged a global health issue by the United Nations and this has brought about the formulation and implementation of several policies and programmes targeted towards addressing the issue globally. Although men are affected too, global estimates reveal that more women than men are victims; with statistics showing that one out of three women experience one form of gender-based violence or the other, in their life time (World Health Organization (WHO), 2013). GBV is a human rights infringement issue that could take various forms which may be physical, sexual, emotional

or psychological. Although it is pervasive, occurring in online, public and private spaces, GBV is often underreported. Available statistics reveal that annually, 245 million girls and women aged 15 and above are victims of GBV (WHO, 2021).

Evidence from existing literature suggests that historically, GBV is a manifestation of the structural inequality of power relations between men and women, with women being discriminated against by men (Bows & Fileborn, 2020; Dahal, Joshi & Swahnberg, 2022; Muzvidziwa, 2022). It manifests when violence is exerted by men as a means of gaining control over women. These unequal power relations have compelled women into subordination in comparison with men, infringing on the enjoyment of their fundamental rights as humans and adversely affecting their full advancement. The unequal power relations are offshoots of discriminatory economic, religious, cultural and social norms and gender stereotypes that deny or restrict the opportunities available to women to make decisions that will improve their life situations (Tsapalas, Parker, Ferrer, & Bernales, 2021).

Just like women, girls experience different forms of violence online, as well as in public and private spaces. It is particularly worrisome when acts of violence are perpetuated against girls in public spaces like educational institutions which are expected to expose them to learning, enhance their personal development and give their lives a positive transformation. Irrespective of the geographical context, violence perpetrated against girls in school are intricately linked with norms and stereotypes that underpin gender inequality (Leach & Humphreys, 2007; Mayeza, Bhana & Mulqueeny, 2022; Debowska, Boduszek, Jones, Willmott & Sherretts, 2021). Different forms of violent acts perpetuated against women and girls are upheld by norms and stereotypes which are sometimes as a result of the way children are socialized. In her study on GBV across four African countries – Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, Ndiaye (2021) pointed out that the different way boys and girls are socialized from childhood upholds violence against women. She explains that the patriarchal nature of these West African states upholds negative norms and stereotypes that are instrumental in socializing children. While girls learn to cope with and endure violence perpetuated in the home, boys internalize norms that make them engage in violent and controlling behavior.

GBV, its multifaceted nature and dimensions, particularly as it affects women and girls is not peculiar to a particular region in Africa, but is a phenomenon that occurs across the continent and in different countries all over the world (Schissel, 2000; Schaffner, 2007; Smith, McLean Cooke, & Morrison, 2020; Douki Dedieu, Ouali, Ghachem, Karray & Issaoui, 2021; Torres-Rueda, Ferrari, Orangi, Hitimana, Daviaud, Tawiah & Vassall, 2021). In this paper however, focus is on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) – a form of GBV, with emphasis on how it affects girls in Africa.

Over the years, extensive research has been conducted on SRGBV in Africa, with a particular focus on its impact on primary and secondary school students. For example, Badri (2014) examined the prevalence and consequences of SRGBV on primary school girls in Sudan, while Onoyase (2019) conducted a similar study in Nigeria. Additionally, a study in Kenya explored how SRGBV affects both primary school boys and girls, shedding light on the culture of silence surrounding this issue (Barasa, Wamue-Ngare & Wanjama, 2021). In South Africa, research has delved into the reporting patterns of adolescent boys and girls in high schools (Rasool, 2017). Furthermore, research has been conducted across 14 Eastern and Southern African countries to explore the relationship between SRGBV and school absenteeism among boys and girls (Lee & Rudolf, 2022). Beyond examining prevalence and consequences, other studies have focused on policy initiatives aimed at addressing SRGBV in countries such as Zambia, Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, and Togo (Parkes, Ross & Heslop, 2020). Despite the extensive research on SRGBV in Africa, there remains a gap in the literature that consolidates instances of SRGBV experienced by girls across different countries on the continent. This article aims to address this gap. Issues such as the diverse nature of SRGBV, its prevalence on girls in Africa, available statistics across different regions on the continent, the consequences of SRGBV on girls and strategies to combat the menace are articulated in subsequent sections.

An Overview of School-Related Gender Based Violence

School-Related Gender Based Violence encompasses acts or threats of sexual, physical; or psychological violence which takes place in, or around a school, often upheld by gender norms and power imbalances ((UNESCO/UNGEI 2015).

SRGBV can be perpetrated by teachers, school staff, peers and persons that students come in contact with, in or around the school premises. Physical manifestations of SRGBV include bullying, corporal punishment, slapping, biting, pinching, boxing or pulling, with the intention of inflicting pain or discomfort on the victim. Any form of sexual activity that is unsolicited by the victim, often without consent such as rape, explicit sexual language, teasing about body parts, initiating moves for sexual activity and refusing to allow for the declination of such invitations, unwelcome touch or other forms of sexual gestures which may be expressed verbally or enforced through coercion are considered as sexual forms of SRGBV. Most of the time, sexual forms of SRGBV take place in lonely paths on the way to school, staff quarters, classrooms, toilets and on school grounds. Research shows that apart from the home of the victim or perpetrator of sexual violence, the rates at which students are abused sexually are high in schools (Bonar et al., 2022; Devries & Meinck, 2018; Coker, Bush, Clear, Brancato & McCauley, 2020). Psychological SRGBV can take forms including teasing, unjustifiable criticisms, humiliating punishment, bullying, refusal to praise for good efforts, and other acts with the intent of exerting control or causing mental or emotional harm. SRGBV is a violation of rights and one of the major obstacles to learning and to accomplishing educational goals. In schools, both boys and girls are affected by SRGBV, however, studies reveal that girls are more disproportionately affected (Itegi & Njuguna, 2013; Parke et. al, 2016, Keith, Hyslop & Richmond, 2023).

Scholars have identified various contextual factors that determine the prevalence and manifestations of SRGBV. For instance, Leach (2002) points out that there are instances when schools promote a culture that upholds masculine and feminine stereotypes, resulting in higher chances of SRGBV. These could be evident in the way the curriculum is designed with certain jobs, vocations or activities tagged as being for boys or men, and others for women and girls. Another way that schools unknowingly uphold gender stereotypes is when certain words like “bravery” and “courage” are used to describe masculinity while “homeliness” and “submission” are expressed as expected feminine traits. Without sexist intent, the use of words can propagate ideas that reinforce gender stereotypes. Not just these, in situations when there is an absence of concerted efforts in creating awareness on what gender-based violence entails in schools, especially in the curriculum, SRGBV will be prevalent (Vanner, 2022).

Gender biased discourses also present avenues for making derogatory gender comments, unsolicited sexual comments and provide opportunities for sexual harassment in schools (Taole, 2016). At times, during break periods when there are no classes, students may engage in conversations or debates amongst themselves that may lead to the use of offensive gendered comments or the boys touching the girls in suggestive sexual manners. An additional contextual factor that accounts for SRGBV is a poor understanding of what love or relationships are about among school boys and girls. To explain this, Cole (2023) points attention to how heteronormative interpretations of “relationship” and “love” limit the understanding of teen girls when they are faced with abuse; they consider it as the normal intricacies that come with love relationships.

Also, in situations where sex is traded for academic grades or in exchange for money, especially between a teacher or any other adult staff of a school and a student, SRGBV is said to have taken place (Postmus et al., 2015). This happens when students, especially girls, transact their bodies to get good academic grades, or for money so as to be able to meet their needs both within and outside the school. Although, this is transactional, it is considered an abuse because such an act can prevent girls from reaching their full potential in life. It is also considered an abuse because the adult teacher or staff is expected to take responsibility to care for students under their care, and not engage in any form of sexual interactions or relationships with them.

The intersection of gender with other forms of vulnerabilities can make girls to be inexplicably victims of SRGBV. In instances where attacks are launched on schools or educational institutions for religious, military, political, ethnic or criminal reasons, girls are often the targets. Such instances have been witnessed in countries including Nigeria, where school girls in different locations have been abducted by the deadly *Boko Haram* sect (Adekoya & Beredam, 2021, Verjee & Kwaja, 2021). While not all girls may be abducted, some may be sexually molested or suffer physical and emotional harm during attacks on their schools. Not only do girls experience a lot of difficulty during periods of conflict, unrest and disaster, the prevalence of SRGBV for them heightens even after periods of disasters. This is because

when girls return to school after disasters, the unavailability of basic infrastructure such as access to clean water and adequate security, puts them at a higher risk of being victims of gender-based violence (Thurston, Stöckl & Ranganathan, 2021). In essence, as a result of harsh economic conditions during and after disasters, girls are more likely to be victims of exploitation in order for them to access the basic necessities. SRGBV often has diverse physical and psychological effects on victims, contributing negatively to their overall wellbeing. These effects include poor academic performance, absenteeism from school, depression, injury, suicidal attempts, loss of body parts, death, low self-esteem, anxiety, school dropout, fear, sexually transmitted infections, sleep disorders, social isolation, unwanted pregnancies and teenage motherhood, (Garner, 2014; Lee & Rudolf, 2022, Kim, Sanders, Makubuya & Yu, 2020, Tantu, et al., 2020). Despite the numerous effects of SRGBV, global statistics of its prevalence are hard to come by as a result of the diverse nature of data collection methods across countries. Nonetheless, in the next section of this chapter, focus will be on available estimates of the incidence of SRGBV, particularly on the experiences of girls in Africa.

School –Related Gender Based Violence against Girls in Africa

Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims at ensuring that boys and girls get quality education, but SRGBV is a major impediment to its achievement because it creates an unsafe learning environment. An unsafe learning environment may lead to absenteeism and school dropout, lowers academic performance, hampers students' ability to focus and learn effectively. Undoubtedly, in schools, both boys and girls are victims of SRGBV but more girls are disproportionately affected as established in the existing literature (Brookings Institution, 2020; Dlungwane & Hamlall, 2024; Amaral et al., 2024). Many girls have been victims of physical SRGBV in Africa. Research indicates that a significant percentage of adolescent girls in African schools have been subjected to some form of SRGBV. In a study involving over 60,000 Grade 6 learners across Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania (mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, Lee and Rudolf (2022) asserted that girls were disproportionately affected by SRGBV, including verbal harassment, physical abuse, and sexual violence, with the experiences significantly impacting their mental health, attendance, and academic performance.

Although often used as a method of discipline despite a growing discourse on its ban, studies have shown that school girls in several parts of Africa including South Africa, Tanzania and Ethiopia, are sometimes subjected to physical violence in the form of corporal punishment (Nkuba, Hermennau, Goessmann & Hecker, 2018; Chitsamatanga & Rembe, 2020; Kumar & Teklu, 2018). To maintain order, teachers resort to the use of beatings, floggings, slapping, hitting and other forms of physical abuse. Not only these, female students are frequently targeted for violence by their male peers who view them as easy targets. In a study comprising of junior secondary schools in Ghana and Botswana, Dunne (2007) asserted that during non-instructional hours, older boys have been reported to engage in behaviors such as bullying and taking money or belongings from girls, as well as attempting to exert control and discipline over them. Girls who resisted these attempts were often embarrassed and demoralized.

Another form of physical SRGBV that girls in Africa face within the school environment is forced labor. In countries like Malawi and Zimbabwe, Chisamya et al., (2012) asserted that girls are frequently coerced into performing physically demanding tasks such as fetching water, cleaning, or running errands for teachers. These exploitative practices not only reinforce gender stereotypes but also take away valuable learning time from these girls. As a result, their educational opportunities are undermined, perpetuating systemic inequalities.

Several girls who experience physical SRGBV are also victims of the psychological forms. Research has indicated that girls who reject advances from boys seeking a relationship may be at risk of experiencing physical and psychological abuse. For instance, in Muhanguzi's (2011) study on secondary schools in Uganda, it was found that girls who rejected relationship proposals from boys were often met with verbal abuse and hostility. This included beatings, spreading of false rumors to tarnish their reputation, and body-shaming through derogatory comments about their appearance, including their physical features such as their looks and buttocks.

Another illustration of this, is the violence carried out by authority figures, including teachers and school staff. In certain situations, female students are subjected to physical coercion and psychological assault when they reject sexual advances from authority figures. To buttress this, Msambwa et al., (2022) in their research conducted in secondary schools in Tanzania, have brought to light instances where girls have been physically punished or psychologically assaulted by teachers for refusing inappropriate sexual demands, showcasing a power dynamic that enables such abuse to occur. Such forms of abuse include beatings, threats of failure, victimization, and derogatory name-calling. Literature has shown that the physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by authority figures and male classmates has been correlated with the high rates of girls dropping out of school (Rammbuda, 2023; Gbordzoe, 2024). Many girls choose to halt their education rather than continue to endure persistent abuse.

Sexual SRGBV perpetrated against girls is widespread but available statistics likely underestimate its prevalence, as a result of the pervasive culture of silence surrounding it. Research has brought to light rates of victimization, with studies conducted in countries such as Cameroon, Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda, Morocco, Senegal and Sierra Leone, to mention a few, showing that many female students are subjected to sexual violence in educational environments (Moundene, 2023; Anwar et al., 2020; Reilly, 2014, Dlungwane & Hamlall, 2024; Beyene et al., 2021). A study conducted by Reilly (2014) in Sierra Leone revealed that female students in junior secondary schools are subjected to abuse by male teachers, older male students, and other men, such as motorcyclists commonly known as *boda-boda* riders near the school premises. The girls have been subjected to various forms of abuse, including unwanted touching of their bodies, inappropriate gestures, and in severe cases, sexual coercion. The most frequently reported form of abuse, however, comes from teachers. Due to poverty, some teachers exploit students by demanding money in exchange for better grades. For girls who cannot pay, they are coerced by the teachers to offer sex for good grades.

It is particularly worrisome that sexual harassment is not only carried out by peers but also by authority figures in schools. In a study conducted in Uganda, findings revealed that 1in 20 (4.9%) schoolgirls reported being sexually molested by their teachers (Parkes et al., 2023). Shockingly, among girls with disabilities, this number rose to 16%. The girls shared with researchers how they had bravely resisted unwanted advances, even when faced with the threat of further punishment or lower grades. Concerns have been raised on the urgent need for increased action to address this issue. In their study, Chitsamatanga and Rembe (2020) made reference to a longitudinal study conducted in Kenya between 2003 and 2009, which found that out of 12,660 girls who were sexually abused by their teachers, only 633 teachers were ultimately convicted. Sexual abuse has a lot of adverse effects on victims. Dwelling on experiences of sexual harassment between educators and learners in high schools in Morocco, Aboulkacem (2023) identified the effects it has on girls who are victims to include loss of concentration, poor academic performance, trauma and emotional distress. Rejecting sexual advances from schoolteachers and other authority figures in schools can result in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and self-doubt for girls. They may begin to question their own judgment, worth, and boundaries, while also grappling with feelings of guilt and responsibility for the teacher's behavior. These experiences can have lasting psychological effects on the student, impacting their self-esteem, trust, and relationships with authority figures.

The impact of SRGBV on girls in Africa is significant and complex, impacting their physical health, mental well-being, and educational success. Victims may experience physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unintended teenage pregnancies, maternal health complications associated with teenage pregnancy. Their mental health well-being may also suffer as they are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, loss of concentration substance abuse and emotional distress. SRGBV negatively impacts on their educational success, resulting in increased absenteeism, lower academic achievement, and higher dropout rates, as the school environment becomes hostile and detrimental to learning. Beyond the immediate harm, SRGBV is instrumental in perpetuating cycles of poverty and hindering educational and empowerment opportunities.

From the foregoing, the absence of comprehensive statistics on the prevalence of SRGBV is a stark reminder of the deep-rooted

systemic failure in putting up safeguarding mechanisms to effectively address it. It's an issue that requires a multi-pronged approach to address. It is therefore imperative to recommend policies to address this pressing issue in order to achieve the goal of providing quality education for all, with a specific focus on empowering girls. When girls are educated, it has a multiplier effect on development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

By examining the dynamics of SRGBV, particularly as it affects girls in Africa, this paper has drawn attention to the menace, and its effect on the lives of girls. SRGBV continues to pose a major obstacle to achieving gender equality in education throughout Africa. Despite the existing data shedding light on the seriousness of the problem, the true extent of SRGBV is often obscured by underreporting. Resolving this systemic issue necessitates comprehensive interventions at the policy, institutional, and community levels to guarantee that all girls have secure environments in which to learn and flourish, devoid of the specter of violence. To address it, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies including:

1. It is crucial for schools to establish a safe and supportive environment for students to report inappropriate behavior from teachers and other authority figures. In order to establish safe learning environments, empowerment programs for students where they get information on their rights as well as the appropriate channels for reporting violence should be put in place in schools.

2. Governments across all levels in Africa should embark on high-level awareness campaigns against SRGBV on mass and social media platforms, amplifying the dangers inherent in it, and enlightening people to disabuse their minds of harmful norms and beliefs that contribute to various forms of violence.

3. There is an urgent need for states in Africa to have agencies that train school authorities to effectively identify, prevent, and address SRGBV. This training should emphasize the importance of implementing gender-sensitive strategies within the school environment, in addition to utilizing positive discipline techniques.

4. The importance of accurate data cannot be overemphasized in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence of SRGBV and for informing targeted interventions. There is therefore a need for data collection agencies across states in Africa to adopt effective data collection processes which are pre requisites for checking the progress and efficacy of implemented strategies to combat SRGBV.

5. There is a need for legislations that forbid SRGBV and its enforcement by governments across African states. It's not enough to have laws that prohibit it, the laws should be implemented by putting in place mechanisms for ensuring that offenders are punished.

6. Community engagement that entails bringing together community leaders, parents, organizations and other stakeholders to engage in conversations and collaborations tailored towards addressing societal norms that perpetuate violence.

7. These suggested measures, if well implemented, will bring about far-reaching implications not only for the well-being of girls, but also for the broader social fabric in which they exist.

Author's Biography

Dr. Adebusola Okedele teaches Political Science. Over the years, her research has focused on women in politics, gender studies, human rights, transnational advocacy, development and most recently on children's gendered political socialization in Nigeria. She has presented her research findings at national and international conferences, and her articles have been published in journals, books and newspapers.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND HUMAN SECURITY: AN EVALUATION OF SHELL'S CSR INITIATIVES IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study evaluates the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on human security in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to assess whether CSR interventions by Shell effectively mitigate environmental degradation, economic insecurity, and social instability. This study anchored in human security theory, which emphasizes a people-centered approach to security, the study interrogates CSR's role beyond community development projects to its impact on economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and conflict resolution. The findings reveal that while Shell's CSR programs provide infrastructure, education, and healthcare, they fail to address core human security concerns. Weak stakeholder engagement and governance structures limit transparency and community participation, leading to elite capture of CSR benefits. Additionally, environmental degradation persists despite Shell's sustainability commitments, and CSR-based economic empowerment programs remain unsustainable, failing to curb youth unemployment and militancy. The study recommends restructuring CSR interventions to incorporate holistic human security strategies and strengthening regulatory frameworks to enforce corporate accountability. This research contributes to the literature by shifting the focus from corporate philanthropy to structural governance solutions. Unlike previous studies that document CSR activities, this study critically examines their effectiveness in promoting human security and highlights the need for policy-driven CSR reforms to achieve sustainable peace and development in oil-producing regions.

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a fundamental aspect of corporate governance, influencing the relationship between multinational corporations (MNCs) and their host communities. Globally, corporations are increasingly expected to contribute positively to social and environmental sustainability beyond profit-making. CSR encompasses economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities, ensuring that businesses operate in ways that benefit society (Carroll & Shabana 2019). International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank have emphasized CSR as a mechanism for promoting human security, particularly in conflict-prone regions. For instance, the United Nations Global Compact provides guidelines for businesses to align strategies with human rights, labour, environmental, and anti-corruption principles, ensuring sustainable development (UNGC, 2022). In conflict-affected areas like the Middle East and Latin America, companies such as BP and Chevron have integrated CSR into their business models to mitigate community grievances and promote stability (Frynas, 2021).

Across Africa, CSR has gained prominence due to the continent's extensive natural resource wealth and the presence of multinational corporations, particularly in the extractive industries. However, the relationship between corporations and host communities has been characterized by socio-economic inequalities, environmental degradation, and governance challenges. While some corporations have adopted CSR practices to foster development, others have been accused of exacerbating conflicts through exploitative practices (Idemudia, 2020). In countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Angola, and South Africa, the extraction of minerals and oil has triggered socio-political instability due to inadequate corporate governance and weak state institutions (Omeje, 2022). In Angola, for instance, oil companies have invested in social projects, but allegations of corruption and environmental harm persist, undermining trust between corporations and local populations (Luiz & Stewart, 2021). Similarly, in South Africa, mining companies such as Anglo-Americans have implemented CSR initiatives to improve education and healthcare. Nevertheless, community dissatisfaction remains high due to persistent inequality and environmental damage (Hamann, 2022).

Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer, has experienced significant challenges in managing the relationship between multinational oil corporations and local communities, particularly in the Niger Delta region. The discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956 marked the beginning of extensive oil exploration, dominated by companies such as Shell, Chevron, and ExxonMobil (Watts, 2021). Despite contributing over 90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, the oil industry has been linked to environmental degradation, socio-economic disparities, and community unrest (Nwoke, 2023). CSR initiatives in Nigeria have been implemented to address these challenges, but their effectiveness remains debated. According to Ebegbulem et al. (2022), oil companies have introduced community development programs, including education, healthcare, and infrastructure projects. However, inadequate stakeholder engagement and weak regulatory frameworks have often resulted in mistrust and conflict. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and other activist groups have consistently criticized Shell and other oil companies for failing to fulfil their CSR obligations and for perpetuating environmental pollution (Ojo, 2023). This has contributed to tensions between corporations, the government, and local communities, leading to recurring incidents of oil facility vandalism, kidnapping of expatriates, and militancy.

Rivers State, located in the heart of the Niger Delta, has been a focal point for oil exploration and CSR controversies. As one of the major oil-producing states, Rivers State hosts several multinational oil companies, with Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) being a dominant player. The state has witnessed significant environmental and socio-economic challenges due to oil extraction activities. Oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation have led to declining agricultural productivity and health hazards, exacerbating poverty and insecurity (Okonkwo & Uche, 2023). The failure of past CSR initiatives to adequately address these issues has fueled community grievances and conflicts. A study by Oruwari and Owei (2022) found that despite Shell's investment in local development projects, many communities perceive these efforts as insufficient, primarily due to a lack of consultation and transparency. The situation has been further complicated by the rise of militant groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers, who argue that oil companies have failed to equitably distribute the benefits of resource extraction (Ikelegbe, 2023).

Shell has implemented various CSR programmes aimed at improving human security and sustainable development in Rivers State in response to these challenges. The Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model introduced by Shell seeks to involve communities in decision-making processes and enhance corporate-community relations (Akinwale, 2023). Under this framework, Shell has funded projects in education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives remains contested.

Existing literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Nigeria's oil sector primarily focuses on its economic and environmental impacts, often overlooking the specific role of CSR in addressing human security challenges in conflict-affected communities. While studies such as Idemudia (2020) and Omeje (2022) analyze CSR's role in mitigating conflicts, they provide limited empirical evidence on its direct impact on human security in Rivers State. Additionally, previous research has not sufficiently examined the effectiveness of the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model in fostering corporate-community relations. This study fills this gap by assessing Shell's CSR initiatives in Rivers State through the lens of human security, incorporating stakeholder perspectives on their effectiveness. Unlike prior studies that focus on broad CSR frameworks, this research provides a localized analysis, evaluating community engagement, project sustainability, and conflict resolution outcomes. By doing so, it contributes new insights into how CSR can be leveraged to enhance stability in resource-rich but conflict-prone regions.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

A significant gap remains in evaluating the direct impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on human security in conflict-affected communities, despite extensive scholarship on CSR in Nigeria's oil sector. Most studies focus on CSR as a tool for corporate image-building (Idemudia, 2020) or its role in mitigating environmental degradation (Omeje, 2022). However, little empirical research critically examines how CSR interventions influence broader human security dimensions, including economic stability, environmental protection, community resilience, and governance structures. In Rivers State, where Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) has been a dominant player, CSR projects have been implemented to address social and economic disparities. Yet, evidence suggests that these interventions have failed to resolve long-standing grievances, particularly among marginalized communities affected by oil extraction activities.

The Niger Delta, including Rivers State, experiences high levels of socio-economic deprivation despite generating over 75% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (NBS, 2023). According to the National Bureau of Statistics, poverty levels in the region remain at 42%, with unemployment rates exceeding 35%, particularly among the youth, who constitute a significant portion of the population. Environmental degradation resulting from oil spills and gas flaring has devastated livelihoods, reducing agricultural productivity by 60% and contaminating water sources (Nwoke, 2023). Shell's CSR initiatives, such as the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU), have sought to improve education, healthcare, and infrastructure. However, their effectiveness remains debatable due to a lack of participatory engagement, transparency issues, and poor monitoring frameworks (Ojo, 2023). Many community members perceive these projects as inadequate, reinforcing tensions between corporations, local populations, and the government.

A critical problem lies in the disconnect between CSR strategies and human security outcomes. Previous studies (Akinwale, 2023; Ikelegbe, 2023) have examined corporate interventions without systematically assessing their long-term impact on conflict dynamics, economic well-being, and environmental sustainability. This study addresses this gap by evaluating how Shell's CSR initiatives in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State contribute to or undermine human security. By employing empirical analysis, it assesses the extent to which CSR programs alleviate socio-economic vulnerabilities and foster sustainable peace. The findings will provide policymakers, corporate entities, and civil society organizations with actionable insights for reforming CSR frameworks, ensuring corporate accountability, and promoting inclusive development. Given the persistent unrest in the Niger Delta, an evidence-based approach to CSR evaluation is crucial for mitigating conflict, enhancing community trust, and fostering long-term stability in oil-producing regions.

1.3 Conceptual Clarifications

i. Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to a corporation's obligation to operate ethically and contribute to economic, social, and environmental sustainability beyond profit-making. Traditionally viewed through Carroll's (1991) four-tier model—economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities—CSR has evolved into a strategic tool for corporate governance and conflict management, particularly in resource-rich but volatile regions. Contemporary discourse critiques conventional CSR approaches for being largely symbolic, arguing for a shift towards a rights-based and community-driven model (Amaeshi et al., 2021). In conflict-prone areas like the Niger Delta, CSR must extend beyond token philanthropy to address systemic inequalities, environmental degradation, and governance failures. The effectiveness of CSR depends on stakeholder engagement, transparency, and responsiveness to local socio-political realities. This study re-evaluates CSR's role in promoting human security, arguing for a paradigm shift from corporate-driven initiatives to participatory, community-centered development frameworks. According to Visser (2006), CSR in developing countries follows a distinct trajectory shaped by socio-economic and institutional contexts, where philanthropic activities dominate over regulatory compliance and ethical considerations.

ii. Concept of Human Security

Human security transcends traditional state-centric security paradigms by prioritizing individual and community well-being over military strength. Defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), it encompasses economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Unlike conventional security, which focuses on territorial integrity, human security emphasizes protection from threats such as poverty, environmental degradation, and socio-political instability. Critics argue that the concept remains too broad and lacks enforceability, making it difficult to operationalize (Acharya, 2021). However, in resource-rich but conflict-prone regions like the Niger Delta, human security provides a vital lens for assessing corporate interventions. CSR initiatives must be reoriented to address structural inequalities, environmental sustainability, and participatory governance rather than short-term welfare projects. This study advances the discourse by linking CSR effectiveness to sustainable human security outcomes, advocating for a rights-based approach that ensures corporate accountability in conflict-affected communities. According to Newman (2010), human security is a dynamic concept that evolves in response to global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and pandemics.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of Shell's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and their impact on human security in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State. The study population comprises the residents of Rivers State, Nigeria. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2022), Rivers State has an estimated population of 7,476,743 people. To determine the appropriate sample size, the Taro Yamane (1968) formula was applied. Where n represents the sample size, N is the population size (7,476,743), and e is the margin of error (0.05). Using this formula, the calculated sample size is 400 respondents. A probability and non-probability sampling approach is adopted. Stratified random sampling ensures fair representation from different local government areas (LGAs) with high oil exploration activities, while purposive sampling selects key informants such as community leaders, government officials, and Shell representatives. Primary data is collected using structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Secondary data is sourced from policy documents, reports, and existing literature. Quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data is examined using thematic analysis to identify key trends in CSR effectiveness.

1.5 theoretical framework

This study adopted Human Security Theory, chiefly propounded by Mahbub ul Haq in 1994, with further contributions from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its

1994 Human Development Report. Haq, in his pioneering work, redefined the concept of security beyond traditional state-centred perspectives, which focused primarily on military threats. He argued that true security should prioritize individuals' well-being, encompassing various dimensions such as economic security, health, environmental sustainability, political stability, and protection from violence. Haq's vision emphasized that security should be viewed through a people-centred lens, where the focus is not merely on the absence of war but on ensuring individuals' safety, dignity, and access to basic needs.

The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report further expanded on Haq's ideas by introducing the broader concept of human security, which includes seven interrelated components: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. This expanded framework allowed for a holistic understanding of security, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various social and economic factors that affect individuals' lives and well-being. This study applies Human Security Theory uniquely by examining how Shell's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence multiple dimensions of human security in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on economic and environmental security aspects of CSR in Nigeria's oil sector, this research adopts a holistic approach by evaluating Shell's interventions across all seven components outlined by the UNDP. While existing literature often discusses CSR's role in mitigating conflict or promoting development, few studies directly assess its effectiveness in addressing threats to personal and community security, such as violence, displacement, and political instability. By integrating human security dimensions into CSR evaluation, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how corporate interventions impact both immediate and long-term security concerns in volatile regions. This approach moves beyond corporate compliance or economic benefits, highlighting CSR as a critical tool for sustainable peacebuilding and social stability in the Niger Delta.

1.6 Nexus between CSR and Human Security in Oil-Producing Regions

The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and human security in oil-producing regions has been widely examined, particularly in the context of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. According to Idemudia (2020), CSR initiatives in oil-rich regions are crucial for mitigating social conflicts and improving human security by addressing poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. He argues that multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in extractive industries should engage in sustainable community development programs to ensure equitable resource distribution. However, his study critiques the inconsistent implementation of CSR policies, noting that many initiatives lack transparency and do not align with the actual needs of host communities. While Idemudia's findings provide valuable insights, they do not adequately account for the role of weak governance structures that often hinder effective CSR execution. This oversight raises concerns about whether corporate interventions can genuinely foster human security in regions with institutional inefficiencies.

In the study of Ebegbulem et al. (2022), CSR in Africa's oil-producing regions is explored through the lens of corporate-community relations. Their research highlights that while CSR programs have contributed to infrastructural development, education, and healthcare, they often fail to address deeper socio-political grievances that fuel conflict. The authors point out that corporations focus primarily on philanthropy rather than long-term economic empowerment, leading to dependency rather than self-sufficiency among local populations. Their study, however, does not sufficiently interrogate the structural inequalities that allow corporations to dictate CSR agendas without meaningful community participation. This gap suggests that CSR's potential to enhance human security is undermined by power imbalances between corporations and host communities, necessitating stronger regulatory oversight.

Similarly, Okonkwo & Uche (2023) examine the effectiveness of CSR initiatives in Nigeria's oil-producing communities, with a focus on the Niger Delta. They argue that while companies like Shell and Chevron have invested in social

infrastructure, their activities have exacerbated environmental degradation, thereby undermining the very human security concerns their CSR policies claim to address. They contend that CSR should be redefined to include environmental justice, ensuring that oil companies are held accountable for ecological destruction. While their study expands the discourse on CSR and environmental security, it falls short in assessing the long-term economic impacts of oil-induced environmental degradation, particularly concerning agricultural and fisheries livelihoods. This omission weakens their argument, as sustainable development in oil-producing regions requires a holistic approach that integrates both social and economic security dimensions.

In the study of Ikelegbe (2023), the role of CSR in mitigating conflict and promoting stability in Nigeria's oil-producing regions is analyzed. He asserts that while CSR has the potential to reduce communal grievances, its effectiveness is often limited by corporate insincerity and lack of government enforcement mechanisms. He critiques the practice of companies implementing CSR projects as public relations strategies rather than genuine community-driven initiatives. While his work rightly highlights the deficiencies in corporate commitments, it does not explore alternative CSR models that could ensure better engagement between oil companies and local stakeholders. This omission is critical, as a more participatory CSR framework could bridge the gap between corporate intentions and community expectations, ultimately enhancing human security outcomes.

According to Ojo (2023), CSR initiatives in Nigeria's oil sector have largely failed to address human security challenges due to their top-down approach. He argues that oil companies often impose CSR projects without proper consultation, leading to conflicts and community resistance. His study suggests that CSR should be embedded in broader governance reforms, ensuring that local populations are actively involved in decision-making processes. While his findings contribute to the understanding of CSR failures, they do not sufficiently engage with the legal and institutional frameworks that enable corporate negligence. This limitation underscores the need for policy reforms that align CSR practices with enforceable human security standards.

According to Akinwale (2023), CSR initiatives in Rivers State have been largely ineffective in addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges caused by oil exploration. His study examines the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) introduced by Shell, arguing that while the model promotes community participation in CSR projects, its implementation has been marred by elite capture and lack of transparency. Akinwale critiques the GMoU for failing to reach marginalized groups within host communities, leading to discontent and continued agitation against oil companies. Although his study highlights the participatory framework of the GMoU, it does not critically assess how corporate and governmental interests influence its execution. This omission is significant, as political interference often determines the distribution and effectiveness of CSR benefits, ultimately shaping human security outcomes in Rivers State.

Similarly, in the study of Oruwari & Owei (2022), CSR interventions in Rivers State are assessed concerning their impact on local development and conflict resolution. They argue that while oil companies have invested in social infrastructure such as schools, roads, and healthcare facilities, these efforts have been insufficient in addressing the root causes of conflict, particularly unemployment and environmental degradation. Their research reveals that many CSR projects are poorly maintained due to weak corporate-community relations and lack of local ownership. They further assert that CSR should be integrated with sustainable livelihood programs to ensure long-term benefits for affected communities. However, their study does not adequately explore the role of government agencies in regulating CSR implementation, leaving a gap in understanding the broader governance dynamics that shape CSR effectiveness.

From the foregoing, it is evident that while CSR has the potential to enhance human security in oil-producing regions, its implementation is often fraught with inconsistencies, corporate opportunism, and weak regulatory oversight. The reviewed literature demonstrates that CSR must go beyond philanthropy to address systemic inequalities, environmental sustainability, and community participation. Without a shift towards a more inclusive and accountable CSR framework, the goal of achieving sustainable human security in Nigeria's oil-producing communities will remain

elusive.The literature on Rivers State aligns with broader CSR challenges in Nigeria's oil-producing regions, emphasizing the need for more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable corporate interventions. While CSR initiatives exist, their limited impact on human security underscores the necessity for regulatory reforms and stronger community engagement to ensure meaningful development in conflict-affected areas.Bottom of Form

1.7 Evaluating the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives on Human Security in Conflict-Affected Communities of Rivers State

To what extent do Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives enhance human security in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State? This study critically interrogates the relationship between CSR and human security, questioning whether multinational corporations, particularly Shell, have effectively addressed the socio-economic and environmental concerns of host communities. Theoretically, the study is anchored on human security theory, which argues that security should be people-centered, encompassing economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Haq, 1994; UNDP, 1994). By applying this lens, the study moves beyond traditional CSR assessments that focus solely on community development projects to examine whether these initiatives translate into tangible improvements in human security.

Are CSR interventions in Rivers State structured to address the multi-dimensional nature of human security? Previous studies have largely concentrated on the developmental contributions of CSR in oil-producing regions without linking them explicitly to human security (Idemudia, 2020; Akinwale, 2023). Idemudia (2020) argues that while oil companies have introduced community development projects in the Niger Delta, these interventions often fail to alleviate long-term structural inequalities and environmental degradation. However, this study expands the argument by contending that CSR initiatives must be assessed not just in terms of physical infrastructure but also their contribution to economic stability, environmental justice, and conflict mitigation. This perspective aligns with the UNDP's expanded human security framework, which includes economic, environmental, and community security, providing a broader understanding of CSR effectiveness.

How do Shell's CSR initiatives in Rivers State compare with previous interventions in other oil-producing regions of Nigeria? According to Ebegbulem et al. (2022), CSR projects implemented by oil multinationals often suffer from poor stakeholder engagement, lack of transparency, and elite capture, rendering them ineffective in resolving conflicts. This study confirms these challenges but extends the discourse by highlighting Shell's Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model, which theoretically enhances community participation in decision-making. However, empirical findings suggest that while the GMoU aims to foster inclusive development, it has been dominated by local elites and political actors, weakening its intended impact. This interrogation suggests that corporate CSR frameworks in conflict-prone areas must incorporate stronger governance mechanisms and independent oversight to ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

Does Shell's CSR framework mitigate environmental insecurity in Rivers State? The study of Oruwari and Owei (2022) asserts that oil companies have invested in infrastructure such as roads, schools, and healthcare facilities but have done little to address environmental degradation, a core component of human security. The findings of this study resonate with this argument but provide additional empirical insights by demonstrating that oil spills, gas flaring, and land degradation remain persistent despite Shell's environmental CSR commitments. Reports from local communities indicate that many remediation efforts are superficial, with limited long-term sustainability. This suggests that corporate social responsibility must move beyond compensatory measures to actively prevent environmental degradation through stricter compliance with global best practices and enforcement of environmental laws.

Can CSR initiatives address the security challenges associated with oil-related conflicts? According to Ikelegbe (2023), militancy in the Niger Delta is driven by socio-economic grievances, including unemployment, marginalization, and lack of local ownership of oil resources. While CSR is often seen as a tool for conflict resolution, this study reveals that current corporate interventions do not adequately address the root causes of insecurity.

Shell's youth empowerment and skills acquisition programs have had limited reach, with many beneficiaries lacking sustainable employment after training. Furthermore, community perceptions of exclusion from oil revenues continue to fuel resentment, leading to ongoing agitations and occasional attacks on oil installations. This finding aligns with Akinwale's (2023) critique that CSR programs often fail due to a top-down implementation approach that does not fully engage grassroots community structures. The study suggests that a shift towards more inclusive, locally-driven economic initiatives is necessary to achieve lasting peace.

What are the broader implications of these findings for CSR governance and policy in Nigeria? While previous studies acknowledge the limitations of CSR in the Niger Delta, this study adds a stronger policy-oriented perspective, advocating for structural reforms in Nigeria's CSR regulatory framework. Unlike previous research that focuses solely on corporate responsibility, this study argues that government institutions play a critical role in shaping CSR outcomes. Weak enforcement of corporate obligations has allowed oil companies to operate with minimal accountability. The study thus calls for legislative amendments to the Land Use Act and Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) to ensure mandatory CSR obligations with clear performance benchmarks.

This study deepens the discourse on CSR and human security by shifting the focus from corporate philanthropy to structural and governance-oriented solutions. While CSR initiatives in Rivers State have made some contributions to infrastructure and social welfare, they fall short in addressing environmental justice, economic inclusion, and conflict resolution. Unlike previous studies that primarily document CSR activities, this study critically interrogates their impact on human security, highlighting gaps in governance, transparency, and long-term sustainability. It ultimately argues that CSR, when properly implemented with community-driven governance structures, can serve as a transformative tool for sustainable peace and development in oil-producing regions.

1.8 Findings and Discussions

i. CSR initiatives and human security in Rivers State lack a comprehensive approach

The study reveals that while Shell and other oil multinationals have implemented CSR initiatives in Rivers State, these interventions fail to adequately address the multi-dimensional nature of human security. The findings highlight that CSR programs largely focus on community development projects such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare, but they do not effectively mitigate broader human security threats like environmental degradation, economic marginalization, and social instability.

ii. weak stakeholder engagement and governance undermine CSR effectiveness

Shell's Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model was designed to foster participatory development in host communities. However, the study finds that the implementation of the GMoU is often controlled by local elites and political actors, reducing its intended impact. This supports Ebegbulem et al. (2022), who argue that poor governance structures and lack of transparency in CSR initiatives weaken their ability to resolve socio-economic grievances.

iii. environmental degradation persists despite CSR environmental commitments

One of the critical findings is that Shell's CSR initiatives have not significantly reduced environmental insecurity in Rivers State. Although the company has made commitments to environmental sustainability, oil spills, gas flaring, and land degradation continue to threaten community livelihoods. Oruwari and Owei (2022) contend that oil companies invest in infrastructure but neglect environmental protection, and the study corroborates this by providing empirical evidence of weak remediation efforts and lack of long-term sustainability in environmental CSR projects.

iv. CSR initiatives fail to address economic insecurity and unemployment

The study finds that economic insecurity remains a key driver of conflict in Rivers State, with CSR-based economic empowerment programs having limited long-term impact. Shell's youth empowerment and skills acquisition programmes, meant to reduce unemployment, do not create sustainable job opportunities for beneficiaries. Ikelegbe (2023) argues that youth militancy in the Niger Delta is fueled by unemployment and economic exclusion, and this study confirms that CSR interventions have not sufficiently alleviated these economic grievances.

v. v. CSR fails to mitigate security challenges in oil-producing communities

The study highlights that CSR efforts in Rivers State have not significantly contributed to conflict resolution. Community members continue to feel marginalized from oil wealth, fueling resentment and periodic hostilities against oil companies. Akinwale (2023) criticizes the top-down approach of CSR programmes, arguing that they lack grassroots engagement. This study extends that critique by showing that CSR initiatives do not effectively address the root causes of insecurity, such as resource control disputes, exclusion from oil revenues, and political disenfranchisement.

vi. weak regulatory frameworks allow oil companies to operate with minimal accountability

The study revealed that Nigeria's weak regulatory framework limits the effectiveness of CSR interventions. The study argues that the absence of mandatory CSR obligations and poor enforcement of corporate responsibilities allow oil multinationals to operate with minimal accountability. While previous studies focus on corporate responsibility, this study adds a policy dimension, advocating for legislative reforms in the Land Use Act and the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) to introduce clear performance benchmarks for CSR initiatives.

1.9 conclusion

This study conceptually and theoretically interrogates the link between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and human security in conflict-affected communities of Rivers State through the lens of Human Security Theory (Haq, 1994; UNDP, 1994). The findings reveal that while Shell's CSR initiatives have made contributions to infrastructure and social services, they fail to comprehensively address environmental insecurity, economic exclusion, and governance deficiencies, which are fundamental to human security. Unlike previous studies (Idemudia, 2020; Akinwale, 2023), which emphasize CSR's developmental contributions, this study extends the discourse by arguing that CSR must be structurally embedded within governance mechanisms to ensure transparency and long-term impact. While it aligns with Ikelegbe (2023) on the persistence of socio-economic grievances, it challenges the assumption that CSR alone can mitigate oil-related conflicts. The study concludes that CSR frameworks must prioritize conflict-sensitive approaches, enforce environmental accountability, and integrate community-led economic initiatives for sustainable peace and development.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the study recommended that:

i. Shell and other oil multinationals should restructure their CSR initiatives to address all dimensions of human security, including environmental sustainability, economic stability, and social cohesion.

ii. Shell's Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model should be reformed to enhance transparency, accountability, and direct community participation

iii. The Nigerian government must enforce strict compliance with global environmental standards, ensuring that companies prioritize long-term ecological restoration efforts over compensatory interventions.

iv. CSR-based economic empowerment initiatives should shift from short-term skill acquisition programs to long-term, sustainable employment opportunities.

v. CSR efforts should incorporate community-based conflict resolution mechanisms that directly address grievances over resource control, revenue allocation, and social exclusion.

vi. The Nigerian government should amend the Land Use Act and Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) to introduce mandatory CSR obligations with clear performance benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms.

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KIDNAPPING AND NIGERIA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT
The international image of a country is influenced by its degree of peace, crime statistics, and general progress. In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the rising incidence of kidnapping has significantly tarnished the country's international reputation, solidifying its perception as a state beset by security challenges. This study investigates the influence of abduction on Nigeria's global reputation by assessing its implications on diplomatic relations, foreign investments, and perceptions of government. It assesses the efficacy of governmental initiatives and international collaboration in mitigating the issue, while suggesting pragmatic alternatives to rehabilitate Nigeria's reputation. The study employs the Constructivist theory as its theoretical framework and utilizes a qualitative research approach, sourcing data from academic journals, policy studies, media publications, and government comments. The results indicate that the prevalence of kidnappings has significantly impacted Nigeria's international image, diminished investor trust and straining diplomatic relations. Notwithstanding governmental efforts, inadequate law enforcement, judicial inefficiency, and socio-economic instability persist in exacerbating the issue. The report advocates for the fortification of law enforcement agencies and the judicial system via specific reforms to improve efficiency and accountability. Moreover, the provision of equipment and training for security personnel, coupled with enhanced intelligence-sharing and international cooperation, is crucial for addressing the abduction crisis and rehabilitating Nigeria's global reputation.

1.0 Introduction

The level of growth and global perception of a state are closely related to the stability of its domestic affairs. A state afflicted by internal crises, conflicts, and social vices struggles to achieve sustained development or retain a positive reputation on the world stage. In Nigeria, the frequency of abduction during the Fourth Republic has not only damaged internal stability but also substantially tarnished its image among the comity of countries. The country's international prestige is shaped by the balance of its domestic affairs, its stance on major global problems, and its capacity to project power and importance.

Kidnapping has evolved as one of the most ubiquitous security concerns in Nigeria, having serious ramifications for both national stability and international reputation. Initially centered in the southern regions, targeting foreign nationals and oil workers, the epidemic has expanded into a statewide crisis, affecting persons across all societal strata. Rooted in political instability, young unemployment, and economic insecurity (Slack, 2016; Inyang, 2009), kidnapping has transitioned from a tactic for militants in the Niger Delta into a broader criminal industry that threatens social safety and governance mechanisms. Wright et al. (2017) correctly identify kidnapping as a defining aspect of instability in Nigeria throughout the Fourth Republic.

Historically, the targets of kidnapping in Nigeria were mostly wealthy individuals and political elites, but the scope has recently broadened to include traditional authority such as kings and community leaders. The abduction of traditional rulers, such as the Emir of Kajuru in Kaduna State, shows the daring of criminal forces and highlights the breakdown of cultural norms that traditionally defended such institutions (Ezeibe et al., 2017). These occurrences destabilize communities and weaken the power of organizations that serve as symbols of unity and cultural heritage.

In the education sector, kidnapping has had a disastrous impact, hindering Nigeria's progress toward reaching Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes "quality education for all." The mass abduction of nearly 200 schoolgirls in Chibok by Boko Haram in 2014 remains a tragic illustration of how kidnapping affects schooling (Amnesty International, 2014). More recently, the abduction of 39 students from the Federal College of Forestry Mechanization in 2021 and over 100 students from Bethel Baptist High School further highlight how insecurity cripples access to education (BBC News, 2021). These occurrences have forced school closures and generated a climate of fear among students and parents, further impeding educational development in afflicted districts.

The Fourth Republic, beginning in 1999, signified Nigeria's return to democracy after years of military control. However, this time has been characterized by increased insecurity, with kidnapping becoming a dominating form of violent crime. Initially driven by economic objectives such as ransom payments, kidnapping has grown into a tool for political leverage, terrorism, and banditry. High-profile examples like the Chibok schoolgirls' kidnapping have attracted international attention to Nigeria's inability to protect its citizens and institutions, increasing global impressions of lawlessness and governance failings (Amnesty International, 2014). The continuance of this scourge reveals structural governance concerns, including inadequate law enforcement, corruption, socioeconomic inequality, and the expansion of organized crime. Despite various government interventions, including as military operations and legislative measures, the problem continues to rise as offenders adopt increasingly sophisticated strategies. This failure has not only damaged public trust in the administration but also weakened Nigeria's international stature.

Nigeria's international reputation has suffered considerably due to the prevalence of abduction throughout the Fourth Republic. The abduction of foreign nationals in the Niger Delta and the numerous kidnappings of students in the North have reinforced worldwide narratives of lawlessness and state ineffectiveness. These misconceptions have prevented foreign direct investment (FDI), diminished tourism, and strained diplomatic relations. International bodies and human rights organizations have regularly criticized Nigeria for its weak reaction to the kidnapping epidemic, asking more prompt action to address the underlying causes of insecurity (BBC News, 2021).

The growth of abduction during Nigeria's Fourth Republic poses substantial problems to the country's domestic stability and international prestige. As one of the most

serious internal crises, abduction has escalated into a socio-political and economic menace, ruining Nigeria's image abroad. Despite being regarded as the "Giant of Africa," this position has increasingly been a source of scorn as incidences of abductions—often targeting people, communities, and even foreign nationals—dominate global headlines. These depictions of insecurity and instability weaken Nigeria's reputation among the comity of nations. This study critically evaluates the ramifications of kidnapping for Nigeria's worldwide image, highlighting the broader socioeconomic and political consequences. It also tries to fill the study gap on how kidnapping affects global perceptions of the nation. With its focus on tackling the structural factors fueling the abduction epidemic, this report intends to give concrete solutions to lessen its impact and restore Nigeria's global standing. Through an investigation of trends and ramifications, the study proposes a framework to rehabilitate the nation's image and dignity. Ultimately, the study hopes to contribute to policymaking and intellectual discourse, ensuring that Nigeria reclaims its proper status as a respected and important "Giant of Africa" in the global world. With the aforementioned backdrops, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- To examine the impact of kidnapping cases on Nigeria's worldwide image and diplomatic relations
- To propose actionable solutions and recommendations that can help resuscitate Nigeria's image among the comity of nations.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of government policies and international cooperation in addressing the kidnapping crisis and mitigating its effects on Nigeria's international image

2.0 Literature Review

Conceptualizing Kidnapping as a Criminal Offence

Kidnapping is a serious criminal offence that involves the unlawful seizure, abduction, or detention of an individual against their will, typically for purposes such as ransom, coercion, or exploitation. According to Section 364 of the Criminal Code Act of 1999, as enshrined in the Constitution of Nigeria, kidnapping is defined as the unlawful abduction and detention of individuals against their will. The act is categorized as illegal imprisonment and extends to scenarios where the victim is either taken outside the country or confined within the country under conditions that obstruct legal intervention (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Legally, the offence is characterized by the deprivation of liberty, intent to abduct or restrain, and lack of consent from the victim or their legal guardian in the case of minors (Cornell Law School, 2023). It is widely classified as a felony due to its severe violation of personal freedom and societal norms. Penalties often include lengthy prison terms, fines, or even capital punishment in aggravated cases where victims are harmed or killed (UNODC, 2020).

The legal definition varies across jurisdictions, but the core elements remain consistent, emphasizing the intentional and unlawful nature of the act. Kidnapping has devastating psychological impacts on victims, ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to emotional distress. Victims often experience flashbacks, anxiety, and nightmares long after their release, undermining their sense of safety and security (American Psychological Association, 2022). Additionally, the trauma extends to families, who endure significant emotional strain during ransom negotiations or prolonged absences of loved ones. These psychological consequences highlight the need for comprehensive victim support systems, including counselling and reintegration programs. Addressing the mental health aspect of kidnapping is critical for ensuring the well-being of survivors and their families.

The prevalence of kidnapping is often linked to socio-economic and political factors. High levels of poverty and unemployment drive individuals to resort to kidnapping as a means of financial survival, particularly in regions with wide economic disparities (World Bank, 2021). In areas with weak law enforcement, corruption, and poor judicial systems, kidnapping thrives due to low risks of apprehension and prosecution (UNODC, 2020). Additionally, terrorist and insurgent groups frequently use kidnapping as a tool for political leverage, fundraising, or instilling fear in civilian populations. For instance, groups such as Boko

Haram in Nigeria have used mass abductions to further their extremist agendas (Amnesty International, 2021).

Nigeria's Global Image Before and During the Fourth Republic

Nigeria's global image has undergone remarkable shifts, particularly from the pre-independence era through the Fourth Republic (1999–present). Before the Fourth Republic, the country was viewed as a land of immense potential due to its abundant natural resources and cultural diversity. However, post-independence challenges such as military coups, authoritarian regimes, and civil conflicts, including the Biafran War, painted a picture of political instability and social unrest (Akinrinade, 2006). During the early years of the Fourth Republic, the return to democratic governance under President Olusegun Obasanjo heralded a new beginning. Policies focused on debt relief, regional leadership in ECOWAS, and anti-corruption measures sought to reposition Nigeria favourably on the global stage (Ogundiya, 2010). Despite these efforts, lingering challenges have hindered Nigeria's global standing. Persistent issues such as corruption, poverty, and insecurity have tarnished the country's image internationally. For instance, Nigeria's low ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index reflects widespread governance issues (Transparency International, 2021). Similarly, the Niger Delta crisis, marked by militant activities and oil-related conflicts, contributed to perceptions of a volatile and unpredictable nation-state (Eweje, 2006). The periodic outbreaks of violence, combined with systemic governance weaknesses, have continued to challenge Nigeria's attempts to sustain a positive global image.

Factors Influencing Nigeria's International Reputation

Nigeria's international reputation has been shaped by a variety of factors, most notably corruption, insecurity, and governance challenges. Corruption remains a prominent issue, with high-profile cases involving public officials often attracting international attention. One such case was the recovery of stolen funds linked to former military ruler Sani Abacha, which exemplified the scale of corruption in Nigeria (Smith, 2007). Illicit financial flows, estimated at over $15 billion annually between 2005 and 2014, further exposed Nigeria's financial mismanagement and weakened its credibility on the global stage (Global Financial Integrity, 2020). Insecurity has also significantly influenced global perceptions of Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency, which gained international notoriety after the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok in 2014, brought Nigeria into the global spotlight for its inability to ensure citizen safety (Amnesty International, 2015). Broader governance challenges—ranging from electoral malpractice to inconsistent policy implementation have fostered a narrative of inefficiency and instability (Olu-Adeyemi, 2012). These factors collectively contribute to an image of a country struggling to meet its potential, despite its vast resources and influence within Africa.

Role of High-Profile Incidents in Shaping Global Perceptions

Kidnapping incidents in Nigeria, particularly those involving high-profile or vulnerable targets, have become a significant concern both domestically and internationally, exposing deep-seated security and socio-economic challenges. The 2014 abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls by Boko Haram stands as one of the most globally recognized kidnapping incidents in Nigeria's history. This event prompted worldwide outrage, amplified through the #BringBackOurGirls campaign, supported by prominent figures like Michelle Obama and Malala Yousafzai, and fueled by international media coverage (Zenn & Pearson, 2014). The Chibok case not only highlighted the insurgency's grip on northeastern Nigeria but also underscored the Nigerian government's slow and, at times, inadequate response to such crises, attracting criticism from the international community (Amnesty International, 2015). More recently, the 2021 abduction of schoolboys in Kankara by armed bandits reaffirmed the alarming regularity of kidnappings in the country. The incident, which occurred despite increased national and regional security efforts, drew attention to the shifting dynamics of insecurity in Nigeria. Unlike Boko Haram, bandit groups operating in the northwest engage in kidnapping largely as a financially motivated crime, illustrating the growing commodification of abductions in the region (Daily Trust, 2021). These high-profile cases further cement Nigeria's international reputation as a country grappling with systemic security challenges,

which are exacerbated by weak governance structures, underfunded security agencies, and poor socio-economic conditions (Ewi & Salifu, 2017).

The abduction of foreign nationals has further intensified global scrutiny. In the oil-rich Niger Delta, where expatriates have often been targeted, the stakes are particularly high. For example, kidnappings of oil workers have prompted foreign governments to issue advisories and, in some cases, intervene diplomatically. Such incidents underscore Nigeria's inability to provide adequate security in areas critical to its economic stability and international partnerships (US Department of State, 2023). The persistent insecurity in the Niger Delta has led to the withdrawal of key investors, with many multinational corporations either scaling back operations or exiting Nigeria altogether due to heightened risks (Omeje, 2006).

The international media coverage has been playing a crucial role in shaping global perceptions of Nigeria's kidnapping crisis. Media outlets like CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera have provided extensive coverage of high-profile cases, often focusing on the human cost and government failures to resolve such incidents promptly. While this coverage raises awareness of Nigeria's security challenges, it also contributes to a narrative of instability and weak governance, overshadowing any progress made in other sectors (Ikelegbe, 2005). For instance, the framing of Nigeria as a hub for criminal activities such as kidnapping and insurgency has deterred foreign direct investment (FDI), as investors perceive the environment as too risky for business (World Bank, 2021). However, the socio-economic factors driving kidnapping in Nigeria cannot be ignored. High levels of poverty, youth unemployment, and income inequality create fertile ground for criminal activities, including kidnapping. Studies have shown that economically marginalized regions, such as the northern and southern parts of Nigeria, are hotspots for these crimes (Eme & Onyishi, 2014). Addressing these root causes is essential for reducing the prevalence of kidnappings and their subsequent international implications.

The consequences of these incidents extend beyond individual victims, affecting Nigeria's broader socio-economic and diplomatic landscape. Foreign governments frequently issue travel advisories warning their citizens against travelling to Nigeria due to the risk of kidnappings and other violent crimes, significantly impacting the country's tourism sector. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2022), Nigeria has struggled to attract international tourists, with safety concerns being a major deterrent. Similarly, FDI has declined as companies seek safer investment climates, depriving the country of much-needed economic growth and development (UNCTAD, 2021). The international condemnation of Nigeria's kidnapping crisis has strained diplomatic relations with key allies. Countries whose citizens have been abducted often press the Nigerian government to take swift action, with some even threatening to downgrade diplomatic ties if security concerns are not addressed. This dynamic was evident in cases involving Italian and Filipino expatriates, where their governments openly criticized Nigeria's handling of security issues (Eme & Ibietan, 2012). The reputational damage from such incidents undermines Nigeria's efforts to position itself as a regional leader and a reliable partner in global affairs. In sum, the pervasive issue of kidnapping in Nigeria has far-reaching implications for the country's international image, socio-economic stability, and diplomatic relations. While high-profile incidents like the Chibok and Kankara abductions bring global attention to Nigeria's security challenges, they also expose deeper systemic issues that require urgent attention. Addressing these challenges will necessitate not only enhanced security measures but also a concerted effort to tackle the underlying socio-economic drivers of kidnapping.

Empirical Reviews

Okafor and Ede (2021) examined the connection between capital flight and the rate of kidnapping in emerging nations. According to the study, there is a positive correlation between capital flight and abduction rate, indicating that higher levels of capital flight are linked to higher kidnapping rates. The researchers offer a number of potential justifications for this discovery. Economic uncertainty brought on by kidnapping deters investment and encourages capital flight, while wealth owners' behavior is changed by the fear of being abducted, which may also promote capital flight. Kidnapping weakens social cohesiveness and trust, which discourages the investment required to stop capital flight. It can also upset labor markets and

lower household incomes, which lowers demand and causes capital flight. Additionally, the study concludes that in fragile emerging nations, the beneficial impact of kidnapping on capital flight is more pronounced. This is due to the fact that fragile nations lack the institutions and regulations necessary to handle the fallout from crimes and lessen their detrimental effects. In order to lessen the negative effects of kidnapping, the researchers contend that politicians in developing nations must address the underlying reasons of the crime and fortify existing institutions. Additionally, they advise rich countries to help developing countries address their crime problems.

According to George and Obileye (2021), kidnapping and hostage-taking have grown significantly in Nigeria, particularly in the twenty-first century. Drawing from extant literature and theories, the author examines the patterns, causes, and ramifications of kidnapping in Nigeria. The author claims that kidnappings in Nigeria have increased for a number of reasons, including trafficking, politics, rituals, and ransom. Kidnapping has many different and intricate causes. The economy, society, businesses, and victims are all significantly impacted by kidnapping. Victims experience trauma, financial loss, and in certain situations, even death. Because of the instability, businesses and investors are hesitant to operate in Nigeria, which has an impact on the economy. Interpersonal ties and social interaction are also impacted by kidnapping. The author suggests that the Nigerian government strengthen security personnel by giving them resources, training, and equipment in order to prevent kidnapping. Kidnapping can be made less appealing by lowering possibilities and raising the hazards of kidnapping through intelligence and surveillance. Campaigns for public awareness can also teach people how to lessen their risk of being abducted.

According to Jamilu and Bello (2017), youth unemployment and poverty have fueled an increase in abduction as a means of generating income. Corrupt politicians have exploited jobless youths as political thugs who then turn into kidnappers, even though corruption and abduction are not directly related. They contend that victims of kidnapping suffer grave consequences. Kidnapped children are susceptible to health hazards, sexual abuse, and psychological damage. Families of victims also experience financial hardship, illness, and sadness as a result of paying ransoms. The government of Nigeria must handle insurgency, poverty, unemployment, and corruption in order to combat abduction. Security organizations must enhance their rescue and surveillance capabilities. Strong punishments for abductors could also serve as a deterrent. Through collaboration and awareness campaigns, non-governmental organizations and foreign governments can help.

In his analysis of the relationship between state governance and security problems throughout Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999–2015), Malasowe (2016) makes the counterintuitive claim that democratic governance has actually made insecurity worse rather than better. The research attributes the rise in security concerns, such as organized crime, militancy, and insurgency, to governance shortcomings, corruption, and inadequate institutional frameworks. Regarding the subject under consideration, Malasowe (2016) offers a fundamental viewpoint on how systemic governance shortcomings have fueled Nigeria's security challenges, particularly the growth in kidnappings. The report emphasizes how criminal networks have flourished due to ineffective official response procedures, thus harming Nigeria's standing internationally. While democratic administration is supposed to promote stability, the paper's consideration of the paradox of democracy supports the claim that, in Nigeria's situation, ineffective law enforcement and weak leadership have increased security risks, notably the surge in kidnappings. Additionally, Malasowe's (2016) study subtly draws attention to how Nigeria's ongoing security issues have damaged its reputation abroad. Perceptions of Nigeria as a dangerous place for investment, travel, and diplomatic contacts are strengthened by the rising number of kidnapping cases, especially those involving foreigners and well-known people. The study's focus on governance shortcomings implies that in order to address Nigeria's abduction crisis, more extensive institutional reforms are needed in addition to security measures in order to fortify the rule of law and win back international trust. The argument that Nigeria's declining security situation has had a major impact on its international standing is thus supported by Malasowe's (2016) research, which is a valuable academic resource for comprehending the larger governance and security dynamics that have fueled kidnapping in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Theoretical framework: Constructivism

Constructivist theory in International Relations (IR) emphasizes the social production of international realities through the interaction of ideas, norms, identities, and perceptions. Unlike Realism and Liberalism, which emphasize on material power and institutional collaboration, Constructivism maintains that international relations are formed by intersubjective meanings and shared understandings. The theory maintains that the identities of states and non-state actors, as well as the norms guiding their behaviour, are not pre-given but are socially formed through discourse and interaction (Wendt, 1992). For instance, a state's international image or reputation is determined by how others perceive its adherence to principles such as human rights, security, and governance. These impressions determine how states cooperate, establish alliances, and address global concerns.

The core beliefs of Constructivism include the role of ideas, norms, and identities in determining state action and the international system. Constructivists contend that material variables, such as military might or economic resources, gain meaning solely through the common ideas that define them (Adler, 1997). Another essential premise is the concept of agency and structure, which stresses that states and other actors can affect the international system while also being influenced by it. Norms, such as those supporting security or justice, evolve through social interaction and are absorbed by states, impacting their policies and international activity. Constructivism also underlines the function of language and discourse in shaping the narratives that shape state action and identity (Onuf, 1989).

Constructivist theory provides a good framework for examining how the surge in abduction under Nigeria's Fourth Republic has influenced the country's international image. As Constructivism emphasizes the relevance of norms, identities, and perceptions in international relations (Wendt, 1992), it shows how acts of kidnapping, especially when they involve foreigners or international organizations, influence the social construction of Nigeria's global reputation. These instances are not just considered as internal security concerns but also as reflections of Nigeria's capacity to comply to international norms of governance and human security. Consequently, Nigeria's identity in the international system becomes associated with insecurity, instability, and inadequate governance, affecting its capacity to attract foreign investment and maintain positive diplomatic ties.

One key principle of Constructivism is that rules and concepts determine state behaviour and perceptions. In the Nigerian context, the frequent occurrence of kidnapping contradicts universally accepted norms of human security and state responsibility. These norms are crucial in influencing the expectations of governments and non-state actors in their interactions. Internationally, Nigeria's inability to prevent kidnapping instances contributes to a narrative that it struggles with law enforcement and governance, losing trust among foreign investors, tourists, and international partners. Such perceptions are socially formed through discourse in global media, diplomatic reports, and international forums, sustaining Nigeria's poor image (Adler, 1997).

Constructivism also highlights the function of language and speech in shaping international relations (Onuf, 1989). The worldwide discourse on Nigeria's kidnapping epidemic, bolstered by international media outlets and foreign governments issuing travel advisories, generates a narrative of insecurity. This discourse frequently based on high-profile events such as the kidnapping of schoolgirls or expatriates, becomes a lens through which the world community views Nigeria. The repeated characterization of Nigeria as a "dangerous" or "fragile" state not only harms its reputation but also inhibits its potential to engage successfully in international diplomacy. This underlines the Constructivist perspective that the international system is not only formed by material forces but also by shared ideas and perceptions.

Finally, Constructivism illustrates how Nigeria's foreign interactions are shaped by its built identity. The perception of Nigeria as a state grappling with insecurity can lead to exclusion from crucial diplomatic platforms, diminished foreign investments, and strained relations with international allies. For instance, Nigeria's efforts to project itself as a regional leader in Africa and a destination for economic growth are hindered by the social construction of its image as unsafe. Moreover, the inability to address kidnapping events diminishes Nigeria's credibility in supporting global security

principles, further isolating it from foreign alliances. This corresponds with Finnemore's (1996) notion that governments' adherence to norms determines their legitimacy and stature in international society. Addressing abduction, therefore, becomes crucial not only for domestic stability but also for altering Nigeria's international image.

3.0 Methodology

This study takes a qualitative research approach to analyze the impact of abduction on Nigeria's foreign image during the Fourth Republic. The qualitative technique is suited for this research as it provides for an in-depth knowledge of complex socio-political concerns, depending on interpretative analysis rather than numerical data. Data for this study are acquired mostly from printed journals, policy studies, media articles, and governmental declarations. These sources provide vital insights into the historical trends, policy responses, and foreign opinions surrounding the abduction epidemic in Nigeria. Secondary data from scholarly articles, periodicals, and official government reports serve as the foundation for studying the topic completely.

The research applies theme analysis to discover repeating patterns, storylines, and views in existing literature and reports. The thematic analysis entails methodically categorizing data into topics that reflect the essential components of the investigation, such as the socio-economic drivers of kidnapping, government interventions, and international reactions. This method provides for a detailed study of the ramifications of kidnapping for Nigeria's worldwide reputation by examining the presentation of episodes in global media, diplomatic responses, and foreign policy revisions. Additionally, current material is critically analyzed to identify gaps and provide a comprehensive perspective of the topic area.

Reliability and validity are ensured through triangulation, which involves cross-referencing multiple sources to verify facts and interpretations. Hence, drawing from varied and trustworthy academic and policy sources, the study guarantees a balanced analysis free from biases. Ethical considerations are also observed, with care taken to appropriately portray findings and minimize misinterpretation of sensitive data. The ultimate purpose is to provide actionable recommendations anchored in well-documented facts and intellectual discourse, contributing to both academic and policy discussions on Nigeria's worldwide image and security problems.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents a thematic analysis of the impact of kidnapping on Nigeria's international image based on the study's objectives. The analysis is structured around three core themes: (1) the impact of kidnapping incidents on Nigeria's international image and diplomatic relations, (2) actionable solutions to restore Nigeria's reputation, and (3) the effectiveness of government policies and international cooperation in mitigating the crisis.

The Impact of Kidnapping Incidents on Nigeria's International Image and Diplomatic Relations

The regular frequency of kidnappings in Nigeria has had far-reaching implications on its global perception, diplomatic relations, and economic partnerships. Several significant features indicate how these episodes have altered the country's standing on the world scene. Kidnapping cases, particularly those involving foreign nationals, have branded Nigeria as an unstable nation. International media channels like as BBC News, CNN, and Al Jazeera routinely report on kidnappings, reinforcing worldwide stereotypes of Nigeria as a lawless and dangerous state ((Ezeanya & Azubuike 2024). This bad picture deters foreign investors, tourists, and international development partners, who regard Nigeria as a high-risk environment. According to the Opene and Opebe (2023), Nigeria constantly ranks among the most insecure countries due to its high prevalence of violent crimes, including kidnapping.

The insecurity caused by rampant kidnappings has significantly impacted Nigeria's ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Investors are unwilling to devote resources to a country where company activities are routinely disrupted by security threats (AbdulKarim, 2024). Data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022) indicate a fall in FDI inflows to Nigeria, particularly in industries such as oil, gas, and infrastructure development. Multinational firms have either scaled back their operations or

adopted stronger security measures, raising the cost of doing business (Olulowo, Babawale and Anani), 2021). Nigeria's reputation for kidnapping has also damaged diplomatic relations with international governments. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada have issued travel recommendations warning their nationals against coming to Nigeria due to security concerns (Ojo and Oluwole 2024). These advisories effect international trade, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic activities. Additionally, events involving the kidnapping of expatriates have led to tensions between Nigeria and impacted nations, with certain governments seeking more dramatic efforts to protect their residents (Malasowe, 2016).

Nigeria's ability to play an influential role in global and regional affairs is further undermined by the prevalence of abduction. As the so-called "Giant of Africa," Nigeria is expected to spearhead peacekeeping missions, economic projects, and diplomatic negotiations across the continent. However, the country's internal security issues damage its credibility (Okafor & Ede, 2023). The African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and other regional organizations increasingly regard Nigeria as a state failing to maintain stability inside its boundaries, raising concerns about its efficacy in contributing to continental security (ECOWAS, 2022).

Actionable Solutions to Restore Nigeria's Reputation

Law enforcement agencies and the legal system must be bolstered to confront the kidnaping epidemic in Nigeria. The police, military, and other security personnel must be sufficiently equipped, trained, and incentivized to combat kidnapping efficiently (Jamilu & Bello, 2017). Additionally, the justice system must ensure speedy and severe penalties for violators to serve as a deterrence. Corruption within these institutions should also be removed to restore public faith in the government's ability to police law and order (Ezeanya & Azubuike, 2024)). Advancements in technology offer potential possibilities for tracking and preventing kidnappings. The Nigerian government can invest in surveillance systems, biometric identification, and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven security technologies to monitor high-risk regions (Saminu, Muhammad and Empowerment, 2022). The use of drones, GPS tracking devices, and facial recognition technologies can boost the ability to detect and respond to kidnapping occurrences in real-time (Geaorge and Obileye, 2021).

The business sector has a role to play in addressing Nigeria's kidnapping epidemic. Collaborative efforts between the government and corporations can lead to the formation of corporate-funded security initiatives, such as neighborhood watch programs and private security networks (Ogunnubi and Idowu, 2024). Companies operating in Nigeria can also help to security infrastructure development by sponsoring local law enforcement and intelligence-gathering operations (Abba, Abbas & Msughter, 2021). Addressing the core causes of kidnapping demands strong engagement with communities affected by instability. Civil society organizations, religious leaders, and local influencers can play a crucial role in sensitizing communities to the hazards of kidnapping and the necessity for collective security measures (Ibrahim, Ahmad & Shehu, 2021). Empowering kids through work opportunities and skill acquisition programs might help lessen the attraction of criminal activity. Nigeria cannot manage the kidnapping epidemic alone. Strengthening regional and international cooperation is vital in confronting transnational criminal networks involved in kidnappings (ECOWAS, 2023). Intelligence-sharing partnerships with neighboring nations, coordinated military operations, and extradition treaties for kidnapping suspects can boost Nigeria's capabilities to battle this issue (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022).

Effectiveness of Government Policies and International Cooperation

The Nigerian government has implemented several initiatives to reduce kidnapping, but their success remains questionable. The Nigerian government has initiated various military operations to combat kidnapping, including 'Operation Puff Adder' and 'Operation Safe Haven' (Osegboun & Oladipo, 2023). While these efforts have resulted to the release of kidnapped victims and the breakup of some criminal networks, they have not been sufficient to eradicate the problem. Bandits and kidnappers continue to adapt, finding new ways to escape security agents. Several legislative initiatives have been introduced to curb abduction,

including the Terrorism (Prevention) Act and various state-level anti-kidnapping statutes. While these laws provide a legal basis for punishing kidnappers, enforcement remains a challenge due to corruption, lack of resources, and judicial bottlenecks (Abdulkarim, 2024). Many arrested kidnappers avoid prosecution, continuing a cycle of impunity (Ojo & Oluwole, 2024).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The kidnapping crisis in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has had profound consequences for both national stability and international relations. The country's image has been marred by continuous reports of abductions, weakening investor confidence and straining diplomatic ties. Governmental efforts to address this issue have been met with mixed results, underscoring the need for more holistic and sustainable solutions. Addressing the root causes such as unemployment, poverty, and weak law enforcement is essential for long-term progress.

To restore Nigeria's reputation, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. **Strengthening Security Infrastructure** – The government should invest in modern surveillance technology, border controls, and intelligence-led policing to deter kidnappers effectively.

ii. **Community-Based Security Initiatives** – Local communities should be actively involved in intelligence-sharing and security efforts through neighbourhood watch programs and collaborations with law enforcement agencies.

iii. **International Cooperation** – Nigeria should enhance security collaborations with neighbouring countries and global partners to address transnational criminal networks involved in kidnapping.

iv. **Economic Empowerment Programs** – Addressing youth unemployment through vocational training and job creation initiatives can reduce the economic incentives for engaging in kidnapping.

v. Public Relations and Diplomatic Engagement – A strategic communication approach should be adopted to counter negative narratives, highlighting successful government interventions and progress in security reforms.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA: AN EXAMINATION OF 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT
Political parties have been the central thrust of democratic practice, and assessing the performance of political parties and credibility of elections in Nigeria has become a complex task. The 2023 general elections marked a significant shift in the country's political landscape. The study examines the performance of political parties in Nigeria's 2023 general elections, highlighting the challenges faced during the elections, identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses in party operations and as well the areas for improvement. Despite efforts to strength democratic institutions, the elections were marred by weak electoral governance, ethnic and regional dynamics, electoral law violations, godfatherism, money politics and vote buying which has undermined our democratic and electoral institution. This paper relied on secondary source of data collection such as party documents, electoral commission reports, journal articles, textbooks, newspaper, online publications and other relevant existing literatures, the theoretical framework adopt in this paper is the Institutional theory because it explains the linkage between Nigeria's electoral process and political parties' performance in Nigeria. Findings reveal that political parties are faced with numerous challenges such as lack of internal democracy, issue of party financing, lack of ideologies coherence, influence of ethnicity and religion, internal conflicts and factionalism. The paper emphasizes the need for strict compliance with electoral processes and transparency and accountability in the operations of political activities. Finally, the paper suggests a comprehensive electoral reform to address structural issues, increased accountability and transparency in the operations and financial activities of the parties.

Introduction

Election in Nigeria cannot be effective without the activities of political parties. In Nigeria, political parties continue to be the sole avenue for democratically elected leaders to take office (Sadeeque & Dele, 2017). Elections are institutional mechanisms stand as a legitimate means of choosing acceptable leaders who will represent the interest of the public at different stand of governance be it in aristocratic class or oligarchic (Seriki, Jimoh & Daniel, 2023). Elections have provided a means for the people to freely choose their representatives. Elections are thought to take place in every democracy, but not all of them are democratic. Elections that may feature a single candidate or a list of candidates with no other options are considered undemocratic. Even though there may be multiple candidates for each office, these elections are rigged or intimidated to guarantee that only the candidate approved by the government is selected. There might be real options in other elections, but only within the ruling party. According to Kirkpatrick (1984), these elections are not democratic. Elections guarantee democratic governance that lasts (Bamigbose, 2023).

Political parties are essential to democratic governance, because they serve as a conduit between the people and the government and a forum for citizen influence and participation in governance. Promoting the interests of their members, acquiring and retaining power within the government, and putting forward policy options are all crucial roles played by political parties in democracies. Political parties are most successful when they serve as significant avenues for selecting new leaders for the nation's evolving political landscape and for giving the public a say in the process. Political parties can also encourage public accountability, group efforts, public involvement, inclusivity, and legitimacy by making sure that the values and objectives of Nigerian citizens are taken into account during the governance processes. However, political Parties have been constrained to performance their primary responsibilities by internal flaws and obstacles in the political system.

Assessing the performance of political parties in Nigeria's 2023 general elections is crucial for understanding the country's democratic landscape. The 2023 elections marked 24 years of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria, with significant implications for the country's political stability and regional influence. Political parties played a major role in ensuring that democratic is sustained and consolidated. Even though Nigeria's democracy is improving, there are still issues with political parties, such as godfatherism, poor party structures, a lack of internal democracy, Internal conflict and crises, inadequate compliance with existing laws, and poor public outreach. These problems undermine democratic processes by impeding political parties' capacity to operate inclusively and successfully. Significant differences in political participation were brought to light by Nigeria's general elections in 2023, especially for women, youth, and people with disabilities. These groups encountered significant obstacles to representation and entry, underscoring the necessity of a thorough evaluation of political parties' contributions to inclusivity.

The 2023 general elections in Nigeria marked a significant period for evaluating the performance of political parties in the country. These elections included the presidential, gubernatorial, and legislative elections, with the participation of major parties like the All Progressives Congress (APC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), and Labour Party (LP), as well as other smaller parties. Historically, Nigeria's political scene has been dominated by two major parties: The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). However, the 2023 elections witnessed the emergence of the Labour Party (LP) as a disruptive "third force," signaling growing voter dissatisfaction with the traditional parties. Additionally, smaller regional parties like the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) also gained attention in specific areas, reflecting Nigeria's diverse and fragmented political landscape.

However, several empirical studies have been conducted on the challenges faced by political parties in Nigeria, electoral malpractices, misconduct in the activity's political parties as well as ineffectiveness of INEC to monitor the activities and campaign finance of political parties. There is dearth of empirical studies that assess the performance of political parties' activities in the 2023 general elections, hence the study.

Methodology

The study adopts secondary source of data collection. A wide range of literatures on political party and 2023 general elections were reviewed in order to get well-informed information's and findings to assess the performance of political parties during the 2023 general elections. Data were gotten from the official reports by the Independent National electoral Commission (INEC) on the outcomes and performance of political parties across the states, Political parties documents, Electoral Acts 2022, INEC handbooks on political party, journal articles, textbooks, online publications were consulted on the study.

Literature Review

Given Nigeria's crucial role in the democratic development of Africa, academics have been interested in the performance of political parties in the country's elections. A new perspective on party dynamics, voter behavior, and the larger difficulties of electoral governance is offered by the general elections in 2023. In order to place the 2023 elections within these frameworks, this review summarizes the body of research on Nigeria's political parties, electoral procedures, and democratic development.

Conceptual Clarification

Political party has been given a wide range of definitions by scholars in field of political science. A political party is a group of people who have banded together with the ultimate objective of running for office through elections. However, competitive and regular elections have come to at least define the character of liberal democracy. Momoh (2013) famously defines a political party as a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavors, the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they all agreed. This is not to say that the mere existence of political parties implies that a society is democratic or not. The foundational organizations of democracy, government, and the electoral process are political parties. In actuality, political parties have been romanticized to the point where academics argue that neither democracy nor democratic societies can be imagined. Stated differently, the presence of active political parties is essential to the survival of democracy in any given polity (Simebine, 2013:2).

In the same spirit, political parties are no longer relevant in guaranteeing legitimate elections and democracy, according to Diamond and Guntner (2011), Valelly (2000), and other scholars who have researched western democracies. The establishment and growth of an efficient multi-party system is a difficult task in Eastern Europe, which is just transitioning from a socialist one-party dictatorship to democracy.

Empirical Review

Political Party Dynamics in Nigeria

The political party system in Nigeria is frequently characterized by factionalism, a lack of ideological commitment, and weak institutional structures. According to scholars, the dominance of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) reflects a political environment in which political parties serve more as platforms for ideological governance than as means of acquiring power (Omotola, 2019).

According to Liebowitz and Ibrahim (2013), political parties since independence are constructed along ethnic politics The National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), which began as a national party but later reduced its social base to a cultural association, the Igbo State Union of the southeast; the Action Group in the West, which developed from the Yoruba cultural association Egbe Omo Oduduwa; and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), which developed from the northern cultural association, Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa. The First Republic's politics were framed as a struggle for hegemony by the elites of the main ethnic formations, with these ethno-regional elite blocs fighting against one another. Therefore, the First Republic was marked by widespread electoral fraud in the 1964 and 1965 elections, which led to a political crisis, the First Republic's eventual fall, and the military's intervention in Nigerian politics. They assert that, the second republic was largely a rebirth of first republic arrangement of political parties. The general elections of 1979 and 1983 were heavily influenced by regional and ethnic politics. Up to the Second Republic's fall on December 31, 1983, there was political, ethnic, and religious violence, vandalism, political unpredictability, and rivalry between and within parties. The Second Republic's political parties were

distinguished by their use of money, thugs, and the police during electioneering campaigns, their lack of internal party democracy, factions, and electoral fraud. General Babangida's military government later outlawed all of the political parties that had formed in the Third Republic to run for office. The government subsequently created two political parties: The Social Democratic Party (SDP), which is "slightly to the left," and the National Republican Convention (NRC), which is "slightly to the right." The 1999 Constitution established the Fourth Republic. By April 2011, there were 63 registered political parties in Nigeria, marking an unprecedented opening in the country's political landscape. Liebowitz and Ibrahim (2013) noted that numerous small parties exploited the opening of the political arena to register parties that turned out to be unprofitable but were intended to serve as conduits for the Independent National Electoral Commission's financial assistance to parties. However, Jinadu (2014) has maintained that Nigerian political parties have failed to meet the standards of electoral politics, competitive parties, and constructive diversity management.

In the 2023 elections, the Labour Party (LP) and other third forces emerged, challenging this dichotomy and casting doubt on smaller parties' ability to remain relevant in a fiercely competitive landscape (Okonkwo, 2023).

Studies revealed the role of third forces in the 2023 general elections, the emergence of LP signify a major dimension turn around in our political system. The APC and PDP duopoly are under threat from the Labour Party (LP) and other smaller parties that emerged in the 2023 elections. These third forces refer to political parties and candidates outside the regular dominant traditional parties in place during previous elections (APC- All Progressives Congress and PDP-People's Democratic party). the Labour party made significant changes across the country winning several seats at the National Assembly, States Assembly and governorship positions in some states. This giant stride marked a paradigm shift in Nigeria's political dynamics, labour party and other third forces were able to depend on the dissatisfaction of some electorates with the dominant parties. The potential of third forces to upend established political systems has been studied by academics, especially in urban and youth-dominated electorates (Onyejekwe, 2023). However, the ability of these movements to establish strong organizational frameworks and reach outside of cities is essential to their long-term viability. In his analysis of the Labour Party's performance, Obiora (2023) argues that the party's success in urban areas reflects a demand for change but highlights its limited reach in rural regions where traditional parties remain dominant. According to Aina, (2023), for the first time in the history of our political system, a third force candidate changed the narratives, because the strong performance of opposition parties stopped a winning candidate from getting the plurality and dominance of votes for the first time in our political dispensation (Fourth Republic, 1999 to date). To him, 37 percent of sub-national units were won by the third forces candidates which include the largest and viable states, Lagos and Kano. Scholars concluded that, the emergence of third forces in the 2023 elections has created inclusive democratic practice, competition and promote diversity in our political circle. Studies conducted on the 2023 general elections revealed that internal conflicts and crises undermines the performance of political parties during the election. Obi & Hassan, (2022), stated that, Internal conflicts and crises have been one the major issues affecting political parties, most political parties lack internal democracy and the legal and moral mechanism to resolve crises which has affect the performance and activities of political parties in carry out the required responsibilities.

Empirical studies also revealed that ethnic coloration characterized the dynamism of Nigeria's political system. Bande (2013), argues that, there are many factors that affect the dynamics and performance of political parties since inception, to him, colonial antecedents, regional, ethnic and religious cleavages; party splits, alliances and mergers; political and socio-cultural forces; constitutions and electoral laws; funding; ideological institutionalization; internal party democracy; and, the media are factors and challenges that undermines the performance of political parties in Nigeria. Nigerian political parties frequently use ethnic and regional divides to rally support, which serves to further polarize the country rather than promote unity (Adeyemi, 2021).

Studies conducted on the Electoral integrity and governance in Nigeria by Yakubu, (2023), stated the persistent challenges faced during elections activities which including vote-buying, voter intimidation, and manipulation of results. Innovations like the **Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)** introduced in

the 2023 elections aimed to enhance transparency, yet their effectiveness has been mixed. For example, Yakubu (2023) argues that while BVAS improved voter accreditation, logistical issues and delayed result transmission undermined trust in the process. Nwankwo and Chijioke (2023), point out that while technological reforms like BVAS and electronic results transmission have the potential to lessen electoral fraud, they also need strong implementation frameworks. However, ineffective technology deployment during the 2023 elections suggests that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is inherently inefficient (Ajayi, 2023).

Voter Behavior and Electoral Participation in Nigeria

voter participation rates are a direct indicator of the public's involvement in the democratic process, they have a significant impact on election results. Voter apathy and electoral violence have historically compromised Nigeria's electoral integrity, resulting in low turnout rates that distort outcomes and call into question the legitimacy of elected officials. This fact was highlighted by the general elections of 2023, which showed that even with notable advancements in online services and mobile connectivity, methods to increase voter turnout are still insufficient. Nigeria, for instance, has made significant strides in digital engagement, but the failure to convert these developments into higher voter turnout points to a gap between public resources and election participation (Igwe, 2021).

Dll (2023), stated that there are various factors that influenced voter's behavior and participation in the 2023 general elections. He argued that, media operation played a major role by sensitizing and educating the general public on the use of technology. He noted that, The INEC voter enrolment device (IVED), the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for voter accreditation and e-transmission of results for collation, and the INEC results viewing (IReV) portal, which allows the public to view polling station results in real time.

According to Amao & Alliu, (2024), voters' behavior and participation in electioneering processes are as a result of certain factors. He identified ethno-religious, regional affiliations, party affiliations or identification as a determinant factor that influences voter behavior and participation in the 2023 general elections. He added that, voter behavior and choice are driven by primordial sentiments, religion bias and party identification and this attest to the social divisions that have enveloped politics in the country since independence.

Prysby and Scavo, (1993), identified a number of social and attitudinal factors that could influence or determine voters' behavior in an election. On the one hand, they proposed that the main attitudinal factors that may influence a voter's behavior during elections are party affiliation, personal characteristics, political party affiliation, and evaluations of government performance. The social factors that impact voting decisions, however, were found to be gender, constituency, ethnicity, and religion.

In another study conducted by Agomor & Adams, (2014), aimed to clarify how voters choose between evaluative factors like a candidate's qualities and achievements, the effectiveness of the government, and party policy platforms, and non-evaluative factors like political affiliation, ethnicity, or familial ties all of which are primarily psychological in nature. The study's conclusions demonstrated that factors influencing voters' decisions in elections include evaluative justifications like issue-based campaigns, candidate charisma, and the degree to which the ruling party keeps its campaign pledges. They contended that this data bolsters Nordin's (2014) assertion that issue-based political campaigns give voters the chance to identify the best candidate among a number of contenders because they aid in defining economic issues facing a state and inform voters of the candidate best suited to provide workable solutions to address economic problems in general and citizens' welfare in particular.

In Nigeria, socioeconomic circumstances, political consciousness, and faith in the electoral process have all had an impact on voter turnout. Youth and urban voters' interest in the 2023 elections increased, primarily due to the "Obidient Movement" that backed Labour Party candidate Peter Obi. A growing disenchantment with traditional parties and a desire for accountability are reflected in this (Okafor, 2023). According to scholars, there are two determinants factors that influences voter behavior and participation in the 2023 general elections. They are:

Empirical studies conducted by Adebayo, (2023), he emphasized the role of youth mobilization in enhancing participation, the 2023 elections' involvement of young people highlights the value of grassroots initiatives and social media in energizing voters. Low voter turnout (roughly 27%), however, suggests persistent indifference and structural obstacles to voting (Adebayo, 2023). According to Eze and Adekunle (2022), ethnic and regional influences voter behavior during electioneering activities, Nigerian voting habits frequently reflect regional and ethnic allegiances, indicating a political culture in which identity politics predominate over campaigns driven by policy. In 2023 general elections, voters voted along ethnic and regional line, it was evident that Peter Obi of Labour Party had majority of his vote from his region, South-East region and also the APC also enjoyed ethnic and regional support as a result ethnic background of President Ahmed Tinubu.

Theoretical Framework

Institutional theory is a fundamental framework in political science and organizational sociology that helps explain how formal and informal structures, norms, and regulations influence how people behave in particular settings. It is framework that assesses the performance of political parties in Nigeria's general elections in 2023. In Nigeria's democratic setting, the theory shed light on the dynamics of political parties, institutional theory is a fundamental procedure, voter behavior and political competition. It first appeared in the second half of the 20th century as researchers tried to understand how institutions affected different social phenomena. According to institutional theory, actors' choices and actions within a system are greatly influenced by institutions, which include formal laws, rules, and unwritten conventions.

Early researchers who examined how societal structures influenced individual behavior and participation in the society, like Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, are credited with laying the foundation for institutional theory. However, thanks to important contributions from academics like Meyer & Rowan (1977), DiMaggio & Powell (1983), and Scott (1987), the modern development of Institutional Theory accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s. These academics concentrated on the ways that institutions give social systems consistency, legitimacy, and a feeling of order.

Institutional theory provides a useful lens through which to examine the complex dynamics of political and organizational structures in order to evaluate the performance of political parties in Nigeria's general elections of 2023. This theoretical framework clarifies how the electoral system's formal and informal norms, regulations, and practices influence the conduct of important participants.

The importance of actors in Institutional Theory is emphasized by Patriotta (2020). This viewpoint highlights the agency of people and organizations participating in the electoral process in relation to the performance of political parties. Voters, political parties, and election officials are viewed as active participants in the institutional environment, both influencing and being influenced by it. A thorough examination of how these actors maneuver through and impact electoral systems is made possible by this lens. According to Emordi, Ekaka, Chinemerem & Ayinor (2024), The theory also emphasizes the importance of the institutional environment, which includes the interaction between formal and informal institutions, in shaping political processes.

The Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The study adopts the institutional theory which play a significant role in assessing the performance of political parties in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. This theory helps us understand how institutions such as political parties, shape the behavior and actions of individuals and groups within them. In the context of Nigerian politics, institutional theory can be used to analyze the internal dynamics of political parties such as the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). For instance, a study on the impacts of internal party democracy on the performance of the party's inability to conduct free and fair primary elections led to internal party crisis and threatened the party's survival.

Institutional theory examines the role of external institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in shaping the behavior, activities and actions of political parties. For example, INEC's capacity to conduct credible elections can impact the performance of

political parties. Institutional theory is highly relevant to assessing political parties' performance in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. It highlights how the interplay of formal structures (e.g., INEC, electoral laws) and informal norms (e.g., party culture, voter behavior) shaped electoral outcomes. Strengthening institutional capacity, addressing systemic inefficiencies, and enhancing internal party democracy are essential for improving the performance of political parties in future elections.

Assessment of the Political Parties Performance in the 2023 General Elections

The performance of political parties in Nigeria's 2023 general elections highlights significant trends, challenges, and shifts within the country's political landscape. Established parties like the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) continued to dominate in terms of nationwide networks, resource mobilization, and electoral results. However, the elections also revealed the growing influence of smaller, third-force parties such as the Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), signaling a potential transformation in the dynamics of Nigerian politics. To Yargwa & Abada, (2024), political parties in Nigeria, particularly the dominant parties transgressed democratic principles and internal democracy driven by anti-party activities, defection and undemocratic practices.

The APC retained its status as the ruling party by winning the presidency with Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerging victorious. The party benefited from its extensive political machinery, strategic alliances, and ability to mobilize resources across key regions. However, the APC's performance was not without challenges. Internal party divisions, as well as controversies over governance under the outgoing administration, affected its popularity in some regions (Ajayi, 2023). According to Anene & Ndubuisi (2024), the APC performance can be linked to lack of internal democracy experienced during primary elections conducted within the party and during the electioneering period. Furthermore, it is evident that the APC performance in the subsequent elections were far better. Oyeleke, (2022), believed that political party's performance in general elections can be severely affected by an internal crisis and a lack of internal party democracy. Momodu and Matudi (2013), also subscribed that most political parties experienced crisis, defection and fractionalization as a result of lack of internal democracy.

Eze & Adekunle, (2022) stated that the PDP, historically one of Nigeria's most dominant parties since 1999, faced significant setbacks during the elections. Although its presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, secured a substantial number of votes, internal crises, including the rebellion of the G5 governors and leadership disputes, weakened the party's cohesion. This contributed to its inability to reclaim the presidency, highlighting the impact of internal party dynamics on electoral outcomes. However, Gabriel & Anietie, (2024), stated that, the PDP was a credible opposition in the 2019 general elections with Atiku Abubakar as the candidate and Peter Obi as the running mate. The party approached the 20023 election with weak structure and leadership tussle. The power tussle between Governor Wike of Rivers state and the Presidential Candidate, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku was one of the major contending issues that led to the failure of PDP during the 2023 general elections.

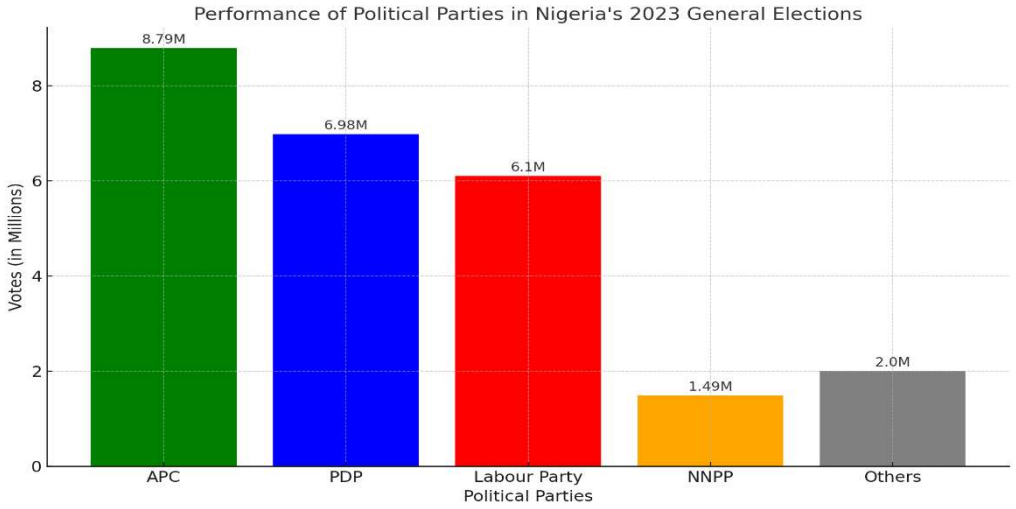
The Labour Party, led by Peter Obi, made remarkable strides, particularly among urban and youth voters. The party leveraged social media, grassroots mobilization, and public disillusionment with the APC and PDP to gain significant traction. While the Labour Party's stronghold was primarily in urban centers and the South-East region, it struggled to establish a robust presence in rural areas, limiting its overall impact. Nonetheless, its performance represented a shift towards a more pluralistic political landscape (Onyejekwe, 2023).

Okonkwo, (2023), noted that, the NNPP also emerged as a notable force, particularly in Kano State, where its candidate, Rabiu Kwankwaso, garnered widespread support. The NNPP's regional focus demonstrated the potential for smaller parties to challenge established players in localized contexts. However, like the Labour Party, the NNPP faced challenges in transitioning from regional influence to national relevance.

The 2023 general elections also underscored systemic issues affecting political party performance, such as the role of money politics, vote-buying, and allegations of electoral malpractice. While technological innovations like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System

(BVAS) were introduced to enhance transparency, inconsistencies in their implementation undermined trust in the process. These challenges disproportionately affected smaller parties, which lacked the resources to counter institutional weaknesses (Yakubu, 2023).

Overall, the performance of political parties in the 2023 elections reflected both continuity and change in Nigeria's political system. While established parties maintained their dominance, the rise of third-force parties highlighted the growing demand for alternative political platforms. This development underscores the need for reforms to enhance electoral integrity, strengthen internal democracy within parties, and address systemic inequalities in Nigeria's political landscape.



Source: INEC and various election reports (2023)

Factors that Influences Political Parties Performance in the 2023 General Elections

The performance of political parties in Nigeria's 2023 general elections was shaped by several interrelated factors, reflecting the complexities of the country's political landscape. Among these factors, the role of electoral reforms stood out prominently. The introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the electronic transmission of results aimed to enhance transparency and reduce malpractices. While these reforms were lauded for their potential, their uneven implementation affected party performance. Parties with robust technological adaptability, like the Labour Party, leveraged these innovations to engage urban voters effectively, while others struggled in regions where technical challenges arose (Yakubu, 2023).

Another critical factor was internal party dynamics. Weak internal democracy and factionalism plagued major parties like the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). The PDP faced significant setbacks due to the defection of key figures and the rebellion of the G5 governors, which undermined its cohesion and electoral strategy. Conversely, the Labour Party, with a grassroots-driven campaign led by Peter Obi, benefited from relatively stronger internal unity, capturing the support of disillusioned voters, particularly the youth (Ajayi, 2023).

The influence of regional and ethnic politics also played a significant role. Established parties like the APC and PDP capitalized on their extensive networks and ethno-regional affiliations to secure votes in specific strongholds. The New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) gained dominance in Kano State due to the popularity of its leader, Rabiu Kwankwaso, demonstrating the impact of regional loyalties. However, the Labour Party struggled to expand beyond urban centers and the South-East, reflecting the challenges of breaking entrenched regional voting patterns (Eze & Adekunle, 2022).

Voter turnout and electoral participation significantly influenced outcomes. The 2023 elections recorded a turnout of approximately 27%, one of the lowest in Nigeria's history. This low turnout reflected voter apathy and a lack of trust in the electoral process. Established parties with deeper grassroots structures, like the APC, managed to mobilize their base effectively despite the widespread disillusionment, while smaller parties faced challenges in reaching rural voters (Okonkwo, 2023).

Campaign financing and resource distribution were also decisive. The APC and PDP, as dominant parties, benefited from extensive financial resources, allowing them to fund large-scale campaigns and deploy agents nationwide. In contrast, the Labour Party and NNPP operated on relatively limited budgets, which constrained their ability to compete in rural areas and regions with high logistical demands (Onyejekwe, 2023).

Lastly, social media and informal institutions emerged as pivotal tools, particularly for the Labour Party. Social media platforms enabled smaller parties to bypass traditional media barriers and reach a younger, tech-savvy electorate. This dynamic was a game-changer, allowing third-force parties to build momentum despite institutional disadvantages (Yakubu, 2023). These factors collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of political party performance in the 2023 general elections, highlighting the need for systemic reforms to address structural inequalities and enhance democratic participation.

Challenges of Political Parties in Nigeria

Political parties in Nigeria are face with multitude of challenges that hinder their ability to effectively function and contribute to the democratic process. These challenges are deeply rooted in the country's historical, social, and political contexts, and they continue to impact the functioning and development of political parties.

One of the most significant challenges is the issue of party financing. Political parties in Nigeria are heavily reliant on financial contributions from a few wealthy individuals or interest groups, which can lead to the entrenchment of patronage systems and corruption. According to Galadima & Umar, (2017), managing a national and durable political party with a strong political base require huge financial backing and resources. Elections since 1999 has shown huge influence of money bag. This financial dependence often distorts the party's ideological and policy orientations, making it more prone to serving the interests of a small elite rather than the general population. According to a study by Iyoha (2014), the absence of robust mechanisms for political financing, coupled with the dominance of a few financial backers, undermines party democracy and weakens the political system.

Another key challenge is the lack of ideological coherence among political parties. Many Nigerian political parties are often criticized for their lack of clear ideological stances or policy platforms, which leads to a lack of direction in governance. Instead of being based on ideologies, Nigerian parties tend to be more focused on power struggles and personal ambitions. According to Liebowitz and Ibrahim (2013), the focus of party politics has shifted from ideology to personalities, ethnic groups, geopolitical zones, and power control. A national party's ideology plays a crucial role in communicating to the public its values and positions on social, political, and economic issues. Ideology is what gives a party its unique character and draws in voters. This lack of ideological clarity makes it difficult for voters to make informed choices, and it fosters a situation where political parties are more about competing for power rather than promoting coherent policies. As noted by Omotola (2012), the absence of ideological differences makes it easy for politicians to switch parties, further undermining party cohesion and stability.

In addition to ideological ambiguity, political parties in Nigeria face severe internal conflicts

and factionalism. These internal divisions often arise due to power struggles, disagreements over leadership, and competition for resources. As a result, parties frequently experience fragmentation, leading to splinter groups or the formation of new parties. These divisions weaken the party system, limit political stability, and create confusion among the electorate. For instance, the recent history of political parties like the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) shows how factionalism and infighting can cripple party operations and affect electoral outcomes.

Another challenge is the influence of ethnicity and religion on party politics. Nigeria is a highly diverse country, with deep ethnic and religious divides that often play a significant role in the formation and operation of political parties. Many political parties tend to reflect these divisions, leading to a politicization of ethnicity and religion that can hinder national unity and social cohesion. As highlighted by Akinwumi (2017), ethnic and religious considerations often override policy concerns, resulting in the marginalization of certain groups and creating a highly polarized political landscape.

Moreover, the electoral process itself poses a challenge to political parties in Nigeria. Electoral malpractices, including vote-buying, electoral fraud, and violence, have plagued Nigerian elections for decades. These issues distort the legitimacy of political parties and undermine the trust of the electorate. The role of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has also been questioned at times, with criticisms that it is unable to ensure free and fair elections. The prevalence of electoral malpractice further compounds the difficulties that political parties face in their pursuit of power.

However, political parties in Nigeria face a range of challenges that hinder their ability to foster democratic development. These challenges, which include financial dependence, ideological incoherence, internal divisions, ethnic and religious divisions, and electoral malpractices, have resulted in a weak party system that struggles to provide effective governance and meet the needs of the population. Addressing these challenges will require comprehensive reforms aimed at strengthening political institutions, ensuring better party financing mechanisms, promoting ideological clarity, and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's general elections in 2023 represented a turning point in the nation's political history, demonstrating both the continued dominance of long-standing political parties and the rise of fresh forces looking to alter the political landscape. The Labour Party (LP) and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) illustrated the expanding potential of alternative platforms, while the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) preserved their prominence through vast networks and resource mobilization. The elections revealed systemic issues, including low voter turnout, persistent challenges with internal party democracy, and inconsistencies in the implementation of electoral reforms such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). Despite these challenges, the performance of political parties underscored the evolving dynamics of voter behavior, regional politics, and the influence of technology in electoral processes.

The findings highlight the necessity of addressing critical structural and institutional weaknesses to foster a more inclusive and competitive political environment. This requires sustained efforts to improve electoral governance, promote internal democracy within parties, and enhance the trust of the electorate in the political process.

However, the study provides the following recommendations to enhance the performance of political parties and electioneering process in Nigeria. They are:

1. **Strengthening Electoral Reforms**: The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should address the difficulties encountered during the implementation of BVAS and electronic result transmission in order to increase transparency and credibility. Investing in strong infrastructure, especially in rural areas, and providing thorough training for electoral staff can reduce technical issues and guarantee consistent implementation of reforms.

2. **Encouraging Internal Party Democracy**: To combat factionalism and anti-democratic candidate selection procedures, political parties should give internal reforms top priority. Parties will become more cohesive and credible as a result of transparent and inclusive procedures, which will also make them more receptive to the demands of the electorate and members.

3. **Using Technology to Engage Voters**: Political Parties should keep using digital platforms and social media to reach out to voters, especially young people and those living in cities. Party members can improve their interaction with tech-savvy voters by receiving training on successful digital campaign tactics.

4. **Fostering Emerging Political Forces**: Smaller parties should receive institutional support, such as funding, media outlets, and voter education materials, in order to promote pluralism. Emerging parties can increase their influence outside of their local strongholds and create enduring networks with the aid of these policies.

5. **Strengthening Campaign Financing Regulations**: Strict enforcement of campaign finance laws is necessary to level the playing field. This entails keeping an eye on party spending and reducing the impact of money politics, which erodes electoral equity and gives established parties an unfair advantage.

By following these suggestions, Nigeria can create a more robust democratic system that promotes fair competition, motivates citizens to get involved, and represents the preferences of its diverse populace.

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CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD) IN IMPLEMENTING RURAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN NIGERIA

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Policy Inconsistency, Corruption, Rural Development, Sustainable Agriculture, Poverty Reduction, Food Security

ABSTRACT
The study investigates the challenges hindering the effective implementation of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria, particularly focusing on Borno, Kano, and Jigawa States. The necessity for this study arises from the persistent issues affecting agricultural growth in these regions, despite IFAD's financial and technical support. The objective of the study is to explore the barriers faced by IFAD in ensuring the success of its projects, with an emphasis on understanding local contextual factors. A survey method was utilized, employing both questionnaires and interviews to gather data. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using simple percentage to ensure clarity, while qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews was conducted through content analysis. The Planned Behavior Theory was adopted to frame the study, justifying its relevance in understanding how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control influence project implementation outcomes. The findings revealed critical challenges, including corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks, policy inconsistency, and the exclusion of farmers in decision-making processes. Based on these findings, two key recommendations were made: enhancing transparency and accountability mechanisms to combat corruption and increasing farmers' participation in the design and execution of agricultural projects to improve their effectiveness and sustainability. This research uniquely contributes to knowledge by providing a state-specific analysis of IFAD's implementation challenges, integrating behavioral insights into agricultural policy discussions, and offering a more practical approach than previous broad-based studies on rural development.

Introduction

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Nigeria's economy, with rural areas serving as the primary source of food and income for millions of people. Despite this, the country faces significant challenges in achieving sustainable agricultural development, particularly in rural areas (Adebayo & Olayemi, 2022). One of the international organizations committed to improving rural agricultural productivity in developing countries is the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Through its financing and technical support, IFAD has been instrumental in promoting rural development projects that aim to enhance food security, improve the livelihoods of rural farmers, and reduce poverty in Nigeria. However, despite the substantial efforts by IFAD, a myriad of challenges persists, hindering the successful implementation of rural agricultural development projects in the country (Eze & Igbokwe, 2024).

Some of the primary challenges include inadequate infrastructure, limited access to financing, weak institutional capacity, and unfavorable policy environments. Rural areas often suffer from poor road networks, lack of electricity, and insufficient irrigation systems, which affect the productivity of agricultural activities. Moreover, the financial constraints faced by farmers, coupled with limited access to credit and modern farming techniques, make it difficult for them to participate fully in IFAD's initiatives. Furthermore, despite the international and national commitments to enhancing agricultural development, the institutional frameworks in place to manage these projects are often weak or fragmented, leading to inefficiencies in the implementation of rural agricultural programs. Additionally, policy inconsistency and lack of coordination between the different levels of government (federal, state, and local) create an unfavorable environment for the successful execution of these projects (Olanrewaju & Abdullahi, 2021).

Another key challenge lies in the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria, which affects the sustainability of agricultural interventions. The country has been plagued by political instability, corruption, and conflicts, which divert attention and resources away from long-term agricultural development goals. As a result, even when funds are allocated, their proper utilization is often hindered by mismanagement or political interference. Furthermore, rural farmers are often left out of decision-making processes, making it difficult for IFAD's projects to effectively address the needs of the communities they are intended to serve (Ojo, 2023).

However, scholarly literature extensively discusses the challenges of implementing agricultural development projects in Nigeria. However, there is a notable gap in state-specific analyses, particularly concerning IFAD's implementation challenges in Northern states like Borno, Kano, and Jigawa. Most studies adopt a generalized national perspective, overlooking the unique socio-economic and security contexts of individual states. This oversight limits the understanding of localized challenges and the development of tailored interventions.

For instance, while the insurgency in Borno State poses distinct challenges to project implementation, the relatively stable Kano State face different issues such as bureaucratic delays or infrastructural deficits. Jigawa State's experiences with abandoned projects and substandard constructions highlight the need for stringent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Addressing these state-specific challenges requires a nuanced approach that considers the unique contexts of each state.

The current study fills this gap by conducting a simultaneous state-specific analysis of IFAD's implementation challenges in Borno, Kano, and Jigawa states. The objective is to identify localized obstacles and propose tailored strategies to enhance the effectiveness of rural agricultural development projects in these states.

Statement of the Problem

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has been instrumental in funding rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria. However, several challenges have hindered the full implementation and success of these initiatives. One significant challenge is poor coordination between IFAD and local government agencies, resulting in inefficient project execution. The lack of alignment between IFAD's objectives and the priorities of local stakeholders has led to delays in fund disbursement and a mismatch between project

goals and the needs of rural communities. According to recent data from the Nigerian Ministry of Agriculture, approximately 40% of IFAD-supported projects have faced delays due to administrative bottlenecks (NMA, 2023).

Another challenge is the inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within IFAD's framework. Without robust monitoring systems, it is difficult to assess the actual impact of agricultural projects. In a 2022 report, the Nigerian government noted that many rural development projects funded by IFAD failed to meet set targets, particularly in enhancing food security and improving farmers' incomes. For instance, the Rural Finance Institution Building Programme (RUFIN), which was aimed at improving rural access to finance, struggled to reach its full potential due to poor financial literacy and weak linkages between rural farmers and formal financial institutions (Adamu & Nwosu, 2022).

The limited availability of technical expertise has also hampered project implementation. Many rural farmers lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively adopt the modern farming techniques promoted by IFAD. This gap in skills, coupled with inadequate training programs, has undermined the sustainability of agricultural projects. A recent survey revealed that only 35% of rural farmers who participated in IFAD-funded projects were able to adopt new agricultural practices successfully (Adebayo & Nwachukwu, 2024).

Furthermore, insecurity in rural areas, exacerbated by conflicts and banditry, has posed a significant barrier to the smooth execution of agricultural projects. The increasing violence in regions such as North-Central Nigeria has led to the displacement of farmers and abandonment of farmlands, disrupting the flow of agricultural activities and, consequently, the success of IFAD's interventions. The above challenges point to the need for a more integrated approach that addresses infrastructure, capacity building, and governance in order to enhance the impact of IFAD's initiatives in Nigeria, hence the need for this study.

Research Questions

This study is guided with the following questions.

i. What is the challenges militating against IFAD in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Northern Nigeria?

ii. What strategies can IFAD adopt to effectively overcome the challenges faced in rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges that hinder the effective implementation of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) funded rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria. Therefore, the specific objectives include, to;

i. identify the challenges that hinder IFAD's efforts in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Northern Nigeria.

ii. explore effective strategies that IFAD can employ to address and overcome the challenges encountered in rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework/Review

This section defines key concepts related to the study of challenges faced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria, providing clarity for the investigation.

Rural Agricultural Development

Rural Agricultural Development refers to the process of improving agricultural practices in rural areas to increase productivity, income, and overall well-being for rural populations. It focuses on using innovative techniques, providing access to resources, and addressing challenges that limit agricultural potential in rural communities. Rural agricultural development aims to enhance food security, reduce poverty, and stimulate economic growth by promoting sustainable farming practices. By focusing on both social and economic aspects, it seeks to provide farmers with the knowledge,

tools, and infrastructure needed to improve crop and livestock production (Adebayo, Ajala & Olusegun, 2023).

One of the key goals of rural agricultural development is to enhance the livelihoods of rural farmers. This can be achieved through providing better access to agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation systems, as well as improving market access for rural produce (Ogundipe & Adeola, 2024). Moreover, fostering better linkages between rural farmers and urban markets plays a crucial role in ensuring fair prices and steady demand for farm produce. Training and education programs are also essential to improve farming techniques, which can help in increasing yields and ensuring environmental sustainability (Ajibade, Adeyemi & Alabi, 2023). In addition to these economic factors, rural agricultural development promotes social change by empowering rural communities. This empowerment helps to address inequalities, particularly gender disparities, by providing women with the opportunity to actively participate in agricultural development (Adeyemo & Olaniran, 2024).

From the above definitions, it is however pertinent to state that rural agricultural development is the efforts aimed at improving farming practices, increasing productivity, and enhancing the livelihoods of farmers in rural areas through better access to resources, technology, and support services.

Smallholder Farmers

Smallholder farmers are individuals who operate small-scale agricultural enterprises, usually with limited access to land, capital, and other resources. These farmers typically cultivate a variety of crops or raise livestock to support their households and generate income, often relying on traditional farming methods. According to Adeyemo, Bello and Olamide (2023), smallholder farmers are critical players in the agricultural sector, especially in developing countries, where they contribute significantly to food production and rural livelihoods. However, they often face numerous challenges such as limited access to credit, poor infrastructure, and fluctuating market prices, which hinder their productivity and income levels.

In many regions, smallholder farmers cultivate less than five hectares of land, and their farming activities are typically labor-intensive, relying on family labor rather than hired workers. As noted by Olajide and Akinyele (2023), these farmers frequently use low-input, low-output farming techniques that can lead to inefficiencies in production. Despite these challenges, smallholder farmers are highly resilient and adapt their farming strategies to local conditions, making use of available resources in innovative ways.

However, smallholder farmers are individuals or families who grow crops or raise animals on small plots of land, typically using limited resources and labor, to meet both their own needs and, occasionally, for local markets.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction refers to efforts aimed at improving the quality of life for people living in poverty by addressing the root causes that perpetuate poverty and providing means for individuals to escape it. Poverty is commonly understood as the lack of basic needs such as food, clean water, shelter, and access to healthcare and education. It is also linked to a lack of income, employment opportunities, and economic stability, which affect a person's ability to live a dignified life. The process of reducing poverty is multi-faceted and often involves improving economic opportunities, promoting access to education, healthcare, and social services, and implementing policies that create job opportunities and support sustainable livelihoods (Nwaogbe & Ifediora, 2022). In developing countries, poverty is deeply intertwined with structural inequalities, such as gender, racial, or regional disparities, which require targeted interventions to address.

Strategies for poverty reduction typically aim to increase household income, enhance access to education and healthcare, and ensure that basic services are accessible to all individuals, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable. International organizations, governments, and NGOs have implemented various programs aimed at reducing poverty through microfinance, social safety nets, and rural development initiatives (Akinwale & Owolabi, 2021). These programs seek to empower individuals by providing the tools and resources necessary to improve their livelihoods. For instance, microfinance initiatives provide low-interest loans to small-scale entrepreneurs to

help them start or expand businesses, thus fostering self-reliance and economic growth within poor communities.

Additionally, poverty reduction strategies often involve the improvement of infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and water systems, which can stimulate local economies and create more opportunities for education and employment. In some cases, providing direct cash transfers or food aid can temporarily alleviate the hardships of poverty while individuals or communities work toward long-term solutions. However, successful poverty reduction requires an integrated approach that combines economic growth with social inclusion, as merely improving economic conditions without addressing inequality may lead to unequal benefits, where only the more advantaged groups see improvements in their living standards (Abubakar, 2022).

From the researcher's point of view, poverty reduction refers to efforts aimed at decreasing the number of people living in poverty by improving their access to basic needs like food, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, thereby improving their quality of life and well-being.

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture refers to farming practices that aim to meet current food and fiber needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It integrates environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity, focusing on methods that are ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. Sustainable agriculture involves techniques like crop rotation, agroforestry, and organic farming, which help to preserve soil health, maintain biodiversity, and minimize the use of synthetic inputs. The core objective is to maintain a balance where agricultural production is increased or sustained over time without degrading the environment or overexploiting natural resources.

In recent years, the need for sustainable agriculture has become more pressing due to increasing environmental concerns and the growing global population. Climate change, soil erosion, water scarcity, and the depletion of natural resources pose significant threats to food security. Therefore, sustainable agricultural practices are not just beneficial but essential for long-term food production. Scholars emphasize that sustainable agriculture can reduce the environmental footprint of farming by using natural processes to manage pests, fertilize crops, and improve water retention. These practices not only help farmers to maintain a stable income but also support the health of the ecosystem by reducing the need for harmful chemicals and promoting biodiversity (Kassie, Shiferaw & Mmbando, 2024).

Furthermore, sustainable agriculture also seeks to improve the social well-being of rural communities by promoting fair labor practices and ensuring that local populations have access to nutritious food. For example, farmers are encouraged to use farming methods that require less capital investment, which in turn lowers their dependency on external markets for inputs. This can lead to greater financial resilience in rural communities. At the same time, sustainable farming practices can help increase food security, particularly in areas where traditional farming methods have been detrimental to the environment. This holistic approach addresses not only the environmental sustainability but also the social and economic sustainability of agricultural communities (Ndiritu, Mutinda & Wambua, 2023).

Meanwhile, sustainable agriculture refers to farming practices that meet current food needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, focusing on environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity for long-term agricultural productivity.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

This section examines the empirical review of various scholars on the challenges hindering the effective implementation of Rural Agricultural Development Projects by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Nigeria.

Challenges Militating against IFAD in Implementing Rural Agricultural Development Projects

Musa (2021) examined financial and infrastructural barriers impacting IFAD's agricultural projects, focusing on road networks, irrigation facilities, and access to agricultural

loans in Nigeria. The author conducted a quantitative study using structured questionnaires distributed to 400 farmers across three northern states. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify the relationship between infrastructure, financing, and the success of IFAD projects. The findings revealed that poor rural infrastructure and limited access to agricultural financing were among the critical challenges undermining IFAD's project implementation. Poor road networks and lack of storage facilities increased post-harvest losses, while inadequate access to credit facilities prevented farmers from purchasing necessary inputs. The study highlighted the need for government collaboration to improve infrastructure and financing solutions for rural farmers. The study recommended that IFAD collaborate with local governments and financial institutions to improve rural infrastructure and provide low-interest credit facilities to support farmers in project areas. Developing rural road networks and building storage facilities were suggested as essential steps to support agricultural productivity. While Musa's study focused on general infrastructural and financial challenges, it did not account for the specific infrastructure needs and funding access disparities in each of the three states. The present study fills this gap by highlighting how each state's unique infrastructure and financial ecosystem—affected by cultural and environmental factors—poses specific challenges for IFAD. For example, Borno's security concerns add a unique layer of difficulty in financing, which requires IFAD to implement more context-specific solutions.

Adamu (2023) assessed socio-political Challenges in Implementing Rural Development Projects: A Case Study of IFAD in Northern Nigeria. The study adopted a case study approach, conducting in-depth interviews and participant observations in rural communities in Borno, Kano, and Jigawa. The study focused on identifying socio-political issues that impede IFAD's project implementation, such as local leadership conflicts, security threats, and policy inconsistencies at the state level. A sample of 15 key informants, including community leaders, local government officials, and IFAD coordinators, provided detailed perspectives on the socio-political environment. The study discovered that socio-political instability and security challenges were major obstacles in rural areas, especially in conflict-prone regions like Borno. These factors disrupted project timelines, discouraged community participation, and increased costs. Additionally, the lack of coherent policies across the states and inconsistent support from local authorities led to administrative challenges, which ultimately slowed IFAD's progress. The study recommended that IFAD work closely with local governments to ensure policy alignment and build trust within communities. A stronger focus on security collaboration with local enforcement agencies was advised to create safer environments for project activities, especially in areas with security risks. The study primarily addressed broad socio-political challenges but did not differentiate between the unique socio-political climates in each state. The present study fills this gap by analyzing how specific community-based socio-political challenges vary across Kano, Jigawa, and Borno states emphasizing the need for IFAD to adopt adaptable strategies suited to each state's context.

Strategies to employ in overcoming the challenges facing IFAD

Musa and Lawal (2022), investigate *Agricultural Financing and Development in Nigeria's Rural Areas: A Comparative Approach. The authors* used mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with rural farmers and quantitative data analysis of project outcomes in selected Nigerian states. Their study found that limited access to financing and inefficient distribution networks constrained rural agricultural productivity. They recommended implementing a community-based financing model where IFAD collaborates with local cooperatives to extend small loans to farmers. This approach, they argued, would help overcome financial barriers and create an inclusive financing system that empowers local farmers. However, the study overlooked community-oriented strategies specifically tailored to address the unique agricultural and social conditions in Kano, Jigawa, and Borno states. Addressing these local contexts could increase community buy-in and make strategies more adaptable to the specific needs of these states.

Adegboye and Yusuf (2023), in their study titled *"Enhancing Agricultural Development through Rural Infrastructure Investment in Nigeria,"* employed a case study methodology focusing on infrastructure's role in improving rural agriculture. Their research included surveys

and in-depth interviews with stakeholders across 12 rural communities, highlighting that poor road networks and limited storage facilities were significant challenges to agricultural growth. They recommended that IFAD could focus on infrastructure development, such as farm-to-market roads and storage facilities, to reduce post-harvest losses and facilitate farmers' access to markets. Despite these findings, the study did not consider the need for locally adapted infrastructure solutions that align with the cultural and environmental conditions of Kano, Jigawa, and Borno states. This gap could be addressed by incorporating feedback from local community leaders and farmers on infrastructure priorities to ensure that facilities are beneficial and sustainable in each community.

Okeke and Chukwu (2024) evaluate *empowering Rural Farmers Through Agricultural Technology: IFAD's Role in Nigeria. The study* used an experimental design to examine the effects of technology adoption on productivity among rural farmers involved in IFAD projects. They randomly selected farmers in intervention and control groups to assess the impact of technology training on crop yield and income. Findings indicated that farmers who received training on modern techniques and inputs significantly increased their productivity compared to the control group. The authors recommended that IFAD enhance farmer training programs by incorporating continuous technical support and follow-up to ensure sustained technology adoption. However, the study did not adequately address community-specific strategies that could leverage indigenous knowledge and practices in Kano, Jigawa, and Borno. Integrating local agricultural knowledge with modern technologies may foster greater acceptance and ensure that the technology aligns with the environmental conditions of these states.

However, the reviewed studies highlight several strategies for IFAD, such as improving financing models, investing in rural infrastructure, and promoting agricultural technology. Nonetheless, a recurring gap is the lack of emphasis on community-oriented strategies tailored to the specific needs of rural communities in Kano, Jigawa, and Borno states. The current study fills this gap by proposing strategies that incorporate the socio-cultural contexts of these states, particularly focusing on participatory planning with local stakeholders. By engaging local community leaders and farmer cooperatives, the study seeks to foster community ownership and sustainable adoption of IFAD's projects, thus addressing a crucial gap in the literature on rural agricultural development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This paper employs Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as its framework of analysis. The theory developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, expands upon the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating perceived behavioral control as a critical determinant of behavioral intention and action. Ajzen proposed that human behavior is influenced by three core components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These components collectively shape an individual's intention to perform a given behavior, which, in turn, determines the likelihood of its execution (Ajzen, 1991).

The TPB assumes that individuals are rational actors who consider available information and implications of their actions before forming intentions. Attitudes refer to the degree of positive or negative evaluation of the behavior, while subjective norms capture the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behavior. Perceived behavioral control reflects the individual's belief in their ability to execute the behavior based on resources and constraints (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010).

The theory is widely used to predict and explain behaviors in areas such as health, environmental conservation, and consumer decision-making. For instance, studies have demonstrated its relevance in understanding smoking cessation and exercise adherence (Conner & Sparks, 2005). However, critics argue that it oversimplifies complex behaviors by relying heavily on intention as the primary determinant, ignoring emotional and contextual factors (Sniehotta et al., 2014). Despite its limitations, TPB remains a robust framework for understanding and influencing human behavior in diverse settings.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a relevant framework for examining challenges faced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural

agricultural projects in Nigeria. This theory focuses on how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individuals' intentions and actions. It aligns with IFAD's challenges as the theory emphasizes the need for community-oriented and participatory approaches, which are often lacking in Nigerian policies.

In Nigeria, rural agricultural development policies frequently neglect local community needs and fail to engage stakeholders adequately. This gap hinders project success, as shown by IFAD's limited impact in states like Borno, Kano, and Jigawa. For instance, in 2022, the National Bureau of Statistics reported that 53% of rural farmers in these states lacked access to inputs due to weak policy implementation. Furthermore, a 2021 IFAD report highlighted that only 35% of targeted beneficiaries in Nigeria actively participated in project planning, resulting in low adoption rates of modern farming techniques.

The TPB highlights the importance of addressing these gaps by involving communities in decision-making processes to build positive attitudes and trust. For example, in Jigawa, an IFAD project integrating community input increased adoption of improved rice farming practices by 40% within two years. These statistics justify using TPB as a tool to address challenges IFAD faces in Nigeria, particularly in fostering community participation and ensuring policies reflect rural realities, which can significantly improve project outcomes.

Methods

The study's population comprised 5,940 beneficiaries of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) program across six local government areas in three states: Jigawa, Kano, and Borno. This group included smallholder farmers and participants from other agricultural sectors, such as agricultural enterprises, livestock keepers, and fishermen and fisherwomen. The sample size of 361 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, with 328 responses retrieved for analysis. Additionally, three agricultural officials from the three states were selected for in-depth interviews using purposive sampling. Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies, while data from the interviews were examined through narrative analysis. Secondary data were analyzed using historical analysis methods.

Data Presentation/ Analysis

Table 1: Respondent's view on the challenges militating against IFAD in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria

No. of Respondents	Q1. What challenges does IFAD encounter in engaging local communities for agricultural development in Nigeria?	Q2. What are the specific logistical challenges IFAD faces in reaching remote rural communities in Nigeria?	Q3. How do political dynamics at the local and national levels affect IFAD's project outcomes in rural Nigeria?	Q4. In what ways do government policies and regulations impact the execution of IFAD's agricultural projects in Nigeria?	Q.5 What challenges arise from coordinating with local governments in the execution of IFAD's projects?

328	**Low Awareness and Education**	Inadequate Transportation Facilities	**Corruption**	Import Restrictions	Poor Communication
328	Poor Policy Implementation	**Bureaucratic Bottlenecks**	Weak Governance Structures	Political Interference	Low Stakeholder Engagement
328	**Cultural and Language Barriers**	Inadequate Local Workforce	Political Interference	Inadequate Support for Smallholders	**Corruption and Mismanagement**
328	**Bureaucratic Delays**	Supply Chain Interruptions	Inefficient Decentralization	Excessive Taxation	Conflicting Priorities
328	Insecurity	**Weak Institutional Support**	**Ethnic and Regional Divisions**	Inconsistent Policies	Resource Misallocation

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Analysis of the respondents' views from selected communities in Jigawa, Kano, and Borno states reveals key challenges that the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) faces in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria. Each of the questions highlights specific barriers and complications encountered by IFAD, illustrating a complex landscape in which socio-economic, logistical, and political factors interweave to create substantial obstacles

For Question 1, the respondents emphasized "Low Awareness and Education," "Poor Policy Implementation," and "Cultural and Language Barriers" as the primary engagement challenges. The local communities often lack adequate knowledge about agricultural development initiatives and the benefits of IFAD's projects, leading to low participation. This issue is compounded by poor implementation of existing policies, which cause distrust among the beneficiaries. Additionally, cultural and language barriers limit effective communication and reduce the influence of IFAD's interventions. The analysis suggests that there is a critical need for more community sensitization and tailored communication strategies to foster local engagement.

Question 2 addresses logistical challenges, with respondents identifying "Inadequate Transportation Facilities," "Bureaucratic Bottlenecks," and "Inadequate Local Workforce." Poor transportation infrastructure, especially in remote areas, restricts access to beneficiary communities, impacting the delivery of resources and services. Bureaucratic delays within local administrative frameworks further hinder logistical efficiency, slowing down project timelines. Additionally, a lack of skilled local labor complicates the execution of agricultural programs, necessitating external support that may not align with the local context. These insights point to the necessity for IFAD to collaborate closely with local administrations to streamline procedures and build local capacity for agricultural development.

Question 3 explores the effect of political dynamics on IFAD's project outcomes. The respondents mentioned "Corruption," "Weak Governance Structures," and "Political Interference" as significant barriers. Corruption at different levels of governance undermines resource allocation and project credibility, diverting funds away from intended beneficiaries. Weak governance structures, particularly at the grassroots level, exacerbate this issue, making it difficult to maintain accountability. Political interference, often driven by vested interests, influences project outcomes, skewing priorities away from the genuine needs of rural communities. These findings suggest that greater transparency and stronger accountability mechanisms are needed to insulate projects from undue political influence.

For Question 4, respondents pointed to "Import Restrictions," "Political Interference," and "Inadequate Support for Smallholders" as key challenges. Stringent import policies hinder the procurement of necessary agricultural inputs, leading to project delays and increased costs. Political interference not only affects governance but also influences policy formulation, limiting the effectiveness of agricultural interventions. The lack of sufficient support for smallholder farmers, who are central to rural development, highlights a disconnect between national agricultural policies and local realities. Addressing these issues would require IFAD to advocate for more favorable policies that support rural agricultural growth and engage smallholders as critical stakeholders.

Question 5 reveals challenges in coordinating with local governments, including "Poor Communication," "Low Stakeholder Engagement," and "Conflicting Priorities." Poor communication channels between IFAD and local governments create gaps in information sharing and collaboration. Low stakeholder engagement results in the exclusion of local voices in the planning and implementation phases, reducing project sustainability. Conflicting priorities between IFAD's objectives and local government agendas lead to resource mismanagement and project delays. These insights indicate the need for IFAD to strengthen communication with local authorities and create inclusive platforms to align priorities effectively.

However, the analysis underscores that IFAD's rural agricultural development initiatives in Nigeria are significantly impeded by a combination of socio-cultural, logistical, and political challenges. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach that enhances community awareness, improves infrastructure, streamlines bureaucratic processes, and aligns local governance structures with development goals. IFAD must also engage in continuous dialogue with local stakeholders to adapt interventions to the unique contexts of diverse regions, ensuring that policies are locally relevant and inclusively developed. The insights suggest that without addressing these fundamental barriers, IFAD's long-term success in fostering sustainable rural agricultural development in Nigeria will remain limited.

In an interview conducted on 21st June 2024, the Director of Planning, Research, and Statistics at the Borno State Agricultural Development Program (BOSADP), the discussion centered on understanding the challenges faced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural agricultural projects in the state. The Director emphasized that:

> *limited security, particularly in areas affected by insurgency, has hindered project execution. Additionally, the Director mentioned that bureaucratic delays in processing funds and insufficient local infrastructure have slowed down implementation. He highlighted that communication gaps between IFAD officials and local communities sometimes lead to misunderstandings about project goals and timelines, which affects cooperation (Field Survey, July, 2024).*

Similarly, on 20th June 2024, an interview was held with the Director of Agricultural Finance and Investment at the Kano Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA). The discussion explored the difficulties IFAD faces in deploying rural development initiatives within the region. The Director pointed out that:

> *One of the main challenges is the inadequate financial literacy among local farmers, which affects their ability to access and manage the support provided by IFAD. Additionally, he mentioned logistical issues, such as poor transportation networks, which make it difficult to reach remote areas. The Director also noted that delays in disbursement of funds from central to local levels impact the momentum of agricultural projects (Field Survey, July, 2024).*

On 20th June 2024, an interview was conducted with the Director of Agricultural Services at the Jigawa Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (JARDA). The focus of the interview was on the barriers IFAD encounters while working on agricultural projects in the state. The Director highlighted thus;

> *The lack of skilled manpower as a significant challenge, as local extension officers often lack the training needed to guide farmers effectively. He also mentioned that there are occasional conflicts of*

interest between traditional leaders and project implementers, leading to disruptions in certain areas. Another concern raised was the unpredictable weather patterns, which pose risks to crop yields and the timing of agricultural activities funded by IFAD (Field Survey, July, 2024).

However, data from the secondary sources indicates that International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is facing several challenges in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria. Recent reports and data highlight thus;

Funding Constraints: Despite significant investments, funding shortfalls remain a persistent challenge. For instance, the 2023 Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) in Nigeria, supported by IFAD, had a total cost of $329.5 million, with the IFAD loan covering 65% of this amount. However, delays in government counterpart funding and limited beneficiary contributions (7% of total costs) have hindered timely project implementation (Bello, Mohammed & Yusuf, 2023).

Weak Institutional Capacity: The program's financial management was rated as moderately unsatisfactory in 2023, reflecting inefficiencies in budget utilization and oversight. This has affected project outcomes, particularly in reaching smallholder farmers and ensuring sustainability

Security Challenges: Widespread insecurity, including banditry and farmer-herder conflicts, has disrupted rural agricultural activities. These conflicts have led to displacement, reduced farming activities, and challenges in delivering inputs and services to target areas.

Climate-Related Risks: Changes in rainfall patterns and increasing droughts have impacted agricultural productivity. IFAD has worked on building resilience through climate-smart agricultural practices, but scaling these initiatives remains a challenge (Odoh, Chukwu & Kalu, 2023).

Monitoring and Evaluation: Inadequate tracking of program outputs and outcomes has been a recurring issue. In 2023, the VCDP reported progress in profiling over 150,000 households, but weaknesses in data management and reporting hindered comprehensive impact assessments (Onyekachi & Abubakar, 2024).

Table 2: Opinion of respondents regarding the strategies IFAD can adopt to effectively overcome the challenges faced in rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria

No. of Respondents	Q1. What strategies can IFAD employ to improve its engagement with smallholder farmers to better understand their needs?	Q2. How can IFAD enhance its collaboration with local governments to overcome implementation barriers in Nigeria?	Q3. How can IFAD improve its monitoring and evaluation processes to better address challenges in Nigeria?	Q4. How can IFAD strengthen partnerships with Nigerian government agencies to achieve better results in rural development?	Q5. What strategies can IFAD use to ensure more effective use of resources in overcoming project delays in Nigeria?
328	Participatory Assessments	**Stakeholder Engagement**	Third-Party Evaluation	Collaboration	Timely Disbursement

328	Community Dialogues	**Policy Alignment**	Regular Reporting	Sustainability	Collaboration with Local Authorities
328	Focus Group Discussions	Funding Support	**Partnerships**	Co-financing	Transparent Reporting
328	Local Partnerships	Monitoring & Evaluation	Impact Assessment	Monitoring	Sustainability Focus
328	Capacity Building	Public Awareness Campaigns	Data Validation	Training	Clear Project Guidelines

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The analysis of the respondents' views from selected communities in Jigawa, Kano, and Borno states on the strategies the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) can adopt to overcome challenges in rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria reveals key insights into the approaches needed to improve project outcomes. The responses provided by 328 participants across five critical questions offer an understanding of the factors influencing agricultural development in rural areas and the strategies that IFAD could implement to address these challenges.

The first question, asking about strategies to improve IFAD's engagement with smallholder farmers to better understand their needs, highlights the importance of participatory approaches. A large proportion of respondents emphasized the use of participatory assessments, community dialogues, and focus group discussions. These methods are crucial for creating direct communication channels between IFAD and farmers, ensuring that projects are tailored to the actual needs of the communities they intend to serve. By incorporating the voices of farmers in the design and implementation stages, IFAD can foster greater ownership and improve the relevance of its interventions. Local partnerships also emerged as an essential element, as they help build trust and strengthen the community's capacity to engage in project activities.

The second question, focusing on how IFAD can enhance collaboration with local governments to overcome implementation barriers, points to stakeholder engagement and policy alignment as key strategies. Respondents indicated that aligning IFAD's goals with local government policies would streamline efforts and ensure that both IFAD and local governments are working towards common objectives. Stakeholder engagement was similarly seen as vital to overcoming barriers, as it involves building relationships with a wide range of actors, including local government officials, farmers, and community leaders. This collaborative approach would help address logistical and political challenges that often hinder project implementation at the local level.

In the third question, regarding improving Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes to address challenges, respondents suggested the use of third-party evaluations, regular reporting, and impact assessments. Third-party evaluations were viewed as a way to ensure impartiality and provide an objective assessment of project outcomes. Regular reporting was also considered critical for tracking progress and identifying issues early on, enabling timely interventions. Monitoring was seen as a cornerstone for successful project implementation, with many respondents stressing the need for more robust data collection and analysis to better assess the effectiveness of IFAD's interventions. Additionally, the focus on sustainability through continuous M&E processes could help in fine-tuning strategies to ensure long-term success.

The fourth question, regarding strengthening partnerships with Nigerian government

agencies, drew responses that suggested the importance of collaboration with local authorities, co-financing, and policy alignment. Many respondents felt that stronger partnerships with key government agencies would improve coordination, reduce duplication of efforts, and ensure that IFAD's programs are integrated into broader national development plans. Co-financing was identified as a particularly effective strategy for pooling resources and increasing the impact of agricultural projects. By aligning its activities with government priorities, IFAD can avoid misalignment with national strategies, thus enhancing the sustainability and relevance of its interventions.

The final question, which sought strategies to ensure more effective use of resources to overcome project delays, highlighted the need for timely disbursement, clear project guidelines, and transparent reporting. Timely disbursement was seen as critical for maintaining momentum and ensuring that funds are available when needed to keep projects on track. Clear project guidelines were emphasized as a way to prevent delays due to misunderstandings or inefficiencies in project implementation. Transparent reporting, especially regarding financial expenditures and progress, was seen as a necessary strategy to build accountability and ensure that resources are being used efficiently.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching for IFAD's strategies in rural agricultural development in Nigeria. The emphasis on participatory methods, stakeholder engagement, and local partnerships suggests that IFAD's success in Nigeria hinges on its ability to work closely with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to ensure that projects are both responsive to local needs and aligned with broader national policies. Furthermore, the emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, impact assessments, and transparent reporting indicates a demand for stronger accountability mechanisms and a data-driven approach to managing and improving projects.

To complement the above, an interview was conducted with the Director of Agricultural Services at the Jigawa Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (JARDA) on 20th June 2024. In his view,

> *IFAD could enhance its impact by fostering community-based cooperatives that allow farmers to collectively access resources and share risks. He suggested that IFAD should invest in infrastructure like feeder roads to facilitate easier access to markets, reducing post-harvest losses. He also emphasized the need for IFAD to increase its focus on climate-resilient farming techniques, given the challenges posed by unpredictable weather patterns in Northern Nigeria. According to him, these measures could help ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of agricultural projects in the region (Field Survey, 2024).*

On 20th June 2024, an interview was conducted with the Director of Agricultural Finance and Investment at the Kano Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA). He suggested that:

> *IFAD's interventions would benefit from a stronger focus on local financing options for farmers, including accessible micro-credit schemes that support input purchases and farm maintenance. He recommended collaboration with local financial institutions to create tailor-made financial packages for rural farmers. In addition, he emphasized that IFAD should prioritize youth involvement in agriculture by providing entrepreneurial training and access to technology, which he believes could motivate the younger generation to engage in agriculture (Field Survey, 2024).*

Similarly, on 21st June 2024, an interview was conducted with the Director of Planning, Research, and Statistics at the Borno State Agricultural Development Program (BOSADP). When asked about strategies the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) could adopt to address challenges in rural agricultural development in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern regions, he emphasized the need for targeted training for smallholder farmers. He suggested that

> *IFAD should focus on practical, location-specific agricultural*

techniques that match the local environment. He also recommended developing partnerships with local agricultural institutions for effective knowledge transfer. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of improved irrigation systems and storage facilities to mitigate seasonal challenges, which are common obstacles in rural areas (Field Survey, 2024).

Findings

The first objective of this study seeks to examine the challenges militating against International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria. From the investigation, the respondents consistently cited corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks, policy inconsistency, and lack of farmers' inclusion as primary challenges undermining IFAD's efforts. These findings resonate with the work of Musa (2021), who identified poor rural infrastructure and limited access to agricultural financing as key obstacles to successful project implementation. According to the participants, corruption within local administrative bodies often diverts project resources, reducing the scope and quality of agricultural support available to rural farmers. This situation is exacerbated by bureaucratic procedures that slow down project approvals, leading to delays in funding disbursement and resource allocation. Additionally, frequent changes in agricultural policies create uncertainties, disrupting continuity and reducing farmers' trust in the projects. The exclusion of farmers from planning phases also results in a lack of alignment between IFAD's interventions and the specific needs of rural communities. This gap mirrors the challenge of limited financial accessibility identified by Musa (2021), indicating that without a focus on direct farmer involvement, projects are less likely to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Secondly, to address these challenges, respondents emphasized the need for IFAD to implement community-based financing models. This strategy would involve collaborating with local cooperatives and farmer groups to provide small-scale loans tailored to the specific needs of rural farmers. By leveraging local networks, IFAD could offer better access to credit, enabling farmers to invest in productivity-enhancing resources. Additionally, such an approach could strengthen community involvement in the projects, fostering a sense of ownership and enhancing sustainability. These insights are consistent with the recommendations of Musa and Lawal (2022), who advocated for a community-based approach to agricultural financing. They argued that engaging local cooperatives can improve the accessibility and effectiveness of financial support, which aligns with the study's findings on the potential benefits of empowering local agricultural networks in overcoming financial barriers.

Conclusion

The study on the challenges militating against the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria highlights critical obstacles that hinder the effective realization of its objectives. Key findings reveal that poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, bureaucratic bottlenecks, political interference, and limited community engagement significantly impede project execution. These challenges undermine IFAD’s mission of enhancing rural livelihoods, reducing poverty, and fostering sustainable agricultural growth.

Poor infrastructure, such as inadequate roads, and water supply, restricts access to project sites and markets, reducing the overall impact of interventions. Inadequate funding, exacerbated by delays in fund disbursement, affects the continuity and quality of projects. Bureaucratic hurdles within governmental processes lead to inefficiencies, while political interference often distorts project priorities and allocation of resources. Furthermore, insufficient community involvement in project planning and implementation diminishes local ownership and sustainability of initiatives.

However, the study provides a unique and state-specific analysis of IFAD’s implementation challenges, distinguishing it from previous research that often adopts a generalized national perspective. By focusing on Northern states such as Borno, Kano, and Jigawa, the study reveals region-specific obstacles shaped by security concerns, socio-economic disparities, and governance structures. In Borno, the impact of insurgency and instability significantly

disrupts project execution, limiting accessibility and community participation. In Kano, bureaucratic inefficiencies and political influence emerge as dominant challenges, affecting fund allocation and project sustainability. Meanwhile, in Jigawa, the primary barriers include infrastructural deficits and insufficient stakeholder engagement, which hinder the scalability and long-term viability of IFAD-supported initiatives. This state-level insight provides a more targeted understanding of IFAD's operational difficulties, offering a valuable framework for policymakers to implement context-specific solutions that enhance rural agricultural development outcomes.

Recommendations

To address the challenges militating against the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in implementing rural agricultural development projects in Nigeria, the following two recommendations are crucial.

i. **Strengthening Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:** IFAD should establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track project progress, ensuring transparency and accountability. This could include regular audits, stakeholder reviews, and the inclusion of local community representatives in decision-making. By reducing corruption and bureaucratic delays and security challenges as seen in the case of Kano, Borno and Jigawa states, this approach will foster greater trust and efficiency in the implementation process.

ii. **Enhancing Farmers' Inclusion in Project Design and Execution:** IFAD should prioritize the active involvement of local farmers in the planning and execution of agricultural development projects. This can be achieved through regular consultations, training, and the establishment of farmer cooperatives to facilitate community-driven development. This approach will address the issue of exclusion and ensure that projects are tailored to the specific needs of rural farmers in Borno, Kano, and Jigawa states.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND RESILLIENCE OF DISPLACED WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN SHIRORO LGA, NIGER STATE

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ABSTRACT
The socioeconomic effects of displacement on women and children in Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA), Niger State, Nigeria, are examined in this study. It looks at how banditry-induced forced migration has affected livelihoods, education, health, and safety, making women reliant on outside assistance and keeping kids out of school. The study also looks at the difficulties of living in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, where displaced people are subjected to additional burdens like psychological trauma and gender-based violence due to inadequate utilities, poor housing, and a lack of privacy. The study generates information from impacted communities using a qualitative research methodology in order to document the lived experiences of women and children who have been displaced. It reveals how women use coping mechanisms like farm work, menial labour, and unofficial support systems to maintain their families through focus groups and interviews. However, the effectiveness of these survival tactics is limited by the lack of official community-based programs and insufficient government intervention. The study is based on the Social Exclusion Theory, which describes how displaced people become marginalised because their access to social services, education, and economic possibilities is limited. The way that displacement exacerbates inequality and upholds structural barriers that keep women and children trapped in a cycle of poverty and dependency is highlighted by this theoretical framework. By concentrating on a lesser-known area impacted by displacement brought on by banditry, this study adds to the body of literature by reorienting focus from security issues to socioeconomic disturbances. This study emphasises grassroots resilience and offers policy-oriented recommendations to improve IDP conditions and help displaced communities, in contrast to many other studies that focus on government interventions.

Introduction

With millions of people displaced by armed conflict, violence, human rights abuses, and natural or man-made disasters, internal displacement is a worldwide humanitarian crisis. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) stay inside their nation's borders and frequently face little government assistance, in contrast to refugees who are granted international protection. Their general well-being is threatened by environmental hazards, political marginalisation, poor health, and economic volatility (Oladeji, 2015; Emmanuelar, 2015). Many internally displaced people live in filthy, overcrowded camps, which leaves them susceptible to illness and dependent on outside assistance. More than 33.3 million people are internally displaced globally, according to latest estimates, underscoring the serious obstacle that displacement presents to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016).

Internal displacement has disproportionately afflicted Africa, where millions have been displaced by environmental disasters, political unrest, and warfare. Due to ongoing security problems, the number of internally displaced people on the continent increased steadily, reaching 15 million by 2014 (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016). In contrast to earlier decades, when interstate conflicts were the main source of displacement, intrastate conflicts such as insurgencies, armed banditry, and intercommunal conflicts are now the main cause of displacement in Africa (UNHCR, 2012). The vulnerabilities of displaced people have been exacerbated by these types of violence, especially for women and children who lack proper access to necessities like food, medical care, and education.

With more than 3.3 million internally displaced persons, Nigeria is one of the most afflicted nations. Insurgency, ethnic conflicts, and banditry have caused more than 2.1 million people to be relocated in the northern region (IDMC, 2016). The continuous struggle between Fulani farmers and herdsmen, which has intensified violence and instability, is a major cause of displacement (Itumo & Nwefuru, 2016). Despite efforts by humanitarian organisations and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), many displaced persons live in host communities or temporary settlements where they struggle with scarce supplies. However, many IDPs lack a sustainable means of subsistence because current efforts are still insufficient (Ventures Africa, 2015).

The displacement situation in Nigeria is best shown by the Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State, where thousands of people have been displaced as a result of violent attacks and banditry. Women IDPs have particular difficulties, such as economic hardships, lack of access to reproductive healthcare, and gender-based abuse. Research shows that more than half of those displaced are women, and children (Biola, 2016). Shiroro LGA's displaced women still face insufficient support networks and are compelled to use a variety of survival techniques in spite of government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) assistance.

Although there is a growing body of research on internal displacement in Nigeria, the most of it has been on displacement brought on by insurgencies, especially in the northeast, with little attention paid to areas like Niger State that are impacted by banditry. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the socioeconomic effects of displacement, particularly for women and children, even if previous study frequently looks at it from a security standpoint. By placing the issue in global, regional, and national contexts, this study adds to the body of literature by offering localised insights and evidence-based recommendations for improving the living conditions and resilience of displaced populations. Addressing these issues is crucial for promoting sustainable development in affected communities and improving human security. This study emphasises how displacement perpetuates social and economic marginalisation, ultimately limiting opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

Statement of Problem

Due to violence, conflicts, and insecurity, millions of Nigerians have been forced to flee their homes, making internal displacement one of the country's most urgent humanitarian crises. As of 2016, there were about 3.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria, the majority of them were based in the country's north, according to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). The issue has been compounded by recurrent

disputes between farmers and herders, insurgency, and, more recently, the advent of armed banditry. Armed groups' frequent attacks in Niger State, especially in the Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA), have forced thousands of people to flee their homes and leave them without a steady source of income, a place to live, or access to basic amenities. Over 150,000 individuals have been displaced from their homes in Niger State in the past ten years as a result of violent attacks, according to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

Due to their extreme socioeconomic problems, women and children are the most vulnerable among the displaced. According to reports, children make up more than half of those impacted, while women make up more than 50% of the displaced population. Numerous women who once worked in agriculture and commerce have lost their jobs and are now solely reliant on frequently insufficient humanitarian aid. Conversely, children experience poor health, interrupted schooling, and a higher chance of child labour and exploitation. Their living conditions are made worse by the absence of infrastructure in IDP camps, including as sufficient security, healthcare, and sanitation, which leaves them vulnerable to psychological trauma and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The response is still insufficient to meet the long-term requirements of the displaced people in Shiroro LGA, despite several interventions by governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many internally displaced people reside in cramped, temporary settlements where they have limited access to clean water, food, medical treatment, and education. Furthermore, women lack official support networks to help them re-establish their livelihoods, which forces many of them to turn to risky coping strategies like working in low-paying professions with abusive conditions. In the impacted communities, displacement exacerbates social marginalisation, poverty, and insecurity in the absence of long-term solutions.

Although a number of studies have looked at displacement in Nigeria, the majority have concentrated on displacement brought on by insurgencies in the northeast, specifically the Boko Haram issue. The effects of banditry-induced displacement in Niger State, particularly on women and children, have not, however, been thoroughly studied. By investigating how displacement impacts the socioeconomic well-being of women and children in Shiroro LGA, investigating their coping mechanisms, and evaluating the structural deficiencies that maintain their vulnerabilities, this study aims to close this gap. Gaining an understanding of these problems is essential to creating focused solutions that deal with the underlying causes and long-term effects of displacement in the area.

Conceptual Clarification

Socioeconomic Challenges

The problems that people or groups encounter in obtaining and preserving basic components of social and economic well-being, such as money, work, education, healthcare, and housing, are referred to as socioeconomic hurdles. Because displacement disrupts livelihoods, restricts access to essential services, and fosters economic instability, these issues are more severe for displaced communities. Castles (2003) asserts that since people lose access to markets, secure employment, and productive resources, migration frequently results in economic exclusion.

Poor living conditions in displacement camps and insufficient government intervention exacerbate these issues for internally displaced people (IDPs), especially women and children (Brookings Institution, 2008). Many women in Shiroro LGA, Niger State, have been forced to rely on humanitarian help or work in low-paying occupations as a result of being displaced by armed banditry. In a similar vein, youngsters experience educational disruptions that impact their future socioeconomic prospects.

The incapacity of displaced women and children to obtain secure livelihoods, education, healthcare, and basic necessities, leading to long-term vulnerabilities, is how this study defines socioeconomic problems.

Resilience

In the context of displacement, resilience is the capacity of people and communities to adjust to unfavourable situations, bounce back from emergencies, and figure out how to maintain their well-being in the face of persistent difficulties. Resilience, according to

Norris et al. (2008), is a dynamic process that includes economic, social, and psychological coping strategies that help displaced people deal with uncertainty and start over. Through a variety of adaptive techniques, such as working on farms, trading on a local scale, and creating unofficial support networks, displaced women in Shiroro LGA have shown resilience.

However, systemic limitations including a lack of access to economic opportunities and insufficient government support frequently hinder resilience (Betts & Collier, 2017). Resilience is defined in this study as the coping techniques used by displaced women and children, such as social networks, informal support systems, and economic survival mechanisms. Although resilience is necessary for survival, ongoing socioeconomic marginalisation frequently reduces its efficacy.

Displacement

When people or communities are forcibly relocated from their usual habitation because of violence, conflict, natural catastrophes, or development projects, this is referred to as displacement. Displacement is involuntary, as opposed to voluntary movement, and frequently causes severe social and economic suffering (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2016). Insurgency, intercommunal conflicts, and, more recently, banditry have been the main causes of displacement in Nigeria. According to Oladeji (2015), displacement damages local economies, upends community institutions, and puts impacted communities at higher risk of poverty and insecurity.

Family structures have broken down, livelihoods have been lost, and there is now a greater need for outside assistance in Shiroro LGA as a result of the relocation brought on by violent attacks. Once engaged in farming and trading, women have been pushed into dependency, and children suffer from psychological and educational losses as a result of their unstable living circumstances. According to this study, displacement is defined as the forcible relocation of people as a result of violence and insecurity, which increases vulnerability for women and children and causes economic hardship and social marginalisation.

Empirical Review

The difficulties experienced by IDPs and the efficacy of rehabilitation programs have been the subject of numerous studies. Umaru and Mohammed (2017) evaluated the rehabilitation requirements of insurgency victims in IDP camps in Yobe State, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey design. According to their research, more than 65% of internally displaced people experienced psychological suffering, substance abuse, unemployment, and camp conflicts. In order to promote national integration, the study suggested counselling techniques like therapy and orientation workshops.

Likewise, Umaru (2018) investigated the connection between counselling interventions and PTSD in Borno State's internally displaced people. The study recommended therapy-based approaches to support recovery after identifying symptoms of trauma as emotional numbness and hyperarousal. Omonyemen (2020) highlighted the importance of counselling in IDP rehabilitation and promoted a cooperative strategy combining the government, educational institutions, and civil society organisations.

Banditry and insurgency-related displacement has been the subject of other investigations. The resilience of violence-affected rural communities in Niger State was investigated by Hamza et al. (2022), who emphasised the necessity of ongoing government engagement. Similar to this, Askederin (2021) looked at the difficulties of IDP resettlement in Nasarawa, Niger, and the Federal Capital Territory. They found that living circumstances were subpar and that many IDPs wanted to go back to their homes if they were given financial and security help. Izom (2024) emphasised poverty as the main cause of banditry in Shiroro LGA, Niger State. According to the survey, 64.5% of participants connected economic hardship to instability and displacement, and they suggested measures like improved intelligence collection and youth empowerment.

Giyoh (2023) investigated the adaption mechanisms of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Kumba Town with regard to survival tactics, highlighting acute food insecurity and poor healthcare as key issues. The study discovered that in order to survive, displaced people frequently cut back on meal quantities, resorted

to less expensive food options, and sought out unofficial medical care. In a similar vein, Aidelokhai (2022) evaluated food insecurity among internally displaced people in Niger State and discovered that 90% of participants cited insurgency and banditry as the main reasons for food shortages. To lessen food insecurity, the study suggested enhanced security and intelligence-sharing protocols.

Inadequate governmental and civil society interventions pushed many IDPs in Benue State to resort to petty stealing, street begging, and other desperate means, according to Albert and Abah's (2024) investigation on survival tactics. In order to address the situation, the report recommended sustainable development policies and skill development centres.

Finally, more general research on displacement and security has connected poor governance to IDP difficulties. Rosenje and Adeniyi (2021) studied how banditry affected Nigeria's national security and found that poverty, unemployment, and the spread of weapons were the main causes. The report made the case that banditry jeopardises national stability and advocated for proactive border security measures, government policies, and youth empowerment programs.

Although these studies offer insightful information about IDP rehabilitation, resilience, and security concerns, they frequently concentrate on more general displacement problems or more significant security issues. In contrast, the current study focusses on the socioeconomic effects of displacement on women and children in Shiroro LGA, highlighting the ways in which displacement intensifies social exclusion and gendered vulnerabilities. This study addresses a gap in the literature on gendered displacement experiences in conflict-affected areas of Nigeria by utilising Social Exclusion Theory to give a targeted examination of how displaced women and children deal with financial hardship and access support networks.

Theoretical framework

The social exclusion theory serves as the analytical basis for this investigation. Lenoir (1974) popularised the term "social exclusion" in France to refer to people who were shut out of the welfare and employment markets, including the disabled, the unemployed, and other marginalised groups. Later, Sen (1999) developed the idea by connecting poverty, inequality, and loss of talents to social isolation. He maintained that people's incapacity to fully engage in society is just as much a factor in exclusion as financial difficulties. Likewise, Silver (1994) created a paradigm that highlights the multifaceted nature of exclusion by analysing it in various societal and cultural situations.

The denial of social, political, and cultural involvement is a form of social exclusion that goes beyond economic hardship. It is strengthened by institutional and societal arrangements that deny some groups access to opportunities and resources. Ethnic minorities, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and displaced people are among the vulnerable groups that frequently experience many layers of exclusion. This process is dynamic rather than static since social discrimination, legislative changes, and changes in the economy can all cause people or groups to be constantly marginalised.

A number of fundamental presumptions form the basis of the idea of social exclusion. First, exclusion happens when people or groups are not given access to opportunities and resources that are necessary for full participation in society, which is a fundamental human right. Second, institutional frameworks and cultural prejudices frequently act as obstacles that strengthen marginalised communities' exclusion. Third, rather of addressing exclusion, societal mechanisms like welfare programs, labour markets, and educational systems often serve to reinforce it. Lastly, even while exclusion restricts opportunities, impacted people and groups still have resilience and agency, which enables them to deal with or oppose exclusionary behaviours.

Social exclusion theory has been criticised despite its applicability. According to some academics, the phrase is overly general and ambiguous, making it challenging to use consistently in research. Others argue that the theory ignores personal preferences, such as the desire of some groups to maintain their separation, and overemphasises communal participation. Furthermore, detractors point out that although the theory mainly concentrates on local or national exclusion, it falls short in explaining how globalisation and international institutions affect marginalisation. Moreover, some contend that the theory minimises how

structural dominance and power relations maintain exclusion.

Social exclusion theory is a useful framework for comprehending the socioeconomic effects of displacement on disadvantaged populations, notwithstanding these criticisms, according to this study. It is a crucial tool for formulating policy suggestions because it draws attention to the structural and systemic obstacles that sustain marginalisation and inequality. The idea sheds light on the difficulties internally displaced people (IDPs) encounter in Shiroro LGA and guides tactics to alleviate their marginalisation and enhance their reintegration into society.

Methodology

In order to investigate the lived experiences of women and children who have been displaced by violence in Shiroro Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State, this study uses a qualitative research design, more precisely a phenomenological approach. This study uses a phenomenological methodology in an effort to document the individual experiences, difficulties, and coping mechanisms of displaced people as seen by them.

Purposive sampling was used to guarantee a more comprehensive and methodical participant selection procedure. This approach makes it possible to choose people who can offer rich, in-depth insights and who have direct experience with displacement. Twenty-five women and children from Gwada camp and fifteen from Kuta camp made up the 40 participants that were chosen. Economic status, length of displacement, and willingness to engage in the study were among the factors used to choose the sample.

Semi-structured interviews, which gave participants the freedom to discuss important themes and share their experiences in their own words, were used to collect the data. The interview guide was divided into two sections: the first collected demographic information, and the second segment concentrated on topics including access to necessary services, social support networks, coping strategies, and economic hardship. In order to add context and bolster the findings, secondary data sources such as scholarly publications, official reports, and policy papers were also examined.

A thematic analysis method was applied to the data. In accordance with the goals of the study, the interview replies were classified, transcribed, and grouped into emergent themes. This approach made sure that important trends and patterns in the lives of displaced women and children were methodically found and analysed. Selected participants examined summarised replies to verify accuracy as part of a member checking process to increase the findings' reliability. The study's depth and dependability were enhanced by the utilisation of several data sources and analytical methods, providing a thorough grasp of the socioeconomic effects of displacement on marginalised communities in Shiroro LGA.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Negative Impacts of Displacement on Women and Children

Family Disintegration and Loss of Loved Ones

Women and children are especially affected by the severe family fragmentation brought on by displacement in Shiroro Local Government Area. Numerous women have become widows after losing their spouses, and brutal attacks have left children orphaned. One widow described how her husband and a number of other men were brutally murdered on his farms, and others were captured. Another woman talked about how she lost her spouse only three months into their marriage after he was kidnapped and slain for not paying the ransom demands of the kidnappers. In addition to causing these families great emotional suffering, the loss of loved ones has resulted in heavy financial difficulties.

Economic Hardship and Loss of Livelihoods

For displaced women and children, the loss of homes, businesses, and farmlands has had disastrous economic repercussions. Numerous women who were formerly involved in farming, trade, and raising livestock are now without a source of income. One respondent, formerly from the wealthiest class in her neighbourhood, explained how she fell into great poverty after being violently attacked and losing her home, life savings, and everything she owned. Financial instability has also resulted from market women who depended on daily trading for livelihood

being displaced and unable to maintain their businesses. Losses have also been experienced by women who raised cattle, which has made survival more challenging and weakened their economic resilience.

Disruption of Education and Child Welfare

Children's education has been significantly impacted by the displacement crisis; as a result of persistent insecurity, many schools have been demolished or made dangerous. The absence of educational facilities and financial limitations make it difficult for families in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps to enrol their children in new schools. Many displaced children have thus stopped attending school, which has significantly reduced their chances for the future. One mother described how her child's health issues at birth were brought on by the stress of escaping an attack, making it even more difficult for her to get healthcare and schooling.

Psychological and Social Distress

Displacement has serious psychological repercussions, with many women and children experiencing trauma, worry, and future uncertainty. After losing family members and witnessing violent attacks, a number of respondents said they felt hopeless. Formerly relatively comfortable families now live in overcrowded shelters and depend on family members' kindness and humanitarian assistance to survive. Many have been unable to restore their lives due to the ongoing fear of further assaults, which has made their psychological suffering much worse.

The Daily Struggles of Displaced Women and Children

Loss of Stability and Increased Dependency

Families that have been displaced in the Galadiman-Kogo, Erena, and Bassa communities are now completely dependent on government assistance programs and non-governmental organisation (NGO) donations. Previously, women who worked on farms or had small enterprises now have no way to make a living. Due to the widespread poverty brought on by the devastation of farms and businesses, displaced women find it challenging to support their children.

Children have experienced a crippling sense of instability as a result of displacement. Many youngsters in Erena now face starvation and an uncertain future after formerly having access to education and a healthy diet. Their parents, who used to be their guardians, are now powerless to pay for their fundamental needs. Many families in Bassa have become extremely dependent due to the loss of economic possibilities, making them susceptible to more adversity.

Loss of Lives, Property, and Educational Opportunities

Tragically, both lives and property have been lost as a result of the displacement issue. Following violent attacks, several families have been forced to leave their homes and everything they possessed. Although there are still some schools in the impacted areas, most of them are closed since the students and staff are afraid for their safety.

Once a means of achieving optimism, education has been seriously interrupted. Parents are too scared to send their kids back to school, and many teachers have run away. As a result, many kids miss important learning opportunities because they are not attending school. Makeshift classrooms have been used as shelter in IDP camps, and attempts to re-establish schooling are made more difficult by overcrowding and a lack of supplies. The future development of relocated children is affected in the long run by the lack of structured learning contexts.

The Unique Challenges Faced by Displaced Women

Increased Burden and Vulnerability

When it comes to displacement, women confront particular difficulties that exacerbate their pain. Women frequently struggle with new and unfamiliar survival tasks, whereas men may discover chances in manual labour. To support their families, many displaced women have turned to dangerous jobs like illicit mining.

Men and women are compelled to share cramped quarters in IDP camps, raising serious privacy concerns. Women find it challenging to maintain personal hygiene because of this invasion of privacy, especially when they are menstruating. Their difficulties are made worse

by the lack of adequate sanitary facilities. Furthermore, young moms who have lost their husbands now have to deal with the difficulties of being a single parent in a very insecure setting.

The Impact on Children's Education and Well-Being

Educational Disruptions and Psychological Trauma

With an estimated 80% of relocated children now not attending school, the effects of displacement on children's education are profound. While the few who can afford it face limited access to high-quality education, many families are prevented from enrolling their children in alternative schools due to financial constraints.

In addition to receiving an education, children who witness violence or lose loved ones experience emotional and psychological suffering. Many people struggle to comprehend the abrupt breakdown of their formerly steady lives and suffer from worry and sadness. These events cause trauma that affects their general wellbeing and leaves them with long-lasting scars.

Health issues are also common. Malnutrition is on the rise as a result of food shortages, and children in IDP camps are exposed to infections due to poor sanitation. These difficulties reduce children's prospects of a better future by endangering their physical and cognitive development.

Compromised Safety and Security
Risks of Exploitation and Violence

Due to insufficient protection in IDP camps, displaced women and children are at serious danger for safety and security issues. They are susceptible to exploitation and abuse because they lack secure homes and receive no assistance from the authorities. In settings with inadequate security measures, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence.

Many displaced people have also been compelled by extreme poverty to resort to child labour as a last resort. Children are frequently exposed to hazardous situations as they work informally to help support their families. Families who have been displaced are left in a state of perpetual uncertainty and dread due to the lack of organised government assistance.

Survival Strategies of Internally Displaced Women in Shiroro LGA

Coping Strategies and Alternative Livelihoods

Shiroro LGA's displaced women have adapted a variety of survival techniques to deal with their situation. In return for food or money, many help out local farmers by performing hard agricultural labour. Nevertheless, they frequently experience exploitation and are paid insufficiently for their labour.

Contract farm labour is a popular tactic used by displaced women. Some hire other women to split the workload and accept farm contracts. Then, as payment, harvested crops like millet, maize, and groundnuts are distributed. This structure of cooperation offers a limited but necessary method of surviving.

Children also perform small-scale work, including helping market vendors, to support their families. Since IDP camp rations are sometimes insufficient, these profits assist families in filling food supply gaps.

Access to Food, Shelter, and Basic Necessities

Challenges of Sustaining Daily Needs

For food, shelter, and basic necessities, displaced households in Shiroro LGA depend on a variety of sources. While some relief is offered by NGOs, the government, and individual donations, the assistance is frequently insufficient. Through informal labour and menial professions, women look for other ways to augment food supply.
For displaced people, a public elementary school has been transformed into temporary housing. But because of its inadequate infrastructure, there is overpopulation and subpar living conditions. Strong familial ties frequently lead women to seek safety with family members, but host families' capacity to offer sustained support is hampered by financial difficulties.

Role of Family and Community Networks

Despite the lack of official community-based support systems, displaced women have established unofficial networks for survival. When assistance is available, they pool resources and work together on labour-intensive projects. Since some displaced people depend on family members for support, social and familial relationships are also quite important. However, many host families have found it impossible to provide long-term support due to economic challenges.

Summary of Key Findings

According to the report, internally displaced women and children's livelihoods, education, and general well-being have all been severely disrupted by displacement in Shiroro Local Government Area. Many women who had worked in agriculture and trade have lost their jobs and are now dependent on government assistance, manual labour, and family support. In places like Galadiman-Kogo and Bassa, the displacement has also had a major impact on agricultural productivity, which has increased poverty and the need for outside help.

Approximately 80% of students are not attending school as a result of insecurity and school closures, making education one of the most negatively affected industries. Teachers and students in Erena Community have gone, leaving youngsters without formal education, endangering their future prospects and long-term growth. Displacement also has significant psychological repercussions. While women face increased stress as they attempt to care for their families in challenging circumstances in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, many youngsters suffer from emotional distress as a result of the death of loved ones and the unpredictability of their living surroundings.

IDP camps are characterised by overcrowding, inadequate healthcare services, and poor sanitation, all of which raise the possibility of disease epidemics. Gender-specific issues that women confront include vulnerability to exploitative work circumstances and a lack of facilities for menstruation hygiene. Due to a lack of economic options, some have been compelled to engage in dangerous jobs like illicit mining.

Displaced women have come up with a number of survival techniques in spite of these obstacles. Many work in the agricultural sector, helping farmers in return for food or money. Additionally, some women work together on farms under contract, sharing resources and earnings. By helping market vendors and earning meagre wages to sustain their families, children help to sustain households.

Food and shelter supplied by the government are still insufficient, so women are forced to look for other ways to survive. Family relationships are essential for offering short-term housing and emotional support, but their ability to help is limited by financial hardships. Without official community-based support systems, displaced women have established unofficial networks for survival, cooperating on farming projects and pooling resources.

These results are consistent with earlier studies on livelihood disruption and displacement. Shiroro LGA is a clear example of the decline in economic activity and the growing burden on women, as noted by academics such as Cernea (2000) and Chant (2006). Furthermore, Putnam's (2000) discussion of social networks' involvement in relocation emphasises the significance of unofficial support systems during emergencies.

Due to displacement, women and children in Shiroro LGA are now more susceptible to gender-specific difficulties, psychological discomfort, disruptions in their education, and financial difficulty. In order to deal with the harsh reality of their displacement, displaced women have shown resilience by embracing collective survival techniques, informal labour practices, and reliance on family and social networks, even when institutional support structures are still lacking.

Conclusion

The economic, educational, and psychological difficulties that women and children in Shiroro Local Government Area encounter as a result of displacement were highlighted in this study. Due to the widespread economic hardship brought on by displacement, women are now forced to survive through menial labour, family assistance, and humanitarian relief. Due to insecurity and school closures, many children have been unable

to finish their education, endangering their long-term growth.

In addition, in overcrowded IDP camps, displaced women and children face poor living circumstances and significant psychological suffering. These results highlight the critical need for long-term solutions that improve living conditions and psychological assistance for displaced people while addressing both economic hardships and disruptions in education.

Recommendations

To effectively mitigate the impact of displacement in Shiroro LGA, the following recommendations should be implemented:

i. To boost their efficacy, government organisations like NEMA and SEMA ought to be given more money and better coordination. Long-term solutions, such as skill development programs, vocational training, and sustainable livelihood initiatives for displaced women, should be the main focus of partnerships with international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

ii. Immediate action is needed to improve the terrible living conditions in IDP camps. Clean water, suitable housing, better sanitation, and easily available medical care should all be prioritised. Restoring economic activity in the camps will also assist displaced people in becoming self-sufficient.

iii. Economic instability and vulnerability to gender-based violence are two of the particular vulnerabilities faced by displaced women. Affected women will benefit from social stability, legal protection, and economic empowerment through the establishment of women's cooperatives, legal aid services, and gender-sensitive assistance initiatives.

iv. Temporary learning centres with qualified instructors and required educational resources should be built up inside displacement camps in order to avoid long-term educational setbacks. Children should also have access to psychological support services, such as trauma counselling and kid-friendly environments, to help them deal with the psychological effects of relocation.

v. Long-term policy measures are necessary to address displacement in a sustainable manner. The government should create comprehensive policies that address the underlying causes of displacement, such as resource conflicts and insecurity, while guaranteeing sufficient support networks for displaced people. This should be done in coordination with civil society and international partners.

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FEMINISM AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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Feminism, Gender, Discrimination, Analysis, Movement, Northeast

ABSTRACT
It is a universal fact that women, unlike men gender used to be marginalized, oppressed, abused, and deprived their socio-economic, educational, political and legal rights. This necessitated a broader global feminist movement to advocate for equal rights and opportunities of all genders. This paper titled "Feminism and Gender Discrimination in Northeast Nigeria: A Theoretical Perspective on Northeastern Nigeria" presents an attempt to examine the existing discrimination of women with regards to their socio-economic, political, educational and legal rights in Northeastern Nigeria. The paper uses secondary source of data collection through major instruments such as textbooks, journals, online publications, among others, while content method of data analysis was explored in the analysis of the data collated. The research also employs Legal feminist theories as its theoretical framework. Some of the findings of the paper reveals that, religion, culture, societal division of labour, among other things, contribute a lot in promoting gender discrimination in Northeastern Nigeria. The paper recommends for a designed policy that is "northeastern-centric" in nature that would address a notion of "men gender naturally ahead"; strengthen the activities of nongovernmental organizations for their advocacy against gender discrimination, and so forth.

Introduction

History has shown that, women across the globe are marginalized, oppressed and abused to the extent that they are deprived from their socio-political, economic, educational and legal rights just because of their genders. Many perspectives of feminism; liberal, Marxist, black, existential feminism etcetera exist to promote the gospel of full right and liberty of women across the globe and to stress the equal rights and benefit of genders. Feminism is therefore with the belief that, individuals should not experience any form of discrimination based on their genders and it seeks to stabilize systemic inequalities as well as challenging societal beliefs and norms that promote gender-based differences.

Connectedly, feminism evolved through different waves, history and stages and each wave addresses specific issue(s) ranging from suffrage movements to intersectional perspectives etc. thereby expanding the scope of gender equality and promoting inclusive and equitable world. Speaking from the universal experience, the basic slogan of feminism centers on the creation of a just and equitable society or creation of a classless society as well as the creation of a neutrality in genders respectively. As such, this gives room for the equality of genders as it is accepted in many societies where women accepting responsibilities as against the other societies that denied them taking same advantages as males especially when it comes to holding public responsibilities.

As the most populous African state, Nigeria still suffers from uncountable cases of gender discrimination which continued to put women in the country in gross disadvantage. Despite the fact that women constitute about half of the population of the Nigerian State and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers etc and their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres, however, their participation in formal and informal structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant.

The case remains the same in the Northeastern region of the country. The level of discrimination of women in Northeastern Nigeria notably stemmed from the culture, religious beliefs and the patriarchal nature of the societies accross the region. This translates in women's unequal access to education, healthcare, legal, and political opportunities in the region. Women have no choices in regards to their education, abortion, marriage, job selection, political appointment to mention but few just because of the culture of the contemporary northeast Nigeria. It is based on this background that this research seeks to examine the basis of gender/women discrimination vis-a-vis feminism in the Northeastern Nigeria with a view to profer solution to certain scenarios that result in the subjugation and unequal treatment of women in the region.

Conceptual and Historical Development of Feminism

The term "Feminism" was derived from the Latin word "Femina", which means "women", and was first used with regards to issues of equality and women's right movement (Raina, 2017). It presents a set of beliefs and ideas that belong to the broad social and political movement to achieve greater equality for women. As it is governing ideology, feminism gives shape and direction to the women movement and of course, is shaped by it (Fiss, 1994).

The concept of feminism however, was defined differently by different scholars, though, one common thread that goes through most of the definition is quest and compaign for protection of rights of women and simply gender equality. According to (Stephen, 2019) the words ‘feminist’ or ‘feminism’ are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new Woman’s Movement which emerged in the late 1960s. Likewise, Raina (2017) believes that the idea behind feminism revolves around advocacy for equal rights and opportunities of all genders, as well as challenging the gender-based discrimination already in existence and dismantling patriarchal structures of domination.

In various societies of the world, the pattern of women oppression and subordination are believed to be different, consequently, different feminist groups have emerged in different times. But the main goal of every group is to achieve gender equality (Tong, 2009). Feminism can be manifested into seven categories as; i) liberal feminism, ii) Marxist feminism iii) socialist feminism, iv) radical feminism, v) ecofeminism, vi) cultural feminism, vii) black feminism, and viii) postmodern feminism (Jaggar, 1983). Each ideology tries to describe women's oppression, explains the causes and consequences, and suggested strategies for women liberation. Feminists support a gender-based view of the state, which is based on the creation of a gender-neutral society (Brunell and Burkett, 2019).

To work toward social transformation of gender inequality to equality, feminism undergoes various stages through the following waves, each of which marked by specific goals and challenges as follows:

The First Waves of Feminism

The first wave of feminism emerged in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries with focused on suffrage and legal rights. The first wave was championed by Elizabeth Candy Stanton, Matilda Joslyn Gage etc. as liberal feminism. As part of their advocacy, they called for the introduction of laws to promote the rights of women to vote, have access to education and legal recognition. However, the first wave feminism took place in Western countries with some important remarkable events such as the Seneca Falls Convention in the year 1848 where the major concern was put to kick against the sentiments on women and blacks and the year 1920 which was the period United States passed the 19th Amendment law granting women the right to vote. Many activists engaged in protests, marches and civil disobedience to secure this voting rights and this has played a significant victory in the first wave because women gained right to vote in different countries and has addressed issues that cut across property rights, marriage and employment opportunities as well as challenging the societal norms that restricted women to only domestic roles. In contrast, this wave have been criticized on the ground that, it focused on issues primarily relevant to middle-class white women and neglecting broader intersectional concerns.

The Second Wave of Feminism

The second wave of feminism occurred during the 1960's and 1990's with emphasis on women of color and developing nations seeking sisterhood, and solidarity. Like Marx, in this wave, they see women's struggle as class struggle addressing a broader range of issues that go beyond legal rights. In this phase, emphasis was given on social and cultural inequalities such as reproductive rights, workplace discrimination and the general women status in society. To address these, there were call to give women access to birth control, reproductive rights and the right for legal abortion. Women should have sexual liberation, tackle workplace discrimination, to have equal pay as well as advocacy for equal opportunities and fair treatment. The most important figures during the second wave were Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem etc. who played an important role in expanding the scope of gender equality and influencing policy changes. Some of the important events during the second wave include the formation of the National Organization for Women, the Education Amendments of 1972 etc. (Rampton, 2008).

Third Wave of Feminism

The third wave started from 1990's to the 2000s with focus on diversity, intersectionality, and individual empowerment. However, this wave focused to address the shortcomings of first and second waves and embraced more inclusiveness that considered the experiences of women from various cultural, racial and sexual backgrounds. To this waive, women's experiences are intersectional and interconnected with other social identities such as race, class and sexual orientation.

Fourth Wave of Feminism

The fourth wave of feminism primarily focused on the use of technology for activism and it acknowledged a wide range of platforms in playing a significant role in escalating women's voices and organizing feminist movements. In other words, the fourth wave feminism is a digital advocacy that highlights the issues related to reproductive rights, workplace discrimination and gender-based violence. It also seeks to dismantle systemic barriers in fostering inclusive and equitable gender society. This wave promotes hashtag campaigns and online movements through social media as a big seal of the fourth wave because it is through the social media and technology gargets, unique challenges faced by women of different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socio-economic backgrounds would be recognized and addressed.

Theoretical framework

There are lots of theories in social and political science that can explain the issue of women inequality.

Liberal Feminist Theory

This research adopts the theory of liberal feminism in analyzing the gender and women discrimination phenomenon in northerneastern Nigeria, as the theory explains the origins and causes of socio-economic, political, cultural, and psychological inequalities women face. There are many scholars that work in promoting the arguments put forward by liberal feminist thesis, the initial work that gave birth to what is seen

today as Liberal Feminist theory is usually attributed to the efforts of Abigail Adams and Mary Wollstonecraft (West, 1913).

Liberal feminism was born in Western countries from the contact of educated women with liberal ideas. Liberal feminists want to apply the philosophy of liberalism to gender equality: the oppression of women lies in their lack of political and civil rights. This has been made possible according to the theory basically due to female subordination which is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world, and strive for gender equality via political and legal reform. According to the assumption of this theory, gender discrimination and inequality are the result of social and cultural practices, rather than innate differences between men and women. It can, therefore, be countered by reforms aiming at establishing equal opportunities for both women and men. Women's 'liberation' would, thereby, be achieved by putting an end to discriminatory practices, and by pushing for equal rights (Chatterjee, 2001).

Thus, contemporary Liberal feminists seek to reform the legal and political system so that women can access opportunities and produce a state of equality between men and women (Sindhuja and Murugan, 2001). Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects marked the beginning of feminist theory in the early-to-mid 18th century (1792). Mary Wollstonecraft was not concerned with the equality of men and women in essence, but she believes that women have a more extensive function in society than simply maintaining the household.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The theory appeared to be relevant in explaining gender and women discrimination in Northeastern Nigeria. As has been explained by the theory, the basis for women's discrimination rooted the customary practices of the societies across northeastern Nigeria resulting in subjugation of women and undermining their self-esteem. The overall impact of gender bias, cultural norms and practices has entrenched a feeling of inferiority in women and place them at disadvantage position over their male counterpart in the socio-political, economic, cultural and social interaction. These socially constructed norms and stereotype roles make women overplay their 'feminity' by accepting that they are 'weaker sexes', overemphasizing the dainty nature of their sex and regarding exceptional achievement as masculine.

Methodology

This paper gathered its data from secondary source through such instruments like textbooks, journals, conference papers and online publications among others. The data gathered were reviewed in a thematic way using content analysis and the results gotten were presented qualitatively.

Feminism and Gender Discrimination in Northeastern Nigeria

Issues that have to do with gender discrimination have been a general global phenomenon, with almost all the sections of the world (both developed, developing and underdeveloped countries) experiencing various modes of gender, or more precisely unequal treatment of women in the socio-economic and political landscapes. However, Nigeria is not immune from this, especially the states in the Northeastern region which factual statistical data presented as the most backward region in the whole of Nigerian State. Thus, the following presents a sample picture of the pattern of gender discrimination in the region (Northeast):

Feminism and Discrimination on Education

One of the factors that causes discrimination to women gender in the northeastern Nigeria is their level of education. Northeastern Nigeria has the belief of giving priority of formal education to men over women. The traditional Northeastern Nigerian society paid less attention to girl's formal education and focus on informal education as the major training young girls received to prepare themselves for household work. Women are mainly trained to cook, home craft, child rearing etc. and they were not encouraged by parents to send them to schools. As a result, they received little or no parental support. Unlike boys who on the other hand went to school with parental support and approval which give them a feeling of importance and superiority. A clear example is that, according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 50 percent of girls in Nigeria constituting about 7.6 million girls are

not attending school out of which 3.9 million of them are at primary level and 3.7 at secondary junior level. However, out of this 50 percent of out of school girls, 48 percent of them are in northeast and northwest respectively (Odeyemi, 2027). The data above simply suggests that Northeastern Nigeria is hit harder by challenges that have to do with gender inequality in terms of educational training for men and women. While education remains vital need for all human specie, it is very visible that in some Nigerian regions, especially Northwest and Northeast, women were left behind.

Feminism and the Attitude of Early Marriage

The notion on girls' early marriage in Northeastern Nigeria is a serious issue of major concern that have continued to draw the attention of feminist advocates in the region. The attitude of early marriage by girls in the northeast regardless of their ages comes because of the feelings and fear that girls who waited for long might not find suitable husbands. Also, In many parts of the Northern Nigeria, females are the victims of such inequalities in terms of early and force marriage as some men view women's roles only in the "kitchen, the living room and the other room" (Buhari, 2022). This denies them access to many opportunities including access to reproductive choices. In many instances, women used to be deprived their reproductive rights including the right to make abortion or birth control when the need be. Despite the fact that Nigeria co-sponsored the 2018 UN General Assembly resolutions on child, early and forced marriage and also signed a joint statement on Human Rights Council 2014 resolution, child marriage continues to prevail by 77% especially in the poorest communities dominantly residing in the northeast and west Nigeria. In such communities, the early marriage is mostly carried out to lessen the economic burden for their respective families. According to Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (2018), Nigeria had witnessed over 23 million girl child marriages many of which are in the North West and North Eastern part of Nigeria constituting the highest prevalence of child brides at 68% and 57% respectively (Save the Children, 2021). Therefore, this stresses that feminist advocacy has a long way to go in fighting this long tradition that has almost become order of the day in Northeastern Nigeria. Based on this also, the advocacy for the equality of women in terms of reproductive rights may be very difficult in such patriarchal society where male gender takes leading role in providing the basic need and necessities to the family.

Feminism and Job Discrimination

Another issue on gender discrimination in northeastern Nigeria is the question of job discrimination. Women's historical experience of discrimination puts them at a disadvantage position economically. Over the years, sexual division of labour and job opportunities offered on sex basis has given men productive gender roles, enabling them to possess more purchasing power over their female counterparts. As an implication, the Nigerian labor force participation rate among females was 52.2% while for the males was 65.9% in 2023 alone (https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/nigeria). For example, in northern Nigeria with the exception of few States, women are not partaking in high lucrative business, they were reserve petty trades mostly at their matrimonial homes. Moreover, there are clear division of jobs in the northeast unlike in the south where woman would join military and paramilitary without being stigmatize by the society. This economic disparity favours men taking advantage over women, and this makes women dependent on men financially. This has revealed the extent of financial incapacitation of women especially in the northeast. It affects what jobs women are able to get and how much they are to be paid. These pay gaps between men and women continues and has created a legacy of discrimination and contributes to gender inequality.

Feminism and Patriarchal Domination

Moreso, the believe on men naturally ahead of women is another serious gender discrimination concern in the northernestern Nigeria. Patriarchy literarily denotes a rule by the father, it refers to a society's rule subscribe to men domination over women as practice in northernestern Nigeria and other sub-saharan African countries within the families giving men a higher social status over women. As a result, the northeastern Nigeria's families play crucial role in maintaining the status quo, thereby promoting the patriarchal order for longer generation. In other words, such patrichial tendency gives an ample opportunity to men to decide what to be done and what not to be done in their home. They feed the family, they decide what to cook, which school their children to attend, what time the woman should go out, and

what roles their wives to perform at home (Allanana, 2013). This patriarchal system practice upto now in the northeastern Nigeria has created alot of mayhem leading to destabilization of many families because not every directive would be tolerated by women at home.

Feminism, Religion, Culture and the issue of Political Participation

Religious belief has been and is still a challenge to feminist movement in northern Nigeria. Religion s a range of social-cultural systems, including designated behaviors and practices, morals, beliefs, world views, texts, sanctified places, prophecies, ethics, or organizations, that generally relate humanity to supernatural, transcendental and spiritual elements although there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion. It is also described as a system of beliefs and practices that relate to supernatural beings and are intended to organize and define the environment in which the religious community operates (Gaitanos, 2019). Islam and Christianity as religious faiths belief in supernatural being or beings. These religions are practice in northern Nigeria with majority Muslims. With the introduction of Sharia in some northern states as being practiced in Kano and Zamfara states, has rising some issues regarding such practice, this makes it so difficult to present women candidates in the northeastern Nigeria as aspirant (the cases of Aishatu Binani in Adamawa and Aishatu M.B Ahmad in Gombe State (as been discussed below) have been is a tangible example of how gender discrimination affects women's participation in politics in the Northeastern Nigeria).

Feminism, Political Identity and Representation

Connected with the above, the northeastern Nigeria is experiencing unequal political participation because of political identity. Political identity is group identification with political relevance and people build their political selves based on political group membership (Buddy, 2013). Political identity is one of the issues challenging the representation of women in politics especially in the northeast Nigeria. For example, in Adamawa state, a woman gubernatorial aspirant; Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed known as Binani came out second position after the official announcement of 2023 governorship election result. This happened because of what is called politics of identity; mostly women voted their fellow women likewise men voted their fellow men. In the case of Gombe state, the case of Aishatu M.B Ahmed whose saga between her and her counterpart contestant in the national assembly; Usman Bello Kumo and many of their kinds show the level of inequality when it comes to representation as the number of men in state and national assembly supersede that of women. The issue of "Mai 'Dankwali" (subscribing to women symbolize by "head tie" and "Mai Hula "Suscribing to men symbolize by cap) dominate the political atmosphere in the north causing poor representation of women in governance and causing difficulty in correcting this notion.

Feminism rape and stigmatization in northeastern

To buttress further, Boko Haram and bandits have caused serious threats to women. Women are facing issues related to sexual harassment by these terrorists groups especially when abducted. Women faced many consequences when abducted because in most cases, these terrorists usually derive their sexual pleasure from the women abductees, which as a result, they felt stigmatized by the society to the extent that if such case of harassment is known in the public domain, such women find it difficult to get partners for marriage. And for the married women, their husbands mostly run away from them (Abubakar, 2023). Feminist movement may find such instance very difficult to rehabilitate the mindsets of such husbands and societies with the raw information on such women that fall under the victim of raping.

Feminism and Racism

Racism is the bias that member of a particular group is more superior than the other race. Racism is practice in many societies including the northern Nigeria. For example, women from another region of the country (Southwest and Southeast) living in the north or women from different tribes that are not northerners find it very difficult to get married in the north. Hausa man goes for Hausa girl and Yoruba Man goes for Yoruba girl etc. They face serious unequal treatment from the fellow men and relatives when it comes to marriage. Those that are not Hausa/Fulani are term as "Qabilu", meaning

tribe outside Hausa/Fulani. Not only this, issue of fair complexion women versus black, the tall versus short, the slim versus fat, educated versus uneducated dichotomy mostly comes out visible when issues related to women gender comes in and correcting this notion requires a total commitment.

The Recommendation/Prospect to Feminism in Northeastern Nigeria

1. There is serious need to address the burning issues concerning women's right to choices with regards to marriage, and choosing partner. This has to do with the work to break the long-term tradition of forced marriages; uncontrolled and unhealthy pregnancy, among other things that in many cases put the lives of women in disarray. There should be a policy framework (northern-centric in nature) that would focus on women choices about marriage and the right to make choices about one's own sexual preference etc. This will enable personal choices and freedom from external control or coercion.

2. There is need for political and legal reform in the context of gender equality. This will help in revising and reshaping political and legal structures to eliminate discriminatory practices and promote equitable treatment of all genders. This can be done through advocacy for increased representation of all genders in political offices and decision-making positions as well as enacting and enforcing laws that prohibit gender-based discrimination in various areas, including employment, education etc.

3. The governments across the regions need to work round the clock to ensure speedy implementation of laws and policies that address the existing disparity in wage payment between the genders, especially in the mini private business environments, where some jobs with very meager wages are being advertised for women alone. Likewise, strict measures need to be taken against all Gender-Based violence and sexual harassment of whatever kind in order to ensure the protection of the right and dignity of all. All legal frameworks to this end should be strengthened.

4. Implementing policies that provide equal opportunities for both genders in terms of jobs. Addressing and rectifying gender biases within legal systems to ensure fair treatment is the issue that requires prompt intervention by the federal, state, local governments and nongovernmental organizations.

5. Also, the activities of non-state actors, especially civil society organizations and the entire non-governmental bodies that work in the area of gender equality should be consolidated and encouraged in order to promote massive inclusion of women in day-to-day affairs of the states within the Northeastern region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Feminism is a movement for the equal treatment of all genders. It has challenged the intersecting form of oppression that women face globally such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability intersect with gender, influencing women's experiences in complex ways. Addressing these intersections is crucial for crafting inclusive solutions that uplift all women. Feminism undergoes series of waves, the first wave of feminism emerged in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries with focused on suffrage and legal rights. The second wave, from the 1960s to the 1980s, addressed broader issues like reproductive rights and workplace equality. The third wave, emerging in the 1990s, emphasized diversity, intersectionality, and individual empowerment. Each wave built upon the achievements and shortcomings of its predecessor, contributing to the ongoing evolution of feminist thought and activism. Feminism therefore creates opportunities for women and addresses challenges women faced.

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DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIFFERENT APPROACH TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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ABSTRACT
Diplomatic negotiation and mediation emerged as critical instruments in conflict resolution; these processes not only aim to halt hostilities but also lay the groundwork for conflict resolution and sustainable peace. The study examined various approaches to diplomatic negotiation and mediation, highlighting their roles in resolving intrastate and interstate conflicts. It specifically focuses on the conflict resolution strategies employed in the Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula and the Niger Delta conflicts. The study methodology is historical and premised on the use of secondary data. Thus, the study contends that both conflicts involved extensive diplomatic negotiations and mediation efforts, emphasising peaceful resolution over military confrontation. The Bakassi Peninsula dispute was primarily an interstate conflict resolved through legal frameworks and international mediation. At the same time, the Niger Delta crisis was an intrastate conflict resolved through socio-economic solutions and local mediation efforts. The Bakassi dispute relied heavily on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling and the involvement of the United Nations. In contrast, the Niger Delta crisis relied on the Nigerian government's developmental commissions in the region and the Amnesty program. The study concludes that diplomatic negotiation and mediation, when effectively implemented, can lead to lasting peace and stability in any society.

Introduction

Since no human society or country can exist in isolation, all societies and nations, regardless of size, must engage with one another in order to survive and develop. Since conflict is a natural occurrence that arises when individuals, societies, or nations interact with one another, these interactions may occasionally spark and transfer conflict to the individual(s), society(s), or nation(s) (Asanebi, 2021). Throughout human history, conflict has been an inevitable and fundamental aspect of life; even though humans have developed a variety of coping mechanisms,

conflict still arises (Asanebi & Okafor, 2019). Conflict, which can take many forms, including territorial disputes, ethnic tensions, ideological conflicts, etc., poses a serious threat to the stability and development of a nation and the world. Conflict can significantly affect regional power dynamics, international alliances, global security policy, and its immediate effects. For example, the prolonged crisis in Ukraine has compelled the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and other international actors to reconsider their security strategies, in addition to affecting the immediate region (NATO, 2022).

As a result, diplomatic negotiation and mediation become essential dispute resolution techniques that aim to both end hostilities and create the foundation for lasting peace. Diplomatic negotiation and mediation, which are often facilitated by an unbiased third party, often involve direct discussions between disputing parties. The goal is to reach a compromise that addresses the underlying issues and prevents the situation from getting worse. This strategy fosters a sense of accountability and commitment to the pursuit of peace by relying on the party's willingness to communicate and come to a compromise. To help the disputing parties communicate more clearly and find common ground, an impartial mediator intervenes. The mediator helps the parties come to an agreement rather than imposing solutions on them (Jacob & Jackson, 2009).

Diplomatic negotiation and mediation prioritise peaceful resolution over the use of force by fostering a culture of communication and cooperation, they address both the direct causes of conflict and the structural issues that contribute to instability. Diplomatic activities create the foundation for long-lasting peace and progress by fostering mutual respect and understanding between parties (Peter, 2015, & Williams, 2007).

Successful diplomatic negotiations and mediations often combine formal and informal processes and strategies. However, there have been decades of violence in Nigeria, and diplomatic negotiation and mediation have been the main strategies used to put an end to these conflicts and advance enduring peace. Nigeria's complex conflict landscape includes historical grievances, economic inequality, resource competition, religious conflicts and ethnic tensions, etc. For instance, the core of the conflict in the Niger Delta is the struggle for control of resources and the aspiration for greater economic benefits and development of the region. Diplomatic negotiation and mediation have been crucial in resolving this conflict and the Nigerian government has engaged in diplomatic negotiation and mediation processes with regional and international organisations to resolve this conflict and promote dialogue and harmony among its citizens. While reminiscing on the above, the fulcrum of the study is to examine approaches to diplomatic negotiation and mediation, highlighting their roles in resolving both intrastate and interstate conflicts. The study specifically focuses on the conflict resolution strategies employed in the Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula and the Niger Delta conflicts.

Conceptual Clarification

Conflict

Asanebi and Okafor (2019) define conflict as a struggle or dispute that arises when the objectives and ambitions of two or more individuals or groups, including those for wealth and power, interfere with each other's efforts to achieve their goals. People or groups experience discomfort when such goals, values, and aspirations are not realised in reality because they may act aggressively out of frustration, which frequently leads to conflict. Human needs and pursuits of wealth, power, aspirations, dreams, identity, and ideals, among other things, have led to conflict in every culture and society on Earth (Asanebi, 2021).

Diplomatic Negotiation

Diplomatic negotiation, often facilitated by diplomats or other government officials, involves direct discussions between disputing parties. Finding a compromise that addresses the underlying issues and prevents the situation from worsening is the primary goal. This strategy relies on the parties' willingness to communicate and come to an agreement to foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the peace process (Chester et al., 2007). Whereas multilateral negotiations involve multiple parties, bilateral negotiations only involve two. The negotiation process becomes more

complicated as more people participate because they each bring different goals, interests, and points of view to the table. Successful diplomatic talks usually require skilled negotiators who can manage these complexities and promote agreement between the parties (William, 2007).

Diplomatic Mediation

In diplomatic mediation, an impartial third party helps the disputing parties find common ground and enhance their communication. The mediator assists the parties in coming to an agreement rather than imposing solutions on them. This tactic can work particularly well when there is a lack of trust between the parties because the mediator may help build confidence and encourage fruitful communication (Jacob & Jackson, 2009).

Negotiation and mediation are frequently combined because they offer a methodical way to settle conflicts. The mediator's responsibilities include helping the parties identify underlying issues, facilitate communication, and investigate potential solutions. While an elder or other prominent community leader conducts informal mediation, a trained mediator handles formal mediation. Both intrastate and interstate issues can be resolved with the aid of diplomatic negotiation and mediation. By placing a strong emphasis on cooperation, communication, and understanding, these tactics can contribute to the development of a more stable and peaceful society.

Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula Conflict

Originating in the colonial era, when European nations drew borders in Africa without considering the native populations and their lands, the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula is a significant example of an interstate war based on territorial claims. The dispute centres on ownership of the Bakassi peninsula, which is in the Gulf of Guinea and has abundant oil, gas, and fishing resources. Due to its strategic and economic importance, the Bakassi Peninsula became a point of contention. When Cameroon and Nigeria both claimed the peninsula in the 1980s and 1990s, the conflict flared.

While Cameroon relied on the 1913 border agreement between Britain and Germany as well as international law, Nigeria's claim was based on historical ties, the presence of Nigerian communities in the area, and the 1884 border agreement. The dispute escalated into a military conflict between the two nations in the 1980s and 1994, which led to casualties and heightened tensions. To find a legal settlement, Cameroon took the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1994. The ICJ's 2002 decision in favour of Cameroon was based on international law and the 1913 border agreement between Britain and Germany, which gave Cameroon sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula (colonial treaties). The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Nigeria to hand over control of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. Despite initial resistance and domestic criticism, Nigeria ultimately accepted the verdict, and the actual handover took place in 2008.

The Bakassi Peninsula conflict and its resolution were significantly influenced by a number of important parties and stakeholders. Nigeria's military and government played a significant role in the conflict, making it a major player. Because their identities and means of subsistence were directly impacted by territorial changes, Nigerian populations on the Bakassi Peninsula were crucial. Another important variable in the crisis is Cameroon. The government of Cameroon vigorously pursued its legal and diplomatic claim to the Bakassi Peninsula. Also involved in the conflict was the Cameroonian military, particularly during the military conflicts of the 1990s.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ Report, 2002) was instrumental in resolving the dispute with its 2002 ruling. The court's decision provided a framework for the peaceful transfer of sovereignty and set a precedent for settling similar territorial disputes. The implementation of the ICJ's ruling was made possible with assistance from the United Nations. The United Nations established the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission to oversee the peaceful transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula and manage any related issues (UN Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission). Lastly, the indigenous and local communities on the Bakassi Peninsula were directly impacted by the dispute and its resolution, and they were also heavily involved in the process of resolving the conflict. Their involvement and cooperation were essential to the successful implementation of the ICJ's ruling

and the maintenance of regional peace (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

The conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula serves as a reminder of the importance of mediation and diplomatic engagement in resolving territorial disputes. The ICJ's intervention provided a legal basis for the resolution, even though the mediation efforts encouraged dialogue and cooperation between the parties. One of the key factors that contributed to the resolution's success was the commitment of Nigeria and Cameroon to respecting international law and the ruling of the ICJ. This commitment demonstrated a willingness to prioritise a negotiated resolution over a military confrontation (ICJ Report, 2002).

The United Nations and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission were crucial in ensuring the resolution's successful implementation. The commission's efforts to supervise the transfer of sovereignty, handle local issues, and promote dialogue helped the parties develop trust and cooperation (UN Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission). Nigeria and Cameroon's dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula was resolved, highlighting the importance of diplomatic negotiation and mediation in resolving territorial disputes. The successful implementation of the ICJ's ruling and the UN and Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission's mediation efforts highlight the significance of international cooperation and dedication to peaceful resolution.

Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta crisis is deeply rooted in the region's complex history, environmental degradation, marginalisation, ethnic tensions, etc. Thus, the region is the bulk of crude oil deposits in Nigeria and serves as the nation's livewire of sustainability (Asanebi, 2016). After its discovery in 1956 in the Otuabagi community in present-day Bayelsa State, the benefits were not equitably distributed, leading to widespread discontent among the local communities. The environmental impact of oil extraction has been devastating for the Niger Delta, as oil extraction has severely damaged the ecosystem, affecting the livelihoods of the local population who rely on fishing and farming. The lack of adequate compensation and remediation efforts by the multinational oil companies and the federal government of Nigeria further exacerbated the grievances of the local communities. To the Nigerian government oil in the Niger Delta is the national interest of the nation, and its exploitation should not be disrupted. On the other end of the divide are the Niger Delta oil communities, who completely disagree with the position taken by the government. To the communities, oil is their God-given resource and exploitation should have direct positive impacts on their lives and environment (Doder, 2012). This led the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) to pontificate that:

> *Niger Delta wealth should be used to develop the Niger Delta region and not to oppress Niger Delta citizens (Extracted from Asanebi, 2014).*

The Nigerian government and multinational oil companies failed to honour the yields and aspirations of the Niger Delta people towards their region and resources. Angered by this development, some youth of the region established armed groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), the Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), and the Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), etc., demanding greater control over the region's resources and compensation for the environmental damage caused by oil extraction. These groups carried out attacks on oil installations, kidnapping, and other forms of violence to press their demands. They adopted violence to draw attention to the plight of the local communities and press for their demands. Their operations and activities have had a substantial impact on Nigeria's oil production and security.

Despite being criticised for their poor management of environmental issues and their role in the region's economic marginalisation, the multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region are another key stakeholder in the crisis, in addition to the local oil communities and armed groups, their operations caused significant environmental damage. The Nigerian government is another key stakeholder in the Niger Delta crisis. Its policies and actions significantly influenced the cause of the conflict. The government's failure to address the grievances of the local communities and its reliance on military force to quell unrest are major points of contention (Okonta & Douglas, 2003). Finally, the international community, including organisations such as the

United Nations and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs), was involved in the Niger Delta crisis. These actors provided humanitarian aid, advocated for environmental justice, and facilitated dialogue between the conflicting parties (UN Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission).

Addressing the Niger Delta crisis required a comprehensive approach that includes true environmental remediation, economic development, and political reforms to address the underlying grievances of the local communities. The diplomatic negotiation processes in the Niger Delta crisis have been multifaceted, involving various stakeholders and strategies aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict. The Nigerian government, recognising the need for a peaceful resolution, initiated several negotiation efforts to engage with the militant groups and local communities. A few of the most significant diplomatic efforts were the Niger Delta Development Board in 1960 (NDDB), the Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission in 1999 (OMPADEC), the Niger Delta Development Commission in 2000 (NDDC), and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs in 2008 (MNDA) to address the region's issues, such as environmental degradation, poverty, unemployment, and infrastructure decay, etc., and the introduction of the Amnesty Program in 2009 by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. The amnesty program offered unconditional amnesty to militants who agreed to lay down their arms and participate in the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration process.

The amnesty program resulted from prolonged negotiations between the government and militant group leaders, which were assisted by mediators and international organisations. The initiative sought to address the militants' grievances, which included calls for more control over the region's resources, compensation for environmental destruction, and socioeconomic growth, among other things. The negotiations also included discussions about providing vocational training, education, and employment possibilities for ex-militants to help them reintegrate into society. Mediators played an important role in resolving the Niger Delta issue by bridging the gap between opposing sides and facilitating communication. The mediation process involved a variety of parties, including local leaders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international bodies.

The Pan-Niger Delta Elders Forum (PANDEF), a coalition of traditional elders, political figures, and civil society organisations from the Niger Delta, was involved in one of the noteworthy mediation efforts. PANDEF served as a go-between for the government and the militant organisations, representing local communities' interests and making sure their opinions were heard during the talks. These mediation efforts produced noteworthy results (Okonta & Douglas, 2003). More than 30,000 militants were disarmed as a result of the amnesty program, which also decreased violence and increased oil output.

The conflict resolution tactics used during the Niger Delta crisis demonstrate the significance of a thorough and inclusive approach to conflict resolution. Thus, the developmental commissions helped to rebuild people's trust in the Nigerian state, while the Amnesty program effectively reduced violence and facilitated disarmament. The establishment of the numerous commissions, as well as the emphasis on conversation and negotiation, were among the resolution techniques primary assets. By engaging militant groups and local communities, the government was able to establish trust and a sense of ownership in the peacemaking process.

Comparative Analysis of Diplomatic Negotiation and Mediation Approaches to the Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula Dispute and the Niger Delta Crisis

The Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi peninsula dispute and the Niger Delta crisis are two separate but significant disputes in Nigerian history. Both disputes required diplomatic negotiation and mediation to be resolved, but the tactics used differed significantly.

Similarities in the Approaches

1. **Diplomatic Engagement:** There were lengthy diplomatic negotiations in both conflicts. While the Nigerian government established the amnesty program to interact with and withdraw militants from the creeks and developmental commissions to address the region's problems, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was crucial in providing a legal framework for resolving the Bakassi Peninsula dispute.

2. **Mediation Efforts:** In both situations, mediation was essential. While the Bakassi Peninsula was peacefully turned over with the help of the UN and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, the Niger Delta conflict was handled by several mediators, including local leaders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

3. **Focus on Peaceful Resolution:** Peaceful resolution was given precedence over military conflict in both strategies. The International Court of Justice's Bakassi judgement and the Niger Delta Amnesty program both placed a strong focus on communication, cooperation, and compromise.

Differences in the Approaches

1. **Nature of the Conflict:** The Bakassi Peninsula dispute was an interstate conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon centered on territorial claims. In contrast, the Niger Delta crisis was an intrastate conflict involving local communities, militant organisations, and the Nigerian government, fuelled by concerns over resource control, environmental degradation, underdevelopment, and marginalisation, among other things.

2. **Legal Framework and Socio-Economic Solutions:** While the Niger Delta conflict necessitated socio-economic solutions, such as the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of militants, as well as developmental commissions and projects to address underlying grievances, the Bakassi dispute was resolved primarily through international law and the ICJ's decision.

3. **International and Local Mediation:** International organisations, such as the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, gave the Bakassi issue a lot of attention. Local leaders, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations all played significant roles in the Niger Delta crisis, which, on the other hand, required more localised mediation efforts.

Despite these parallels and differences, the diplomatic negotiations and mediation efforts in the Bakassi Peninsula issue were very successful. A clear legal framework for resolution was established by the ICJ's ruling, and the United Nations and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission's mediation efforts enabled a peaceful transfer of sovereignty. When the ICJ's ruling was successfully put into practice in 2008, it marked a significant turning point in international conflict resolution and demonstrated the importance of using both legal and diplomatic channels to resolve territorial conflicts. The diplomatic negotiations and mediation attempt in the Niger Delta conflict were also successful, albeit with some hurdles. In their projects, the various commissions attempted to promote regional development. The various commission projects aimed to advance regional development, and the amnesty program led to the disarming of over 30,000 terrorists and a decrease in bloodshed, significantly improving regional security. The mediation efforts of international organisations and local leaders helped to build trust and facilitate communication between the opposing parties, but their long-term success depends on ongoing socioeconomic growth and addressing the underlying causes of environmental degradation, underdevelopment, and marginalisation, among others.

The Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula conflict and the Niger Delta crisis both highlight the importance of diplomatic negotiation and mediation in settling conflicts. Despite their divergent approaches, both initiatives depended on dialogue, compromise, and amicable settlement to accomplish their objectives. The effectiveness of these strategies emphasises the need for a comprehensive, inclusive conflict resolution plan that is tailored to the particulars of each disagreement.

Conclusion

Using the Bakassi peninsula and the Niger Delta crises as case studies, the study examined diplomatic negotiation and mediation as means of analysing different conflict resolution strategies. When accomplished effectively, diplomatic negotiation and mediation can result in lasting peace and stability in any society. The success of these strategies in the Bakassi Peninsula conflict and the Niger Delta crisis highlights how crucial it is to keep putting

dialogue, peace, cooperation, and development first to address the root causes of conflict and establish lasting peace.

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THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL AFFINITIES IN THE DYNAMICS OF ECOWAS AND THE AU

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ABSTRACT
Linguistic and cultural connections are crucial to the functioning of regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). The colonial history of Africa has resulted in a fragmented linguistic landscape, primarily influenced by English, French, and Portuguese, which serve as both unifying and divisive elements. While existing studies have focused on the effects of colonial linguistic legacies on governance, this research delves into how linguistic and cultural commonalities impact policy formulation, conflict resolution, and regional cooperation within ECOWAS and the AU. This study shifts from broad discussions of linguistic diversity to a focused analysis of how these affinities can be strategically utilized to strengthen regional integration. It recognizes both the unifying potential and the divisive aspects of linguistic and cultural factors. Using a qualitative methodology, the research examines official documents, treaties, and policy frameworks, supplemented by expert interviews for empirical insights. The findings indicate that while linguistic and cultural commonalities enhance intra-bloc solidarity, they also create institutional asymmetries that impede cross-bloc collaboration. The study identifies opportunities to leverage indigenous African languages as tools for regional unity, a perspective often neglected in previous research. By advocating for policy reforms that support multilingualism and foster intercultural dialogue, this study provides a fresh outlook on how ECOWAS and the AU can effectively navigate linguistic and cultural diversity to achieve sustainable integration and development.

Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) are two key regional organizations focused on promoting integration, peace, and socioeconomic development in Africa. Founded in 1975, ECOWAS consists of 15 member states in West Africa and is dedicated to achieving economic integration and political stability in the region. The AU, which replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2001, includes 55 member states and aims to foster unity, cooperation, and sustainable development across the continent. Both organizations play a crucial role in Africa's pursuit of self-determination, development, and a cohesive identity (Edozie, 2017). Despite their shared goals, the effectiveness of ECOWAS and the AU is shaped by the complex interplay of linguistic and cultural factors. Africa's colonial history has resulted in a fragmented linguistic landscape dominated by English, French, and Portuguese, which continues to impact governance, education, and diplomacy. These colonial legacies present both opportunities and challenges for regional integration. On one hand, linguistic and cultural similarities within specific blocs, such as Francophone or Anglophone countries, can promote solidarity and cooperation among members. On the other hand, these same similarities can deepen divisions, hindering collaboration across blocs and weakening collective action (Zormelo, 1995). The importance of ECOWAS and the AU goes beyond their immediate objectives, as they serve as vital mechanisms for addressing Africa's historical and structural challenges. Linguistic and cultural factors significantly influence the dynamics of these organizations, affecting everything from policy development to conflict resolution. Understanding the role of these affinities is essential to unlocking the potential of regional integration and addressing barriers to sustainable development. This study seeks to explore how linguistic and cultural affinities can be leveraged to enhance the operational dynamics of ECOWAS and the AU while mitigating their divisive effects. By interrogating the existing body of literature related to the subject, this research aims to identify gaps in the scholarship and establish the foundation upon which this inquiry is premised.

Conceptualizing Linguistic and Cultural Affinities

Linguistic and cultural affinities refer to the shared languages, traditions, norms, and values that create bonds among individuals and groups. In regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), these affinities have a multifaceted impact on interactions and collective decision-making. Africa's linguistic and cultural landscape is deeply influenced by its colonial history. The imposition of European languages, English, French, and Portuguese has resulted in the division of African countries into linguistic blocs (Mazrui, 1995). These colonial languages serve as official languages in many states and are often used as mediums of instruction and governance. Simultaneously, indigenous languages and cultural practices continue to shape identities and foster connections within and across borders (Bamgbose, 2011; Ayeni & Ohanyere, 2017). In ECOWAS, linguistic similarities are notably significant. The region is mainly categorized into Anglophone and Francophone nations, with Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, which are Portuguese-speaking, forming a smaller group. These linguistic divisions frequently shape alliances and affect the ease of communication and collaboration among member states. Similarly, the AU faces the challenge of managing linguistic diversity across the continent while promoting unity and integration. These affinities are integrated into the institutional frameworks of ECOWAS and the AU. For example, ECOWAS designates English, French, and Portuguese as its official languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of its member states (ECOWAS, 1993). These languages are used for official communication, policy-making, and programme implementation. However, the dominance of these colonial languages often marginalizes indigenous languages and limits the inclusivity of regional initiatives (Bamgbose, 2011).

Culturally, both organizations leverage shared traditions and values to foster unity. ECOWAS promotes cultural exchange programmes and regional festivals to strengthen bonds among member states. The AU, through initiatives like the African Cultural Renaissance Campaign, seeks to celebrate and preserve Africa's rich cultural heritage while addressing the socio-political implications of cultural diversity (AU, 2006). On the positive side, they facilitate intra-group solidarity, enhance regional identity, and promote cooperation in areas like conflict resolution and economic integration (Edozie, 2017). For example, Francophone

countries within ECOWAS often exhibit stronger cohesion due to their shared language and legal systems. However, these affinities can also reinforce divisions and hinder cross-bloc collaboration. The linguistic divide between Anglophone and Francophone states has, at times, led to mistrust and policy misalignment. Cultural differences, while enriching, can complicate consensus-building and collective action at the continental level (Zormelo, 1995).

Theoretical Framework

These theories provide insights into how shared languages and cultural ties influence cooperation, governance, and policy implementation within these regional organizations while also highlighting the structural challenges posed by linguistic and cultural diversity.

i. Constructivism and Regional Identity Formation

Constructivists argue that international and regional relations are not merely driven by material interests but also by shared identities, norms, and cultural factors (Wendt, 1999). Studies have shown that shared language plays a crucial role in fostering trust and diplomatic cohesion in regional organizations (Checkel, 1998). Within ECOWAS and the AU, the presence of Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone blocs creates both opportunities for cooperation and challenges for policy alignment (Mazrui, 1995). Constructivism illustrates that linguistic and cultural ties can promote regional integration by fostering alignment on policy issues and strategic alliances among member states with similar cultural backgrounds. However, it also emphasizes that linguistic divisions can lead to fragmentation, complicating consensus-building and reducing institutional effectiveness. A glaring example is the ethnic and regional tensions between between nomadic and sedentary populations in the Sahel region which exacerbated the political marginalization of groups, such as the Tuareg and Fulani in the region (Ayeni & Ogbang, 2025)

ii. Neo-functionalism and the Spillover Effect

Neo-functionalism, an important theory of regional integration, suggests that cooperation in economic, political, and social sectors can trigger a spillover effect, resulting in greater integration in additional areas (Haas, 1958). From this perspective, linguistic and cultural affinities can serve as catalysts for regional cooperation by facilitating cross-border trade, governance, and diplomacy. For instance, the common use of French among ECOWAS member states like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso has fostered stronger economic and diplomatic relations (Zormelo, 1995). However, unlike classical neofunctionalist predictions, linguistic and cultural diversity in ECOWAS and the AU has not always resulted in seamless integration. Instead, linguistic barriers often hinder communication, policy implementation, and collective decision-making (Edozie, 2017).

iii. *Postcolonial Theory and the Lingering Effects of Colonialism*

Scholars such as Fanon (1961) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) have argued that colonial linguistic policies created enduring divisions that continue to shape contemporary governance structures. The legacy of European colonization has left Africa with a linguistic landscape dominated by English, French, and Portuguese, often at the expense of indigenous languages and cultural cohesion (Chumbow, 2005).

These blocs frequently pursue different policy objectives, resulting in imbalanced power dynamics within these organizations.

Historical Development of ECOWAS and the AU

ECOWAS was founded in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos, primarily to promote economic integration and development in West Africa. The founding members (15 West African nations), sought to create a unified market that would enhance trade and investment while reducing the region's dependency on external actors (Asante, 1985). The organization's mandate has since broadened to encompass peace and security, as ongoing conflicts in member states underscored the interconnection between economic and political stability. The Revised Treaty of 1993 redefined ECOWAS's objectives to incorporate political cooperation and institutionalized mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution (ECOWAS, 1993). Initiatives such as the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and protocols on free movement and trade liberalization exemplify the organization's commitment to achieving its vision of regional integration. However, linguistic and cultural diversity among member states has posed challenges to consensus-building and implementation (Ojo, 1980).

The African Union (AU) was established in 2001 as the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was founded in 1963. The OAU primarily concentrated on decolonization and the elimination of apartheid, aligning with the political priorities of newly independent African nations. While the OAU achieved significant milestones, such as supporting liberation movements and promoting Pan-Africanism, it was criticized for its limited focus on economic development and governance reforms (Adetula, 2015). The transition to the AU marked a shift toward a more comprehensive agenda, encompassing economic integration, conflict resolution, and sustainable development. The Constitutive Act of the AU set forth ambitious goals, such as creating a unified African market, improving regional security measures, and fostering democratic governance (African Union, 2001). Since then, the AU has launched significant initiatives, including Agenda 2063, which seeks to expedite Africa's socioeconomic transformation (AU, 2015).

Both ECOWAS and the AU share a commitment to regional integration, yet they operate within different contexts and scales. ECOWAS focuses on sub-regional issues, while the AU addresses continental challenges. Despite their achievements, both organizations face obstacles rooted in Africa's colonial history, including linguistic and cultural divides and weak institutional capacity (Mazrui, 1995). These challenges highlight the need for innovative strategies to enhance cooperation and inclusivity. While ECOWAS focuses on regional economic integration and stability, the AU takes a continent-wide approach to addressing political, economic, and social challenges. Together, these organizations embody Africa's aspirations for unity and self-determination.

Institutional Framework and Decision-Making Procedures

The institutional frameworks and decision-making procedures of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) offer valuable insights into how these organizations operate to promote regional integration and tackle challenges in Africa. While both share overarching goals of promoting economic growth, peace, and development, their structures and approaches to decision-making exhibit notable differences.

Institutional Structure of ECOWAS

ECOWAS functions within a well-defined institutional framework designed to promote economic integration and ensure peace and security in West Africa. The key institutions include:

i. *The Authority of Heads of State and Government:* This is the supreme decision-making body of ECOWAS, consisting of the heads of state and government from member countries. It establishes policies and makes decisions that are binding for member states (ECOWAS Commission, 2022).

ii. *The Council of Ministers:* Made up of ministers from member states, this body is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Authority and managing the community's budget and programs.*The ECOWAS Commission:* Acting as the executive arm, the Commission ensures the implementation of decisions, coordinates community

policies, and promotes regional initiatives.

iii. *The ECOWAS Parliament and the Community Court of Justice:* The Parliament provides advisory opinions on policies, while the Court addresses legal disputes and ensures adherence to community laws.

Institutional Structure of the AU

The African Union's institutional framework is more extensive, reflecting its pan-African mission. Key institutions include:

i. *The Assembly of the African Union:* This is the highest organ of the AU, composed of heads of state and government, and is responsible for establishing the union's agenda and priorities (AU, 2021).

ii. *The Executive Council:* Consisting of ministers from member states, this council prepares and implements the Assembly's decisions, particularly in areas such as trade, infrastructure, and health.

iii. *The African Union Commission (AUC)*: Similar to the ECOWAS Commission, the AUC serves as the AU's secretariat, facilitating programs, coordinating policies, and managing administrative tasks.

iv. *The Pan-African Parliament and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights:* These institutions work to promote democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law.

Decision-Making Processes

Both ECOWAS and the AU utilize a consensus-driven approach to decision-making, though there are some differences:

ECOWAS: In ECOWAS, decisions are typically reached by consensus within the Authority of Heads of State and Government. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions may be made by a two-thirds majority (ECOWAS Protocols, 2020). The organization also uses mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms to address disputes, often through its Mediation and Security Council.

AU: The AU Assembly operates similarly, prioritizing consensus. However, when consensus fails, decisions may be reached through a two-thirds majority vote. The AU also relies on subsidiary bodies like the Peace and Security Council to address urgent issues, employing mechanisms such as early warning systems and mediation teams.

While ECOWAS and the AU share similar governance structures, the scale of their operations differs significantly. ECOWAS focuses primarily on the West African sub-region, allowing for more targeted interventions. In contrast, the AU encompasses the entire continent, requiring broader and more complex coordination efforts. Additionally, ECOWAS has a more robust framework for economic integration, exemplified by its efforts to establish a single currency, while the AU places greater emphasis on continental unity and broader socio-political issues.

Official Languages and Working Languages

The use of official and working languages in regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) is essential for facilitating communication, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring effective regional governance. Their language policies reflect both the historical context of colonialism and the multilingual realities of the regions they serve.

ECOWAS: The official and working languages of ECOWAS are English, French, and Portuguese.These languages are used in formal communication, document publication, legal proceedings including meetings, communications, and the drafting of policies and resolutions. within the organization. While ECOWAS' language policy helps ensure communication across its member states, it also faces challenges. The reliance on these colonial languages often alienates populations who may not be proficient in these languages, thereby hindering full participation in ECOWAS programmes and initiatives (Adegbija, 2004). Moreover, the financial and logistical resources required to provide translations and

interpretations across these languages can strain ECOWAS' capacity.

African Union: The AU recognizes six official languages: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Kiswahili (African Union, 2021). These languages represent Africa's colonial past while also reflecting a commitment to promoting African languages. Arabic, due to its widespread use in North Africa, and Kiswahili, as a lingua franca in East Africa, are key to ensuring that the AU remains inclusive and representative of the continent's linguistic diversity.

The working languages of the AU are Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and Kiswahili.While these languages are used for most AU communications and proceedings, Kiswahili's role has been particularly emphasized in recent years, with the AU adopting Kiswahili as a working language in 2022 (Ndlovu, 2022). This decision is part of the AU's broader effort to promote African languages, reflecting the growing importance of Kiswahili in Pan-African contexts. The AU's promotion of Kiswahili as a working language is a significant step towards decolonizing language policy on the continent. It also seeks to enhance the use of African languages in diplomacy, governance, and education (Kamwangamalu, 2016). The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) was created to advance these objectives by promoting the standardization of African languages and their incorporation into the continent's development. However, despite the AU's initiatives, challenges persist in implementing this language policy. The vast number of African languages (over 2,000) complicates efforts to standardize and promote them throughout the continent. Additionally, resistance to abandoning colonial languages remains prevalent, particularly in diplomatic and political spheres where English, French, and Portuguese continue to dominate (Makoni & Meinhof, 2003).

Both ECOWAS and the AU recognize the importance of language in regional governance, yet their approaches differ based on their geographical scope and objectives. ECOWAS, being focused on West Africa, operates with a more straightforward linguistic framework, using only three colonial languages. In contrast, the AU must accommodate a much wider range of languages due to Africa's immense linguistic diversity. The AU's adoption of six official languages enables it to serve different regions, from North Africa to Sub-Saharan Africa. Both organizations continue to recognize colonial languages as official languages. However, the AU has made more considerable progress in promoting indigenous languages, especially Kiswahili, to encourage greater inclusivity. ECOWAS, while recognizing the cultural importance of indigenous languages, has not yet taken significant steps to institutionalize them at the same level. The AU's multilingual approach is a necessary compromise between practicality and inclusivity. It allows the AU to function effectively while recognizing the linguistic needs of its diverse member states. ECOWAS, however, faces the challenge of relying on just three colonial languages, potentially excluding a large portion of its population who may not speak these languages fluently.

Cultural Exchange Programmes and Initiatives

Cultural exchange programs and initiatives within regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) play a vital role in promoting unity, mutual understanding, and development among diverse member states. These programmes address cultural diversity, promote integration, and strengthen social cohesion, ultimately contributing to sustainable development in the region.

ECOWAS recognizes that cultural diversity is one of West Africa's greatest assets. ECOWAS has established programmes to promote cultural exchange and the arts, often focusing on music, dance, and storytelling, which are deeply embedded in the region's traditions. One prominent initiative is the ECOWAS Music and Arts Festival (ECOFEST), which brings together artists and cultural practitioners from member states to celebrate shared heritage while showcasing individual national identities (ECOWAS Commission, 2021). This platform not only enhances regional identity but also provides economic opportunities for creative industries, contributing to the region's development. Another example is the ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC), which incorporates cultural programmes alongside its sports and youth activities. These initiatives encourage youth from different member states to engage in cultural dialogue, strengthening regional solidarity (EYSDC, 2019).

Through its Agenda 2063, the African Union highlights the importance of culture in driving the continent's socioeconomic transformation. The AU's cultural initiatives often have a broader scope, aiming to integrate the diverse cultural practices across the continent while addressing contemporary issues such as migration, conflict resolution, and education. One significant initiative is the African Cultural Renaissance Campaign, which aims to promote the use of African languages, preserve traditional knowledge, and foster cultural industries (AU, 2015). This campaign underscores the AU's commitment to safeguarding African identity in the face of globalization. The AU has also established the Pan-African Cultural Congress (PACC), a biennial event that provides a forum for cultural practitioners, policymakers, and academics to discuss strategies for cultural development. The PACC facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices across the continent, thereby contributing to cultural unity and innovation (AU Commission, 2020).

Despite the progress made, these cultural exchange programmes face challenges, including limited funding, political instability in some regions, and linguistic barriers among member states. However, technological advancements and increased cooperation among member states provide opportunities to overcome these hurdles. Digital platforms, for instance, can amplify the reach and impact of cultural exchange initiatives, ensuring broader participation and sustainability.

The Impact of Linguistic and Cultural Affinities within ECOWAS and the AU

Linguistic affinities among member states with shared colonial histories have facilitated closer bilateral and multilateral cooperation. For instance, Anglophone countries like Nigeria and Ghana often collaborate on regional projects, while Francophone countries like Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire maintain strong cultural and political ties (ECOWAS Commission, 2020).

At the continental level, the AU acknowledges the linguistic diversity of Africa, which includes over 2,000 languages. This is so beecause it understands that language defines our the scope of our ideas, our values, and our behaviours (Ayeni & Okon, 2023). It advocates for multilingualism through initiatives such as the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), which aims to harmonize African languages and promote their use in education, governance, and regional integration efforts (AU, 2021).Linguistic affinities among countries with shared indigenous languages, such as Swahili in East Africa, have strengthened cultural ties and facilitated cross-border interactions.

Cultural affinities, including shared traditions, values, and norms, are a unifying force within ECOWAS and the AU. West Africa, for instance, shares a rich cultural heritage, including music, dance, festivals, and traditional practices that transcend national boundaries. These cultural similarities foster social cohesion and solidarity, which are essential for regional integration.

ECOWAS leverages these affinities through cultural programmes like the ECOWAS Music and Arts Festival (ECOFEST), which promotes the region's cultural diversity and unity (ECOWAS Commission, 2020). Similarly, the AU's Agenda 2063 emphasizes the importance of cultural renaissance in uniting Africa and addressing challenges such as conflict and identity crises (AU, 2015).

Challenges and Opportunities: Ethnic Diversity and National Interests

Ethnic diversity and conflicting national interests pose both challenges and opportunities for regional integration and cooperation within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). Although Africa's cultural and ethnic diversity is a valuable asset, it also makes it more difficult to achieve unity, build consensus, and enhance regional stability. Similarly, national interests can either hinder or enhance collective decision-making and regional development initiatives.

Challenges

i. Africa is home to over 2,000 ethnic groups, with many crossing national borders. This diversity often leads to ethnic fragmentation, which can exacerbate political tensions and conflicts. In some cases, governments prioritize the interests of dominant ethnic groups, sidelining minorities and undermining national unity. These internal dynamics can spill over into regional organisations like ECOWAS and

the AU, complicating collective decision-making (Adebajo, 2010).

ii. Member states often prioritize their national interests over regional objectives, creating obstacles to cooperation. For instance, disagreements over trade policies, resource allocation, or the hosting of regional headquarters can impede the progress of regional initiatives. Within ECOWAS, tensions have arisen over contributions to regional security operations, with some countries shouldering disproportionate burdens (Olowu, 2020). With Nigeria emerging as a key player in stabilizing the west African region (Ayeni & Brown, 2025). Similarly, in the AU, differing positions on issues such as the Western Sahara conflict have created divisions among member states (Murithi, 2015).

iii. Ethnic diversity and nationalistic tendencies hinder the development of a strong regional identity. Without a shared sense of belonging, public support for regional integration remains limited, reducing the effectiveness of ECOWAS and the AU in achieving their mandates (UNECA, 2021).

Ethnic diversity can fuel conflicts, particularly when linked to competition over resources or political power. These conflicts strain the capacities of ECOWAS and the AU to mediate and resolve disputes, often requiring significant resources and time (Adetula, 2015).

Opportunities

i. Ethnic diversity, when managed effectively, can serve as a foundation for cultural exchange and mutual understanding. For example, shared cultural traditions across West African countries, such as music, dance, and festivals, have been leveraged by ECOWAS to foster unity and promote regional identity (ECOWAS Commission, 2020). Similarly, the AU's Agenda 2063 recognizes the potential of cultural diversity in building a pan-African identity (AU, 2015).

ii. Diverse national interests can complement regional goals when aligned strategically. Countries with strong economies, such as Nigeria in ECOWAS or South Africa in the AU, can play leadership roles in advancing regional development projects. National expertise in areas such as agriculture, technology, and peacekeeping can be shared to benefit the broader region (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2016).

iii. Ethnic diversity can enhance economic integration by fostering cross-border trade and investment. Informal trade networks often thrive among communities with shared ethnic ties across borders, such as the Hausa in Nigeria, Niger, and Ghana. ECOWAS and the AU have opportunities to formalize and support these networks to boost regional economies (UNECA, 2021).

The diversity of member states and ethnic groups provides opportunities for inclusive conflict resolution mechanisms. ECOWAS and the AU can draw on indigenous conflict resolution practices and involve traditional leaders in peace-building processes. Such approaches enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of interventions (Adetula, 2015).

Conclusion

Linguistic and cultural affinities are crucial in shaping the dynamics of regional organizations like ECOWAS and the AU. These affinities serve as both facilitators and barriers to regional integration, cooperation, and stability throughout Africa. This study has offered an in-depth analysis of how shared languages and cultural connections impact the effectiveness of these organizations while also highlighting the challenges posed by linguistic divisions and cultural diversity.

A significant conceptual implication of this research is that linguistic and cultural similarities provide a foundation for regional unity, promoting collaboration and enhancing institutional legitimacy. Common languages—such as English, French, and Portuguese—alongside indigenous lingua francas like Hausa and Swahili—have been instrumental in improving communication, trade, and diplomacy among member states. Additionally, cultural

affinities, reflected in shared traditions, values, and historical experiences, foster mutual understanding and a collective identity, thereby bolstering regional solidarity. These findings resonate with constructivist theories of regionalism, which stress the importance of shared identities in fostering cooperation. However, this study diverges from previous research by demonstrating that linguistic and cultural diversity can also present substantial structural challenges to regional integration. While scholars like Mazrui (1995) and Zormelo (1995) have acknowledged the effects of linguistic divisions, this research expands on their insights by illustrating how these divisions impact governance, decision-making, and policy implementation within ECOWAS and the AU. Linguistic divides, especially between Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone states, often obstruct coordination efforts, resulting in miscommunication, mistrust, and delays in executing regional policies. Furthermore, cultural diversity across Africa means that varying traditions, norms, and policy priorities can complicate consensus-building and conflict resolution. The theoretical implications of these findings suggest that while linguistic and cultural affinities can serve as unifying elements in regional governance, they also necessitate strategic management to mitigate their divisive effects. While it supports existing scholarship on the opportunities and challenges presented by Africa's linguistic diversity, it also provides a new perspective by emphasizing the need for targeted policies that leverage linguistic and cultural commonalities while addressing their fragmentary effects.

Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, which reveal the dual nature of linguistic and cultural affinities as both unifying and divisive forces in the dynamics of ECOWAS and the AU, the following recommendations are put forward:

i. Enhance Multilingual Communication Strategies

Given that linguistic divides—particularly between Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone states—hinder policy coordination and decision-making, ECOWAS and the AU should prioritize the adoption of inclusive multilingual policies because "the struggle for independence was not merely a political fight to free Africans from colonial rule but was also a struggle to preserve African identity, cultural integration, and self-affirmation (Ayeni, 2017). This can be achieved by:

- Expanding the use of indigenous lingua francas such as Hausa, Swahili, and Yoruba in regional communications to bridge linguistic gaps.
- Investing in professional translation and interpretation services to ensure seamless communication across member states.
- Promoting language training initiatives for policymakers and diplomats to enhance cross-bloc engagement and understanding.

ii. Enhancing Institutional Frameworks for Inclusive Decision-Making

The study has shown that linguistic and cultural diversity can sometimes lead to miscommunication, mistrust, and policy fragmentation. To mitigate these challenges, ECOWAS and the AU should:

- Establish inclusive decision-making processes that consider the linguistic and cultural diversity of member states.
- Ensure equal representation of linguistic blocs in key leadership positions within these organization.

iii. Develop conflict-resolution mechanisms that are sensitive to cultural differences and promote dialogue-driven approaches to dispute settlement.

Addressing the Lingering Impact of Colonial Linguistic Legacies

This study has shown how colonial linguistic legacies continue to shape regional dynamics, sometimes reinforcing divisions. To address these challenges, ECOWAS and the AU should:

- Advocate for policies that promote linguistic inclusivity and reduce

colonial language dominance in regional affairs.

- Support initiatives aimed at revitalizing and institutionalizing indigenous African languages in governance and education.

- Encourage bilingual and multilingual education systems that equip citizens with the linguistic skills necessary for effective regional engagement.

iv. Establishing a Linguistic and Cultural Integration Task Force

To systematically address the challenges and opportunities presented by linguistic and cultural affinities, ECOWAS and the AU should:

- Create a task force dedicated to researching and recommending strategies for managing linguistic and cultural diversity in regional governance.

- Regularly assess the impact of linguistic and cultural factors on policy implementation and regional cooperation.

- Foster collaborations with academic institutions and research centres to generate data-driven solutions for enhancing linguistic and cultural integration.

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APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL LISTENING STRATEGIES FOR BRAND IMAGE DEVELOPMENT OF GRAND CEREALS COMPANY PRODUCTS IN PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT
Effective social strategies are crucial for organizations to monitor brand conversations, respond to customer feedback, and maintain a positive brand image. Grand Cereals is a leading food processing company in Nigeria, with a strong presence in Plateau State. Despite the importance of social listening in brand image development, there appears to be a dearth of research on the social listening strategies employed by Grand Cereals in Plateau State. The research was aimed at identifying how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and to assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation. The research took its leaning from the uses and gratification theory and media dependency theory. The research was an empirical one, with primary data gathered from twenty staff of the sales and marketing department of Grand Cereal and Oil Mills Ltd, Jos, Plateau State. The findings of the research revealed that Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd has no official strategy for monitoring online conversations about their company products, in addition to the fact that the company has no official engagement strategy for their online customers. The research recommended that Grand Cereals should establish a robust social media presence. The company should also utilize social listening tools to monitor brand conversations, track customer feedback, and respond promptly to customer inquiries and complaints. The study recommended that Grand Cereals should encourage online engagement with their online customers.

Introduction

In the fast-paced digital age of the 21st century, social listening has gained immense significance for businesses, organizations, and individuals. These practices allow for understanding consumer preferences, building brand reputation, managing crises, identifying influencers, conducting market research, and maintaining positive media presence. Tools such as social media and the internet have become essential for staying attuned to public sentiment, adapting to market trends, and effectively engaging with audiences. In the era of constant connectivity and information overload, Agozie and Nat (2023) insist that harnessing the power of social listening has become crucial for success and growth. Organizations that harness the power of these practices can gain a competitive advantage, adapt to changing market dynamics, and create a positive impact on their bottom line.

Research on social listening is multi-dimensional, consisting of trend analysis, sentiment analysis and topic modelling (Hedayati 2024). The research will address the issue of social listening strategies as a way of enabling company brands to develop their brand images for public acceptance and better audience engagement, especially within the context of the social media via the understanding of public perceptions towards their brands for better public engagement. Researchers have in the past explored roles of social listening in specific contexts or target populations. Santos and Serpa (2020) focused on assessing social listening among adolescents by analysing social media posts related to health topics. Their study revealed that adolescents with higher media literacy were more likely to engage in informed discussions and critically evaluate health information as postulated by past research.

The research will focus on the appraisal of pragmatic strategies for effective social listening among the target consumers of Grand Cereals products in Plateau State. Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Company Limited is a subsidiary of United African Company (UAC) and they produce several house hold products such as Cereals like Grand Cornflakes, and Grand Maize Brabusco. They also produce Pet Foods such as Bingo dog food and Flours and Meals such as Grand Soya flavour Oils. By studying the target consumers of Grand Cereals products in Plateau State, the research can provide contextual data that can help Grand Cereals tailor their media messages to suit the needs of their diverse audiences and identify potential areas of improvement.

Statement of the Problem

With the abundance of social media content and data, it has become difficult to filter through the noise and identify relevant information. Understanding the context of a conversation is crucial for accurate analysis. Social listening tools appear to struggle with understanding sarcasm, irony, or expressions specific to a particular culture or region (Hedayati 2024). This may result in misinterpretation of policies. Fake accounts or irrelevant data may skew results and lead to a misguided conclusion. Social media platforms may not provide detailed demographic information about their users, which may limit the ability to segment and analyze data based on specific demographics (Martino 2020). Social media conversations happen in real time, which requires social listening tools to constantly monitor and analyze data in real-time as well.

Human language is complex and often contains ambiguous expressions, irony or figurative language. In trying to harness social listening strategies, algorithms may struggle to accurately interpret and assign viewpoints to individual expressions, leading to incorrect results (Bhuvana 2024). Social listening heavily relies on understanding the context in which the text is written. Without proper context, social listening strategies may misinterpret the motives behind the text (Khan, 2024). Different people may interpret and express advert messages differently, this may lead to inaccurate classification in domain specific applications.

It may appear that the inability of most companies and organizations like Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd, Plateau State to extract social media conversations about their brands in terms of message reception and interpretation may lead to a gross misinterpretation of companies and organizational image. This may have a debilitating impact on company or organizational policies, especially towards their target public, which could in the long run, impact on the overall image of such companies and organizations in a negative way.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the research is to appraise pragmatic strategies for effective social listening among the target consumers of Grand Cereals Ltd Company products in Plateau State. This will be done with the under listed objectives;

1. To identify how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and proffer strategies of effective social listening on the social media for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd

2. To assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation for better social media image enhancement for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd

Conceptual Clarification

Social Listening

Social listening constitutes the process of monitoring and analyzing social media platforms to comprehend public sentiments and opinions. It involves systematically collecting data from social media sources, such as tweets, posts, comments, and reviews, and applying analytical techniques to interpret and understand the information (Machiri, et al 2023). Stewart and Arnold (2017) emphasized that social listening provides a comprehensive view of the conversations happening around a particular topic, brand, or industry, thereby allowing companies and organizations to make informed decisions based on a deep understanding of public perceptions.

One of the primary applications of social listening examined by scholars is its capacity to generate valuable consumer knowledge (Tachi 2021). By gathering real time data, brands can analyze how consumers perceive their products and services. Researchers argue that this immediate feedback loop allows companies to identify evolving trends and adopt their marketing strategies accordingly. Another critical aspect of social listening highlighted in academic literature is its role in crisis management. Scholars suggest that social listening acts as an early warning system for brands, enabling them to detect potential issues before they escalate.

Literature Review

Strategies for Enhancing Effective Social Listening on Social Media

Some of the possible ways of enhancing social listening efforts and practices according to Sakti (2023) could range from understanding social media influence, assessment of public perception, and evaluating news sources.

Understanding Social Media Influence

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, shaping the way we communicate, interact, and consume information. With the rise of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok, social media has significantly altered the way we connect with others and access news and entertainment. Hogsnes, et al (2023) posit that one of the key aspects of social media that has garnered much attention in recent years is its influence on individuals and society as a whole. The ability of social media to shape opinions, attitudes, and behaviors is both powerful and widespread, with a vast majority of people using social media in some form or another.

The influence of social media can be crucial for several reasons. Firstly, social media has the potential to mobilize and organize large groups of people, leading to social movements and protests that can bring about significant change (Jung & Wang 2024). For example, the end SARS protest in Nigeria in October 2020 was largely fueled by social media, as protesters used platforms like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to coordinate their actions and spread their messages. Furthermore, social media can also influence consumer behavior, with many companies now using platforms like Instagram and YouTube to advertise their products and services (Matthew 2024). Influencers on these platforms have a massive following and can sway their audience to purchase certain products or support certain causes.

Assessment of Public Perception

Public perception refers to the collective opinions, attitudes, and beliefs held by the general public towards a particular entity, such

as an organization, brand, individual, or societal issue. It is the image or reputation that a particular entity holds in the eyes of the public (Nwagwu, et al 2024). Public perception plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, influencing consumer behavior, and impacting decision-making processes. Assessing public perception can lead to solutions on how the public perceives and understands a particular entity. Matea and Peric (2023) posit that through public perception, companies and organizations can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement. This knowledge enables them to tailor their strategies, communications, and offerings to better align with public expectations and preferences. Public perception can directly impact an entity's reputation (Puig & Gen 2023). Positive public perception can enhance trust, credibility, and goodwill, leading to increased support, customer loyalty, brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Conversely, negative public perception can tarnish an organization's reputation, leading to a loss of trust, decreased customer confidence, and potential financial losses (Hanathasia & Lestari 2024). In this regard, public perception can influence consumer behavior. People often make purchasing decisions based on their perceptions of a brand or product. Positive public perception can drive consumer loyalty, while negative perceptions can deter potential customers.

Evaluation of News Sources

In today's digital era, the abundance of information at our fingertips has never been greater. With just a few clicks, we can access news from all around the world, ensuring we stay informed about the latest developments. However, amidst this vast sea of information lies the challenge of distinguishing reliable news sources from less credible ones. It has become imperative for media consumers and companies alike to develop the critical skills needed to evaluate news sources accurately in order to develop their brand image.

Ensuring that the news they consume is accurate and unbiased is crucial for several reasons. Duijf (2024) suggested that relying on misinformation can lead to an uninformed citizenry, which poses threats to our democratic societies. Misinformation can shape our opinions, influence our decision-making, and impact the way we view the world. Without evaluating news sources, companies risk falling prey to false narratives and propaganda especially about their target audience and thus, compromising their ability to form well-informed opinions. Aslet and Sanderson (2023) emphasized that the rise of fake news and deceptive news outlets has increased the need for source evaluation. Fabricated stories, exaggerated claims, and misleading headlines can spread rapidly, often going viral before their inaccuracy is discovered. Therefore, evaluating news sources allows companies to separate fact from fiction, reducing the dissemination of misinformation and ensuring that only reliable information reaches their target public.

Emerging Trends in Content Creation and Engagement

The rapidly evolving digital landscape has witnessed significant shifts in content creation and audience engagement. With the rise of social media, streaming platforms, and personalized experiences, brands and content creators are continually adapting to emerging trends to capture and retain audience attention. Embracing these trends allows brands to create meaningful and memorable experiences that resonate with audiences in this ever-evolving digital edge.

In today's digital age, brands are constantly looking for new ways to engage with their customers and build brand loyalty. One powerful tool that has emerged in recent years is interactive content. Interactive content refers to any type of content that requires active participation from the user, such as quizzes, polls, surveys, calculators, and interactive videos (Ambarwati & Sudarmiatin 2024). The impact of interactive content on user engagement and brand loyalty cannot be underestimated. Andini and Tuti (2024) posit that interactive content provides a more engaging and personalized experience for target publics, allowing them to interact with the brand in a more meaningful way. This not only captures their attention but also encourages them to spend more time on the brand's website or social media platforms. Asiyah (2024) emphasized that one of the key benefits of interactive content is its ability to capture valuable data about the user. By engaging with interactive content, users provide valuable perceptions into their preferences, behaviors, and habits. This data can then be used to create more targeted and personalized marketing campaigns, leading to higher conversion rates and increased brand loyalty.

Interactive content also encourages social sharing and virality. When users engage with interactive content, they are more likely to share it with their friends and followers, leading to increased brand visibility and reach (Rai & Dahal 2024). This word-of-mouth marketing can be incredibly powerful in building brand loyalty and driving customer acquisition. Furthermore, Idemon and Nisa (2024) stressed that interactive content allows brands to create a more memorable and enjoyable experience for their customers. By incorporating elements of storytelling, and personalization into their content, brands can create a more immersive and interactive experience that resonates with users on a deeper level. Interactive content has a significant impact on user engagement and brand loyalty. Kumaresan and Samydoss (2024) added that by providing a more engaging and personalized experience for users, capturing valuable data, encouraging social sharing, and creating a memorable experience, interactive content can help brands build stronger relationships with their customers and drive long-term brand loyalty. As such, brands should consider incorporating interactive content into their branding strategies to enhance user engagement and build brand loyalty in today's competitive digital landscape.

Personalization has become an integral part of content creation today. With the rise of digital platforms and the abundance of content available, personalization techniques have emerged as a way to engage and cater to individual users' preferences, needs, and interests. According to Sodiya, et al (2022) one of the widely used personalization techniques is demographic targeting. This technique involves creating content that appeals specifically to a particular demographic group. By analyzing demographic information such as age, gender, location, and occupation, multi-national companies can tailor their content to resonate with the intended audience (Honora & Wang 2024). For example, an online shopping platform might create content targeting young adults by featuring trendy fashion items or celebrity endorsements. Another effective personalization technique is behavior targeting. This technique involves analyzing user behavior data such as browsing history, search queries, and purchase patterns to create personalized content (Abbas 2024). For instance, a streaming service like iROKO tv might recommend Nollywood movies and TV shows to users based on their viewing history and preferences. This technique enables content creators to deliver relevant and timely content to users, enhancing their overall experience. Iliyas (2024) averred that content creators also use collaborative filtering as a personalization technique.

Live streaming is another trend in content creation that has emerged as a powerful tool in the digital age, revolutionizing the way content is consumed and shared. It allows individuals and organizations to broadcast events, performances, and discussions in real-time to an online audience (Andari & Robbani 2023). In recent years, live streaming has gone beyond simply transmitting information. It has become a means of establishing and strengthening audience engagement and connection. Dua (2023) posits that live streaming facilitates direct and immediate interaction between content creators and their audience. Viewers can ask questions, provide feedback, and engage in discussions through live chat features. This real-time interaction fosters a sense of inclusion and involvement, as audiences feel like active participants rather than passive observers. Sonda and Balqiah (2023) maintained that this interaction is crucial in building a deeper connection with the audience and creating a community around the content. It also provides an unfiltered and authentic experience for the audience. Unlike pre-recorded content, live events showcase genuine moments, spontaneous reactions, and unscripted conversations. This transparency helps humanize content creators and organizations, making them more relatable and trustworthy. By witnessing raw emotions and witnessing content in real-time, viewers are more likely to forge a genuine connection with the creators. Live streaming eliminates geographical and physical barriers, making content accessible to a global audience (Melani & Zamzamy 2023). Regardless of their location, people can tune in to live events and be part of the experience. This inclusivity enhances engagement by allowing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures to connect and interact. Live streaming has made it possible for niche communities and interest groups to come together, share common experiences, and form meaningful connections.

In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in various fields has become increasingly prevalent, and one area where its impact is particularly evident is content creation. Shin and Jeong (2021) proffer that AI technology, using machine learning algorithms and natural language processing, has the ability to generate

written and visual content at an unprecedented speed and accuracy. This integration of AI in content creation has had a profound effect on engagement, transforming the way businesses connect with their audience. One of the key advantages of AI in content creation is its ability to generate personalized and relevant content (Walia 2024). AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data, such as user preferences, browsing behavior, and demographic information, to understand what content would resonate most with individual users. This personalized approach enhances engagement by providing users with content that is specifically tailored to their interests and needs, leading to increased user satisfaction and loyalty.

Social media platforms have had a profound impact on content creation and engagement trends in recent years. These platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and TikTok, have become crucial channels for individuals and businesses alike to create and share content, fostering engagement with their target audience in unique ways. One of the key roles that social media platforms play in content creation is providing a user-friendly and accessible space for individuals to share their ideas, stories, and creations (Colombo & Gray 2023). These platforms offer a variety of features, such as text updates, photos, videos, and live streaming, allowing users to express themselves and share their content in a visually appealing and engaging manner. Najeer and Dwivedi (2024) noted that this democratization of content creation has empowered individuals to become creators, resulting in a diverse range of content that caters to various interests and passions.

Theoretical Framework

The study took its leaning from the Uses and Gratification theory and the Media Dependency theory. The Uses and Gratification theory is a communication theory that explores why people actively seek out and use certain media and communication channels. It suggests that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages, but rather active consumers who select and use media in order to fulfil their specific needs and goals (Wibowo 2022). The theory focuses on the motivations and purposes behind media consumption, and suggests that people turn to media in order to satisfy specific psychological, social, and emotional needs. The theory also proposes that individuals have specific needs such as the need for information, entertainment, personal connection, identity construction, and social interaction, and they choose their media consumption accordingly (Mutiara & Putri 2023). The uses and gratification theory was first proposed by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. The theory was developed in response to the dominant mass communication theories at the time that focused on the effects media had on individuals.

The uses and gratification theory can be relevant to research on assessment of social listening in the following ways. Firstly, the theory suggests that individuals actively choose and use media to fulfill their needs and gratifications. Research using social listening can examine how media consumers select specific media sources or platforms for information, entertainment, or social interaction. By understanding the motives behind media selection, researchers can assess the preferences of individuals. Secondly, the theory emphasizes that individuals seek gratifications from media consumption.

The Media dependency theory on the other hand is a communication theory that examines the relationship between media and individuals or social groups. It posits that individuals or social groups become dependent on media to fulfil their information needs and to maintain social connections. The theory suggests that individuals or groups depend on the media to obtain information about the world. This can include news, entertainment, education, or any other content that fulfils their information needs. Safdar (2023) avers that the theory projects the media as a tool for facilitating social connections and interactions. This means that individuals and groups can rely on media to connect with others, maintain relationships, and engage in social activities. The theory also asserts that the media serves as a source of diversion, offering an escape from daily routines and providing enjoyment or relaxation (Chen 2023). People may depend on the media as a way to unwind, relieve stress, or find distraction from their everyday lives. The theory was first proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in the early 1970's. The theory was developed in response to the rapidly changing media landscape and the increasing influence of media on society.

The Media Dependency Theory is very relevant to this research work for so many reasons. Through the assessment of social listening, a better comprehension can be

achieved on how employees or stakeholders in companies rely on media sources for information about the organization, its industry, and relevant topics. This understanding can inform strategies for improving social listening within companies. The theory highlights the potential influence of media on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The Media Dependency Theory recognizes that individuals engage in selective exposure and interpretation of media messages based on their existing attitudes and beliefs. Through social listening, analysis can be made on the types of media sources or platforms that employees or stakeholders prefer, identifying any patterns of selective exposure.

Methodology

The study is an empirical one which combines qualitative analysis of relevant literature with primary data gathered from 20 interractants using a convenience sampling technique with a five point focus group discussion guide. The interractants were grouped in fives (5) within a four day interval. The interractants were randomly chosen from the Sales and marketing department of Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd, Jos South, Plateau State. All the interractants were directly involved in the publicity and marketing of Grand Cereals Company products and were also involved in one way or the other in giving feedback to the company on customer comments and reactions virtually and physically as well. The discussions took place within the period of 4 days spanning from Wednesday, 19th to Saturday, 22nd February 2025.

Presentation of Findings

The responses from the interractants were collated, analyzed and presented below:

Q1: Socio-Demographic Distribution

Sex	**Frequency**	**%**
Males	9	45
Females	11	55
Total	20	100
Marital Status	**Frequency**	%
Married	9	45
Single	7	35
Divorced	1	5
Prefer not to say	3	15
Total		100
Age Range	**Frequency**	**%**

25-35	9	45
36-45	5	25
46-55	6	30
55 and above	0	**0**
Total	20	100
Years of Experience	**Frequency**	**%**
0-5	8	40
5-10	6	30
10-15	4	20
20 and Above	2	**10**
Total	**20**	**100**
Membership of Professional Body		
NIPR	**0**	**0**
APCON	**0**	**0**
	0	**0**

Source: Field Survey 2025

From the tabulation above, it shows that 9 (nine) of the interractants were males making up 45% while 11 (eleven) of the interractants were females, making up 55 %. This shows that majority of the interractants randomly chosen were females. The table also revealed that nine of the interractants were married, while seven of the interractants were single. One of the interractants was divorced while three of the interractants preferred not to disclose their marital status.

The table above also shows that nine of the interractants were within the age range of 25-35 while five of the interractants were within the age range of 36-45 and six of the interractants fall within the age range of 46 to 55. None of the interractants from the table above fall within the age range of 55 and above. The table above also depicts that eight of the interractants had a work experience of zero to five years while five of the interractants had work experience of between five to ten years and four of the interractants had work experience of between ten to fifteen years and two of the interractants had a work

experience of fifteen years and above. Coincidentally, none of the interractants was a registered member of either the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) or the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).

Question One: What Strategy Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills use to monitor Conversations about their Company Products online?

Six of the interractants revealed that although, there is no official strategy for monitoring mentions about the company products online, but most of their marketers and sales representatives identify conversations about their company products online through hashtags, especially industry specific hashtags. However, eight of the participants on the other hand affirmed that online conversations about their company products mostly come to the company through influencers whom they have developed relationships with. These influencers according to them, sometimes deliberately create conversations about their company products to sample opinions by online users of their company products. Consequently, four of the interractants asserted that sometimes, they create online engagements about their company products to stimulate conversations and sample public opinion online while the rest of the two interractants affirmed the submission of all of the above interractants.

Question Two: Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a social media Page on any of the Social Media Platforms?

A total of nine of the interractants affirmed that the company had a social media page on Facebook, registered under their parent company, United African Company (UAC) and not as Grand Cereals and Oil Mills with a total of one thousand eight hundred followers as at February 2025. Six of the interractants were not sure whether the Company had a page on the social media while four of the interractants were not aware that the company had a page on any social media platform.

Question Three: How Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills get feedbacks from Customers about their products online?

Seven of the interractants averred that some of their customers give feedbacks about the company's products in comment sections on Facebook when the company advertises some of its products. Subsequently, six of the interractants affirmed that the company also receives feedbacks from some of its customers on company products from company emails. Four of the interractants posited that some of the company's customers reach out to the company through direct messages (DM) via Facebook messenger while three of the interractants were not certain about the online feedback mechanism.

Question Four: How Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills respond to Customers' concerns about their Company products online?

A total of eleven of the interractants posited that the company seldom responds to customers' enquiries and concerns on company products online. They disclosed that the company usually compensates their customers when concerns about company products arise through the company's distributors by way of offering extra products and packages especially during festive periods. Consequently, seven of the interractants asserted that the company provides compensations for customers who proffer concerns about company products through sales promotions where discounts of a certain percentage are made for customers also through the company distributors. Two of the interractants were unsure of response mechanisms of the company.

Question Five: Does Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a Social Media Content that fosters online engagement with Customers?

Fourteen of the interractants averred that the company had no official social media content that fosters online engagement with customers while the rest of the six interractants were not sure whether the company had any in the distant past before their arrival in the company as employees.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the research was to identify how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd carryout social listening on their company products and proffer strategies of effective social listening on the social media for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd. Findings reveal that Grand Cereals and Oil Mills have a social media page on Facebook, however, the company sales representatives on their own deploy the use of company hashtag to identify and monitor conversations about their company products online, while some of their sales representatives and marketers relate with social media influencers whom they rely on to create conversations about their company products online in order to sample online opinions about their company products and relate same to company management. Findings also revealed that the company seldom responds to online querries and inquiries by online customers due to company policy. This falls in line with the assumption of the uses and gratification theory which suggests that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages, but rather active consumers who select and use media in order to fulfil their specific needs and goals. The theory also focuses on the motivations and purposes behind media consumption, and suggests that people turn to media in order to satisfy specific psychological, social, and emotional needs. The findings implies that there is a dire need for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills as a company to actively engage with their online customers in order to portray and enhance a better image for the company in addition to their direct sales and advertisement strategies.

The second objective of the research was to assess how Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd engage their online customers on the social media and examine the emerging trends in content creation for better social media image enhancement for Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Ltd. Findings reveal that the company has no official content for online customer engagement thus far. In line with the assumptions of the media dependency theory which provides that individuals or social groups become dependent on media to fulfil their information needs and to maintain social connections. The theory suggests that individuals or groups depend on the media to obtain information about the world. This can include news, entertainment, education, or any other content that fulfils their information needs. The theory also projects the media as a tool for facilitating social connections and interactions. The implication of the above findings in line with the media dependency theory infers that since a lot of people, especially customers of grand cereals depend on the media to meet their information needs, the absence of same could lead to false and misinformed perceptions of Grand Cereals and Oil Mills Company Ltd by their online public, regardless of how well intentioned their policies appear to be.

Conclusion

The study set out to appraise the social listening strategies employed by Grand Cereals for brand image development in Plateau State. The findings revealed that Grand Cereals has a limited online presence, which hinders effective social listening and brand image development. Grand Cereals' social media presence is limited, making it challenging to engage with customers and monitor brand conversations. The company's social listening efforts are insufficient, leading to missed opportunities for customer feedback, complaint resolution, and brand advocacy. The study highlights the importance of social listening in brand image development, emphasizing the need for Grand Cereals to prioritize online engagement and customer feedback.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations;

i. Grand Cereals should establish a robust social media presence, leveraging platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

ii. The company should utilize social listening tools to monitor brand conversations, track customer feedback, and respond promptly to customer inquiries and complaints.

iii. Grand Cereals should encourage online engagement through contests, giveaways, and interactive content, helping to build brand awareness, loyalty, and advocacy.

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THE USE OF PHOTOBOOKS TO DISSEMINATE AND GENERATE MORE AWARENESS ON RABIES AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC

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KEYWORDS
Rabies; Photographs; Photobook and Graphic Design

ABSTRACT
The paper examines how Photographs in the Photobook are used to disseminate information and generate awareness about rabies among the general public. A studio-based paper investigating how images could be utilised to educate the public on the danger of rabies through a photobook. The materials for data collection were a professional camera, phone, and questionnaire. The finding revealed that photographs play a pertinent role in overcoming language and verbal barriers, thus, photography is crucial in answering live' challenges, the best means for conveying messages.

Introduction

In the past, people found ways information could be disseminated through the use of signs, drawings, paintings and symbols in the caves, walls and mountains. As time went by, photographs were introduced as ways to advance visual communication in disseminating critical information to society. Photography, therefore, is the act of drawing with light or light drawing or using a device to capture or record light on a sensitive surface (DeGuzman, 2022). Such a device is called a camera. This has become one of the strongest ways to communicate with people, regardless of their diverse languages, distances, and backgrounds (Nida, 2018). Photobook, according to Template.net, (2023) is the compilation of images, illustrations and photos that give information on a given topic largely placed where people can see it. Thus, the topic for the article is rabies. A contagious, fatal viral disease found in dogs, cats, and other mammals, transmitted through saliva to humans causing convulsions and madness resulting in death if attention is not given at the preliminary stage of infection. A life-threatening disease common particularly in dogs, causing the death of about 59,000 annually worldwide. (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2002). Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2025 reported that about 1,500 people die of this disease in Nigeria every year with 1,000 cattle and uncounted domestic animals. Consequently, with these huge losses, it is pertinent to campaign and spread information to the public about this deadly zoonotic disease killing both man and animals alike through the use of photobooks.

Materials and Methodology

The research uses a studio-based design method to describe systematic studio processes and analysis, focusing on practical procedures for photobook production. The study includes preliminary sketches, questionnaires and one-on-one interviews, thus, the designs of the

photobook sheets were done from sketching to computed generated (Dakyes, 2022).



Fig. 1: Do not touch or capture animals Unprofessionally

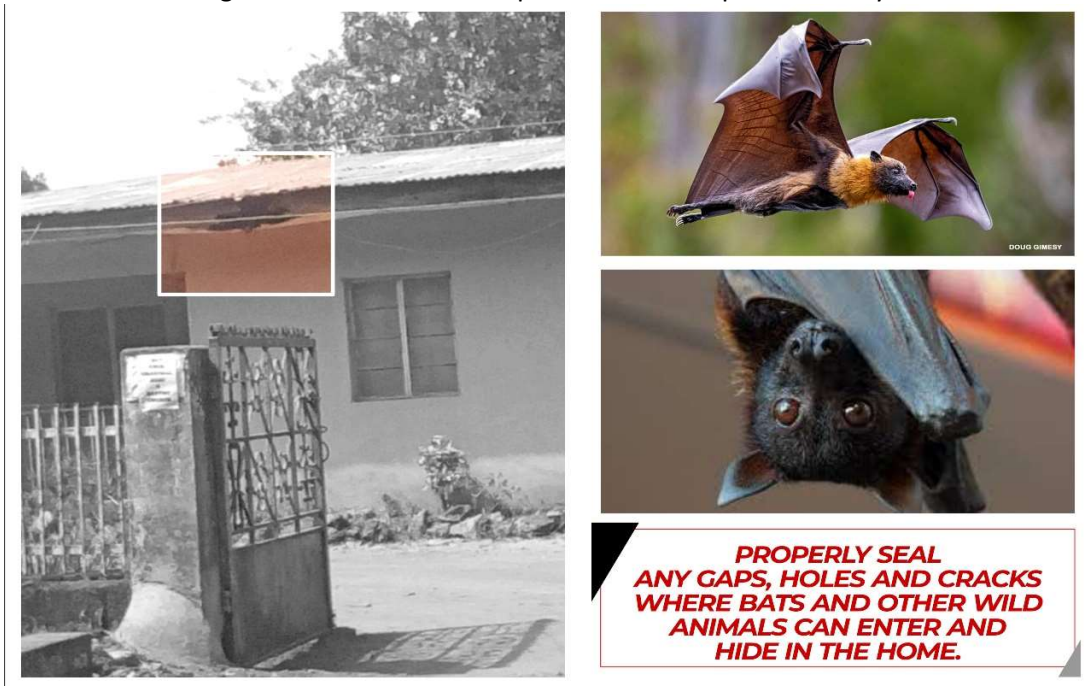


Fig. 2: Properly seal holes and cracks in the home where animals can enter and hide

Discussion and Findings

The overall responses from the above graphic design discovered that effective use of photography/images and illustrations were viable means to disseminate information, generate more awareness about rabies among people and spread information on rabies for commuters. Arguably, photography has become one of the most radical and effective tools of communication for current artists to visually communicate what they find noteworthy. (Debashish*et el*, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, photography is a crucial tool for scientific research and effective in communication, helping the profession to make vital discoveries, it is therefore recommended that the use of images in design makes researchers collect data and analyse vast amounts of information, determining public perceptions and views on important issues.

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MANIPULATION OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT IN THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS: IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIA'S UNITY

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ABSTRACT
The Nigeria's multi-ethnic and multi-religious settings constituted a huge socio-political problem that are inimical to Nigeria's national unity. Ethno-religious sentiments played a key role in the formation of political parties during the First Republic. The three major political parties (NCNC, NPC and AG) were established by the then regional governments; Western Region, Northern Region and Eastern Region. The parties were the political players of the First Republic. Ethno-religious differences constituted a very fundamental question among the political parties, which in fact, paved way for the collapsed of the First Republic, which consequently, threw Nigeria in to civil war. Bearing in mind, the negative effect of ethno-religious sentiments in to the body of Nigeria's polity, the political elites came up with a number of measures with a view to addressing the ethno-religious sentiments that brought the end of the First Republic; Nigeria was divided in to six geo-political zones with a view to give each zone opportunity to lead the country. In addition to this, Muslim/Christian Presidential ticket or vice versa, became a tradition in to the Nigeria's political space. Against this background, the paper presents historical formation of political parties in Nigeria, stressing the indisputable role of ethno-religious sentiments in the formation of the political parties. Equally, the paper examines the resurgence of ethno-religious politics, delving on 2023 Nigeria's general elections. It also highlights the wave of Muslim-Muslim ticket and how it rejuvenated the intrusion of ethno-religious inclusion in to the body of Nigeria's polity. Using documentary sources, the paper posits the implications of manipulation of ethno-religious sentiments, essentially, as it relate to 2023 general elections and how it constitutes formidable threat to Nigeria's unity.

Introduction.

Nigeria is made up of diverse ethnic groups. There are more than 200 distinct ethnic groups most of whom have distinct customs, tradition and languages. The larger and politically dominant groups include the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani (Udo 2004, 14). In fact, Hausa/Fulami, generally are Muslims, Yoruba are split evenly between Muslim and Christian. Igbo are predominantly Christian. Hence, ethnic and religious identities may be conjoined, which also tends to reinforce regional zones. The North predominantly Muslim; the Southwest, a mixture of Yoruba Muslim and Christians; and Southeast also predominantly Christians Igbo (Paden 2015, 5). Two major religions; Islam and Christianity are the dominant religion in the country. The pre and post independent political parties were established and nurtured along ethnic, regional and religious sentiments. The political parties were established based on regional or sectional lines. The Action Group (AG) was dominantly, a southwest political party and the party's members were generally Yoruba tribes. Northern People's Congress (NPC), which was headed by Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto was founded by the North. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), though started as national party but later degenerated to a regional party. The party was dominated by the easterners, mainly, Igbo extractions.

It is pertinent to stress that the politics of ethnicity emerged and perhaps became so pronounced since the time of decolonization processes of the 1940s and 1950s, as the different groups, which made up the country resorted to the use of ethnicity for political ascendency and consolidation. It was with the ambit of the struggle for political power and resources allocation that ethnicity and religious sentiments were manipulated in order to pursue other clandestine motives (Oyeweso 2017, 106). In 2023 general elections, Nigeria witnessed serious surge of religious and ethnicity sentimentality that over the years Nigeria had never experienced a severe intrusion of ethno-religious manipulation than the 2023 elections. Political elites, religious leaders and prominent ethnic based groups were deeply engaged in the agitation for power, essentially, as it relates to the chair of presidency. In view of this, the paper reviews the formation of political parties in pre- and post-colonial Nigeria highlighting the continuous manifestations of ethno-religious sentiments in the formation of political parties. The paper equally, points out how the intrusion of ethno-religious sentiments in the 2023 elections constitute a formidable threat to Nigeria's unity.

2.0 Ethnicity and Religion: Brief Conceptual Definitions

Two important concepts are central in this paper; ethnicity and religion. For clarity and deeper understanding of the paper, a number of definitions based on the understanding of various scholars were spelt out.

i. Ethnicity: Ethnicity and ethnic group are inseparable concepts. The two concepts conjoined along the same terrain. The understanding of ethnicity is deeply connected to ethnocentrism, which denotes an overwhelming thinking of one's ethnic group either in the political space of public affairs or in socio-economic dimension. Ethnicity was defined as '' differentiation of group of people who have shared cultural meanings, memories and descent produced through social interaction'' (Darity 2021,8). Some scholars viewed ethnicity on the stand point of a social identity of a person or group based on characteristics, such as race, language and culture and on recognition of a distinctive historical origin (Encyclopedia Americana; 2021. Vol. 10,631).In fact, the term ethnicity cannot be understood without defining ethnic group or nationality. An ethnic nationality is a group of people who shared a national, racial, linguistics or religious heritage (Oyeweso 2017, 92).

ii. Religion: Religion is a set of beliefs, symbol and practices which is based on the idea of the sacred and which unite believers into a socio-religious community (Scott 2005, 560). Religion means earnest observance of ritual obligations and an inward spirit of reverence (Oyeweso 2017, 91). In Nigeria, there are quite a number of ardent followers of two major religions (Islam and Christianity) and their religious beliefs exerts huge impact on their socio-political life, which in fact, translate into their intrusion in the Nigeria's democratic processes.

There exists a marriage of convenience between ethnicity, religion and politics in the Nigeria's political space. In fact, ethno-religious sentiments deeply penetrated into Nigeria's political processes right from the colonial and

post-colonial Nigeria. The inter play of ethno-religious sentiments in the 2023 Nigeria's general elections leave no stone unturned, particularly, taking into cognizance the role played by the religious leaders of the two major religions (Islam and Christianity) coupled with the role of tribal or cultural organizations in the political processes of 2023 general election. The seamless penetration of ethno-religious sentiments in the Nigeria's democratic transitions, essentially, as it relates to 2023 general elections poses serious threat to Nigeria's cohesion.

3.0 Political Parties Formation and Ethno-Religious Sentiments

During the periods of pre and early post-colonial Nigeria, three major political parties featured prominently in the Nigeria's political space; Action Group (AG), Northern People's Congress (NPC) and National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC). These political parties formed the foundation of Nigeria's political transition. The pre independence political parties were established, essentially, to prepare ground for Nigeria's political independence, which was actualized in the 1960. The three political parties were the first-generation political parties in the country. It is palpable to points out that the parties were nurtured along ethnic and or regional directions. The Action Group (AG) was a transformation of Yoruba socio-cultural organization called *Egbe Omo Oduduwa,* the party was dedicated mainly for Yoruba nationalism and thus, became the first party to be inspired by and founded on and nourished by ethnicity (Oyeweso 2017, 104). The party members were predominantly Yoruba extractions and it was a political party of the Western Region. The party was established and headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

The Northern People's Congress (NPC) metamorphosed out of ethno-cultural organization or association called *Jamaiyar Mutanen Arewa.* The party was founded in 1949 and transformed into full-fledged political party in 1951. The party's slogan was One North, One People, One Destiny irrespective of religion, rank or tribe. The party's members were predominantly from the Northern Region and it was led by Sardauna of Sokoto. The slogan of the party vividly suggest that it was purely regional party, which by careful analysis of the party's activities, it is not plausible to defunct the permutation of ethnicity in the pursuit of the party's political objectives.

The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), at the initial stage, was seemed to be a national party unlike the AG and NPC. From the onset, NCNC was a conglomeration of members from different regions, particularly, western and eastern regions. However, latter the party degenerated to regional party, specifically, for the eastern region.

It is worth noting here that the first-generation political parties were embroiled with ethnic and religious sentiments. Oyeweso (2017, 102) opines that politicization of religions and ethnicity in Nigeria's political space is traceable to the era of British colonial administration in the early period of the 20th century. It took a more dangerous dimension in the last decade of the colonial rule when the nationalist differed on several issues, essentially, on the basis of religion, ethnicity and sectarianism. Since the 1940s and 1950s the question of religion and ethnicity has taken center stage in the Nigeria's democratic processes. The formation of Nigeria's political space was deeply impregnated with ethno-religious considerations. In fact, ethno-religious manipulations permeated in all nooks and cranny of Nigeria's democratization processes even before Nigeria became a sovereign entity. Mustapha (2004, 258), points out that the politicization of ethno-religious sentiment started even before the independent period, ethno-regional conflicts emerged as far back as 1950s democratization processes. The conflicts were between political block constructed around specific ethnic, religious and regional elements. From the Hausa-Fulani, part of the Kanuri and other Muslim communities of the North; the Igbo in the mainly Christian East and the Yoruba in the West. The 1959 election explicitly suggests that the NCNC, NPC and AG were parties founded along ethno-religious considerations. The NPC won election mainly in the North, the NCNC in the Christian East and the AG in the Western region and the Christian dominated Middle Belt region of the North.

In the first-generation political parties, there were penetration of ethnicity and religion in the political processes, however, it was not explicit as the way and manner the country witness it in the 2023 presidential elections. Political actors in the first republic were deeply concerned with their selfish ends and that of their ethnic groups,

but then there was degree of caution not to vilify other ethnic groups as rightly pointed out by Ige (1993, 27) ''There had always been some measures of ethnic politics which was tolerable and acceptable. This was usually for the glorification and advancement of the ethnic group, without vilifying other ethnics or rousing their primordial emotion''.

The second-generation political parties include; National Party of Nigeria (NPN), under this party, Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari contested for presidential chair; Nigeria's Peoples Party (NPP), headed by Nnamdy Azikiwe; Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), was also headed by Obafemi Awolowo; Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim and People's Redemption Party (PRP), equally, headed by Malam Aminu Kano.

The third/fourth generation political parties were divided into groups. Group A, comprises; National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP). These political parties were founded by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida with a view to returning the country to democratically elected government. Unlike the first and second generation political parties, NRC and SDP were founded by the government. The menace of parochial as well as primordial interest was minimally curtailed. Although NRC was populated by the big wings of NPN, NPP and GNPP of the second republic. The ideological manifest of the party was found to be conservative. This made president Babangida to call it ''a little to the right''. The SDP equally, was composed of all those parties in the second republic with leftist ideology such as PRP, UPN and some members of NPN, NPP and GNPP (Umar 2012, 134).

The second group (group B) of the third and fourth generation political parties comprises five political parties; the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), Congress of National Consensus (CNC) and Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM). These parties were registered under the General Abacha political transition program between 1993 and 1998. Just like the NRC and SDP, the parties were established by the government. There was, however, minimal intrusion of ethnic and religious jingoism in the parties' activities.

The fifth-generation political parties were formed during General Abdulsalami Abubakar. The three major political parties that were registered include; Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). AD was originated from pro-democracy associations, such as Afinefere and NADECO. The big wings of the party were mainly, from the Yoruba extractions. Thus, the party was embroiled with ethnic and religious chauvinism. The APP was founded by Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, it was a conglomeration of a number of political parties/associations. Although party members were drawn from length and breadth of the country, however, taking into cognizance statistical coverage of its membership, it suffices to suggest that the party has a bit sedimentation of ethnic sentimentality. The PDP was originated from a pressure group called the G.34, which strongly opposed to the clamor for General Abacha's self-succession to emerge as the civilian president of the country. The party, unlike the other parties, had a wider national coverage, as pointed out by Umar (2017, 139), it was the only big party with truly Nigerian factor with most of its joiners setting aside the ethic of ideology in politics.

It is worthy to surmount here that there was flavor of ethno-religious sentiments into Nigeria's political transition programs beginning from pre and post- colonial Nigeria. There was a deep sense of ethno-religious engravement into Nigeria's democratic processes, more worry some is, the menace is rapidly penetrating in to the minds of Nigeria's political actors as pointed out by Sani (2022, 248, cited in Ake, 1993) "ethnicity is politicized, politics is ethnicised and ethnic groups tendentially became political formations whose struggles with each other and competing interest may be all the more conflictual for exclusivity of ethnic group membership.''

4.0 Measures Taken to Curtail Menace of Ethno-Religious Sentiments in Nigeria's Political Processes

Taking into cognizance the magnitude of penetration of ethno-religious manipulations in the Nigeria's democratization processes, a number of measures were taken with a view to addressing the vociferous yearnings of the Nigeria's political elites, specifically, as it relate to their ethno-sectarian inclinations. Since the 1960, when Nigeria got its political sovereignty, the three major ethnic groups; Hausa/Fulani,

Yoruba and Igbo were the ardent players of Nigeria's polity. In order to give space for other ethnic minority to take part in the country's political processes, zoning system was employed by most of the government agencies/political parties.

Zoning was created for fair play and ensuring that ethnicity, religion and regionalism could not be used as a tool for perpetuation and ascendency for power, more particularly, at federal level. Constitutionally, the principles of zoning are not explicitly enshrined in the 1999 constitution, however, it has been reflected in the principles of federal character extant document as pointed out in section 13 (3) and 4, thus;

The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character principles of Nigeria and the principles need to promote national unity; and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies. Equally, according to the zoning committee report 1994/1995 pointed out that the issue of zoning has been very contentious in Nigeria; the committee recognized that in a country like Nigeria with its diverse political, cultural and economic endowment, true federalism must reflect a genuine attempt to regulate among groups, as well as a reflection of these identifiable divergences with in a framework of national unity ((Benjamin 2022, 83-4).

In order to augment and more concretize the federal character issues, six geo-political zones were established in the country. The creation of the zones was done, essentially, to allow or rather alternate some public and political offices across the zones. In the political space, at the federal level, office of the president, vice president and some principal officers of both upper and lower houses, including political parties' leadership, zoning was seemed to be the guiding principles. It is worth noting here that zoning system was established, specifically, to minimize perpetuation of power by some ethnic groups/regions at the detriment of others.

In furtherance to the federal character extant rules, the Nigeria's political elites thought of balancing the chair of president and vice president, being mindful of Nigeria's religious settings. In view of this, inter-faith ticket for president and vice president was put into practice by some political parties, in essence, if the presidential candidate is a Muslim his vice president should be a Christian, vice-versa. However, this is not extant rules, it is at the discretion of party members either to adopt inter-faith or intra-faith tickets for president and vice president.

5.0 Muslim – Muslim Ticket and 2023 Election

It is not out of place to bring to the fore that intra-faith, in other words, Muslim-Muslim and vice versa ticket is not alien in Nigeria's democratic processes. Pondering over the history, in 1979 general election, the presidential candidate of UPN Chief Obafemi Awolowo, a Christian from the west, chose Chief Umeadi Philip, also a Christian from the eastern part of Nigeria, as his running mate. In the same vein, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the leader of (NPP), also had a Christian-Christian ticket with Professor Ishaya Audu as his vice president, both were Christian, Azikiwe was from the south-east and Audu was from the north. Equally, in 1993, the presidential candidate of SDP, Chief MKO Abiola a Muslim from the west, chose Baba Gana Kingibe, also a Muslim from the northern part of Nigeria as his running mate.

The 2023 general elections, which witness the participation of 18 political parties, out of these parties, four major political parties featured prominently in the election processes. The parties were; All Progressives Congress (APC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Labor Party (LP) and New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), in fact, these parties were the major contenders in the 2023 presidential elections. APC in its national convention held on 8th June, 2022 at Eagle Square, Abuja, elected Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the presidential candidate of the party. Tinubu chose Kashim Shatima as his running mate. The duo are Muslims only that the presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu was from the west and Kashim Shatima was also from the northern part of Nigeria.

The adoption of Muslim-Muslim ticket by the APC in the 2023 presidential elections brought vociferous heated debate across public space in the country, more importantly, among the religious and socio-cultural organizations. The

four major political parties, tendentiously used religion to garner support from the electorate. In the same vein, it was so explicit that politicians ethnicized their campaign with a view to convince and perhaps get support from the people. In fact, religious prejudice was used by the major political parties, namely; LP, PDP and NNPP against the APC due to its adoption of Muslim-Muslim ticket. They used Muslim-Muslim ticket as a big campaign issue to mobilize Nigerians against APC.

It is imperative to mention that the audio conversation between the LP presidential candidate, Peter Obi with renowned Christian personality, Bishop Oyedepo was explicit to show the degree at which Nigerian politicians used religion as a factor to get support, which may ultimately assist them to win the election. The exert of the audio conversation read in part;

Obi: Good morning Dady.

Oyedepo: Praise the lord, how are you Sir?

Obi: Fine Dady good morning Sir,

Oyedepo: Ameen, in Jesus name we are going to get bright results.

Obi: I need you to speak to your people in South West and Kwara, the Christians in South West and Kwara this is a religious war….Oyedepo… I did a release …and I am coming with second one today, but in the name of Jesus this would be a success, you know what I said… all we are doing, we are appealing to the conscience of people to know where to go. But I want to assure you that the result will be favorable (Jimoh 2023, 4). Although some LP members falsify the audio leak, however, the spoke man of LP presidential campaign confirmed the authenticity of the audio but claimed that it was taken out of context by critics. He wrote '' our attention has been drawn to the publication of this audio tape of private conversation between Peter Obi and Bishop Oyedepo. It is not surprising that these political criminals are trying to spin the conversation as if Obi was making a religious statement'' (Jimoh 2023, 4).

Similarly, in response to Muslim-Muslim ticket of APC, the national president of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) quoted to have said ''many Christian feel and have genuine fear that there is deliberate plan to remove the Christian faith from the scheme of things and make us second-class citizens in our own country…there is genuine fear borne out of the recent happenings in our polity, that is, the same faith ticket in one of the major political parties in Nigeria, despite the caution raised by CAN (Jesupemi 2023, 1). To concretize and add more flavor to the CAN president assertion, the Northern chapter of the CAN, which comprises 19 Northern states and Abuja has reaffirmed its opposition to the APC Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket (Isenyo 2023, 1).

As the Nigerian Christians vehemently rejected APC Muslim-Muslim ticket, some Islamic organizations courageously called their fellow Muslim brothers and sisters to support the APC Muslim-Muslim ticket. For instance, a renowned Islamic preacher has charged Muslims to consider the APC and its Muslim-Muslim ticket as a call for Jihad. He added that the Muslim-Muslim ticket is not about mere promises of bringing dividend of democracy like road and infrastructure. This ticket is about the supremacy of Islam. This ticket has honored Islam. Therefore, we will honor it with our ballot (Sahara Reporters).

In spite of the fact that a number of Islamic organizations supported APC Muslim-Muslim ticket, however, there were Islamic organizations that opposed APC Muslim-Muslim ticket. For instance, Center for Promotion of Sharia has rejected the Muslim-Muslim ticket of any political party, calling on Nigerians to be committed to the core values of the leading faiths in the country. The national coordinator of the Center emphasized on Center's commitment to the Islamic ideals of justice and fairness adding that Nigerians should reject the temptations of voting along religious line (Sunday 2023, 1).

6.0 Manipulations of Ethno-Religious Sentiments in 2023 Elections

The 2023 presidential elections were held on 25th February, 2023. After the completion of all the processes of the elections, Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his running mate were declared winners of the elections by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). The declaration of Tinubu as the winner of the elections generated mixed reactions across the public space, the reactions may not be unconnected with the issue

of Muslim-Muslim ticket that was adopted by the APC. Most of the reactions were driven by ethno-religious sentiments. For instance, the popular Igbo socio-cultural organization, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, through its vice president pre-empted the outcome of the elections, as he was quoted to have said, Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide has rejected the ongoing presentation of the 2023 presidential elections results…the ones declared so far were not the true reflection of the people's will. The organization further called for the arrest of the INEC chairman (Obinna, 2023; 22). Equally, Ohanaeze alongside with Southern and Middle Belt Leaders Forum (SMBLF) had endorsed the presidential candidate of the Labor Party (LP) ahead of February, 25 elections (Magnus 2023, 24).

The renewed NADECO group, which was a pro-democracy Yoruba socio-cultural organization, through its national leader pointed out that the emergence of Tinubu as president elect is the best that had ever happened to Nigeria in recent times. He described the moves by the PDP and LP to upturn Tinubu's victory through the tribunal as an exercise in futility (NAN 2023, 35).

7.0 2023 Presidential Election Results Declared by the INEC

	STATE	APC	PDP	LP	NNPP
1.	Ekiti	201,497	89,554	11,397	264
2.	Kwara	263,572	136,909	31,166	3,142
3.	Osun	343,954	354,366	23,283	713
4.	Ondo	369,924	115,463	44,405	930
5.	Ogun	341,554	123,831	85,829	2,200
6.	Oyo	449,884	182,977	99,110	4,095
7.	Yobe	151,459	198,567	2,406	18,270
8.	Enugu	4,772	15,749	428,640	1,808
9.	Lagos	572,606	75,750	582,454	8,442
10.	Gombe	146,977	319,123	26,160	10,620
11.	Adamawa	182,881	417,611	105,648	8,006
12.	Katsina	482,283	489,045	6,376	69,386
13.	Jigawa	421,390	386,587	1,889	98,234
14.	Nasarawa	172,922	147,093	191,361	12,715

15.	Niger	375,183	284,898	80,452	21,836
16.	Benue	310,468	130,081	308,372	4,740
17.	FCT	90,902	74,194	281,717	4,517
18.	Akwa Ibom	160,620	214,012	132,683	7,796
19.	Edo	144,471	89,585	331,163	2,743
20.	Abia	8,914	22,676	327,095	1,239
21.	Kogi	240,751	145,104	56,217	4,238
22.	Bauchi	316,694	426,607	27,373	72,103
23.	Plateau	307,195	243,808	466,272	8,869
24.	Bayelsa	42,572	68,818	49,975	540
25.	Kaduna	399,293	554,360	294,494	92,969
26.	Kebbi	248,088	285,175	10,682	5,038
27.	Kano	517,341	131,716	28,513	997,279
28.	Zamfara	298,396	193,978	1,660	4,044
29.	Sokoto	285,444	288,679	6,668	1,300
30.	Delta	90,183	161,600	341,866	3,122
31.	Cross River	130,520	95,425	179,917	1,644
32	Ebonyi	42,402	13,503	259,738	2,661
33.	Anambara	5,111	9,036	584,621	1,967
34.	Taraba	135,165	189,017	146,315	12,818
35.	Borno	252,282	190,921	7,205	4,626
36.	Rivers	231,591	88,468	175,071	1,322
37.	Imo	66,496	30,234	360,495	1,552
	Aggregate	8,794,726	6,984,520	6,101,533	1,496,671

Source: htpps://www.vanguardngr.com/2023-presidential-election-results-by-states/

Voting behavior is one of the key parameters that shows the role of ethno-religious sentiments in 2023 presidential elections. The results above indicates that south-south and south-east geo-political zones has 11 states, out these states, LP won 8 states. In fact, the whole of south-east zone LP won all the states in the presidential elections. It is not exaggerating to point out that two factors are fundamental in shaping the behaviors of electorate of these zones. First, ethnicity, all the states that are dominantly Igbo extractions LP won the presidential elections. Secondly, religion, due to fact that south-south and south-east predominantly Christian, hence, they opted to vote for LP against the other parties, particularly. APC, which proclaimed Muslim-Muslim ticket. To further show the extent of ethnic sentiments in the 2023 presidential elections, out 7 states that are predominantly Yoruba tribe, APC won 5 states with exception of Lagos and Osun states. Equally, the presidential candidate of PDP Atiku Abubakar won Adamawa and Yobe states, likewise the NNPP presidential candidate Rabiu Kwankwaso overwhelmingly, won Kano state, this may not be unconnected with tribal and religious solidarity.

To further show the strength of religious factor in the 2023 presidential elections vis-à-vis to counteract the Muslim-Muslim ticket of APC, despite the fact that Plateau and Benue states are from the north and the two presidential candidates of the major parties; PDP and NNPP belongs to the north, LP presidential candidate won the two states. The reason for the LP victory in the two states, assumably, was based on the consideration that the states are predominantly Christian, hence, tilted to vote for LP candidate, who to some extent, considered to be a Christian's candidate, even though his running is a Muslim.

8.0 The Implication of 2023 Presidential Elections to Nigeria's Unity

Nigeria witnessed a number of political turbulences. The collapse of First republic was occasioned by tribal and regional sentiments. The causes of both January and July 1966 military coups that overthrew the civilian government in the first republic, ethno-religious manipulations was central. The coup threw the country into almost 30 months civil war, which ended in 1970. Equally, the 1990 Gideon Orkar coup d'état attempt was as a result of purported Babangida's government marginalization of the people of Niger Delta and the entire southern part of the country. He further announced the expulsion of some northern states of Bauchi, Borno, Katsina, Kano and Sokoto from Nigeria. These are explicit evidences that translate the danger of ethno-religious sentiments to Nigeria's unity.

Taking into account the events of 1966 coups and the 1990 Orkar coup d'état, the 2023 presidential elections was flashing red light to Nigeria's unity. The involvement of renowned religious leaders and some notable socio-cultural organizations in the 22023 presidential elections, as pointed out in the paper, is complicit to Nigeria's national cohesion.

The causes of most of the controversies and agitations, particularly, for the chair of presidency, Muslim-Muslim ticket took center stage. But one may need to ask some germane questions. In the Nigeria's democratic transition, was it only APC chose to adopt Muslim-Muslim ticket? If no. When it was adopted by some political parties, was there any public outrage? As pointed earlier in the paper, in 1979, Azikiwe and Awolowo their running mates were all Christians, in essence, Christian-Christian ticket. In the same vein, in 1993, MKO Abiola adopted Muslim-Muslim ticket. In fact in both the 1979 and 1993 political transitions, when same faith ticket was adopted, there wasn't serious clamor for same faith ticket, why only in 2023 political transition? This plausibly suggest the magnitude of ethno-religious surge in the 2023 presidential elections, which ultimately, is damaging the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria.

Suffice it to mention that since 1960, when Nigeria, as a sovereign nation, started democratization processes, the country had never witness the penetration of ethno-religious manipulations in the political processes like that of 2023 presidential elections. Osinbanjo (2023, 8) was quoted to have said ''one of the unsavory tendencies that was witness in this election cycle was the weaponization of ethnic, religious and sectional prejudices in ways that are damaging to social cohesion.'' The menace of the ethno-religious manipulations in 2023 presidential elections has no doubt poses serious threat to Nigeria's unity. Nigeria's politicians are of the fun

of using ethno-religious sentiments in order to win elections. It is imperative to say that Nigerian politicians are political forgers who uses ethno-religious manipulations to perpetuate in power at the expense of their followers. To say the least, they are the gallows of Nigeria's unity.

9.0 Conclusion

The Nigeria's pre and post independent political parties, in the first republic, the three major political parties were ethnic, religious and regional biased; Action Group (AG) was dominantly for the Yoruba of the south west, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) for the Igbos, while Northern People's Congress (NPC), was for the Hausa-Fulani dominated by the people of the northern region. These parties were the first-generation political parties. There were also the second-generation political parties comprises National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria's People's Party (NPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Great Nigeria's Peoples Party (GNPP) and People Redemption Party (PRP). In the parties there were traces of elements of ethno-religious manipulations. The third-generation political parties, which was organized and established by General Ibrahim Babangida were seemed and perhaps tends to be fairly, free from ethno-religious sentiments, however, most of the members of the two political parties (NRC and SDP) were mostly members of the second-generation political parties. The fourth-generation political parties were also established by General Abacha, although there were quite a number of political parties than the Banbangida's transition program, however, party members were just replication of both second and third generation political parties. The 2023 political transition program, about 18 political parties participated in the transition, but the major political parties were; All Progressives Congress (APC), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Labor Party (LP) and New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP). The elections witnessed in deep sense, the manipulation of ethno-religious sentiments in the political processes. In both before and aftermath of the elections, there were serious outrage across the public space, particularly, relating to penetration of ethnic and religious prejudices in the election processes. In view of this, the paper conclude that 2023 elections pose threat to Nigeria's unity.

10.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the paper, which vividly depict the seamless impact of ethno-religious intrusion in the 2023 Nigeria's general election that ultimately poses a daunting threat to Nigeria's unity. In view of this, the paper recommends the following:

i. Religious cleric be obstructed from participating in political transition campaign, either in public space or in religious congregations.

ii. Tribal as well as cultural organizations be barred from partisan politics that may tend to suggest their alliance to any political party.

iii. As matter of expediency, although Nigeria is a secular state, however, for emphasis, there shall be a phrase in the Nigeria's constitution that conspicuously deter religious leaders as well as ethno-cultural organizations from partisan politics.

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IMPACT OF THE HADEJA JAMA'ARE RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HJRBDA) ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY IN JIGAWA STATE

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HJRBDA, Agricultural Productivity, Food Security, Irrigation Governance

ABSTRACT
This study assesses the effectiveness of the Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) in enhancing agricultural productivity and food security in Jigawa State, employing a mixed-methods approach within the framework of the hydraulic society theory. Quantitative data were collected from farmers utilising HJRBDA irrigation schemes, while qualitative insights were obtained through key informant interviews with policymakers and agricultural experts. The study findings reveal that while HJRBDA has contributed to increased rice and wheat production, its impact is hindered by infrastructural deficits, inconsistent policy implementation, and climate variability. Previous studies broadly classify River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) as ineffective, but this study identifies localised successes and argues for a differentiated approach to evaluating RBDA performance. The study advances the literature by integrating irrigation governance with food security discourse in semi-arid regions. It recommends increased funding for infrastructure maintenance and a more coordinated policy framework to enhance irrigation efficiency. Additionally, farmer training programs should be institutionalised to improve water management practices. This study contributes to existing scholarship by highlighting both the potentials and limitations of RBDAs in Nigeria, challenging the reductionist view that irrigation alone guarantees food security. It emphasises the need for an integrated policy approach that incorporates climate adaptation, market access, and institutional reforms to maximise the effectiveness of irrigation schemes in ensuring sustainable agricultural development and food security in Jigawa State.

Introduction

Agricultural production and food security are globally central to both socioeconomic stability and environmental sustainability. Food production underpins the economies of many countries, especially in regions where agriculture accounts for a significant portion of employment and GDP. However, factors like climate change, water scarcity, and land degradation have increasingly threatened the availability of resources critical to food production, particularly in developing economies. Globally, over 800 million people are food insecure, with a significant portion in Africa (FAO, 2023). Many countries have initiated policies and projects aimed at enhancing food production and security by implementing irrigation systems and improving water management practices, essential for buffering against erratic rainfall patterns that threaten crop yield stability (FAO, 2023).

In Africa, where a large portion of the population depends on subsistence farming, food security is intimately linked to water access and climate resilience. The continent hosts multiple river basins that support agricultural activities, including the Nile, Niger, and Zambezi. The sustainability of these water sources is vital, as they enable irrigation, fishing, and other agricultural activities. Many African countries are adopting advanced river basin management systems and enhancing infrastructure to maximise agricultural productivity. Egypt, for example, has increased its dependency on the Nile River through efficient water management practices and policy frameworks supporting irrigation projects to address food shortages and secure a stable food supply for its growing population (El-Sherif et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, Ethiopia has been investing in the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Blue Nile, which, despite tensions with downstream countries, is intended to boost irrigation potential and hydroelectric power, with the aim of improving local agricultural productivity and food security (Gebrehiwot, 2022). These cases underscore the strategic importance of river basin management to bolster food production in regions susceptible to climate variability and limited rainfall. Across the Sahelian regions of Africa, including parts of Nigeria, drought and desertification have been accelerating. These environmental pressures increase the importance of effective water management systems like HJRBDA, as irrigation could provide a critical safeguard against food shortages in times of drought. In 2023, Chad, for example, implemented large-scale irrigation initiatives targeting drought-prone areas, with success in increasing rice and maize yields (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Similarly, Kenya's Tana River Basin has implemented improved water management to support agriculture, reducing dependency on unpredictable rainfall. The success in these regions illustrates the potential of well-managed river basins to improve food security and agricultural productivity.

Nigeria, being part of the Sub-Saharan region and one of Africa's most populous nations, faces distinct challenges concerning food security. The country grapples with population pressure, climate change, and insufficient water resource management, all of which impact agricultural productivity. Agriculture remains crucial in Nigeria, providing jobs for over 35% of the labour force, with a substantial portion of agricultural output depending on rain-fed farming (NBS, 2022). This dependency makes the agricultural sector highly vulnerable to climate-related disruptions, particularly in the northern regions, where seasonal and erratic rainfall patterns limit crop yields and threaten food availability. Nigeria established several River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), including the Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA), aimed at improving irrigation infrastructure and supporting food production through better water resource management. The RBDAs are mandated to facilitate agricultural development, increase water supply for various uses, and improve flood control. Despite the ambitious objectives, the effectiveness of these RBDAs has varied, with significant challenges arising from inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and limited stakeholder engagement (Adamu & Zakar, 2023).

The Hadeja Jama'are River Basin, in particular, plays a critical role in Nigeria's food security landscape. Covering areas within Jigawa, Kano, and Bauchi states, the basin supports thousands of hectares of agricultural land. It serves as a major water source for both smallholder and large-scale farms. The HJRBDA was established to promote sustainable irrigation and increase crop production in a region heavily reliant on seasonal rains. The Hadeja-Jama'are Basin has also become vital due

to its proximity to Lake Chad, a water body that has experienced drastic shrinkage over the past decades. This reduction has significantly impacted agricultural activities, fisheries, and local livelihoods dependent on the lake. Consequently, effective management of the Hadeja Jama'are Basin has become a priority, not just for Jigawa State but for the broader Lake Chad Basin area, which includes several countries dependent on this ecosystem (Olufemi et al., 2023).

In Jigawa State, the HJRBDA has contributed to notable increases in the cultivation of crops like rice, wheat, and vegetables, which are essential for food security in Nigeria. Rice production, in particular, has surged due to enhanced irrigation and government support through agricultural policies. Rice is a staple in Nigeria, and domestic production is essential to reduce the high costs associated with rice imports. However, these advances have not been without challenges. Despite HJRBDA's success in some areas, farmers in Jigawa State face difficulties due to issues like inadequate maintenance of irrigation infrastructure, conflicts over water usage, and insufficient technical support to maximise agricultural yield (Yusuf & Abdullahi, 2023). Another challenge affecting HJRBDA's impact on agricultural productivity is climate change. Increasing temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns impact water availability in the Hadeja Jama'are Basin, as well as other basins across Nigeria. The Sahelian zone, where Jigawa is located, has been experiencing higher-than-average temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns. This has led to fluctuations in river flow and, consequently, in the reliability of irrigation systems. For instance, in the past decade, recurring floods and droughts have affected the region, causing both crop losses and displacement of farming communities. The erratic nature of these events calls for adaptive water management strategies, including improved water storage, flood control measures, and resilient crop varieties that can withstand harsher conditions (Adetunji et al., 2022). Insufficient funding and lack of coordination between federal, state, and local governments have hampered the effectiveness of river basin authorities in Nigeria (Musa, Ahmed, & Suleiman, 2022). The HJRBDA has contributed to some improvements in agricultural production. However, the lack of continuous investment in irrigation infrastructure and the absence of comprehensive policies addressing climate resilience have limited the potential gains. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the impact of the Hadeja Jama'are Basin Authority on Agricultural production and food security in Jigawa State.

"It is against this backdrop that this study examines the impact of the Hadeja Jama'are Basin Authority on agricultural production and food security in Jigawa State. While previous studies have explored various aspects of river basin management in Nigeria, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific role of HJRBDA in mitigating the challenges of climate variability, irrigation inefficiencies, and policy implementation at the local level. This study aims to address this gap by assessing the effectiveness of HJRBDA in enhancing food security and agricultural sustainability in Jigawa State."

Statement of the Research Problem

The Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) was established to enhance agricultural productivity and food security in Jigawa State by providing sustainable irrigation infrastructure and water management systems. However, despite its existence, the region continues to experience erratic agricultural output due to climate variability, inefficient irrigation practices, and weak policy implementation. Jigawa State, located in the Sahelian zone, is highly vulnerable to climate change, with increasing temperatures and irregular rainfall patterns affecting crop yields. Annual rainfall in northern Nigeria has decreased by 15% over the past two decades, leading to prolonged dry spells that disrupt farming activities (Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet, 2023). The inadequacy of irrigation infrastructure under HJRBDA has further compounded this issue, as many irrigation channels remain underdeveloped or poorly maintained, limiting farmers' access to water. Despite government interventions, only 30% of irrigable land in Jigawa State is currently utilised, compared to the national average of 45% (Adamu & Zakar, 2023). This shortfall in irrigation development restricts farmers from cultivating crops year-round, exacerbating food insecurity.

Furthermore, policy inconsistencies and poor coordination between federal and state governments have hindered the full potential of

HJRBDA. Many farmers lack access to extension services, improved farming techniques, and financial support to adopt climate-resilient practices. Musa, Ahmed, and Suleiman (2022) highlight that over 60% of farmers in the region rely on rain-fed agriculture, leaving them exposed to climate shocks. Additionally, security challenges, including farmer-herder conflicts and banditry, have disrupted farming activities, displacing thousands of rural households. The persistent challenges faced by HJRBDA indicate a significant gap in the literature regarding its effectiveness in addressing climate variability, irrigation inefficiencies, and policy implementation. This study seeks to critically examine these gaps and propose sustainable interventions to enhance food security in Jigawa State.

Clarification of Concepts

i. **Agricultural Production:** Agricultural production encompasses the processes involved in cultivating crops and rearing livestock to sustain food supply and economic growth. In Jigawa State, the reliance on rain-fed agriculture limits productivity, making irrigation crucial for stabilising yields. However, inefficient irrigation systems and climate variability disrupt farming activities, leading to seasonal food shortages (Adamu & Zakar, 2023). The Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) was established to address these issues, yet its impact remains constrained by poor infrastructure, limited funding, and policy inconsistencies (Musa et al., 2022). Emerging research emphasises the need for climate-smart agriculture and precision irrigation to optimise water use and enhance food production (Olufemi et al., 2023). Strengthening HJRBDA's role in promoting efficient water management alongside modern agricultural practices is imperative for achieving food security and economic stability in Jigawa State, particularly in the face of increasing climate-induced challenges (NiMet, 2023).

ii. **Food Security**: Food security refers to the availability, accessibility, and affordability of nutritious food for a population. In Jigawa State, erratic rainfall and inefficient irrigation have exacerbated food insecurity, threatening livelihoods (Adamu & Zakar, 2023). The Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) plays a pivotal role in mitigating these challenges, yet gaps in policy implementation and infrastructure hinder its effectiveness (Musa et al., 2022). Strengthening adaptive water management and integrating climate-resilient farming practices could enhance food security. A shift towards precision agriculture and sustainable irrigation is crucial for long-term stability (Olufemi et al., 2023).

iii. **Irrigation:** Irrigation is the artificial application of water to support crop production, which is crucial in regions with erratic rainfall, like Jigawa State. The Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) was established to enhance irrigation, yet inefficiencies persist due to outdated infrastructure and poor water governance (Adamu & Zakar, 2023). Climate change has further strained water availability, necessitating adaptive strategies such as drip irrigation and smart water management systems (Musa et al., 2022). Integrating technology-driven irrigation models with community participation could optimise water use, improve yields, and strengthen food security in arid zones (Olufemi et al., 2023).

iv. **Climate Resilience:** Climate resilience involves the capacity of systems, communities, and ecosystems to cope with, adapt to, and recover from climate-related stresses, such as extreme weather events and shifting seasonal patterns. In agriculture, resilience includes adopting drought-tolerant crops, improving water management, and implementing sustainable farming practices. Building climate resilience is essential for maintaining agricultural productivity and food security amid climate variability (IPCC, 2023). Resilient practices protect livelihoods, reduce disaster risks, and support environmental sustainability (Adetunji et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the impact of the Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) on agricultural production and food security in Jigawa State. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2022), Jigawa State has an estimated population of 6.2 million people. The study's sample size is determined using Taro Yamane's (1968) formula:n=N1+N(e2)n = \(N)(1 + N(e^2). Where N is the population size, e is the margin of error (0.05), and n represents the sample size. This calculation provides a scientifically valid sample size for data collection. A multi-stage sampling technique, combining probability and non-probability approaches, is used. Stratified random sampling ensures fair representation of farmers across various LGAs under HJRBDA's jurisdiction, while purposive sampling targets key stakeholders, including agricultural officers, irrigation experts, and policymakers. Data collection involves structured questionnaires administered to farmers and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, to examine the relationship between irrigation practices and food security. Qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights. This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of HJRBDA's role in enhancing agricultural productivity in Jigawa State.

Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the hydraulic society theory, propounded by Karl Wittfogel (1957), Donald Worster (1985), and Marty Melosi (2000). The theory posits that societies relying on large-scale irrigation and water management systems develop centralised governance structures to control water resources effectively. Wittfogel (1957) argued that hydraulic civilisations, such as ancient China and Mesopotamia, depended on bureaucratic control over irrigation for agricultural sustainability. Worster (1985) expanded this perspective by linking water management to environmental determinism, emphasising the role of irrigation in shaping social and economic hierarchies. Melosi (2000) further contextualised the theory within modern governance, stressing the interdependence of water resource management, policy frameworks, and technological advancements in contemporary agricultural systems. These theoretical foundations make the Hydraulic Society Theory relevant in assessing the HJRBDA's role in food security through water governance and irrigation development.

Unlike previous studies that applied the Hydraulic Society Theory to broad irrigation management and state control, this study focuses on its micro-level impact in Jigawa State, specifically analysing how HJRBDA's water governance structure influences smallholder farmers' productivity. While past research emphasised state control and resource monopolisation, this study examines how decentralised irrigation practices affect local food security, stakeholder participation, and climate resilience. Additionally, earlier works on Nigeria's River Basin Authorities have primarily highlighted policy inefficiencies. In contrast, this research integrates empirical data to assess how irrigation interventions directly affect agricultural output and food security metrics in Jigawa State. By using mixed-methods analysis, this study expands the theory's frontier beyond governance structures to the practical implications of water access, infrastructure efficiency, and climate adaptation strategies within a specific regional context.

Relationship between Agricultural Production and Food Security: A Perspective

Agricultural production is the backbone of food security worldwide, as it determines the availability, accessibility, and affordability of food. According to FAO (2023), global agricultural output has been significantly impacted by climate change, land degradation, and population growth, affecting food security, particularly in developing regions. However, while FAO emphasises the importance of technological innovation in improving agricultural yields, it does not fully explore the socio-political dynamics that hinder effective implementation. A more nuanced examination by local scholars is necessary to bridge the gap between global policy prescriptions and local realities.

In the study of Olayemi (2022), agricultural production in Africa has been constrained by inadequate infrastructure, poor irrigation facilities, and climate variability, all of which undermine food security. While Olayemi correctly highlights the necessity of sustainable land use and irrigation to enhance agricultural resilience, his study overlooks the role of government policies in mitigating these challenges. Policy interventions, such as subsidies and extension services, can significantly bolster agricultural productivity, thereby strengthening food security across the continent.

Similarly, Bello & Yusuf (2021) examine the relationship between agricultural productivity and food security in Nigeria, identifying climate variability, poor mechanisation, and inefficient water resource management as major constraints. Their findings align with previous studies emphasising these barriers but fail to adequately account for the role of smallholder farmers, who constitute the bulk of Nigeria's agricultural workforce. Addressing smallholder-specific challenges through improved access to credit and agricultural inputs could further solidify the nexus between food production and food security.

In the study of Ibrahim et al. (2023), an assessment of Nigeria's River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) revealed that irrigation projects contribute significantly to increased crop yield and food security. However, the study lacks a critical evaluation of the institutional inefficiencies within the RBDAs, particularly concerning mismanagement and policy inconsistencies. A more comprehensive analysis would need to consider the governance structures and funding mechanisms of these institutions to ensure sustainable agricultural productivity.

According to Yusuf & Abdullahi (2023), the Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) has played a crucial role in improving food production in Jigawa State by providing irrigation infrastructure and supporting smallholder farmers. While their study acknowledges the successes of HJRBDA, it underestimates the ongoing challenges, such as conflicts over water usage, siltation of irrigation channels, and limited technical expertise among farmers. Addressing these issues through strategic policy reforms and community engagement is critical to maximising the basin's potential for food security.

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that agricultural production and food security are deeply intertwined, with irrigation, climate resilience, and policy implementation playing pivotal roles. However, while global and national perspectives highlight broad challenges, local studies provide specific insights into the practical constraints affecting food security, particularly in Jigawa State. To enhance the impact of agricultural initiatives, there is a need for more integrative approaches that combine infrastructure development, policy support, and community-driven solutions tailored to the unique needs of the region.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) in Agricultural Productivity and Food Security in Jigawa State

The assessment of the effectiveness of the Hadejia Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) in agricultural productivity and food security in Jigawa State necessitates a critical interrogation of its institutional role, operational efficiency, and the broader theoretical implications of its interventions. This study will cover the extent to which HJRBDA has facilitated sustainable agricultural development in Jigawa State and its contributions compared with existing theoretical postulations on water resource management and food security.

Theoretically, this study engages with the hydraulic society theory, which emphasises the centrality of water management institutions in ensuring agricultural stability and social order (Wittfogel, 1957). If water control mechanisms are indeed pivotal to agricultural productivity, why has food security remained precarious in Jigawa State despite the presence of HJRBDA? This question situates the study within the broader debate on the effectiveness of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) in Nigeria. While past studies have highlighted the role of RBDAs in irrigation expansion (Adamu & Zakar, 2023), empirical data suggest that challenges such as poor infrastructure, inefficient water distribution, and limited farmer engagement continue to undermine their potential. This study's findings align with

Adetunji et al. (2022), who argued that while RBDAs have contributed to irrigation schemes, their impact remains inconsistent due to climate variability and governance inefficiencies.

Empirical data from Jigawa State reveal that HJRBDA has made measurable contributions to agricultural productivity, particularly in the cultivation of rice and wheat, yet structural limitations persist. How does this align with global perspectives on irrigation and food security? Studies in Egypt and Ethiopia, where large-scale irrigation systems have significantly enhanced food production (El-Sherif et al., 2023; Gebrehiwot, 2022), demonstrate that effective water governance leads to increased crop yields. However, unlike Egypt's structured water management policies, HJRBDA operates under fragmented administrative and funding structures, limiting its overall efficiency. The inconsistency in policy implementation at the federal and state levels exacerbates this issue, mirroring Musa, Ahmed, and Suleiman's (2022) findings that a lack of coordination between governing bodies impedes sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria.

Comparatively, the study questions whether HJRBDA's irrigation interventions have significantly enhanced food security in Jigawa State. While Ibrahim et al. (2023) document increased maise and rice yields due to large-scale irrigation projects in Chad, findings in Jigawa show only marginal improvements in yield stability, with persistent challenges related to climate change and irrigation maintenance. This divergence suggests that while irrigation remains a fundamental tool for food security, its effectiveness is contingent on continuous investment, policy coherence, and climate adaptability. In Kenya's Tana River Basin, for instance, improved irrigation efficiency has reduced reliance on erratic rainfall, leading to sustained food production (Olufemi et al., 2023). The absence of a similar comprehensive approach in Jigawa State raises concerns about the sustainability of current agricultural interventions under HJRBDA.

Further interrogating the study's findings reveals both consistencies and deviations from previous research on agricultural productivity in Nigeria. According to Yusuf & Abdullahi (2023), the primary limitations of river basin authorities include inadequate funding, poor infrastructure maintenance, and water use conflicts—issues that this study reaffirms within the Jigawa context. However, while existing literature often frames RBDAs as largely ineffective, this study identifies pockets of success in localised irrigation projects that have increased rice production. This nuanced perspective challenges monolithic assessments of RBDAs and argues for a differentiated approach that acknowledges both institutional failures and site-specific successes.

The theoretical implications of these findings extend beyond HJRBDA's operational effectiveness to the broader discourse on food security governance in semi-arid regions. If water resource management is as crucial as posited by the hydraulic society theory, why does food insecurity persist despite extensive irrigation schemes? This contradiction suggests that water management alone is insufficient without complementary policies addressing input supply, farmer training, and market access. Musa et al. (2022) contend that beyond irrigation, a holistic approach involving climate adaptation strategies and stakeholder collaboration is essential for sustainable food security. This perspective aligns with this study's conclusion.

In summation, this study demonstrates that while HJRBDA has made contributions to agricultural productivity in Jigawa State, its impact remains constrained by systemic inefficiencies, inadequate funding, and climate variability. The findings both support and challenge existing literature by acknowledging the partial successes of irrigation projects while critiquing the broader inefficiencies in Nigeria's RBDA framework. Consequently, this study calls for policy reforms, improved funding mechanisms, and adaptive irrigation strategies to enhance food security outcomes in Jigawa State and beyond.

Discussion of Major Findings

The study identified six findings regarding the impact of the Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) on agricultural production and food security in Jigawa State.

i. **Impact on Agricultural Productivity**: The study finds that HJRBDA has contributed to increased rice and wheat cultivation in Jigawa State, aligning with previous studies that acknowledge the role of irrigation in enhancing crop yields (Adamu & Zakar,

2023). However, these gains are not uniform across all farming communities due to infrastructural limitations and climate variability.

ii. **Infrastructure Deficiencies**: Despite HJRBDA's mandate to improve irrigation, poor maintenance of irrigation canals and water distribution inefficiencies persist. This finding is consistent with Yusuf & Abdullahi (2023), who identified inadequate infrastructure as a major constraint limiting the success of RBDAs in Nigeria.

iii. **Policy and Administrative Challenges**: The study confirms Musa, Ahmed, and Suleiman's (2022) argument that inconsistent policy implementation and lack of coordination between federal and state agencies undermine RBDA efficiency. Unlike Egypt's structured water governance, HJRBDA suffers from fragmented administrative structures, limiting its effectiveness.

iv. **Climate Variability and Water Availability**: Findings indicate that unpredictable rainfall and recurring droughts in Jigawa State negatively impact irrigation reliability. Unlike large-scale projects in Chad and Kenya, which have adapted to climate challenges (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Olufemi et al., 2023), HJRBDA lacks sufficient adaptive strategies.

v. **Limited Farmer Engagement and Training**: The study highlights that while irrigation facilities exist, many farmers lack adequate training on water-efficient farming techniques. This aligns with Adetunji et al. (2022), who emphasised the need for technical support alongside irrigation expansion for sustainable productivity.

vi. **Partial Food Security Gains:** While irrigation has stabilised some crop yields, food insecurity remains prevalent due to market access issues and inconsistent policy support. This supports the argument by Musa et al. (2022) that irrigation alone is insufficient without complementary agricultural policies.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reaffirm the centrality of irrigation in agricultural productivity and food security, aligning with the hydraulic society theory, which underscores the role of water management in sustaining agriculture (Wittfogel, 1957). However, while previous studies (Adamu & Zakar, 2023; Yusuf & Abdullahi, 2023) have generally characterised RBDAs as inefficient due to infrastructural deficits and policy inconsistencies, this study presents a more nuanced perspective by highlighting localised successes within HJRBDA's interventions in Jigawa State. While irrigation schemes have improved rice and wheat cultivation, their impact remains constrained by climate variability, poor governance structures, and inadequate farmer engagement. Unlike studies in Egypt and Ethiopia (El-Sherif et al., 2023; Gebrehiwot, 2022), which emphasise structured water governance as key to irrigation success, findings in Jigawa State reveal that fragmented policies and weak institutional coordination undermine sustainability. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2023) documented substantial food security improvements through large-scale irrigation in Chad, whereas in Jigawa, gains remain marginal due to inconsistent support mechanisms. This study expands the discourse by arguing that while water resource management is critical, its effectiveness in ensuring food security depends on complementary policies addressing infrastructure, climate adaptation, and market access, thereby challenging reductionist views that attribute food security solely to irrigation development.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following six recommendations are proposed to enhance the impact of the Hadeja Jama'are River Basin Development Authority (HJRBDA) on agriculture and food security in Jigawa State:

i. The government and HJRBDA should prioritise the rehabilitation and expansion of irrigation canals, ensuring efficient water distribution by investing in modern irrigation technology, such as drip and sprinkler systems, which can mitigate infrastructural deficiencies and improve water efficiency.

ii. A structured and harmonised policy framework is needed to strengthen coordination between federal and state agencies by establishing a dedicated intergovernmental task force that can enhance policy implementation and streamline administrative functions for more effective water governance.

iii. HJRBDA should integrate climate resilience measures, such as constructing water reservoirs, promoting drought-resistant crop varieties, and implementing weather forecasting systems to enhance farmers' adaptive capacity against unpredictable rainfall and droughts.

iv. Capacity-building programmes should be introduced to educate farmers on water-efficient farming techniques, irrigation management, and modern agricultural practices.

v. The government should facilitate access to credit facilities, input subsidies, and efficient transportation networks to address food insecurity.

vi. **The government should establish** sustainable funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships and international donor support, to ensure the continuous operation and maintenance of irrigation projects.

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EFFECTS OF CRUDE OIL THEFT ON INTERNAL SECURITY OF DELTA STATE

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Crude oil theft, internal security, Delta State, frustration-aggression theory

ABSTRACT
This study examines how economic marginalization and weak governance fuel criminal activities, leading to violent confrontations between security forces and oil thieves, using the Frustration-Aggression Theory. Crude oil theft in Delta State poses significant threats to internal security, contributing to economic losses, environmental degradation, and increased violence. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews among local communities, security personnel, and government officials. Findings indicate that oil theft is driven by unemployment, inadequate government intervention, and the complicity of local elites. Data analysis reveals that areas with high crude oil theft incidents experience increased militia activities, arms proliferation, and organized crime. Qualitative insights highlight the perceived injustice among local youth, who view oil theft as a means of economic survival. Security agencies struggle with inadequate resources and corruption, exacerbating the crisis. Strengthening security frameworks through enhanced intelligence sharing and community policing is recommended to curb oil-related crimes. Additionally, economic empowerment programmes targeting youth in affected areas in Delta State can reduce incentives for criminal participation. This study contributes to the literature by integrating the security and economic dimensions of crude oil theft, unlike previous studies that focused primarily on economic losses. It provides new empirical insights from mixed-methods data, bridging the gap between structural causes and security responses. The findings offer a holistic policy direction, emphasizing both punitive and preventive measures.

Introduction

Crude oil theft is a significant global challenge, with repercussions for economic stability, environmental sustainability, and internal security. Globally, oil-related crimes, including theft, piracy, and sabotage, undermine national economies and international energy markets. The global oil sector loses approximately $150 billion annually to theft and illegal trade (International Energy Agency (IEA, 2023). These illicit activities often fund transnational organized crime and terrorism, exacerbating global insecurity. Countries reliant on oil exports, including those in the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, are disproportionately affected. For instance, Venezuela and Iraq have struggled to curb oil theft, which drains resources from public budgets and fuels internal conflicts.

In Africa, crude oil theft is a widespread problem, particularly in resource-rich nations. Illicit activities in the oil sector contribute to financial losses exceeding $11 billion annually across the continent (African Development Bank, 2023). Oil theft not only affects national revenues but also intensifies corruption, environmental degradation, and armed conflict. In Angola, for example, oil theft has led to significant environmental damage, affecting marine life and the livelihoods of coastal communities. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has also witnessed oil-related crimes fueling armed groups, further destabilizing an already volatile region.

Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer, bears the brunt of crude oil theft, with estimates from the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI, 2023) suggesting losses of approximately $3.6 billion annually. Crude oil theft in Nigeria is not just an economic issue but also a major driver of insecurity, particularly in the Niger Delta region. The stolen crude is often sold in international black markets, with proceeds funding militant groups and exacerbating regional instability. Furthermore, the activities of oil thieves result in pipeline vandalism and environmental disasters. For instance, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA, 2023) reported over 1,300 incidents of oil spills in 2023, primarily due to sabotage, devastating local ecosystems and displacing communities.

Delta State, located in the heart of Nigeria's Niger Delta, is a focal point of crude oil theft. The state is endowed with vast oil reserves, contributing significantly to Nigeria's economy. However, it has also become a hotspot for illegal oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism. Delta State accounts for nearly 40% of the nation's crude oil theft cases (NNPC, 2024). These illicit activities have severe implications for the state's internal security, with armed groups and militant factions exploiting the proceeds from stolen oil to purchase weapons, fund operations, and undermine government authority. Communities in Delta State are caught in the crossfire, with recurring violence between security forces and criminal groups exacerbating insecurity.

The environmental impact of crude oil theft in Delta State cannot be overstated. Illegal refining activities, often carried out in makeshift facilities, result in extensive pollution of land and water resources. The Niger Delta region, including Delta State, suffers from one of the most polluted environments globally, with significant implications for agriculture, fishing, and public health (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2023). Local communities face dwindling economic opportunities as farmlands and rivers become unproductive due to oil spills and chemical contamination. Efforts to combat crude oil theft in Delta State have included military operations, policy reforms, and community engagement. The Nigerian government launched Operation Delta Safe in 2016, aimed at curbing oil-related crimes and restoring peace in the Niger Delta. Despite these measures, the persistence of crude oil theft highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach.

Existing studies on crude oil theft in Nigeria primarily focus on its economic consequences, environmental impact, and government responses. However, there is limited research on the interplay between crude oil theft and internal security dynamics, particularly in Delta State. While some scholars have examined militant activities in the Niger Delta, few have systematically analysed how crude oil theft catalyses organized crime, arms proliferation, and state fragility. Moreover, most studies rely on either qualitative or quantitative methods, leading to gaps in understanding the broader security implications. This study fills this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach to explore how crude oil theft exacerbates internal

security challenges, offering a more comprehensive and evidence-based analysis.

Statement of the Research Problem

Crude oil theft in Delta State has evolved into a critical internal security challenge. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on its economic and environmental consequences, leaving a significant gap in understanding its security implications. While prior studies have examined militant activities in the Niger Delta, few have systematically analyzed how crude oil theft directly contributes to organised crime, arms proliferation, and state fragility. Current research largely relies on either qualitative or quantitative methodologies, failing to provide a holistic perspective on the intersection between oil theft and security threats. This study addresses this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach to assess how crude oil theft exacerbates internal security dynamics in Delta State.

Empirical data underscores the severity of the problem. According to the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI, 2023), Nigeria loses approximately $3.6 billion annually to crude oil theft, with Delta State accounting for nearly 40% of reported cases (NNPC, 2024). This illicit trade fuels armed groups that use the proceeds to acquire sophisticated weapons, intensifying violent confrontations with security forces. Reports from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED, 2023) indicate a 35% increase in armed clashes linked to oil theft in Delta State between 2020 and 2023. Additionally, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA, 2023) documented over 1,300 oil spill incidents in 2023, with 75% attributed to sabotage, further destabilizing local communities.

The persistence of crude oil theft threatens national security by eroding state authority and fostering criminal enterprises. Weak law enforcement, corruption, and limited community engagement have allowed oil theft networks to thrive, complicating countermeasures. The infiltration of illicit financial flows into local economies creates parallel power structures that challenge government control. Furthermore, the illicit refining of stolen crude has resulted in severe environmental degradation, contributing to economic hardships that push more individuals toward criminal activities.

Stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, oil companies, and security forces, face dire consequences. The Nigerian government experiences revenue losses, undermining its ability to fund public services. Security agencies struggle to contain oil-related violence due to corruption and resource constraints. Oil companies suffer infrastructural damage, increasing operational risks and deterring foreign investment. Local communities bear the brunt of the crisis, enduring violence, displacement, and environmental devastation.

This study is essential in bridging the gap between crude oil theft and its security dimensions by providing empirical evidence of its role in organized crime and instability. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data, the research will offer policymakers actionable insights to formulate security-driven interventions beyond economic and environmental responses.

Conceptual Clarification

i. **Crude Oil Theft:** Crude oil theft is the unauthorized extraction, diversion, and sale of crude oil, often linked to organized crime, militant financing, and state corruption (NEITI, 2023). While traditionally analyzed as an economic crime, emerging studies emphasize its role in exacerbating security crises (Obi, 2022). Unlike conventional theft, crude oil theft operates through a complex web involving political actors, security operatives, and transnational networks (Ibaba, 2021). The proceeds from stolen oil fuel armed insurgencies, arms proliferation, and violent conflicts in Delta State (Adebayo, 2023). Additionally, pipeline vandalism associated with oil theft contributes to environmental degradation, displacing communities and deepening local grievances (UNEP, 2023). Despite military interventions such as Operation Delta Safe, oil theft persists due to weak governance and institutional complicity (NNPC, 2024). This study repositions crude oil theft as a security crisis, arguing for a shift from purely economic

deterrence to integrated security-focused solutions.

ii. **Internal Security:** Internal security refers to the protection of a state from threats that arise within its borders, including insurgency, organized crime, and resource-driven conflicts (Akinola, 2022). In Delta State, crude oil theft has redefined internal security challenges by funding armed groups, weakening state authority, and escalating violence (Eke, 2023). Traditional security approaches, such as military crackdowns, have failed due to systemic corruption and community resentment (Okonkwo, 2024). This study argues that internal security in resource-rich regions must integrate socio-economic interventions with intelligence-driven security measures to disrupt criminal networks sustaining oil theft.

iii. **Environmental Degradation:** Environmental degradation refers to the deterioration of natural ecosystems due to human and industrial activities (Nwankwo, 2022). In Delta State, crude oil theft accelerates environmental destruction through illegal refining, pipeline vandalism, and oil spills, contaminating water bodies and agricultural land (Okoli & Orji, 2023). The resulting ecological damage disrupts livelihoods, intensifies poverty, and fuels local grievances against the state (Ejeh, 2024). This study highlights how environmental degradation from oil theft not only undermines sustainable development but also exacerbates security challenges by fostering resource-based conflicts and criminal economies within affected communities.

iv. **Community Displacement**: Community displacement occurs when individuals are forcibly uprooted from their homes due to environmental, economic, or security threats (Ikelegbe, 2022). In Delta State, crude oil theft-induced conflicts, pipeline explosions, and environmental pollution have led to large-scale displacements, disrupting social cohesion and economic stability (Okonkwo & Eke, 2023). Displaced communities face loss of livelihoods, inadequate access to basic services, and heightened vulnerability to crime and violence (Adebayo, 2024). This study underscores how displacement, driven by oil theft, exacerbates internal security challenges by fostering grievances, increasing militia recruitment, and weakening governmental authority in affected areas.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the effects of crude oil theft on internal security in Delta State. The exploratory sequential design begins with qualitative data collection to identify key themes, which then inform the development of quantitative tools. The study focuses on oil industry workers, local community members, security personnel, and government officials. As of 2022, Delta State's population is estimated at approximately 5,636,100 people by National Population Commission (NPC, 2022). The population of the study is 5,636,100. This study used Taro Yamane's formula (1968) to determine the sample size as calculated below: N is the population size (5,636,100), and e is the margin of error, typically set at 5% (0.05) for a 95% confidence level.

n = 5,636,100/ (1+5,636,100 (0.05)2

n= 5,636,100/(1+5,636,100 x 0.0025)

n= 5,636,100/ (1+14090.25)

n=5,636,100/14091.25≈399.9. the sample size for this study is approximately 400.

A multi-stage sampling technique is employed, starting with purposive sampling to identify affected communities and followed by random sampling of respondents. Data collection includes semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions to understand perceptions of crude oil theft and its security implications. Structured questionnaires are also distributed to capture variables such as theft frequency, economic losses, and security incidents, complemented by secondary data. Thematic coding is used to analyze qualitative data, while descriptive statistics are applied to quantitative data using SPSS. Ethical approval is secured, participants' confidentiality is ensured, and informed consent is obtained. This integrated methodology ensures a

comprehensive understanding of the interplay between crude oil theft and internal security, combining detailed insights with statistical validation.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Frustration-Aggression theory, developed by John Dollard et al. (1939) and later expanded by Leonard Berkowitz (1969), which posits that aggression is a result of frustration arising from unmet needs or blocked goals. In the context of Delta State, the exclusion of local communities from the economic benefits of oil wealth creates frustration, which often manifests in aggressive behaviours such as oil theft, sabotage, and militancy. This theory explains how deprivation, particularly in resource-rich areas, leads to violent actions as a means of expressing discontent or achieving economic survival. Berkowitz's extension of the theory highlights that aggression can be triggered by environmental cues, such as corruption, unemployment, and environmental degradation, which are prevalent in Delta State.

This study applies the Frustration-Aggression Theory uniquely by linking systemic economic deprivation to escalating security threats in Delta State rather than focusing solely on economic grievances or isolated militant activities, as seen in previous studies. While past research has primarily examined oil theft as a criminal act or a response to marginalization, this study integrates institutional failures, environmental destruction, and state responses as key frustration triggers. Unlike prior works that treated militancy and oil theft as distinct phenomena, this study demonstrates how frustration from governance neglect and environmental damage systematically escalates into organized crime and armed resistance. Additionally, it highlights the role of security crackdowns as a secondary frustration trigger, reinforcing cycles of violence. This study employed qualitative and quantitative methods to go beyond theoretical assumptions to provide empirical validation of frustration-aggression pathways, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how oil-related frustrations directly fuel internal security crises in Delta State.

Relationship between Crude Oil Theft and Internal Security

Crude oil theft is a critical factor influencing internal security, with global implications extending to Africa and, more specifically, Nigeria. According to Adegbite (2021), oil-related crimes contribute to transnational security threats by financing armed groups and fueling corruption within national institutions. His study argues that the illicit trade of crude oil not only depletes national revenues but also strengthens organized crime networks. However, Adegbite's analysis fails to consider the role of political actors in sustaining these illegal activities, which is a crucial dimension in understanding security vulnerabilities. This limitation necessitates further examination of how state complicity exacerbates security risks.

In the study of Okechukwu (2022), crude oil theft in Africa is linked to environmental and economic destabilization, particularly in resource-dependent economies. He asserts that the sabotage of oil infrastructure increases the vulnerability of states to insurgency and armed conflicts, citing the cases of Angola and Sudan. While Okechukwu provides valuable insight into the macroeconomic consequences, his research overlooks the micro-level dynamics, particularly how local communities respond to state security interventions. This omission weakens the applicability of his findings to localized security crises, such as those in Delta State, where grassroots mobilization against security forces is prevalent.

Similarly, Adebayo (2023) examines the direct relationship between crude oil theft and internal security in Nigeria, emphasizing the Niger Delta region. He argues that oil theft has transitioned from small-scale illegal refining to highly sophisticated criminal enterprises involving international actors. Adebayo's study strengthens the argument that poor governance and weak law enforcement allow these crimes to flourish. However, his research underestimates the role of economic deprivation as a driver of oil theft, focusing more on state responses rather than the socio-economic conditions that sustain these illegal activities. This gap is crucial in understanding how frustration among marginalized communities manifests in security threats.

According to Chukwu (2023), oil theft is analyzed as both a cause and consequence of insecurity in Nigeria. He asserts that the militarization of the Niger Delta has led to an arms race between oil thieves and security forces, escalating violence. While this perspective is valid, Chukwu's study does not account for the cyclical nature of state responses, where increased military operations often lead to higher levels of aggression and crime. His work supports the study's position that without economic incentives for alternative livelihoods, security responses will remain reactionary and ineffective.

According to Okonkwo (2024), Nigeria's oil theft crisis is deeply rooted in governance failures and elite complicity. He critiques previous studies for focusing solely on criminal elements without addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate these activities. His research expands the frontiers of understanding by illustrating how regulatory loopholes and political patronage networks sustain oil theft operations. However, his study does not provide empirical data linking these governance failures directly to specific security incidents, making his argument more theoretical than practical. This study, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by providing empirical evidence on how governance inefficiencies directly escalate security challenges in Delta State.

According to Aluko (2018), oil theft in Delta State has led to widespread internal security challenges, including increased arms proliferation, communal conflicts, and heightened law enforcement-militant clashes. His study provides critical insights into the operational tactics of oil thieves. However, it largely neglects the role of international actors in sustaining the illicit oil trade, a dimension this study seeks to integrate.

Similarly, Onuoha (2017) highlights that oil theft in Delta State is intricately linked to youth unemployment and systemic corruption. He argues that marginalized communities resort to oil theft as a survival mechanism due to government neglect. However, his work focuses more on economic deprivation than on how environmental degradation, resulting from oil spills and illegal refining, exacerbates security tensions.

Ibrahim (2016) critiques the ineffectiveness of security agencies in curbing oil theft, citing institutional corruption and inadequate surveillance as key challenges. While his work provides an extensive analysis of security lapses, it does not sufficiently explore community-based solutions, which this study aims to incorporate.

This literature suggests that while there is a consensus on the link between crude oil theft and internal security, existing studies often overlook the interconnectedness of political, economic, and security factors. The reviewed works highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach that integrates governance, socio-economic conditions, and security strategies. This study builds on previous research by offering a multidimensional analysis that not only investigates the role of crude oil theft in internal security crises but also explores policy alternatives for mitigating these threats effectively.

Effects of Crude Oil Theft and Internal Security Challenges in Delta State

To what extent does crude oil theft exacerbate internal security challenges in Delta State? This question underscores the thrust of this study, particularly in examining the interplay between economic deprivation, organized crime, and violent conflicts. Conceptually, crude oil theft is not merely an economic crime; it is a systemic issue that fuels insecurity through arms proliferation, destruction of infrastructure, and erosion of governmental authority. Theoretically, the Frustration-Aggression theory posits that economic marginalization and resource exclusion foster grievances that escalate into aggression. In Delta State, the exclusion of local communities from the benefits of oil wealth creates an environment where youth resort to illicit activities, including oil theft, as a means of survival. This study's findings corroborate Berkowitz's (1969) argument that environmental cues, such as corruption and unemployment, amplify aggressive tendencies, further destabilizing internal security structures.

In comparison with previous studies, the findings of this research diverge in certain critical ways. For instance, according to Ugwuanyi & Okeke (2021), crude oil theft in the Niger Delta is primarily a function of weak law enforcement and corruption within state institutions. While this assertion is valid, it does not sufficiently account for the role of socio-economic deprivation in escalating security threats. This

study expands the discourse by demonstrating that beyond institutional corruption, the systemic lack of economic opportunities contributes significantly to local participation in oil theft. Similarly, in the study of Ajayi & Ibekwe (2022), the link between oil theft and the proliferation of small arms was explored, arguing that stolen crude is often exchanged for weapons in transnational criminal networks. It aligns with the findings of this research, which further reveal that such transactions facilitate the growth of militant factions that directly challenge state security forces.

In Africa, studies on resource-driven conflicts have often highlighted the role of oil in exacerbating insecurity. For example, the work of Mbah & Eke (2020) examined how oil theft in Angola contributed to the rise of armed insurgencies. While Angola and Nigeria share similar resource-based security dilemmas, this study diverges by emphasizing the micro-level impact, particularly how community discontent fuels militancy in Delta State. Similarly, Nwankwo (2019) analyzed the role of multinational corporations in sustaining oil theft, arguing that their complicity indirectly supports organized crime. However, this research extends that argument by revealing how the absence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives fosters local resentment, leading to increased security threats.

A critical finding of this study is the environmental dimension of crude oil theft, which further exacerbates security challenges. Oil spills and gas flaring have not only rendered farmlands unproductive but have also led to forced migration, creating climate refugees within Delta State. It aligns with the findings of Eze & Obi (2023), who posited that environmental degradation contributes to displacement and resource competition. However, this research provides a nuanced perspective by linking such displacement to increased urban crime, as displaced individuals seek alternative livelihoods, often through illicit means.

Furthermore, this study interrogates the effectiveness of government responses to crude oil theft and security challenges. According to Okonkwo (2021), military interventions such as Operation Delta Safe have had limited success due to the deep-seated socio-economic roots of oil theft. This research corroborates this view, highlighting that militarized approaches often lead to human rights violations, thereby exacerbating local grievances rather than resolving the underlying issues. In contrast, the work of Adebayo (2022) suggested that community-based security initiatives could serve as a viable alternative to state-led crackdowns. The findings of this study support this argument, demonstrating that community policing and economic incentives reduce the incentive for criminal activities.

The study also explores the role of gender in crude oil theft and security challenges, an aspect often overlooked in existing literature. According to research by Opara (2023), women in the Niger Delta are disproportionately affected by oil-related conflicts due to displacement and economic disempowerment. This study builds on that argument by illustrating how women, though rarely active participants in oil theft, bear the brunt of insecurity through forced migrations and loss of livelihoods. Such insights expand the discourse on the socio-economic consequences of oil theft beyond the predominantly male-dominated narratives of militancy.

One of the major contributions of this study to existing literature is its policy-oriented approach. While previous studies have largely focused on either the economic or security implications of crude oil theft, this research integrates both dimensions, offering a holistic framework for policy interventions. It emphasizes that addressing oil theft requires not only stronger law enforcement but also socio-economic reforms, including job creation, infrastructural development, and community engagement.

This study reinforces the argument that crude oil theft is both a symptom and a driver of internal security challenges in Delta State. While previous research has examined aspects of this issue in isolation, this study provides an integrated analysis, bridging the gap between economic deprivation, environmental degradation, and security threats. The findings underscore the necessity for a multidimensional approach that combines state-led interventions with community-driven solutions. By interrogating existing perspectives and introducing new dimensions to the discourse, this study advances scholarly understanding of the complex relationship between resource theft and security in oil-producing regions.

Discussions of Major Findings

This study established six findings that underscore the intricate link between crude oil theft and internal security challenges in Delta State.

First, economic deprivation remains the primary catalyst for crude oil theft. The findings show that unemployment and exclusion from oil wealth push many individuals, particularly youths, into illicit activities, supporting the Frustration-Aggression theory's premise that economic marginalization fuels aggressive responses.

Second, arms proliferation is directly linked to crude oil theft. Stolen crude is often traded for weapons, strengthening militant groups and escalating confrontations with security forces. This confirms Ajayi & Ibekwe's (2022) assertion that illicit oil sales sustain criminal networks.

Third, environmental degradation exacerbates security threats. Oil spills and gas flaring not only destroy livelihoods but also displace communities, increasing urban crime rates. The study extends Eze & Obi's (2023) argument by linking forced migration to rising insecurity.

Fourth, government responses remain ineffective due to corruption and militarization. Security operations, such as Operation Delta Safe, have been largely unsuccessful, with some security personnel allegedly complicit in the illicit trade. This supports Okonkwo's (2021) critique of military interventions.

Fifth, the role of multinational corporations in oil theft sustains organized crime. The absence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives fosters local grievances, a perspective extending Nwankwo's (2019) analysis.

Finally, a policy shift toward community-driven security strategies is necessary. Findings align with Adebayo (2022), demonstrating that economic empowerment, infrastructure development, and local security initiatives offer sustainable solutions to curbing oil theft and its security implications.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reinforce the conceptual argument that crude oil theft is not merely an economic crime but a systemic issue that fuels internal security challenges through organized crime, arms proliferation, environmental degradation, and the erosion of governmental authority. Theoretically, the Frustration-Aggression theory remains relevant in explaining how economic deprivation and exclusion from oil wealth generate aggressive responses that manifest as oil theft, sabotage, and militancy. The study's findings align with Berkowitz's (1969) extension, which posits that environmental and socio-political triggers, such as corruption and unemployment, exacerbate aggression. However, this study expands the theoretical discourse by demonstrating that beyond frustration-induced aggression, crude oil theft operates within a broader network of transnational organized crime, making it a more complex security challenge.

In contrast to previous studies that primarily focus on institutional failures, such as weak law enforcement (Ugwuanyi & Okeke, 2021), this research highlights the socio-economic dimensions of crude oil theft. While prior works like Ajayi & Ibekwe (2022) have established the link between oil theft and arms proliferation, this study extends the analysis by illustrating how stolen crude fuels criminal economies, reinforcing cycles of violence and state instability. Similarly, while Nwankwo (2019) examined the role of multinational corporations in sustaining organized crime, this study shifts the focus toward corporate neglect and the failure of CSR initiatives, which amplify local resentment and drive security challenges.

Moreover, this research diverges from conventional security studies by incorporating an environmental perspective. Findings from Eze & Obi (2023) on oil-induced displacement are substantiated, but this study takes the argument further by linking environmental degradation to rising urban crime rates. Unlike Okonkwo (2021), who primarily critiques military interventions, this research balances the discourse by demonstrating that while military responses are inadequate, alternative community-based security measures, as suggested by Adebayo (2022), offer viable solutions.

This study bridges gaps in the literature by integrating economic, environmental, and security dimensions, emphasizing that crude oil theft is both a symptom and a driver of insecurity. This issue requires a multidimensional policy approach that combines law enforcement with socio-economic reforms to mitigate both the causes and consequences of oil-related crimes in Delta State to be addressed.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the study recommended that:

i. The government and private sector should implement targeted employment programs in Delta State, such as vocational training, entrepreneurship grants, and youth employment schemes, to provide alternative livelihoods for those engaged in illicit activities.

ii. The federal government should strengthen arms control policies and enhance border security.

iii. The government should enforce stricter environmental regulations on oil companies to ensure immediate cleanup of oil spills and the reduction of gas flaring.

iv. Security agencies should implement strict anti-corruption measures, including digital tracking of crude oil movements and independent oversight mechanisms to prevent security personnel from colluding with oil thieves.

v. Oil companies should prioritize community development initiatives such as road construction, healthcare, and educational projects.

vi. The government should integrate local vigilante groups into formal security structures, providing them with legal backing, training, and logistical support.

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THE IMPACT OF OIL RESOURCE MISMANAGEMENT (1958-1992) ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FROM THE PAST AND PATHS FOR THE FUTURE

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KEYWORDS
Oil Resource Management, Rentier State Theory, Economic Dependency, Resource Curse, Governance Failures, Petroleum Revenue Mismanagement, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Institutional Corruption, Niger Delta Crisis, Economic Diversification

ABSTRACT
Nigeria's oil mismanagement from 1958 to 1992 is analysed in this study that critically studies these events as having laid the foundation for the country's structural weaknesses, economic vices of which still obtain today. While the resource curse, governance failures, and economic dependency have been widely debated in existing literature, the studies also do not make a systematic attempt to link present Nigeria's challenges to past oil governance failures. This study bridges that gap by exploring how the colonial era contracts, corruption and oil booms based on legal tender that resulted in reckless spending during oil booms undermined the economic foundations of Nigeria. A historical analytical approach was used to assess patterns of mismanagement, policy inconsistency, and a failure of governance based on data from archival government reports, economic analyses, and scholarly works. The results shed light on Nigeria's oil wealth being a cause of patronage politics, fiscal recklessness, and non-diversification of the economy, which made the country vulnerable to external price shocks as well as institutional decay. This research supports Rentier State Theory, which is confirmed through the finding that reliance on oil revenues shortened state accountability, encouraged corruption, and caused economic stagnation in Nigeria. It contributes to policy studies by suggesting historically grounded policy prescriptions for sustainable resource governance, economic diversification, institutional reform, and reversing Nigeria's oil-dependent development crisis.

Introduction

Commercial quantities of the crude oil were discovered in Nigeria in 1956 to trigger a turning point in the country's economic history. In Nigeria, economic activity was predominantly agrarian and our export commodities were: palm oil, cocoa and groundnuts until oil became the major source of revenue (Saravanan et al., 2022). Nigeria's development trajectory was completely changed from being based on agriculture to dependence on petroleum, which completely reshaped its political and economic

structures. By the early 1970s, oil would come to dominate the nation's economy. Oil constituted over 90 percent of export earnings and over 80 percent of government revenue (Li, 2023). However, this rapid expansion of oil wealth was not without strong governance structures and prevalent mismanagement, corruption, and economic distortions that inhibited sustainable development (Ibadoghlu, 2024).

There are relatively few studies that critically evaluate Nigeria's present economic realities and their relationship to early oil wealth mismanagement in the 1958 to 1992 period, for example, to consider its long-term developmental implications. To address this gap, this research questions the degree to which misgovernance in the oil exploration's first foundational decades in Nigeria established the structural shortcomings within its foundations to the persistent economic vulnerabilities that the country remains engulfed in today.

This study addresses the central research problem of oil wealth and underdevelopment in Nigeria. Nigeria has been plagued by persistent poverty, economic volatility, and weak institutional structures even though it is a petroleum revenue generator. Successive administrations have not put in place a framework of equitable resource distribution, economic diversification, and industrialization during this period between 1958 and 1992 as an economy of crude oil exportations (Usman, 2022). Moreover, the economic consequences of this mismanagement go beyond the economic sphere itself; inequalities in social peace, environmental degradation in oil-proven regions, and political turbulence are side effects in the Niger Delta (Omotola & Fayomi, 2024). It is necessary to address this historical mismanagement to better understand why contemporary policy reforms have failed to turn the tide of Nigeria's economic direction.

In addition to its wide choice of petroleum reserves, the nation has never experienced development on a basis other than the narrow, except for economic instability, poor infrastructure, and persistent poverty. Through a combination of weak institutions, unchecked corruption, and misguided policies, oil dependency was entrenched from 1958 through 1992, leaving the country insecure to price shocks, external debt, and governance failures (Fusari, 2024). When the 1980s rolled around, the economic crisis had deepened, as coupled with reckless borrowing, revenue mismanagement had picked the country. The persistent failure to industrialize, diversify, and reinvest oil wealth in these years has embedded such weaknesses in long-term structural terms, which continue to shape Nigeria's future economic trajectory even today (Bladder et al., 2022).

Background of Study

The discovery of crude oil at Oloibiri in the Niger Delta in 1956 by Shell-BP brought about a great change in Nigeria's economic trajectory. The nation's economy was dependent on agriculture especially on palm oil, cocoa and groundnuts (Ornla-ied et al., 2021). Nigeria's economy and political outlook changed significantly overnight from 1958 with the arrival of oil wealth, as agriculture was relegated to the background while petroleum became the country's chief source of revenue.

Foreign oil companies, mostly Shell, BP, and then ExxonMobil, produced and collected the revenue flowing from oil exploration right from the early years, while the government showed little oversight It can be said that the boom in Nigeria's oil in the 1970s brought about what was dubbed as unprecedented economic growth, but, at the same time, it fuelled corruption, rent-seeking behaviour, and weak institutional governance (Epstein & Gang, 2022). There was poor economic planning, bad spending and the neglect of vital sectors including; manufacturing; infrastructure; and social services, because the government was unable to tap into the oil revenues effectively due to the absence of a robust regulatory framework.

Research on Nigeria's oil economy has chalked out corruption, policy failure, and the effect of a global price of oil; only a few have examined the long-term developmental outcomes of oil mismanagement early (Ruisi, 2024). This study bridges the gap by conducting a historical analysis of Nigeria's oil governance from 1958 to 1992 and shows how failure to properly establish foundational policy elements has been a cause of Nigeria's current economic and political challenges. Policy lessons are drawn from this period, and the research seeks to offer policy recommendations that would bring oil resource management in Nigeria to be more sustainable and transparent.

Literature Review and Research Gap Identification

There has been extensive scholarly discourse on Nigeria's oil industry: analysing different aspects of resource governance, the economic dependency, corruption, and developmental failures. Nevertheless, most of the literature has been confined to the contemporary forms of oil-related challenges, rather than the historical origins and structural foundations of the latter. In this study, the author critically reviews previous works on aspects of mismanagement of oil mainly between 1958 and 1992 to expose knowledge gaps and provide deeper understanding of early policy failures in shaping Nigeria's economic landscape.

Oil Resource Management in Nigeria: A Review of Existing Literature

Firstly, several scholars have looked at how Nigeria's history has been mishandled when it comes to its oil wealth. Nanziri & Abban (2023) argues that the colonial-era contracts of Nigeria's oil industry were in favour of the multinational corporations at the expense of national economic autonomy. In the early days of oil exploration, companies such as Shell, BP, and ExxonMobil enjoyed almost unfettered business in the country, largely because of lucrative deals that gave little control of Nigeria's petroleum resources to the state. van Krevel & Peters. (2024) goes further and states that even after independence, the government's ability to maximize oil rents was continued by colonial era contracts to uphold a model where foreign corporations set the terms of resource extraction.

Nigeria's oil boom has one of the most discussed consequences: failure to translate petroleum wealth into sustainable economic development. According to Cochrane (2022), Nigeria's government neglected to put in place long-term purchasing and economic frameworks and depended on a reckless fiscal policy that depended on oil equivalents without an anchored lasting monetary arrangement. Broader agree that oil revenues have been drained by public sector expansion and overambitious infrastructure projects that brought little economic returns. Nigeria's inability to diversify its economy is attributable, firstly, to the misallocation of investments in resource development and, secondly, to the shortage of investment in human capital, industrialization and agro-modernization.

Furthermore, the literature also extensively reports on the environment and social effects of oil production beyond economic mismanagement. The problem of who bears the cost, says Ogwus (2022), is that the Nigerian government ignored the Niger Delta communities and multinational oil corporations alike, even though these regions suffered the most from oil exploration's negative externalities. It promoted gas flaring and oil spills, devastating local economies, most notably fishing and agriculture, which had engendered continuous grievances as well as violent resistance movements. According to Achuo Kpwa (2023), this is a main factor in the emergence of militant groups, youth unrest, and armed conflict in the region.

Research Objectives

i. To examine the historical management of the oil resource of Nigeria from 1958 to 1992.

ii. To evaluate the effect of the mismanagement of oil on Nigeria's economic, social, and political development.

iii. To study how the failure of the oil sector's governance and the corruption it is tied to led to economic instability.

iv. To compare Nigeria's oil governance with other resource-rich nations.

v. To offer policy suggestions for oil wealth management in ways that are sustainable.

Research Questions

i. Between 1958 and 1992, how did oil revenue in Nigeria get managed, and what governance structures were there?

ii. What were the greatest economic, social, and political outcomes of the mismanagement of oil during this period?

iii. How has oil dependency structured Nigeria's institutional development and policy choices?

iv. What has Nigeria's oil trail looked like compared to other oil-producing countries?

v. What lessons can be learnt from historical oil mismanagement for policymakers at the moment?

Significance of the Study

i. For policymakers: Historical lessons to help policymakers who govern contemporary oil.

ii. For scholars: It helps fill a gap in literature by linking those governance failures of the past to the present-day economic instability.

iii. For the oil sector: Provides ideas on how revenue can be improved to ensure long-term stability in economic quality.

iv. For civil society: Enhances public discourse on government accountability in resource management.

Scope and Limitations

Scope: The study is focused on Nigeria's oil management from 1958 to 1992. It discusses the governance structure, economic aspects, and corruption in the oil sector.

Limitations:

i. Some of this period's government records might be unavailable.

ii. Comparative analysis: The discussion of comparisons is restricted to case findings as presented in secondary sources.

iii. Some accounts about historical issues are subjectively political.

Conceptual Clarifications

Terminologies used in scholarly discourse on oil resource management, economic development and governance in Nigeria often prove to be terminologies that necessitate a definition as well as an engagement in context. Since mismanagement, resource curse, and economic dependency are at the core of this study, it follows that defining the concepts involved should aim at maintaining analytical rigour. This section does not just present dictionary definitions of the terms; rather, it discusses and relates what these terms mean in the context of the realities of Nigeria's oil economy as well as established scholarly writings on the terms.

Definition of Key Concepts

Oil Resource Management

The term oil resource management encompasses all the strategies, policies, and institutional frameworks that govern the extent of oil exploration, its extraction, revenue allotment, and long-term use of petroleum wealth (Stephens, 2023). Oil resource management should be balanced between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and acceptable wealth distribution. In Nigeria, though, oil management is in opaque governance, poor fiscal transparency, and misdirected public investment, revenue leakage, corruption, and underdevelopment.

Resource Curse

This is what the resource curse means; countries with huge natural resources suffer from economic stagnation, weak institutions, statelessness, and other similar characteristics instead of continuous development and growth (Imran et al., 2024). Nigeria is a typical example of this, as dependence on oil revenues has resulted in over dependence on oil in revenue raising, cycles of economic volatility and under investment in other sectors. In contrast to Norway, Nigeria, which has enjoyed the decades of oil boom wealth, has depended on crude oil exports, making the country vulnerable to its shocks on oil export prices, rent-seeking elites, and developmental declines (Kleit & Foreman, 2023).

Economic Dependency

Economic dependency is when the country's economy has too great a reliance on a single sector or commodity, thus preventing it from making a transition to longer-term economic development. Since the 1970s, crude oil has contributed more than 90 percent to Nigeria's export revenue base, and other sectors like agriculture and manufacturing have been largely neglected and underdeveloped (Shaw et al., 2024). As a result, the economy has been fragile, and economic planning and practice are unstable and reactive with respect to volatile global oil prices in that government revenues and the national budget are directly affected.

Critical Engagement with Relevant Terms

i. **Structure of Oil Boom and the Structural Impact**

Oil boom is the term used to describe the sharp increase in crude oil prices and corresponding revenue spikes that occur in oil-exporting nations. In the 1970s and early 1990s, Nigeria experienced major oil booms that produced unprecedented fiscal windfalls and that featured excessive, wasteful, and corrupt spending, distortions, and policies to promote the country's dependence on oil exports (Lewis, 1996). Unlike in economies that used oil booms to build long-term stability (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Norway), the oil bonanza in Nigeria was deployed not as an investment catalyst in sectors that would augment Nigeria's long-term productivity but instead to nix the odour-filled tale of a bloated government bureaucracy, white elephants, and a culture of patronage politics (Idowu & Ogunnubi, 2023).

ii. **Patronage Politics and Rent-Seeking Behaviour**

Patronage is political when public resources, contracts, and political appointments are distributed based on loyalty rather than merit. This system in Nigeria's oil sector entrenched a culture of rent-seeking where political elites skimmed off wealth through informal access to oil revenues as opposed to productive economic activities (Ibrahim Mahmoud, 2024). Revenue allocation by state actors was also without accountability and transparency, thus allowing state actors to divert public funds for their own personal enrichment to the detriment of institutions and the building of sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

For resource-dependent states, economic volatility, weak institutional governance, and elite rule, especially to the extent that the state's revenue is characterized by unearned resource rents as opposed to productive taxation. Within the framework of the development of the Rentier State Theory (RST), this paper attempts to explain how Nigeria's reliance on oil rents between 1958 and 1992 affected its economic policies, governance structures, and subsequent developmental path.

Selected Theory: Rentier State Theory

As per Rentier State Theory (RST), a State that is made on the basis of natural resource wealth, rather than diversified economic productivity tends to have weak Institutions and non-transparent governance structure (Reed, 2023). Whereas governments in tax-based economies rely on productive economic activity for fiscal revenue, rentier states rely heavily on external revenue sources, including transit, grants, and aid, rendering state accountability to citizens, like in tax-based economies, unnecessary. Crude oil played the central role in terms of state revenue in Nigeria by 1970 when it accounted for more than 90 percent of the country's export earnings, and in turn affected the relationship between the government and the economy (John, 2021).

Justification for the Theory

Using Nigeria's rentier economy as a case, this study builds out the theory of resource dependency as the rentier state through which state actors intentionally blocked the development of a nonpetroleum economy to uphold control over oil rents by elites. In contrast to Norway, which used sovereign wealth funds to insulate oil revenues from political abuse, Nigeria's leaders used oil revenues first for patronage networks, debt accumulation, and other non-productive projects.

Application of the Theory in the Study

RST is applied in this study to discuss how oil rents have helped Nigeria become dependent on

oil rents, which hindered institutional development, indulged in policy short-termism, and catalysed a cycle of economic volatility. The theory explains:

i. The ways in which government overspending could be explained, when oil rents sustained the government.

ii. The reasons why political elites paid more attention to patronage instead of national development.

iii. The process through which resource dependency caused economic stagnation and oil price shocks vulnerability.

Research Methodology

The research makes use of a historical analytical design to examine the management of Nigeria's oil resources between 1958 and 1992 using qualitative research methods. The data sources are archival documents, policy reports and secondary literature, and they are studied in order to understand patterns of mismanagement, governance failure, and economic impact.

Research Design

The approach is qualitative and historical and analytical in nature, and it is used to consider issues of policy decisions, governance structures, and the pattern of economics in Nigeria's oil sector. The study critically reviews both primary and secondary sources to understand the errors of early mismanagement and its long-term economic and political instability.

Study Population and Sample Size

Government records, economic reports, historical accounts, and policy documents of the Nigerian oil sector between 1958 and 1992 were the study population. The review is made of a purposive sample of the key government policy, IMF/World Bank reports, and scholarly analyses.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling strategy is used, which should only include relevant policy documents, archival materials, and expert analysis. The choice is narrowed down to sources in which the fiscal policies, revenue allocation on oil, and institutional governance are elaborated.

Data Collection Methods

Data is sourced from:

i. Other archival government reports (e.g., genetic NNP financial records, national spending).

ii. Scholarly and some international organisations economic and policy analyses.

iii. History of Accounts and Media Reports on Oil Revenue Mismanagement

Data Analysis Techniques

A content analysis is conducted with respect to policy documents, economic data, and governance trends. Patterns of corruption, fiscal mismanagement, and policy inefficiencies are identified in the study with a connection made to long-term economic consequences.

Historical Analysis of Oil Management in Nigeria (1958-1992)

It was only from 1958 to 1992 that Nigeria's oil industry began, which in turn affected both the economic and political structures of Nigeria. Heavy inflows of revenue notwithstanding, long-term development was checked by poor governance, corruption, and policy inconsistencies. This section looks at how oil wealth and misappropriation, as well as external shocks, affected Nigeria's path.

Overview of oil Discovery and Early Management (1958-1970)

In 1956 crude oil was found at Oloibiri, and production started commercially in 1958. Foreign oil companies (Shell, BP, ExxonMobil) exercised power during early operations under colonial-era contracts that offered little to no benefit to Nigeria (Mashhadizadeh, 2023). By 1970, oil production had exceeded a million barrels a day, but the government was out of control of revenues. The creation of the NNOC in 1971 was an initiative to entail the state in the oil production process, but it did not achieve

much because it was based on institutional weaknesses.

The Oil Boom and Governance Challenges (1970s)

In the 1970s, when oil began to boom, unprecedented wealth could be brought; oil revenue shot from $100 million in 1965 to $11 billion in 1979 (Chile et al., 2022). However, policies of government were characterised by corruption, patronage politics, and reckless spending. Towards such projects, inflated contracts, and military expansion, the money was diverted. Though oil revenue control was consolidated in the NNPC, created in 1977, handling the resource remained a problem. By the late 1970s, Nigeria had become over dependent on oil exports, which left behind poor agriculture and manufacturing.

Economic Crisis and the Resource Curse (1980s-1992)

Nigeria's fragile economy was exposed through the 1980s oil price crash. Between 1980 and 1983, oil revenues plummeted from $25 billion to less than $10 billion, which forced the government to declare austerity measures and pile up debt (Koopmann et al., 2021). In 1986, SAP had been designed to enhance economic reforms. However, the implementation of the program through inflation, job losses, and the decline of public services could not be sustained. Declining revenues were misappropriated by military regimes that were also weakening governance, further deepening corruption. The table below shows Nigeria's Oil Revenue and GDP Growth from 1965 to 1992.

Table 1: Nigeria's Oil Revenue and GDP Growth (1965-1992) (Awoyemi & Nwibe, 2022)

Year	Oil Revenue (Billion USD)	GDP Growth (%)
1965	0.2	4.2
1966	0.3	4.5
1967	0.5	5.0
1968	0.7	5.3
1969	1.0	5.7
1970	1.5	6.1
1971	2.0	6.5
1972	3.5	7.2
1973	5.0	8.0
1974	7.5	8.5
1975	10.0	9.0
1976	11.5	7.8
1977	13.0	6.5

1978	15.0	5.3
1979	18.5	4.5
1980	21.0	4.0
1981	23.5	3.5
1982	25.0	3.0
1983	22.0	2.5
1984	19.0	2.0
1985	16.0	1.5
1986	13.5	0.5
1987	10.0	-0.5
1988	8.5	-1.0
1989	6.0	-1.5
1990	5.5	-2.0
1991	5.0	-2.5
1992	4.5	-3.0

Environmental and Social Impacts of Oil Mismanagement

Oil spills, gas flaring, and land degradation, all of which affected the Niger Delta, severely degraded the environment there. Much of Nigeria's wealth was produced in this region, so little reinvestment flowed back, contributing to grievances and protests before even militant resistance (Rosenthal, 2021). This important failure of the government to address these concerns resulted in social unrest, economic displacement, and environmental devastation.

Interrogation of Literature

An examination of existing scholarship on how Nigeria manages its oil wealth discloses different points of view. Some of the scholars' stress external exploitation and historical contracts, while others point out that economic mismanagement was the result of internal governance failures and corruption. In this section, this study argues, interrogates key arguments, and puts forth a narrative that critiques the prevailing ones.

Supporting Arguments from Literature

Oil rents have been ascribed by many scholars as the cause of governance failures and economic volatility in Nigeria. According to Itu (2024), colonial period contracts and foreign corporate dominance prevented control of petroleum wealth in Nigeria. This argument is extended by Chervenak et al., 2023), who stresses the role of oil revenue in a rentier state where the government was concerned with the short term rather than the long-term development. Like David et al (2024), oil wealth allowed corruption, patronage politics, and institutional decay; an economic structure that is very much dependent on oil that is vulnerable to oil price shocks.

Counterarguments and Critique

However, some argue that rather than oil wealth, poor policy choices were the real culprits of Nigeria's slow and steady financial decline along the lines of the resource curse narrative. According to Vijayakumar (2024), failed institutions and economic thinking rather than oil abundance were the reasons why Nigeria stagnated. Islam, Md (2021) too agrees with the overemphasis of the role that external actors played in the underdevelopment and criticises that domestic mismanagement, fiscal irresponsibility, and elite-driven corruption were the crux of the matter.

Contributions to Existing Scholarship

It bridges the gap between external and internal arguments put forth in the assessment of how initial oil mismanagement (1958-1992) afforded long-term political and economic vulnerabilities. Unlike the work of earlier scholars eager to understand current oil governance, this research looks to previous historical events, from the colonial contracts, the state's poor management, and the country's lack of fiscal responsibility, to shed light on how Nigeria's chronic economic instability continues to play out.

Thrust of the Work and Key Findings

This thesis analyses the successful dispossession and mismanagement of oil wealth between 1958 and 1992 as the basis of Nigeria's economic instability, failure of governance, and social unrest. The research traces historical policy failures in a manner that demonstrates how rent-seeking, corruption, and the absence of long-term economic planning compelled Nigeria's dependent situation on oil revenues and weakened the institutional architecture of the state.

Key Research Findings

Oil wealth mismanagement also had devastating consequences to the environment and exclusion from development in oil producing regions, like Niger Delta. In the absence of reinvestment in these communities and in the wake of oil spills, land dispossession and pollution, unrest, protest and finally armed resistance movements (Vijayakumar, 2024) ensued. In addition, Nigeria's protracted reliance on crude oil exports rather than broad-based economic growth hinges on decades of bad reinvestment policies and fiscal mismanagement (Burns & Owen, 2023). Through failure to allocate oil revenues for industrialisation and other non-oil sectors, the country became extremely susceptible to external shocks and global oil prices (Prada Segura, 2022).

Conceptual and Theoretical Implications of Findings

This validates Rentier State Theory, in that rent is relied upon in Nigeria through oil rents.

i. That laid the way for weakened institutional accountability, taking away the connection between state revenues and productive taxation.

ii. Engaged in encouraging elite-driven corruption that constrained economic diversification.

iii. It also created economic instability due to government spending, which, instead of being on an appropriate plan, moved with oil prices.

Comparison with Previous Studies

This research differs from past studies that have tended to address recent governance questions.

i. It traces the long-term consequences of Nigeria's early policy failures (1958-1992) and exposes how this mismanagement of oil has been practiced from its formative years.

ii. It connects Nigeria's experience in international oil economies in contrast with one of Norway's sovereign wealth funds and Indonesia's decentralization model.

iii. It brings to light the marginalization of the Niger Delta and historical evidence on how the government neglect led to resource-based conflicts.

Conclusion

The failures of Nigeria's oil governance from 1958 to 1992 contributed to economic, institutional and social volatility and instability which themselves stand as pillars of the country's present developmental challenges. The results of this study demonstrate that poor fiscal policies, corruption, and crude export dependency caused long-term structural inefficiencies in governance and economic planning.

Summary of Key Findings

i. Reckless spending, patronage politics, and corruption, rather than productive investments, resulted from the 1970s oil boom rather than the economic growth (Stephens, 2023).

ii. Nigeria's economy was exposed as fragile in the aftermath of the 1980s oil price crash, which culminated in crippling debt, austerity, and anger in the society (Gudo, 2024).

iii. These oil-producing communities were left to the destruction of their environment and economic neglect, which contributed to militancy and unrest.

iv. Weak institutions and resource policy unreliability prevented Nigeria's resources from being properly governed, prolonging oil rent dependence.

Implications for Policy and Development

In order to break free from resource dependency and economic instability, Nigeria must:

i. Formulate a sovereign wealth fund to insulate oil revenues from political misapplication as in Norway and Saudi Arabia.

ii. To counter the corruption and rent-seeking behaviour related to oil revenue management, strengthen the transparency mechanisms in the management of oil revenues.

iii. If you choose to take that step, break the oil revenue allocation down to decentralization, these oil-producing regions will now get what should be equitable reinvestment to prevent further unrest.

iv. Attain a diversified economy that weans our country off crude oil dependence through investment in manufacturing, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Recommendations

Structural reforms, transparent governance, and strategic economic diversification will address Nigeria's long history of oil mismanagement (1958-1992). In this section, the policy measures, practical interventions, and future research priorities associated with sustainable oil resource management are outlined.

Policy Recommendations

i. Form a Sovereign Wealth Fund to smooth out oil revenues and prevent spending on frivolities by the government.

ii. Publish all oil contracts, revenues and expenditures (Takekoshi, 2022).

iii. Increase anti-corruption laws to end patronage networks and opaque oil deals.

iv. States can also adopt decentralization policies such that direct investment benefits are directed to oil-producing regions (Pron, 2023).

Practical Strategies for Sustainable Oil Management

i. Prasetio, & Kumalasari. (2021) suggest the implementation of local content policies so that indigenous participation in the oil industry increases.

ii. It will be to invest in infrastructure, education, and vocational training in

order to reduce dependency on oil and diversify the economy.

iii. Cut income inequality by introducing direct cash transfers from oil revenues to citizens (Majeed, 2025).

iv. Enforcing strong environmental regulations that make oil firms responsible for spills and pollution.

Future Research Directions

i. Comparative analysis of Nigeria's oil policies against successful models in Norway, Canada, and Indonesia.

ii. Decentralizing revenue from oil to impact regional development and peace conflicts.

iii. An empirical study of the anti-corruption reform and effectiveness on the Nigerian oil sector.

iv. In a quest to find alternative energy investments to create post-oil economic resilience.

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AN EVALUATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE UNDER A DEMOCRATIC SETTING: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS (1999-2015)

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ABSTRACT
The article examines the socio-economic development of Kwara State from 1999 to 2015. The aim of the study focuses on administrative problems and prospects after the transition to civilian government. This political achievement paved the way for the people to hold their leaders accountable in the state. Kwara State, a federation unit in Nigeria benefits from the Federation Account for socio-economic development. The objective of this study is to evaluate the policy framework that drives the socio-economic development. In view of this stance, the executive governor is the head of civil service administration in the state. Therefore, the successive governors, starting from Governor Muhammad Lawal late (1999-2003), Governor Bukola Saraki (2003-2011) and Governor Abdulfatai Ahmed 2011-2015 respectively are instrumental in policy-making. However, their campaign promises are embedded in the individual manifesto with intention of actualising the expectations of the people. The individual governor derived its socio-economic policy from the Scheme of Kwara State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (KWASEEDS). It is reported from the data collected from the interview scheduled that, there has been socio-economic development in Kwara State, rather it has not commensurate with the expectations of the people within the focus periods. The research method adopted in the study is quantitative and qualitative approach. The implication is that the campaign promises had not reflected on the expectations of the people in Kwara State due to unethical electoral process in the state.

Introduction

Socio-economic development enmeshes governmental plans towards a community development on the interest of the people in Kwara State. This also informs the economic livelihood of the people which the government designs to achieve in a democratic system. This is because economic expectation of the citizens provides a basis of performance after the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1999. However, many scholars have explained economic reform, leadership performance with reference to constraints and successes of the Western, Asia and Latin America economic development. The influence of economic factors on the third wave of democratisation in Asia and African countries recognises the performance of the democratic government. In Huntington's argument, the oil hikes in some countries remains the major constraints with other economic downturns which frustrate the authoritarian regimes to change to democratic government in the third wave from 1974 and aftermath (Huntington, 1991).

Therefore, the fluctuation of oil price in the Nigerian economy was a major challenge in economic sector between 1999 and 2015. This is because the country runs her socio-political and economic mainly on oil as the mono-product. At the tune of the 21st Century, the oil price dropped at the international market. This immediately affects democratic government in Nigeria with a process of manipulation of oil prices (hike) for the sustainability of democratisation process. The focus on the governmental policy is consistent in the country after re-democratisation of the Fourth Republic as the oil price is skyrocketed because successive governments increased the oil price from twenty naira to uncertainty price after the initiation of democracy. Although, President Goodluck Jonathan increased the oil price to ninety-seven naira in 2012 from sixty-five naira after the death of President Umar Yar'Adua in 2009, his regime was down in political legitimacy in 2015 and this forced the price of oil to eighty-seven naira on the basis of his re-election (Usman and Ibrahim, 2012). Against this backdrop, the expectation of the Nigerian people remains the socio-economic development which could reflect reasonable on oil price in the country. Therefore, oil plays a significant role in democratisation process in Nigeria since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The resumption of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 was not a surprise to Nigerians. The oil price was hiked to one hundred and forty-five naira per litres. Comparatively, the magnitude in the oil price after the initiation of democracy in 1999 was skyrocketing as compare to the military regime of the past which maintained stable price in the country. Before the transition to democracy in 1999, the price of oil under General Abacha/General Abdusalam's regime was twenty naira in 1998.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have been conducted on democratic performance, socio-economic development, and campaign promise in Nigeria (Bratton, 2013; Ibeagere and Omoera, 2010; Momoh, 2006; Basiru, 2013; and Ogundiya, 2009). This study focuses on sub-state (provincial/regional) contexts and more specifically on Kwara State, a federation unit in Nigeria. Therefore, this study is necessary as it explore the character of leadership performance and campaign promises in the case study. This study also attempts to examine the fundamental challenges to the successful governments regarding campaign promises by political elites, leadership performance, and the deepening of democracy in Kwara State. By and large, it determines the impact of political class in the leadership selection among the contending political parties and how it inform the voting behaviour of the electorates in the state after the return to democracy. This not only defines the political situation, but the socio-economic interest is the major catalyst which justifies the campaign promises of each political party. It comes informed of community development so any political party that fulfils its promises within four years is likely to enjoy legitimacy (re-election) because of reasonable performance. This makes the competition and participation high in a situation where the electoral system is followed properly. Justification of this character in Kwara State relies on the antecedent democratic character which worked against the principles of democratisation and democratic consolidation.

Conceptual Framework

Socio-economic development serves as precondition for the deepening of democracy as well as assessing leadership performance of a

democratic government. However, we can ask a question about the impacts of campaign promises and leadership performance. Therefore, the quality of a good government is clearly answerable to needs and demands of the actual people. The concept of socio-economic development responds to integration of social interest of the political groups for maximum improvement on living condition of the people for standard (Chojnicki, 2010). I present in this study the system which informs socio-economic development as alternative power mentioned earlier in this section that citizens are the determinant that can change the system when government in power loses legitimacy another government is established by election with reference to leadership performance on economy.

The failure of socio-economic growth in most developing countries of Africa over some years, is basically on the poor performance of democratic government. Therefore, stating various challenges, such as unemployment, hunger, poverty, insecurity, disease, illiteracy, insecurity, wars and crimes. These challenges could be eradicated by new thinking and re-direction of development from economic growth which focused on the citizen's welfare. The urgent solutions to the socio-economic challenges lies on government proactive effort in setting economic policy that would re-direct economic development through the establishment of basic physical infrastructures that would enhance industrialisation with regard to economic growth and economic development (Ewetan, 2014).

In this sense, insufficient infrastructure in developing countries constitute socio-economic disadvantage. Such that hydroelectric infrastructures, such as power, water, and sufficient roads respectively are the strong indicators of development. This requires policy arrangement of a country to improvement public infrastructure so as to maintain economic livelihood of the people (Erdal, 2012). Thus, one of the significances of leadership performance in a democratic government is adequate supply of electricity for the people so as to improve socio-economic advantages in the state.

Research Methodology

The research methodology in this section emphasises on procedural steps on how to make inquiry into campaign promises, leadership performance and the deepening of democracy in Nigeria, study of Kwara State 1999-2015. This process explains the content of research questions and how it justifies the research objectives. The author looks into the importance of research methodology throughout this article. The research captures the underpinnings of qualitative and quantitative methods which are discussed in context of ontological and epistemology.

Theoretical Framework

What is leadership which forms issues in democratic performance? Leadership means influence which is a fact that everybody knows. Sometime is not about why but how do leader influence the followers to the vision of an institution. One of this explains leadership quality, such as integrity that is ability to do what is right, empowerment of followers, faith in followers, understanding of followers, emotionally intelligent, exemplary to followers and communication skill. However, political leadership in a democratic government embraces and seeking for consent rather than imposing coercive power on people. This translates to involvement of the people on policy formulation and implementation which relates to working of democracy. Not only this, it facilitates cordial relationship between the electorates and the government in power to move the country to the next level in development (Teles, 2012). Leadership performance offers a broad definition in the foreign policy as it informs the character of political actors over certain issues which affect national interest of the country. This worthy quality explains the action of diplomatic president in the international politics. It is worth to mention again that performance of political leaders in their domestic governments improve on prospects in global politics. For example, President Bush of the United State fighting against terrorism after September 11, 2001 and French President Francois Holland deployed troops to Syria after the use of chemical weapon in 2013. This reflected performance and presentation of public actors under democratic governments (Lahel, 2011).

Strategies Of Socio-Economic Development in Kwara State

The concept of re-democratisation implies that a democratic government is restored after the end of an authoritarian regime at a period of time. This solemnly embraces the electoral matters which connect the electorate and political elite in engendering a political synergy. Therefore, Nigeria realised democratic government in 1999 as founding elections were conducted in the process of setting the political ball rolling. This development reflects political structures that facilitate socio-economic development in the environment of Kwara State.

Evidently, the elected government that replaced the military regime in Kwara State in 1999 continues with the economic policy of the military. This challenge faced the new democracy after the end of the military rule in Nigeria. This trend was slow to improve on the needs and aspiration of the citizens. However, some cardinal areas which touched the livelihood of the people are: education, health, gender, housing, environment, food and security, etc. These socio-political developments were apparently implemented through rolling terms of the first democratic governance. Thus, the subsequent regimes responded to economic development in the state which obviously replaced the past economic policy by innovative programmes. These initiatives gave a direct sense in building mechanism through public policy.

The process of democratisation process accounts for the presence of economic and political mechanism. These segments find practice at aftermath of the first regime of the state. The management of Kwara State reflects slow socio-economic performance of Executive Governor Muhammed Lawal and this practice thrilled the success of Bukola Saraki in 2003 election as well as his re-election of 2007 to complete the second term in 2011.

The inclusion of socio-economic development in this case study recognises the idea that political structure should be able to tap its natural resources to cater for the needs and social lives of the generality of the people. This is simply a reference to manner of production of goods and services. In another vein, socio-economic development manifests itself in diverse ways: health and well-being of all citizens, good reward labour for improvement in the standard of living from the context of social infrastructures are examples in this case (Terhenman and Tyoyila 2012). The articulation of these social capitals translates into the current programmes of Kwara State by ensuring strong commitment for proper implementation and accountability in utilisation of the state resources through viable public policy which could achieve immediate goals in the polity.

Kwara State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy 2004-2011

Kwara State under the leadership of Executive Governor Abubakar Bukola Saraki, who emerged as the winner in 2003 gubernatorial elections intentionally, waved the obsolete economic programmes of his predecessor, Governor Muhammad Lawal of 1999. The economic rationale of the State Executive (then) was State Economic Empowerment and Strategy which existed between 2004 and 2011 respectively. The socio-economic activities of Kwara State are mainly government driven in supporting viable sectors to achieve its state goals in the area of welfare and social well-being of the people. However, the government demystifies its domestic actions by identifying problems of the past political regimes in ensuring means of resolving it for improvement of the deficit economic factors of the state. In processing this agenda, KWASEEDS was introduced as economic management of the state.

KWASEEDS simply means the commitment of the state government to empower the people as well as enable them take advantage of the current and future opportunities. It therefore seeks to improve human development, promote the private sector, improve governance, address environmental degradation, agenda imbalance and HIV/AIDS problem in the state. Subsequently, in its campaign for this indispensable transformation, the standard of education in Kwara State was relatively low. The KWASEEDS seeks to enhance access to quality education for all school-age children in the state by ensuring that all uplifted to make schools more efficient and learner-friendly. Furthermore, the state health system and facilities have deteriorated over the past decades. The KWASEEDS programme ensures more improvement in the preventive and eradication of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and waterborne diseases (Kwara State Planning Commission 2004).

In another dimension, the governmental policy in the state seeks to control environmental challenges, ranging from soil erosion, flooding and creeping desertification. KWASEEDS is to reduce environmental externalities from economic and social activities in the state to a bare minimum by adopting environmental mitigation that will bring on board both the private and the public sectors and ensuring compliance with the state environmental laws. In this connection, women constitute a higher number of people living below the poverty line in the state. Therefore, KWASEEDS will create space for women to opportunities and resources designed to enhance their welfare and well-being by articulating on gender parity. In this light, poverty is pervasive in the state. But the pervasiveness varies along geographical zones, rural and urban centre, age groups and gender (Kwara State Planning Commission, 2004).

The operation of private sector investment in the state is very minimal. KWASEEDS drives to create enabling environment for large scale business which accommodates private investors. The significance of this economic campaign often relates with the improvement of lives of the people in the aspect of employment. Not only this, the enterprises will also check poverty as well as the government takes viable responsibility in this modern way of sustaining the economic growth and development. Moreover, the growing of private sector in the state will also accommodate social responsibility as task of helping the state in rendering charitable service to the people, depending on the type of the business which emphasises on the private service. Furthermore, involving private sectors in Kwara State internally and externally promotes employment opportunities as well as increase the financial base of the state. The menace of unemployment during the military era manifested the democratic regime of 1999. This bane reflects the policy of the government for growing private sectors in accordance with the interest of the people (State Planning Commission, 2004).

Reforming relates with institutional approach within the ambit of the state. The primary intention of the elected governor (Bukola Saraki) is to tap the human resources for vertical and horizontal development. Human resources in the state is necessary for socio-economic and political development. The resumption of the executive governor in 2003 recognises the institutional challenge that regressed developmental projects. KWASEEDS is established in order to bridge the gaps between the past administration and the present elected government then. Against this backdrop, involving the people of Kwara State especially people that understand the challenges facing the state after the end of the military is important (State Planning Commission, 2004). The effort of every successful government in Kwara State is to improve upon the governance through the institutional framework. Therefore, reforming government and its institutions through the human capacity is germane to democratic development. Thus, different ministries are involved with leadership exercise and state commissioners are appointed to manage the affair of the ministries.

Medium Term Sector Strategy Plan 2011-2015

The importance of election in the state allows different set of democratic governments to implement reform which attain to the demands of the people. It also promotes working and the deepening of democracy in transformation agenda of each successful government. In this sense, what is transformation agenda? The transformation agenda was a blueprint of the President Goodluck Jonathan's economy plan in the course of change from the old socio-economic reforms to the new plan that will oversee and incorporate certain industrial sectors for economic growth and development in the country. Thus, the agenda focuses on these economically sectors vis-avis education, health, energy and power, transportation, agriculture, aviation and security (Bello-Imam, 2013).

These segments agenda are pursued to control the economic conditions of the country so that it will guarantee and create large opportunities for Nigerian. In this sense, Kwara state maintains these economic drives as justified by the creation of Medium-Term Sector Strategy Plan (MTSSP 2011-2015) by the Executive Governor Abdulfatai Ahmed. This economic management was entitled "Kwara: Consolidating developing and delivering". This economic profile will largely foster the socio-economic development of the state. In this template, government activities are aptly explained below:

Agriculture and Agro-Processing

This sector has contributed to the economic growth of the state in diverse settings. Apparently, the establishment of Shonga project has remained a reliable source in the area of income generation. Moreover, agriculture in the state largely remains subsistent and labour intensive. Agro-processing remains a significant source of revenue to the state, due to the significant revenue gains from the value adding processing of basic agriculture raw materials and produce. In 2010, some initiatives commenced in this regard including cashew nut processing and more recently plans for cassava processing into ethanol and so on. The production of other farming in the areas of fishing, cassava, sugar cane fruit juice, rice and soya beans are relevant in the production. The premise of agriculture and agro-processing is a constructive idea of the government for food security in the state. Discovery of the natural endowment in the state requires government to initiate policy that could promote utilisation of resources at local levels.

It needs to be said that the available natural resources could sustain agro-processing on foods which have direct impact on the livelihood of the people. Apart from this initiative, the agro-processing food is very easy to establish as it requires small capital. Finally, this government is committed to giving subsidy which comes in form of money or farm inputs, such as technology, giving fertiliser, and land to the farmers. Nigeria is growing fast in agriculture with 60 per cent population self-employed including women and young children and it contributes 35 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Nwuncli, 2010). This opportunity should remain in the profile of Kwara State government to assist the subsistence farmers in all areas of agriculture. Therefore, the incidence of urban drift would be checked in this framework. The significance of agro-processing industry mainly focused on the agricultural products could enhance adequate food productivity in the state. Exploitation of the natural resource in both human and natural endowments are involved as agricultural inputs. The existence of agro-processing industries depends on the policy of the government to support the scheme with capital intensive and training which ensures socio-economic development in Nigeria (Kareem *et al*., 2009). In view of this new economic development in the state, the policy framework of the government after the initiation of democracy in 1999 is to cut the unemployment rate down through a range of agro-processing industries and this would extend to the rural areas of Kwara State.

Minerals

Kwara State has mineral resources which are abundant in commercial entity. But the basic challenge involves the illegal miners in various tasks tapping it for private enterprise. This action reflects that the state does not gain any economic profit from mineral resources. It is thus right to say that the mineral is undeveloped because it has not passed through the process of tapping for general interest and for mass employment in the state. The state has proven significant reserves of limestone, marble, feldspar, gypsum, kaolin, columbine/tantalite, gold, quarts, mica, and granite, all of which could be exploited to form the base for industrial development in the state. Thus, the government has taken legal action to stop illegal exploitation of the mineral by liaising with the Federal Ministry, Mines and Solid Minerals to ensure proper regulatory framework in Kwara state.

One of the economic functions of every successive government in Kwara State is to have a policy in economic management of the state. This could be achieved through adequate exploitation of the mineral resources. The challenge of illegal mining in the state started from the military era and was inherited by democratic government. Therefore, the mineral resources of the state are protected by the constitution of the country. Rocks are important mineral resources in the world and sedimentary rocks are good for community development. Most of the developed countries in the world today tapped the mineral resources for their socio-economic development. Against this backdrop, developing countries should have the similar idea in exploiting the natural resources in their territory (Chicaco et al 2016). In the light of the abundant resources deposited in the territory of Nigeria, (Bamalli *et al.,* 2011) aptly discusses:

> *It has been proven that Nigeria is endowed with a lot of mineral resources. The range of mineral raw materials and their reserves are so wide that it should not have been necessary to import industrial mineral raw materials. Though, the primary mineral can be exploited for Industrial processing, many industries*

import their mineral raw materials requirements due mainly to inadequate technology for transforming raw materials into variety of products needed by local industries.

This argument provides as well as highlights the major challenge Kwara State is facing after the transition to democratic rule in 1999. Basically, every successful government tries to embark on a project which could harness the resources of the state but persists because of lack of modern technology that could help in this operation. Government of Kwara State could give it a sort by inviting various local technologists to embark on an alternative technology which could benefit the people at low prices.

Manufacturing and Industry

Kwara state had evolved manufacturing enterprises which practically operates at different capacities. These operations have significantly contributed to high level of production in the state. Some of the leading companies are: Dangote flour mills, detergent and pharmaceuticals and there is functioning factory that has been restored which is regarded as one of Nigeria's top companies. Other industrial areas in the state include: United Foam Products, Global Soap & Detergents Industry, Tuyil Pharmaceutical Industries which manufactures a range of pharmaceuticals and the popular Visleri Table water brand, and the Chellarams motorcycle assembly plant, to name a few. In this construction, the private industries have contributed to large socio-economic growth in the state. The government has taken a decisive policy in accommodation of more industries in the state. The step taken by the government is to consolidate the local industries with the foreign industries. Accommodation of the foreign industries expands employment opportunities to the job seekers. This expansion in manufacturing industries often adds to the economic structure of the state (Ojo and Ololade, 2014). The economic structure as a complex organisational framework, interlace network, configuration or outline of logical connectives through which activities of economy are coordinated or aligned in the state.

In Nigeria, particularly after the political independence manufacturing industries contributed significantly 10 per cent to the country's economic output. Discovery of oil boom in 1970s largely affected the operation of the manufacturing industries. The oil price also changed in the international market for the fact that the manufacturing industries regain its operation in 1980 adding more to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). In view of this economic advantage, private manufacturing industries were in existence for the production of food, beverage, beer, textile, cement and tobacco. Kwara State government is not left out in this manufacturing industry. In addition, the manufacturing industry assists in driving the economy from local to modern. This can be achieved through the economic policy of the government which could throw more advantages to the private enterprises in the country (Oburota and Okoi, 2017). Kwara State government should also maintain this idea in the light of transforming the state in the area of the manufacturing industry.

Education

Kwara State government immensely improved the level of human capacity development by establishing viable institutions which will contribute to training of the people's such educational institutions are: Kwara State University Malete and School of Aviation for the training of competent pilots and increasing the level of human capacity in the federation of Nigeria. The two institutions have foreign facilities which make it more attractive to the foreigners particularly neighboring countries. Other formal educational institutions include: College of Education, Ilorin, Lafiagi and Oro, School of Nursing Ilorin, School of Mid-wifery, and College of Health Technology Offa respectively.

The priority for education in Nigeria became the mission of every successful government after the initiation of democratic system in 1999. Qualitative education that could compete in the global system is recognised in Nigeria. In view of progress in the educational institutions, there is hope for the deepening of democracy in the state. The democratic system is prepared to revitalise education in order to meet the international benchmark as well as to target economy of the country. Therefore, training the generations start from the elementary education

to the higher education vis-à-vis University, Polytechnic, School of Nursing, College of Education and Aviation School. Indeed, Universal Basic Education Scheme was re-launched in 1999 for the purpose of meeting the MDG (Mojo, 2000). This is achieved in Kwara State within the three elected executive governors. For one and a half decade, the major challenge in the UBE is the corrupt of official in the organisation was unleashed.

Infrastructure

In recent years, Kwara State infrastructure has seen massive transformation. Roads have been built and upgraded, the power situation has greatly improved and new facilities such as Ilorin International Airport had been constructed. To complement these improvements as well as provide a more conducive environment to users, the state in the last few years has embarked on significant cleaning and greening projects. One of the significant achievements was the provision of transformer in various parts of the state – most significantly within the Ilorin metropolis.

The perennial development in infrastructure is realised but the performance fluctuates in the three democratic governments which were established between 1999 and 2015. Flowing of adequate infrastructures in the Fourth Republic by the regime in power often receives legitimacy from the people that give power periodically. Therefore, a responsible government creates policy in the manifesto in order to realise the dream of the entire populace. The key expectation of the humanity lies on the basic infrastructures which enhance other factor of production and consumption. The establishment of Kwara Infrastructure Investment and Finance Strategy by Governor Abdulfatai Ahmed in 2014 for curtailing of deficit infrastructures across Kwara State vis-à-vis health, education and water (Kwara State Government, 2016).

At this standpoint, what is infrastructure which requires human expectation? This can be distinguished between economic and social infrastructure (Kasper, 2015):

> *Economic infrastructure as a physical network with properties of natural monopoly includes the sectors energy, including electricity, oil and gas; telecommunication, transport, water, and wastewater. Social infrastructure follows the idea of covering a specific area. This could be backed by Hoteling's spatial competition model for supermarkets in industrial*

The major stakeholder in the provision of the two infrastructures involves the state and the private enterprises. The former is important in the function of physical structure particularly dealing with the people, while the latter is more vibrant in the management of the economic structure. Thus, the economic structure under the control of federal and state in Nigeria lacks adequate and proper management because it is replete with corruption and mismanagement which resulted in the privatisation of some sectors in the country, such as Telecommunication and Refinery. The major challenge which seriously accounted for low production is skewed to electricity in Nigeria.

Schemes and Plans on Socio-Economic Performance

In the foregoing discussion of socio-economic development, the Kwara State as the focus in the federation of Nigeria has twenty statutory Ministries. Of these, this study selected three Ministries as the main focus for its societal functions as well services to the people: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Water Resources, and Ministry of Health. The major argument centres upon the socio-economic relations. In this point of view, does the stance commensurate with the governmental policy and the goals of achieving of social well-being of the citizens with reference to process of economic reforms in the state? Therefore, this study observes the four political regimes from socio-economic background with a view to explaining the interactions between the three governors elected and the people in Kwara State. The justification of socio-economic development in the State political environment often depends on the objectives of the blueprint. In a nutshell, bureaucratic structure of the state Ministries will be considered in the interpretation of efficiency and leadership performance in the administration. In view of this training, government's policy thrust for the Ministry of Education revolves around the following:

1. To ensure that Kwara becomes a model for the administration of public education, in terms of the quality of training as well as relevant infrastructure, nation-wide.

2. To contribute to the state's policy with regard to industry by promoting entrepreneurship, sports, civic studies, and ICT skills at a very early age within the Kwara school curriculum.

3. To expand the state's involvement in education beyond primary, secondary and tertiary.

4. Centres for vocational skills for adults and semi-adults (Kwara State Government, 2011).

Kwara State Government focuses on the broad objective of the government of Kwara State is to make the Ministry of Water Resources a national benchmark in sustainable and optimum public service delivery in water resources management. The Ministry intends to drive its vision by ensuring continuous identification and resolution of water and sanitation needs of Kwarans over the next 5 years and beyond. Government's four years objectives are:

- Extend water pipe networks to new layouts and other areas yet to be served as well as the provision of boreholes where it is most appropriate towards ensuring that no Kwaran treks beyond 500m to access potable water.

- Ensure that water is sufficiently available in Kwara State both rural and urban areas.

- Promote public and private sector participation in water resources management, development, supply and conservation (Kwara State Government, 2011).

Figure 1: Does the leadership performance reflect on the economic expectations of the people?

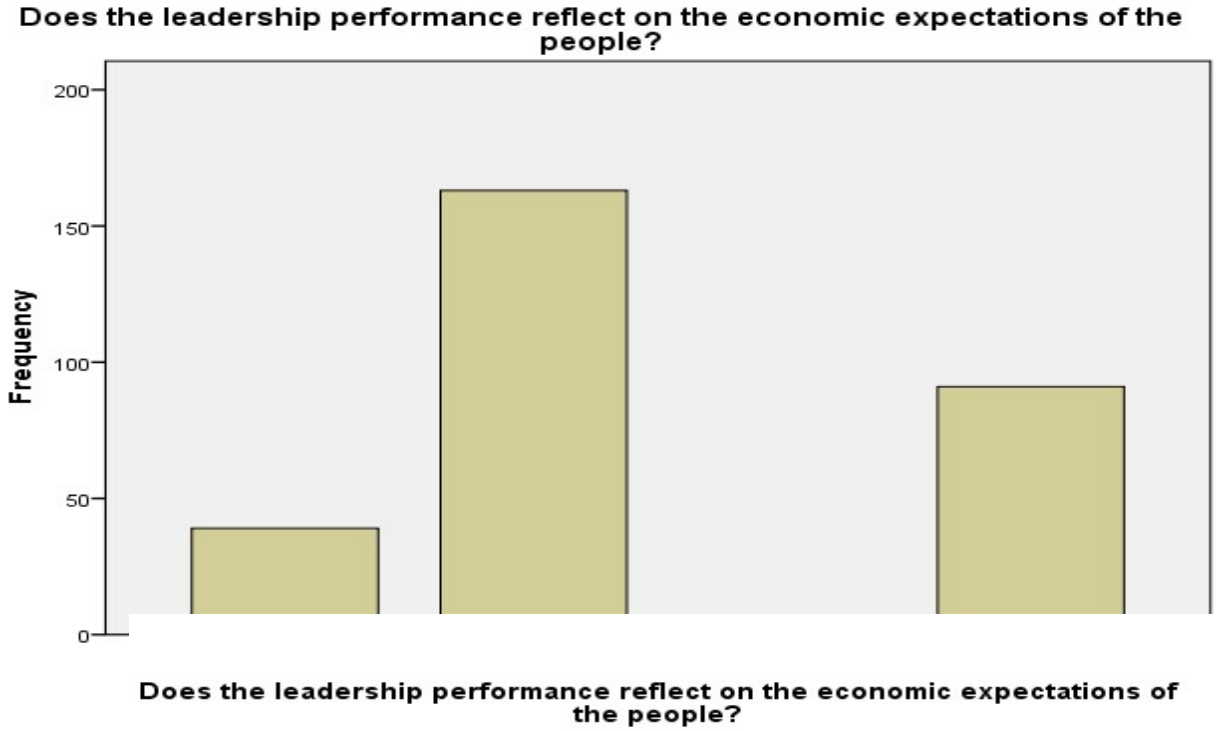


Figure 1 shows whether the leadership performance fulfills the economic expectations of the people. Therefore, the data collected from the respondents indicated that leadership performance has not fulfilled the economic expectations of the people. In the case of Kwara State, the people participated in representative democracy basically on infrastructures that could improve on the humanity in the state. The bar graph indicated 'No' as the highest frequency

of 163 with 55.4 per cent. This means that every government has highly disappointed the electorates by not providing basic needs of the people. In this stance, leadership performance has not defined the economic expectations of the people. This outcome was correspondingly linked to the interview schedule of respondents, it was observed that the number of respondents that said leadership performance has reflected socio-economic development was lesser than the respondents that raised opinion against the performance of the government on socio-economic development in the state. Therefore, the researcher observed from the findings that leadership performance does not reflect the socio-economic expectations of the people due to poor performance of the successive governments in the state.

Conclusion

Kwara State is bedeviled by myriads of problems which, despite its revenue allocation from the Federation Account, inhibit its socio-economic development as well as threaten its current democratic structure. Every successful government of Kwara State has mission and vision for the total welfare of the people based on socio-economic mechanism for the improvement of lives. However, the socio-economic policies of Kwara State had not been in tune with needs of the people. On this note, the transformation agendas of Kwara State through economic policy have little impact on the lives of the people. For example, the overhead bridge, shonga farm, and Aviation School respectively are meaningless since the beginning of the Fourth Republic as the people live in abject poverty in Nigeria and Kwara was in part. The government of Kwara State deliberately focused on the water sector as confirmed by many respondents, but the services are to poor or it has not met the international benchmark. Many respondents also complained of the personnel, medicine and services render are not improving.

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WOMEN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN NIGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE NIGERIAN WOMEN TRUST FUND (NWTF): FOURTH REPUBLIC IN FOCUS

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KEYWORDS
Fourth Republic; National Assembly; Nigerian Women Trust Fund; Political Representation; Women

ABSTRACT
Despite having the most registered voters in the country, the low level of women's political representation in the National Assembly has become concerning. The Nigerian women's political representation currently lags behind the national gender policy standard of at least 35% women representation and other regional and international standards. The study focuses on the role of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) whose goal was to rally support for women and demand the 30% quota granted by the affirmative action policy, particularly in the national assembly as they stood apart from other non-governmental groups. This study investigates the strategies used by the NWTF to enhance women's political representation in the National Assembly. This study used a qualitative case study approach because it captures the key elements of a problem from the viewpoint of the study's primary informants and aids in understanding a complicated social phenomenon, while thematic analysis was used. The finding of this study shows that the National Women Trust Fund employs several strategies, such as guaranteeing quota representation of women in the state house assembly, mobilizing support, providing financial assistance, and raising awareness. The study also discovered that the National Women Trust Fund has improved women's lives by providing financial assistance, capacity-building programs, political mentoring, and raising awareness of women's rights. Thus, it concludes that the Women Trust Fund of Nigeria has impacted significantly the lives of women in Nigeria over the decades.

Introduction

A significant global problem has been the underrepresentation of women in politics and governance. In a democratic society, equal access to political representation for both sexes is regarded as crucial. This is because it promotes political growth and equity (Abubakar, 2015). One of the characteristics that sets democracy apart from other forms of governance is political representation. Anywhere in the world, the foundation of democracy is political representation. Voting is only one aspect of women's political representation in the electoral process; other factors include the freedom to express oneself, assemble and associate,

participate in the management of public affairs, register as a candidate, run for office, be elected, and to occupy political office at all levels of government (Abubakar, 2015). A democratic administration is sure to be more legitimate the more people are represented (Agbude, 2011). Scholars and policymakers have backed democracy as the best form of government in the modern world and as a tool for bringing about change (Abubakar, 2015; Agbude, 2011).

It is alarming how few women are politically represented in the Nigeria National Assembly. Women's political presence in the Nigeria National Assembly is below the UN's recommended minimum gender quota of 35% (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010). According to the available data, the Nigeria Assembly has the lowest level of women's political representation in Nigeria. The Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF), which was founded in 2011 to support greater women's political representation, was motivated by the startlingly low level of women's political representation to guarantee a more significant and constructive development in the Nigeria National Assembly. Enhancing and advancing political representation in the nation, and Nigeria specifically, was the goal of the Act creating the Nigerian Women Trust Fund. To address the issue of low representation of women in Nigerian politics, the NWTF came up to promote increased women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly. Because the NGO programs have failed to establish a clear goal of increasing women's political representation, particularly in the state of house assembly, they have been characterized as tokenism.

Other non-governmental organizations in Nigeria, like the National Council of Women Society (NCWS) and the Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN), have previously focused a lot of effort on women's political and economic empowerment (Arum & Alaba, 2017). Nelson (2012) was concerned about the number of women running for elective positions in the state National Assembly. However, this article is quite different from the rest because its goal was to review the strategic contribution of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund towards increasing women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly. Thus, the current study attempts to investigate the contributions of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund which primarily tries to expand women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly.

Conceptual Clarification / Literature Review

Political Representation: Pitkin (1967) defined political representation as the process of giving all of the nation's citizens a voice, viewpoints, and ideas on the country's public policy process, from defining the agenda to implementing it and providing feedback. Political representation, according to Dovi (2018), occurs when political actors or participants speak out, advocate, participate in the political sphere, and symbolize. Political representation in the context of the current study refers to increased representation, particularly for women, using the United Nations' minimum 35 percent threshold. Philip Pettit says that the concept of representation can be separated into two opposed categories: indicative and responsive (Shapiro, 2010). When the representer "stands for" the representee by perfectly exemplifying or typifying the representee, this is known as indicative representation. The person being represented by another person is known as the representee (Nathan, 2017). Just as the representee would act, so would the representer. This is comparable to Pitkin's "standing for" representation; however, Pitkin distinguishes between two types of representation in this context: descriptive and symbolic (Pitkin, 1967). In contrast, Petit and Pitkin describe responsive representation as "acting for" or "speaking for." Petit compares this to a principle-agent relationship in which the representative is the agent and acts under the wishes of the constituent (the principal) (Shapiro, et. al., 2010). Petit distinguishes between approved responsive representatives, known as deputies, and authorized indicative representatives, which he refers to as proxies (Nathan, 2017). Then, those can be separated into trustees and delegates. While trustees have greater latitude in interpreting the representees' wishes, delegates are more overtly guided by them (Shapiro, et. al., 2010).

The **Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF)**: Opara (2015) states that the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund is a non-governmental organization that was established in 2011 to guarantee that there are more women in Nigerian politics. Like other civil society organizations, the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund was founded in response to the decrease in the number of women in high-ranking political and social positions in Nigeria. Its goal is to address gender equality by "increasing representation of women in Nigerian

governance at all levels." Furthermore, according to the current study, the Nigerian Women Trust Fund is a civil society group dedicated to using its laydown tactics to increase the political representation of women in the Assembly.

Theoretical Underpin

Pitkin was the one who initially proposed the theory of political representation in her book The Concept of Representation, Pitkin (1967) offers a thorough example of the idea of political representation. One of the most important and frequently referenced studies in the field of political representation is Pitkin's analysis. According to the scholar, one must take into account the various ways the term is employed to comprehend the debate surrounding political representation. Every one of these variations on the term offers a unique perspective on the idea. Political theorists offer "flash-bulb photos of the system taken from diverse angles," the researcher added (Pitkin, 1967: 10). Depending on how the phrase is employed in modern politics, political representation can either broaden or unnecessarily limit our understanding of representation, which makes it ideal for the current study. Pitkin, the most prominent political representation scholar, asserts that political representation has at least four distinct aspects. These dimensions are a representation that is formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive. As the following paragraph explains, the formalistic dimension also occurs to capture the current study. Every perspective offers a unique method for analyzing representation. The researcher argues that the many dimensions are appropriately viewed as essential components of a cohesive whole, which makes it most appropriate for the current research, even though there are significant variations among the four (Kurebwa, 2015). The degree to which representatives "stand for" the represented with a focus on symbols or symbolization is known as symbolic representation, and it is one of the elements in the theory of political representation (Kurebwa, 2015).

It appears that this will inspire organizations and women from diverse backgrounds to offer unique viewpoints and ideas to discussions and decision-making around issues that impact them. These theorists frequently stress in their writings that women's interests are not just determined by material circumstances or objective circumstances (Young, 1999; Mansbridge, 1999). Political theorists contend that one of the theory of political representation's shortcomings is its propensity to ignore this conceptual unity and mistakenly regard the various aspects of representation as distinct ideas. Divergent perspectives on representation may also yield disparate criteria for evaluating representatives. The fact that people adopt an incorrect understanding of representation or misapply the norms of representation exacerbates disagreements about what representatives should be doing (Kurebwa, 2015). Most empirical work on representation disregards Pitkin's integrated conception, even though her theories are frequently and favorably quoted. Formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive representation are some of the aspects of representation that certain scholars, like Phillips (1995), usually focus on while disregarding others that are uninteresting or for which there is insufficient data. This not only adds to "a blind man's comprehension of the elephant," which is Pitkin's metaphor above, but it also falls short of offering a sufficient empirical test of the theory's integrated structure (Kurebwa, 2015).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study approach because it captures the key elements of a problem from the viewpoint of the study's primary informants and aids in understanding a complicated social phenomenon. This current paper uses this method because it allows the researcher to have first-hand information from the concerned stakeholders. The current study's inclusion criteria were based on the informants' experience with the National Women Trust Fund's operations as well as their capacity for quick thought and thorough, timely expression. Academics with expertise in the field, women at the grassroots level, and current and former Assembly members are additional admission criteria used in the selection of 15 informants. Thematic analysis was used to follow up on this through transcription, creation of themes, and subsequent analysis.

Women Political Representation in Nigerian in National Assembly: In Brief

In comparison to men, women's representation in the Nigerian National Assembly and their participation in legislative activities are incredibly low and unattractive. Compared to the global average of 22.5 percent, the African regional average of 23.4 percent, and the West African sub-regional average of 15 percent, Nigeria's national average for women's political participation in elective and appointive roles has stayed at 6.7 percent (Eke, 2022). Results also indicate that there are fewer women lawmakers in the National Assembly. In the 9th Assembly, 29 women make up roughly 6% of the total number of members, including the Senate and the House of Representatives, compared to 440 male legislators (Eke, 2022). In the 8th House, there were 438 male legislators compared to just 31 women legislators. One of the most powerful and significant branches of the contemporary government is the Nigerian National Assembly. While some nations have unicameral legislatures, others have bicameral legislatures. Nigeria has two Houses in its National Assembly, which is part of a country with a bicameral legislature. The Senate is the name of the National Assembly's upper house, and the House of Representatives is the name of its lower house. While the House of Representatives now has 360 elected members, the Senate is made up of 109 elected senators, with the president serving as the head of state. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution, members of the House of Representatives and the Senate are chosen for four-year terms. However, there is a significant problem with the gender gap in the nation's parliamentary representation, which is brought on by several circumstances (Eke, 2022). Just sixteen (16) women were elected to the National Assembly in 1999, with three (3) serving in the Senate and thirteen (13) in the House of Representatives. In 2003, there were twenty-one (21) members of the House and four (4) members of the Senate, bringing the total to 25. In 2007, thirty-six (36) women were elected to the National Assembly, with twenty-seven (27) in the House and nine (9) in the Senate, setting a record. There has been a consistent decrease since then, reaching thirty-two (32) in 2011, twenty-two (22) in 2015, and eleven in 2019 (Eke, 2022).

Nigerian National Assembly and the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF): Fourth Republic in Focus

This subsection focuses on the strategic role and the impact of Nigerian Women Trust Fund towards Women in Political Representation in the Nigerian National Assembly

Strategic role Nigerian Women Trust Fund towards Women's in Political Representation in the Nigerian National Assembly

Mobilization: According to Dahlerup and Lenita (2003) the Nordic nations offer electoral quotas, which are frequently optional, never mandated by law, and are only utilized by a small number of the country's center- and left-leaning political parties to promote women's political representation. The link between women's political representation and quota representation was also supported by Dahlerup and Lenita's (2003) study on equal political representation. The position of Dahlerup and Lenita (2003) provides or gives women the chance to be elected, something they might not have had previously. Dahlerup and Lenita (2003) went on to say that the selection process (as well as affirmative action) is the most effective way to address the underrepresentation of women in academia and can address the generally low levels of party representation. This demonstrates that using the quota system to increase the presence of women in the Nigeria National Assembly is possible. According to Okonkwo (2016) in his earlier research, "Gender and Corruption in Nigerian Politics," which contends that mobilization is a crucial tactical instrument for boosting political representation in Nigeria and beyond. The researcher especially believed that, depending on how it is applied, both mobilization and a lack of it can result in a rise or decrease in women's political representation. This indicates that NGOs frequently use mobilization to encourage women in local politics in the country and Nigeria in particular, which is consistent with Okonkwo's (2016) perspective, particularly about the need for women's political representation. This also demonstrates that increasing the state's women's fox mobilization can lead to more women being elected to the Nigeria legislature. In general Okonkwo's (2016) assertion that mobilization is a crucial strategic instrument for

increasing the presence of women in politics in the Nigeria National Assembly.

Financially Support: According to Itodo, Abdu, Dadan-Garba, Ezeayinka, and Asubiaro (2015), states that funding from non-governmental organizations that advocate for increased political representation for women plays a significant role in advancing women's representation in the nation. The NWTF has made financial contributions over the years to guarantee women's political representation in elections for the Nigeria National Assembly. According to Itodo, Abdu, Dadan-Garba, Ezeayinka, and Asubiaro (2015) found that the low political representation of women in the nation's political system was a result of the high cost of politics. The number of women in politics has not changed significantly, even though some political parties in the nation offer free forms for women to run for some of these positions, according to these scholars. The requirement for financial assistance is captured by the formalistic aspect of political representation, which promotes some kind of structure to guarantee needs are met, thus the involvement of NWTF in the request for women's political presentation. The NWTF held that establishing local positions and providing assistance would enable women to enter the political system through a legitimate and efficient process. Supporting women at the local level will help them grow their constituency while also giving them greater experience and confidence, according to a study from the Institute for Inclusive Security (2009). According to the Institute for Inclusive Security (2009), legislative arrangements can improve cross-party cooperation by enlisting women, fostering collaboration, and creating a platform for grassroots women to develop a shared agenda. In light of the above, prior research has shown that grassroots organization support can act as an enabler; as a result, NWTF has adopted the strategy of enlisting women to enhance political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly.

Affirmative Action: The NWTF just like the Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) has been leading the charge to increase women's political representation in Nigeria, the country's electoral legislation to allow affirmative action and establish a requirement for political party registration, and the findings of Orji, Orji, and Agbanyim (2018), who studied women's political representation in Nigeria, thus domestic lobbying is necessary for the country's gender mainstreaming political system and the inclusion of 35% of women in politics. This position is further supported by Manin (1997) which shows international political lobbying can ensure changes in political representation, and domestic lobbying can help achieve this. According to the most recent research, the NWTF used key stakeholders' lobbying to project a higher level of representation for women.

Awareness: According to Dim & Asomah (2015) educational levels appear to be a barrier to women's political representation. And illiteracy is one of the biggest obstacles to women's political representation, particularly in the Nigeria National Assembly. As a result, NWTF adopted a strategy that would help to improve women's political representation in the state assembly. This they demonstrate through the sincerity of the substantive political representation theory's stance in favoring a higher proportion of women in politics, particularly the part that emphasizes the institutionalization of women's representation. This is Lundgren (2005), who believed that electoral statistics in Nordic countries indicate that women are more likely to be represented in the parliament in areas where citizens from NGOs and other concerned associations are sufficiently aware of the issue, as well as in single-member districts. According to this expert, instances such as Germany and New Zealand are classic instances of the role that awareness concerns have in the political representation of women. Raising awareness can help to ensure and guarantee women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly, which is further supported by Lundgren's (2005) perspective. The results of this study are consistent with those of Dahlerup's (2005) study, "Strategies to Enhance Women's Political Representation in Different Electoral Systems," which found that the plurality-majority system used in most countries is less effective than the right awareness system, which helps to increase political representation for women and, consequently, their political profiles.

Impact of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund on women's political representation in Assembly:

According to Shames (2015), who believed that because of the leadership abilities women have developed over the years as a result of NGOs' work, gender characteristics are frequently resistant to feminist critique over time. These results are in line with Alexander's (2012) study, "Change in Women's Descriptive Representation and the Belief in Women's Ability to Govern: A Virtuous Cycle," which discovered that transformational leadership abilities have started to help women take advantage of implicit biases, an unconventional approach to boosting women's political representation, and the opportunity to become political leaders. The position of Alexander's (2012) assertion that mentorship is still the most effective means of advancing women into political office because high-ranking individuals may have an impact on both women's representation. Also, Jabre (2004) holds that NGOs can guarantee increased women's political representation through capacity-building initiatives with the help of foreign donors. The NWFT has significantly improved the lives of women by strengthening their capability, which inevitably helps to increase the number of women in politics both in the state and nationally. Also, Umutoni (2007) showed that women may succeed in unfriendly environments if they are given the necessary tools and assistance, and are supported or agreed with by the NWTF. To Dahlerup and Lenita (2005) earlier the stance backs up NGOs' financial assistance can significantly increase or improve women's political representation, in this example in the Nigeria National Assembly. The ability of women decision-makers to speak for other women is often emphasized by the notion of political representation as an issue of shared gendered identity, which can be accomplished through financial support (Kurebwa, 2015).

According to Kelly (2019) which holds that government support is necessary to ensure and guarantee women's political representation, which NWFT has been very effective in bringing the government's attention to the need to give women, particularly in Nigeria, moral and other support so they can have more representation in politics, particularly when it comes to elections for the state National Assembly. Although the Nigerian constitution (1999) guarantees equal political rights, the National Gender Policy (2006) recommended a benchmark of 35% of seats in parliament in this state National Assembly be filled by women, and Nigeria as a nation is a signatory to international agreements, Kelly (2019) found that the Nigerian government has been reluctant to support and enact relevant laws to improve women's political representation. According to NWTF's women's rights awareness initiatives have had an impact on women's political representation in Nigeria. By including women panelists, the NWTF has fulfilled its right awareness functions and given its members a platform to demonstrate how women are represented in political debates. Intentional action plans can improve women's political representation, as shown that women's political representation may rise if men and women have more political knowledge and discourse (Casserly, 2016).

This NGOs have done a good job of handling laws, regulations, and processes that encourage women's active representation in order to help women in politics. According to the most recent research, NWTF has had a significant impact through her numerous initiatives that educate women about their rights to actively reform laws. According to Shames' (2014) research, advancing women's rights through law contributes to gender equality and gives women and girls a positive message that they have a place in this nation. According to recent research, NWTF's efforts have assisted women in realizing that the state can support their right to legislation and representation in the state National Assembly. Shames (2014) adds that women's rights must be upheld, which consistently supports the results of recent studies on guaranteeing women's rights to laws and the defense of those rights.

Challenges of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund in ensuring an increase in women's political representation

Political challenges: According to Orji et al. (2018), who examined women's political representation and concluded that the godfather's actions have a significant impact on women's political representation generally. In Nigeria, patriarchal patronage networks and party structures are designed with men in mind, which promotes low representation of women and strong male dominance over politics. The

new study supports the findings of Orji et al. (2018), who demonstrated that men control the political system from the nomination stage onward, producing political godfathers who consistently work to deny women their political rights. Activities continue to provide a significant obstacle to women's political representation in the National Assembly. They support Kelly's (2019) research findings that violence during elections, including against women candidates, has an impact on women's political representation. The results of Kelly's (2019) investigation into the obstacles to women's political representation support the current research, which found that the degree of political violence in the state's electoral process is one of the factors influencing women's political representation in Nigeria, particularly about women in the National Assembly. Kelly (2019) went on to suggest that discriminatory laws in and around the state, as well as violence against women, are the main causes of the absence of meaningful representation of women in Nigeria's political system.

Political violence: Against women politicians has taken many forms, from hate speech to physical altercations or threats. The main obstacle to women's political presence in the Nigeria National Assembly is political violence. Therefore, these recent results complement the Peace Direct Committee report, which claims that Nigerian women are singled out in the political arena to guarantee and impede their greater participation in political events like rallies, voting, and/or candidacies. Violence against women continues to rise and poses a serious threat to the nation's democracy (Direct, 2019). However, according to a 2012 British Council Nigeria report, gangs have been employed in some regions by politicians or political elites to thwart women candidates. Inconsistent with earlier research and the British Council report (2012), which asserts that cultural and religious factors influence women's political representation in Nigeria. Their results demonstrate that regional differences in women's representation due to cultural and religious considerations are evident at the state level. British Council report (2012) since it demonstrates that religious beliefs and cultural customs played a significant role in the low political representation of women in the Nigerian National Assembly. Itodo et al. (2015), believed that the nation's cultural norms regarding marriage and Indigenous citizenship frequently place women politicians at a disadvantage and occasionally even disqualify them, even in certain instances, parties have prohibited women from running for office due to their rules of engagement and the type of primary elections that are held, which are typically "indirect primaries" in the selection process that leaves only a few leaders with the authority to select candidates (Itodo et al., 2015; Onimisi. 2014).

Economic barriers: Women's elections usually do not result in more political representation for them because of a lack of mobilization. Lack of mobilization continues to be one of the biggest obstacles women face in their efforts to increase their political participation in the Nigeria National Assembly, according to Okonkwo (2016). The large body of prior research by Kelly (2019), found that lower levels of women's employment and education have an impact on women's political representation in his work titled "Barriers and Enablers for Women's Participation in Governance in Nigeria." The results of the current study reflect Kelly's (2019) assertion that women's political representation is impacted by a lack of educational support, particularly in the Nigeria National Assembly, which is the subject of the current study. Because the NGOs had to balance traditional politics with family responsibilities, provide credence to this view. Rosenbluth, Kalla, and Teele's (2015) study, "The Women Political Career," states that women spend the majority of their time at home and taking care of their children due to the ongoing unequal distribution of family care roles and responsibilities. According to these academics' research, women suffer greatly as a result of becoming mothers, which has an impact on their capacity to hold political office in all election-related roles.

Socio-cultural challenges: The women foxes include other maternal engagements in addition to time and effort. According to Shames' (2014) research, women who are heavily active in childcare would have a hard time juggling their home obligations with political participation, which would make NGOs' struggles even more difficult and disadvantage the women. These results are consistent with those found in previous research by Dahlerup and Lenita (2005) titled "Quotas as a Fast Track to Equal Representation for Women," which held that the main obstacle to women's political representation is their lack of the necessary financial resources to grant them the political

office they so desire. The findings of this current resource, which demonstrate that financial difficulties continue to be a barrier to women's political involvement in the Nigeria National Assembly, are further supported by Dahlerup and Lenita's (2005) perspective. Dahlerup and Lenita (2005) claim that the incremental track concept demonstrates that women's political representation will always be lower than men's because they lack the same political resources. Though the last access to funding appears to be impeding this, political representation theory advocates for women's representation through direct representation in decision-making bodies. Nonetheless, the current investigation is appropriately captured by the formalistic representation dimension of the theory of political representation.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Investigating the role of the Women Trust Fund of Nigeria in ensuring greater women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly, as well as the obstacles the Trust Fund faces in achieving its goal of increasing women's political representation and the strategies that can guarantee greater representation of women in the national assembly, was the primary focus of the study, as stated at the outset. Therefore, these goals were the focus of the case study design. One of the more important conclusions drawn from the study's initial goal was that, by providing financial support to women interested in politics and the state National Assembly, the Women Trust Fund of Nigeria has significantly increased the representation of women in the Nigerian National Assembly. Through political mentorship, mobilization, and the inclusion of women in crucial positions within the state, the Women Trust Fund has helped to support better and strengthen the representation of women in the Nigeria National Assembly. The study concludes that women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly has been strengthened thanks in part to the Nigerian Women Trust Fund. The study concludes that the Women Trust Fund of Nigeria is a strategic partner in ensuring and promoting women's political representation in the Nigeria National Assembly; however, the challenges faced by the Women Trust Fund of Nigeria in their effort to provide great women's political representation in are financial challenges, political violence, and lack of mobilization. The Women Trust Fund of Nigeria through it activities has been able to provide and create women's rights awareness, improvement of public opinion of women, and assistance in coordinating the activities of women.

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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN JOS PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT
Religious intolerance and the its effects on the socio-economic development is an issue faced in Jos Plateau state. These religious conflicts have become a major problem confronting the state and the nation at large. Through empirical review, the study highlighted causes of religious intolerance which led to the conflict. Related literatures mostly examined the topic from the farmers and herder's crisis in Jos while some understudied it from the perspective of religious conflicts. This study however, through a detailed analysis enhances the understanding of how religious conflicts impact economic activities, social structures, and development indicators. Data was obtained from secondary sources through already collected data from journals, historic writings and news articles as they relate to the research topic. The social identity theory is used to clearly understand the connection and relationship between religious intolerance and the groups involved in the crisis. Findings revealed that the root and remote causes of the religious conflicts are tied to intolerance, indigene/settler syndrome, unemployment, poverty, unguided utterances of religious and political leaders, lack of proper education, and absence of good governance among others. The conflict by implication have resulted in the irreplaceable loss of human and material resources that could have been useful for social and economic developmental purposes of the nation. The study, by way of conclusion hoped that awareness campaigns would be held in order to encourage tolerance, diversity and interfaith dialogue amongst the people, and sincere government schemes and efforts would be established to achieve social,

economic and political distributive justice for all people in the country.

Introduction

Africa is one of the continents that is known to experience a significant level of religious intolerance which has led to series of wars throughout the years. The majority of countries that experience or are threatened by religious conflicts are those that are located in sub-Saharan Africa with a significant Muslim population in the North and a Christian population in the South (Basedau, 2017). The Sudanese civil war serves as an example of how Christians, Muslims and traditional religion engaged in violent conflict while in Ethiopia, a Christian dominated government fought a number of predominantly Muslim rebel groups (Basedau, 2019).

In Nigeria, the issue of intolerance in form of gender, political, ethnic and religious is at the centre of the problems that define the country's pluralistic political system. The religious component is more severe due to the abstract nature of religious beliefs, and states such as Borno, Kano, Yobe, Kaduna, as well as many others have had their fair share of religious crisis (Atoi & Babale 2021). This issue has greatly impacted many communities in Nigeria which has hindered proper development and sustainable peace, as a result, the nation has experienced losses politically, socially, economically, and even culturally. Traditional religion, Islam, and Christianity are the three main religions practiced in Nigeria. Christianity and Islam are more common and are fundamental to their followers' way of life. Since Jos saw its first significant riot in more than three decades in the late 2001, at least 4,000 and maybe as many as 7,000 people have died (Krause, 2010).

The worst Jos crisis were recorded to have taken place in the following years; 2001, 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2012. From 1980 to 1999, Jos experienced a fair amount of tranquillity and the year 2000, recorded the first incident of violence and mass murder in Jos since the anti-Igbo pogrom in 1966. Over the years, Jos has had episodes of mass deaths and destructions that has devastated other sections of the Plateau, particularly in rural areas outside of Jos in 2001, 2002, and 2010 (Nwaka 2012). In rural areas, there had been widespread violence between Birom farmers (who are predominantly Christians) and the Fulani pastoralist (who are Muslims). This is generally framed to be a conflict over land, but contrary to media reports, many of those involved tend not to think the fight is about a struggle for grazing land or farm but rather on religious ties.

The outbreaks of conflict attracted the establishment of several commissions, panels and committees of inquiry by both the federal and state governments. Some of which are the 2001 Niki Tobi commission, 2002 peace Summits, 2004 Peace Conference and the emergency Rule, Abisoye Presidential Panel of 2008, Ajibola Gubernatorial Panel of 2008, and the 2010 Lar-Kwande Presidential Committee. Despite the efforts to resolve the issue, it is evident that significant impact has not been made. Therefore, the central problem in this research is the threatening effects of religious intolerance on socioeconomic development in Jos Plateau State.

Operational Definition of Terms

Socio-Economic Development

Socioeconomic development refers to the process of significant changes in the social and economic aspects of a society. It can involve shifts in industries, employment patterns, income distribution, and overall living standards.

Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance can be defined as a lack of acceptance or respect towards the beliefs or practices of individuals or groups who follow a different religion than one's own. It involves prejudice, discrimination, or hostility based on religious differences.

Methodology

Research Design

This study investigates events which have already taken place. It therefore makes use of the ex-post facto research design. This design emphasizes on analysing past events, social processes, and their impacts. It involves a systematic examination of secondary sources such as historical documents, news articles and scholarly works to reconstruct the events that took place in Jos during that period of time and understand their underlying causes and effects of the crisis. This research design is best used to examine the relationship between religious intolerance and the socio-economic development in Jos.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data is subject to content analysis. Content analysis is a particularly suitable method for analyzing the complex and multifaceted topic of religious intolerance and socioeconomic development in Jos, Plateau State. This method allows for a systematic and objective examination of textual data from a variety of sources, such as media reports, government documents, religious texts, and community records. Additionally, it facilitates the analysis of qualitative data in a way that can reveal subtle social dynamics and power relations that quantitative methods might overlook. By employing content analysis, the study can comprehensively assess how religious intolerance is portrayed and understood in public discourse, and how these perceptions correlate with socio-economic indicators. This methodological approach ensures a clear understanding of the interplay between religious intolerance and socioeconomic development, providing insights that are both deep and broadly applicable.

Historical Background of Plateau State, Jos

Jos was officially founded in 1915, the capital city of Plateau State which is one of the thirty-six states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and was established with the start of tin mining. The indigene population on the Plateau consisted of mostly farmers with little interest in tin mining at that time. Some indigene groups were hostile to the influx of Nigerian migrants and Europeans. During the 1940s, the Berom attempted to disrupt mining operations to prevent further destruction of farmland. The mining industry attracted migrant workers from all over Nigeria. By the mid-1940s, more than 200 mining camps had been built on the Plateau and the miner population exceeded 40,000 (Dung-Gwom et al, 2009). The Hausa constituted the most ethnic group that worked in the mines. Significant numbers of Igbo, Yoruba, and members of smaller tribes also migrated to Jos during the same period. Those who had received Western education in the south of Nigeria served within the colonial administration. Others worked as craftsmen or in commerce. Due to the mining activities, the City of Jos expanded rapidly and the population grew slowly between 1930 and 1960 (Plotnicov, 1967).

According to the 2006 census, Plateau has a population of about 3.1million with the City of Jos having one-third of that population. It is majority Christian State within northern Nigeria. The North as a whole has a majority Muslim position but there are also large numbers of Christians living there, both in the far north and in the middle-Belt, which is mainly Christian but still considered part of the north (Higazi 2011). Plateau State is located in the north-central zone and forms part of the middle-belt. Plateau State takes its name from the high Plateau that dominates the state's landscape. There are dozens of languages spoken in Plateau State, therefore marking it out of the predominantly speaking areas further north. The City of Jos emerged as a town of migrants, who arrived from other parts of Nigeria. From its creation, Jos has had a recognizable southern Christian population; the Yoruba and Igbo comprise the majority of Christians in Jos. In rural areas and the smallest towns of Jos Plateau, indigenous Christians form the majority, but in Jos itself the population of areas people is relatively small. In political aspects Jos tends more towards progressive parties but ideologically has become less important in contemporary politics (Blench 2009). Now communal identities became more prominent and appeared to have increased as a result of the violence over the past decade, which has generated greater division amongst the people of Jos along religious lines and in turn created social and political divisions between Muslims and Christians. Consequently, more people are directly affected by these divisions and have put their loyalties with their own

religions and ethnic groups more than they did before (Kane, 2003).

Before the arrival of the colonial masters, Jos was a quiet crossroad inhabited by diverse ethnic groups like the Berom, Afizere, and Jasawa. The discovery of tin in the early 1900s, however transformed the city into a bustling mining hub. British colonial forces established Jos, and their policy of indirect rules, which relied on existing power structures, heightened tension between indigenous groups in Jos. The majority of Nigerians are either Christian or Muslim, with an almost even split between the two. The predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani together established approximately two third of the country population of the northern region. The Yoruba and the Igbo dominate the south of the country; while there are majority Christians, the Yoruba include a sizeable Muslim minority. The Christian within groups refer to their region as the 'Middle Belt'. The Idea of the Middle Belt emerged during the 1940s. When the United Middle Belt Congress was formed as a political party in opposition to the Northern people' Congress. The Idea of a separate Middle Belt identity increased widespread support after Nigeria gained independence in 1960, in light of political domination by the northern states (Falola, et al, 2018).

Empirical Review of the Underlying Causes of the Jos Crisis

Many reasons have been seen to be the cause of the frequent religious tension and crisis in Jos. According to Okwueze (1995) in his work religious problems and conflict in Nigeria revisited, opined that colonialism set the ground for religious hostility and resentment in Nigeria. The introduction of indirect rule in the Northern region by Lord Lugard and non-interference with Islam treaty between Lugard and Emirs in the region, prohibited the penetration of missionary enterprise in the Islamic emirates. This in a way helped in the spread of Islam within the protectorate and gave Muslims an edge over Christians in the region. Igwe (2009) believes that the cause of the reoccurring religious crisis in Jos is the inadequate punishment dished out to culprits. Punishment is a barrier to breaking the law, therefore, as long as the government fails to prosecute and adequately punish the perpetrators, the crisis will continue. For Nwagwu (2010) most cries in the north can be identified with religious intolerance and claim of supremacy. Issues arising from sharing of resources including farmlands, grazing lands, has triggered ethnic animosity and intolerance.

Obayomi, (2020), asserted that discrimination, marginalization, lack of political representation, poverty and inequality and elite manipulation are the causes of the Christian and Muslim conflict in Jos. This further state that identity politics interplay has also contributed majorly to religious intolerance with political, social, religious and economic structural groups manipulating identities and escalating the conflict. More so, it can be attributed to competition and show of superiority between groups as they seek dominance over each. Obayomi also opined that historical misunderstandings and misinterpretations of past events are a contributory trigger to the complex situation between ethnicity and religion in Jos. Due to the complex structure of Jos, the historical misgivings have shaped the contemporary identities and informed relationships between different groups. Interesting to note also, is that beyond identity power play, there exists the role of political actors and resource competition as causal factors to the Jos conflict. This means that existing ethnic and religious tensions are exploited by political groups to secure votes and power. Obayomi (2020) additionally stated that competition for scarce resources like land and water, further heightened by environmental changes and population growth, becomes another point of contention and potential trigger for violence.

Maishanu (2007) is of the opinion that religion plurality has attributed to religious intolerance in Nigeria. This is because humans have a plethora of ways in expressing their religious cravings. The existence of a plurality of religions is a reality, then there is bound to be religious intolerance. In fact, many religiously pluralistic societies all over the world have had to grapple with the problem of religious intolerance. Like most plural state, Nigeria is a country with religious diversity. African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam constitute the dominant religions in Nigeria, with each enjoying large followership. More so, the plurality of religion has bred the superiority power play amongst them. In a bid to display superiority by religious extremists, there is a clash. A religious fanatic believes strongly that his religion is unquestionably superior to other religions. In Jos, religious intolerance in most

cases take the dimension of ethnicity but gradually gravitates into a religious angle as the major religions are the Christians and Muslims.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the Social Identity theory in understanding it better. This theory best suits this study as it helps in explaining how social divisions might have hindered economic development by discouraging collaboration, investment, and overall social unity, thereby affecting the city's socioeconomic path. It was propounded in social psychology by Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). They introduced this concept as a way in which explains intergroup behaviours. It suggests that individuals derive a part of their self-concept from the group they belong to, which leads to a tendency to favour their own group (in-group) and exhibit prejudice and hostility towards members of other groups (out-group). In context to this study, it simply implies when different religious groups perceive their beliefs, values, or ways of life to be under threat or perceived inequalities in resources, status or power, it can trigger inter-group conflicts, which is the case in the study of this crisis. Throughout the years this theory has supported many empirical studies and has provided explanation for other areas of psychology. Social Identity is mostly influential when people consider membership in a certain group and feel strong emotional ties towards that group. Affiliations with a group breeds self-esteem, which aids to sustain the Social Identity. This theory helps one understand why they feel a sense of belonging and connection to certain groups, and how these group identities can influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

A problem with this theory is that it tends to focus on the situation and doesn't have much evidence to support it being about a person's natural characteristics. This theory has traditionally focused on explaining intergroup conflicts, prejudice, and discrimination, potentially overshadowing its applicability to positive intergroup relations, cooperation, and understanding (Turner & Reynolds 2010). Despite its weaknesses it's worth noting that Social Identity Theory has also undergone revisions and extensions to address some of these limitations. Researchers often use this theory as a foundation and combine it with other theories to gain a more distinct understanding of social identity and group dynamics.

The relevance of this theory to the Jos crisis is that it helps to explain how religious identity plays a significant role in intensifying tension and intolerance. It suggests that people living in Jos, Plateau State, belonging to each religious group would identify strongly with their respective religious identities and develop a sense of solidarity within their in-group, therefore heightening religious tensions leading to a stronger "us versus them mentality, this in turn leads to a decrease in trust and cooperation within the community. It also explains that people react negatively to threats to their social identity, therefore the Jos crisis could have been perceived as a threat to the religious identities of various groups, leading to defensive behaviours and increased tension. The social identity theory provides ways in which the conflict can be mitigated or resolved by providing a framework for predicting how future religious tensions in Jos might affect the city's growth, this can be of value to policy makers seeking to promote unity and economic growth. It can also aid in changing the way people perceive and relate to their own, and other persons group. The theory further suggests that when different religious groups perceive their beliefs, values, or ways of life to be under threat or perceived inequalities in resources, status or power, it can trigger inter-group conflicts, which is the case in the study of this crisis. It is important to note that while social identity theory provides insight into the dynamics of inter-group conflict, it is just one among several theories that can help explain religious intolerance in the Jos crisis. Other factors such as political manipulation, socioeconomic disparities and cultural differences also contribute to the complexity of such conflict.

Challenges of Religious Intolerance in Jos, Plateau State

Religion, which has historically served as a source of identity and community in Jos, became a central challenge during the brutal circle of violence in the city from 2008 to 2012. While the roots of the conflict were complex and intertwined with economic and political factors (Human Rights Watch, 2012), religious tensions played a significant and destructive role. One of the key challenges was the manipulation of religious narratives for political gain. Religious

leaders and politicians often exploited existing religious differences to mobilize support for their agendas (International Crisis Group, 2012). This often focused on portraying another religious group as a threat, creating fear and suspicion between the people. This created an us versus them mentality, making interfaith dialogue and cooperation nearly impossible.

Furthermore, the crisis exposed deep-seated religious intolerance within certain parts of the population. The violence was often marked by brutal attacks on religious symbols and places of worship, highlighting a disturbing willingness to violate the sanctity of the other's faith (Ibeanu, 2014). This intolerance shattered the sense of trust and respect that had previously existed between religious communities. The crisis also highlighted the limitations of religious institutions in promoting peace and reconciliation. While some religious leaders bravely spoke out against the violence, others remained silent or even fuelled the flames. This failure of religious leadership eroded public trust in the ability of faith institutions to act as agents of peace.

Another significant challenge is the displacement and economic disruption caused by the violence. Thousands of people were forced to flee their homes, leading to significant economic hardship and the breakdown of social networks (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR, 2012). The displacement not only affected the immediate victims but also strained the resources of host communities, heightening the level of poverty and unemployment. The crisis also highlighted the limitations of religious institutions in promoting peace and reconciliation. While some religious leaders bravely spoke out against the violence, others remained silent or even fueled the flames. This failure of religious leadership eroded public trust in the ability of faith institutions to act as agents of peace. Additionally, the violence severely impacted education and healthcare services in the region. Schools and health facilities were often targeted or used as shelters, disrupting the provision of essential services (Mercy Corps, 2013).

The legacy of these challenges continues to engulf the city of Jos. Rebuilding trust and fostering interfaith dialogue is crucial for a lasting peace. This requires religious leaders to actively promote tolerance, cooperation, and understanding between communities. Additionally, educational initiatives that challenge extremist narratives and promote religious literacy are essential for fostering a more inclusive and peaceful society (Ogunyemi, 2013).

The Effect of Religious Intolerance on Socio-Economic Development in Jos, Plateau State

The City of Jos crisis have continued to raise different issues and questions. The most problematic issue in the crisis is the effect which does not necessarily end in death and destruction of properties but include the general impact on the development of the community. The City of Jos cannot develop properly as development can only take place in a peaceful environment. Crisis hinders development either through the destruction of existing structures or discouragement of investments, in this case, both. In Jos many structures have been destroyed and the money which would have been used to develop new structures are being used to repair the destroyed ones (Albert 1994). It is important to note that crisis have negative effects beyond the communities that are involved. Therefore, crisis in any part of the nation, affects the nation itself. For instance, many travellers and transporters in Kano, Abuja, Bauchi and Kaduna are affected by the crisis in Jos because these are the four leading states into Jos. This crisis has also led to the feeling of insecurity in the country as people rush back to their state of origin for fear of being killed, and with the increase in arms, the oppressors and mercenaries usually go into other states to make a living with their guns (Gofwen, 2004). This crisis has led to destructions worth billions of naira and this has affected life in Plateau state both legally, politically, socially and economically.

Religious crisis in Jos, Plateau state, has presented many challenges that border on security and the corporate existence of a state. The period between 2008 and 2012 marked an emotional chapter in the history of Jos, Nigeria, while the city boasted of a vibrant past as a tin-mining hub, these years were scared by reoccurring outbreaks of religious violence which brought about a significant setback to the city's development, because funds that could have been directed towards the building of infrastructures, education, and healthcare were diverted to security measures and post-conflict

reconstruction (Best & William, 2014). In 2012, in the Northern parts of the state, especially Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government areas, there was a regular record of deadly hostilities between Fulani and the natives, especially the Berom. This led to the death of innocent people, and loss of property worth billions of naira destroyed. Due to this, many villages were deserted while farming which is the basic occupation of the people had been abandoned for fear. Nigeria has become a country in which cutthroat competitive spirit has penetrated every aspect of life. Bloodshed like that of Jos is rooted in our reality. It manifests in communal relations and politics no less than in family affairs (Ibelem, 2010).

This religious violence has created fear and instability, preventing investments, disrupting economic activities and eroding social cohesion. For example, in Jos crisis, the Hausa Fulani have been against Christians instead of confronting Plateau State Government in order to resolve their areas of disagreements. Similarly, in the Boko haram crisis, Nigerians were killed as a result of grievances arising from Governments failure to address poverty, unemployment, corruption and bad governance which affects both Christians and Muslims, and in turn this has also greatly affected the growth and development in the city's social and economic sectors. This clearly implies that to fully understand the socio-economic development of Jos during this period of time, requires examining the interplay between religious tensions, economic activities, and general social well-being (International Crisis Group, 2012).

Economic Effects of the Jos Crisis

The Jos crisis has had far-reaching economic effects on the region, especially between the period of 2008-2012. One major impact is the disruption it has caused to businesses. Many shops, markets, and factories have been forced to close down or operate at reduced capacity due to the instability and insecurity caused by the crisis. This has resulted in job losses, reduced income, and a decline in productivity. The tourism industry, which was once a significant source of revenue for Jos, has also been severely affected. The crisis has led to a decline in tourist visits, as people are hesitant to travel to an area that is experiencing violence and instability. Hotels, restaurants, and other businesses that rely on tourism have suffered significant losses, leading to more economic downturns (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

Additionally, the Jos crisis has hindered overall development in the region by diverting resources and attention away from crucial infrastructure projects and investment opportunities. The lack of stability and security has prevented investors from committing to long-term projects, leading to stagnation in economic growth. Furthermore, the crisis has had a mirror effect on other sectors of the economy. Agriculture, which is a major source of livelihood for many in the region, has been disrupted as a result of the displacement of farmers and destruction of farmlands. This has resulted in a decrease in agricultural output and food shortages, further impacting the economy and increasing poverty levels (Igbino, 2013). Therefore, the disruption to businesses, decline in tourism, and impact on agriculture have all contributed to an overall decline in the region's economy and hindered development. It is crucial for efforts to be made to restore peace and stability in order to mitigate these effects and promote economic recovery.

Socio-Cultural Effect of the Jos Crisis

Not only were there economic and political effects of this crisis on the city of Jos but there were also socio-cultural. The violence which was deeply rooted in the long-standing tension destroyed the social unity that had existed between the Berom and Hausa communities. One of the most devastating effects of the crisis was the mass displacement of people. Fearing for their lives, many residents fled to areas perceived to be safe havens, based on religion or ethnicity (Ufen, 2010). This not only disrupted lives and livelihoods but also reshaped the demographic setting of neighborhoods, schools, and social circles. The social connections and networks that had previously bound the communities together began to fade, replaced by suspicion and fear. Furthermore, the crisis deepened existing social divisions. Long-held stereotypes were increased, making it harder for people from different backgrounds to interact and build trust. Traditional techniques for conflict resolution, which relied on dialogue and compromise within communities, broke down during the period of violence, and the sense of shared identity and belonging that was upheld over religious and ethnic lines was fractured (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

Culturally, the crisis led to a decline in artistic expression and people no longer celebrated diversity, or welcomed it with open arms, as fear and suspicion overshadowed cultural life which was once the characteristic of Jos. Festivals and social gatherings, which served as platforms for cultural exchange and interaction, were threatened with insecurity. This loss of cultural expression not only impoverished the lives of residents but also interfered with the transmission of traditions and customs to younger generations (Ogunyemi, 2013). The education system was equally affected by the crisis. Many schools were damaged or destroyed in the violence, disrupting the education of countless children. The atmosphere of fear and mistrust also made it difficult for students from different backgrounds to learn and interact together. This segregation along religious and ethnic lines within schools suppressed the efforts to promote social cohesion and understanding between future generations. The psychological impact of the crisis was equally intense. The trauma of violence, displacement, and loss of loved ones left frightening images and thoughts on the minds of many. Feelings of anxiety, anger, and distrust lingered long after the violence subsided. This continuous sense of unease further hindered efforts at reconciliation and social healing.

Political Effect of the Jos Crisis

The period of brutal violence from 2008 to 2012 left a deep scar on the national political landscape. The conflict fuelled by religious, ethnic and economic tensions, challenged the peaceful coexistence between the predominantly Christian indigenous Berom people and the Muslim Hausa settlers. With time there was no trust between communities and this exposed the limitations of the government's ability to maintain order. Politically, the crisis had a deep effect that continues to be felt today. Firstly, it significantly weakened the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the region. Accusations were made towards the government's handling of the crisis, with critics pointing out the clear bias towards one side or the other. This fuelled public anger with the PDP, leading to a decline in its support in Plateau (Lyon, 2010). Secondly, Politicians exploiting religious and ethnic divisions to mobilize support, was on the increase and this further deepening societal divide**.** Thirdly, the Jos crisis highlighted the challenges of managing Nigeria's complex diversity. It exposed the faults of religious and ethnic tensions that, if left unaddressed, could easily escalate into violence. The crisis served as a wake-up call for the need to address these issues through genuine dialogue, power-sharing mechanisms, and policies that promote social inclusion and economic development. Fourthly, the crisis led to the militarization of the region. The heavy security response, though necessary to mitigate the immediate violence, also bred resentment among the populace. The presence of a large military presence created fear and suspicion, hindering efforts of reconciliation (International Crisis Group, 2012). Overall, the Jos crisis from 2008 to 2012 had a serious political impact that has deepened existing divisions, straining governance, and affecting the electoral process in the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored the relationship between religious intolerance and its effects on socio-economic development in Jos. The theory employed by this study is useful in understanding the relevance of a society coming together in order to ensure unity between and amongst them and creating peace-building efforts, institutions, policies and programs required to achieve long-term, sustainable peace. Social identity theory suggests that the achievement of sustainable peace is made possible through three main goals; reducing violence, addressing injustice and rebuilding relationships among groups of people. This study suggests that if these three goals can be put into action, future conflicts can be prevented.

To address the multifaceted effects of religious intolerance on socio-economic development in Jos Plateau, it's vital to pursue a comprehensive approach. Firstly, fostering economic opportunities for all communities can help alleviate grievances that often fuel religious tensions. This could involve initiatives such as job training programs, microfinance support, and infrastructure development projects that benefit marginalized areas. Secondly, promoting socio-cultural integration and understanding through community events, cultural exchanges, and interfaith dialogues can bridge divides and build social cohesion. Lastly, ensuring inclusive and transparent governance practices, where all religious groups have a voice in decision-making processes, can help reduce political

manipulation and foster trust in institutions. By addressing economic, socio-cultural, and political dimensions, we can work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Jos Plateau.

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TECHNOLOGICAL SELF-EFFICACY AND ONLINE DATABASE ACCESS AS PREDICTORS OF AI USABILITY FOR RESEARCH AMONG SOCIAL SCIENCES LECTURERS IN OYO STATE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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KEYWORDS
Artificial Intelligence, Technological Self-Efficacy, Online Research Databases, AI Usability, Social Sciences Lecturers, Colleges of Education

ABSTRACT
The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic research has transformed knowledge production, yet its adoption among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education remains underexplored. While existing studies on AI usability in academia predominantly focus on science and technology disciplines, limited attention has been given to social sciences educators, who play a crucial role in shaping pedagogical and policy frameworks. Moreover, prior research has examined technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases as independent factors influencing digital engagement, but few studies have investigated their combined impact on AI usability for research. This study bridges these gaps by analysing how technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases jointly predict AI usability among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State, Nigeria. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 110 lecturers through a structured questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analyses revealed that both technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases significantly influence AI usability, jointly explaining 65% of its variance. The study provides empirical evidence that institutional access to digital resources moderates the effect of individual technological self-efficacy on AI adoption in research. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on digital literacy training, this study highlights the necessity of addressing infrastructural constraints alongside individual competency development. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and institutional administrators seeking to enhance AI adoption in research, ensuring equitable access to

digital resources, and fostering a technologically competent academic workforce.

Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic research has redefined the way knowledge is generated, analysed, and disseminated across disciplines. In the natural sciences, AI-driven methodologies have facilitated advancements in data mining, machine learning, and automated content analysis, significantly improving research efficiency and precision (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017). Similarly, AI applications in social sciences are increasingly transforming qualitative and quantitative research approaches, from sentiment analysis in political studies to predictive modelling in education research (Wang & Lin, 2021). However, while scholars in STEM disciplines have made significant strides in AI adoption, research on its usability within the social sciences remains fragmented, particularly in the context of colleges of education where lecturers play a fundamental role in shaping pedagogical and policy frameworks (O'Connor & Andrews, 2020).

A critical aspect of AI usability in research is technological self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to effectively engage with digital tools, including AI-powered research applications (Bandura, 1986). Prior studies have established that technological self-efficacy is a strong determinant of digital tool adoption among academics, influencing how effectively they integrate AI into their research (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). Lecturers who possess high levels of technological self-efficacy tend to explore AI-driven tools for data analysis, literature synthesis, and content generation, thereby improving research productivity and innovation (Bandura, 2019). Conversely, those with low technological self-efficacy often experience barriers in navigating AI applications, limiting their engagement with advanced research methodologies (Wang & Lin, 2021). While much attention has been given to the role of self-efficacy in technology adoption, existing literature has largely focused on general digital literacy rather than its specific influence on AI usability among social sciences lecturers (Patel & Kumar, 2023). This oversight necessitates further inquiry into how technological self-efficacy influences AI adoption in academic research within this discipline.

Beyond individual competence, access to online research databases is a critical determinant of AI usability in research. Digital repositories such as Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar provide scholars with peer-reviewed literature, citation management tools, and AI-powered analytical platforms that enhance research efficiency (Ahmed et al., 2020). However, disparities in access to these resources persist, particularly in developing contexts where institutional subscriptions, infrastructure, and digital policies influence lecturers' ability to utilise AI tools effectively (Chen & Zhang, 2022). Studies have shown that lecturers with unrestricted access to academic databases demonstrate higher engagement with AI-assisted research and methodological innovation, whereas those with limited access struggle to leverage AI for research purposes (Johnson & Smith, 2021). While existing literature has explored database accessibility as a determinant of research productivity, there is limited empirical examination of its intersection with technological self-efficacy in shaping AI usability among social sciences lecturers.

Despite the increasing recognition of AI's potential in academic research, a significant gap exists in literature regarding its adoption among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education. Most studies on AI usability in academia focus on science and technology disciplines, leaving social sciences educators largely overlooked (O'Connor & Andrews, 2020). Moreover, while previous research has examined technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases as individual determinants of digital engagement, the interaction between these factors in influencing AI usability remains underexplored (Miller & Thompson, 2022). This paper seeks to bridge these gaps by investigating how technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases jointly predict AI usability among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

By situating this study within existing AI adoption frameworks while addressing the

overlooked dimensions of self-efficacy and digital accessibility, this research extends scholarship on AI usability beyond STEM disciplines to the social sciences. Additionally, it critiques the notion that digital literacy alone is sufficient for AI adoption, demonstrating that infrastructural constraints must be considered alongside individual competence. Through empirical evidence, this study contributes to the discourse on digital transformation in higher education, providing insights for policymakers and institutional administrators seeking to enhance AI adoption, bridge digital gaps, and strengthen the research capabilities of lecturers in colleges of education.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed research methodologies across various disciplines, yet its adoption in the social sciences, particularly among lecturers in colleges of education, remains limited. While AI tools offer significant potential for enhancing research productivity, their usability is largely influenced by technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases. Many lecturers in colleges of education may lack the confidence and technical skills needed to effectively utilise AI-driven research tools. Additionally, disparities in access to online research databases pose a significant challenge, as limited access to scholarly repositories restricts the ability of lecturers to engage in AI-assisted research.

Despite the increasing push for digital transformation in higher education, there is insufficient understanding of how technological self-efficacy and database accessibility collectively shape AI usability among social sciences lecturers. Existing studies have often focused on AI adoption in science and technology disciplines, leaving a gap in the literature regarding its relevance and applicability in the social sciences. Moreover, research has largely examined technological self-efficacy and database access as separate factors, rather than exploring their combined influence on AI usability. Without addressing these gaps, institutions may struggle to develop policies that support AI integration in academic research within colleges of education. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by investigating how technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases predict AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Conceptual Clarification

The discourse on artificial intelligence (AI) usability in academic research necessitates a clear understanding of key concepts that underpin this study. **Technological self-efficacy** refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to effectively use digital technologies, including AI applications. It is not merely about possessing digital skills but also about the willingness to explore and integrate AI-driven tools into research practices. Studies have shown that individuals with high technological self-efficacy are more likely to engage with emerging technologies, including AI, as they feel more competent in navigating digital platforms and leveraging them for academic purposes (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Wang & Lin, 2021). In the context of this study, technological self-efficacy determines the extent to which social sciences lecturers can adopt AI for research purposes.

Access to online research databases encompasses the availability and utilisation of digital repositories that provide scholarly resources, including journal articles, datasets, and AI-powered analytical tools. Digital access plays a critical role in research productivity, as lecturers with unrestricted access to high-quality databases tend to produce more rigorous and well-cited academic work (Ahmed et al., 2020). While access is often facilitated through institutional subscriptions, disparities exist due to financial and infrastructural constraints, particularly in developing regions where limited funding affects resource availability (Chen & Zhang, 2022). The extent of database accessibility influences a lecturer's ability to leverage AI in conducting in-depth research, as the effectiveness of AI-driven analytical tools is dependent on the availability of quality data sources.

AI usability in academic research pertains to the ease with which lecturers can integrate AI tools into their research processes to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and innovation. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and automated literature reviews have transformed academic inquiry, offering new ways of conducting systematic research (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

However, the extent to which AI usability is realised depends on both individual competence and institutional support (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Social sciences lecturers, in particular, face unique challenges in adopting AI, as existing research largely focuses on AI adoption in STEM fields, with limited scholarly engagement in social sciences education (O'Connor & Andrews, 2020).

This study critically engages these concepts by examining how technological self-efficacy and access to research databases intersect to influence AI usability. Rather than treating these variables in isolation, the study positions them as interdependent factors that shape the digital research landscape in social sciences. By doing so, it extends existing discussions on AI adoption beyond the dominant focus on science and technology disciplines, placing social sciences lecturers at the centre of the conversation on digital transformation in higher education. This perspective contributes to the literature by bridging the gap between AI usability, digital literacy, and access to scholarly resources within the social sciences context (Miller & Thompson, 2022).

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. The specific objectives are to:

i. determine the impact of technological self-efficacy on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

ii. examine the effect of access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

iii. assess the combined influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested in this study:

i. There is no significant relationship between technological self-efficacy and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

ii. There is no significant relationship between access to online research databases and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

iii. There is no significant combined influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Methods

This study adopted a survey research design of the correlational type. The study aimed to investigate the predictive roles of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. The population for the study comprised all social sciences lecturers in public colleges of education in Oyo State.

All public colleges of education in Oyo State were purposively selected to ensure comprehensive coverage and to allow for a large sample of respondents. A simple random sampling technique was used to select social sciences lecturers from these colleges. The choice of social sciences lecturers was based on their frequent engagement with AI tools, online research databases, and digital resources, making them a suitable population for the study. A total of 110 lecturers participated in the study, distributed across the two colleges of education in the state: College of Education, Lanlate (45) and Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo (65). This sample size was considered adequate for statistical analysis and generalizability, ensuring a robust representation of the target population.

Three instruments were used for data collection:

i. Technological Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES)

ii. Online Research Database Access Scale (ORDAS)

iii. AI Usability for Research Scale (AIURS)

The **TSES** was a self-designed instrument with 10 items aimed at measuring lecturers' confidence in using technology for research. The scale consisted of two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A elicited demographic details such as the name of the college and years of experience. Section B included 15 Likert-type items with a 4-point scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Positive statements were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively, while negative statements were reverse-scored.

The **ORDAS** was developed by the researcher to measure lecturers' access to online research databases. It also consisted of two sections: Section A (demographic information) and Section B, which contained 10 Likert-type items with the same scoring pattern as the TSES. Positive statements were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1, while negative statements were reverse-scored.

The **AIURS** was a self-designed instrument with 10 items aimed at measuring AI usability for research. The scale consisted of two sections: Section A (demographic details) and Section B, which included 10 Likert-type items assessing AI adoption, ease of use, and perceived usefulness for research purposes. The scoring followed the same 4-point Likert scale pattern as the previous instruments.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted using 30 social sciences lecturers from a college of education outside the study sample. The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The **TSES** yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81, the **ORDAS** had a reliability coefficient of 0.78, and the **AIURS** recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. These values indicate a high level of internal consistency, demonstrating that the instruments were reliable for data collection. Additionally, the instruments underwent expert review for content validity, ensuring that the items adequately captured the constructs under investigation.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were used to present respondents' characteristics and responses. Inferential statistics, such as the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis, were employed to determine relationships between the independent variables (technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases) and the dependent variable (AI usability for research). All hypotheses were tested at a **0.05 level of significance.**

Result

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between technological self-efficacy and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Technological Self-Efficacy and AI Usability for Research Among Social Sciences Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Oyo State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Technological Self-Efficacy	110	3.42	0.85	108	0.489*	0.000	Significant

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
AI Usability for Research	110	3.38	0.92				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between technological self-efficacy and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.489$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between technological self-efficacy and AI usability for research. This suggests that lecturers with higher technological self-efficacy are more likely to effectively utilise AI tools for research. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between access to online research databases and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Access to Online Research Databases and AI Usability for Research Among Social Sciences Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Oyo State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Access to Online Research Databases	110	3.58	0.79	108	0.512*	0.000	Significant
AI Usability for Research	110	3.38	0.92				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between access to online research databases and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of

education in Oyo State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.512$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between access to online research databases and AI usability for research. This implies that lecturers with greater access to online research databases are more likely to utilise AI tools for research purposes. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant combined influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Table 3: Joint Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Statistic	Value
R^2	0.65
Adjusted R^2	0.63
F-Statistic	52.14
p-value (F-Test)	< 0.01

Table 3 presents the joint multiple regression model examining the relationship between technological self-efficacy, access to online research databases, and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. The R^2 value of 0.65 indicates that 65% of the variance in AI usability for research is jointly explained by technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases. The model is statistically significant ($F = 52.14$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that the predictors collectively contribute significantly to AI usability for research.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of Predictors for AI Usability for Research

Predictor Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)	Standardised Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Technological Self-Efficacy	0.48	0.56	7.89	< 0.01	Significant

Predictor Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)	Standardised Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Access to Online Research Databases	0.42	0.53	7.02	< 0.01	Significant

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients of the predictors. The standardised coefficient for technological self-efficacy (β = 0.56) indicates a strong positive contribution to AI usability for research, while the unstandardised coefficient (B = 0.48) suggests that a one-unit increase in technological self-efficacy leads to a 0.48-unit increase in AI usability for research. The predictor is statistically significant (t = 7.89, p < 0.01).

Similarly, access to online research databases (β = 0.53) has a notable positive contribution, with an unstandardised coefficient (B = 0.42), indicating that a one-unit increase in access to online research databases results in a 0.42-unit increase in AI usability for research. This predictor is also statistically significant (t = 7.02, p < 0.01).

Overall, the results indicate that technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases jointly explain a substantial portion (65%) of the variability in AI usability for research. Individually, technological self-efficacy (β = 0.56) has a slightly greater influence compared to access to online research databases (β = 0.53). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant combined influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant relationship between technological self-efficacy and AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. This aligns with Bandura's (2019) assertion that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage with and effectively utilise technological tools. Wang and Lin (2021) also emphasised that confidence in handling digital technologies plays a crucial role in the adoption of AI-driven research methodologies. The positive correlation found in this study suggests that lecturers who perceive themselves as competent in using digital technologies are more inclined to integrate AI into their research activities. This is consistent with Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021), who argued that self-efficacy influences an individual's willingness to explore advanced AI applications, including machine learning algorithms and automated content analysis tools. The implication of this finding is that enhancing lecturers' digital confidence through targeted training could significantly improve AI usability in research within social sciences disciplines.

Furthermore, the study established a significant relationship between access to online research databases and AI usability for research. This supports the findings of Ahmed et al. (2020), who reported that lecturers with unrestricted access to research databases demonstrate higher research productivity and greater methodological innovation through AI-assisted research. Similarly, Chen and Zhang (2022) highlighted that disparities in access to online academic resources create a digital divide, limiting the ability of lecturers to engage in AI-driven research. The significant correlation in this study confirms that access to scholarly databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar is a key enabler of AI usability. Johnson and Smith (2021) also observed that

institutions investing in database accessibility report increased AI adoption among their faculty members. This finding underscores the importance of institutional support in ensuring that lecturers have access to digital research tools that enhance their academic productivity.

Additionally, the study revealed a significant combined influence of technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases on AI usability for research. This finding corroborates the argument of Patel and Kumar (2023), who found that lecturers in institutions that provide both digital literacy training and unrestricted database access exhibit higher AI adoption rates. The R^2 value obtained in this study indicates that these two factors jointly explain a substantial proportion of variance in AI usability, reinforcing the interconnectedness of self-efficacy and resource availability in shaping digital research engagement. This aligns with Miller and Thompson (2022), who suggested that AI adoption in higher education requires both individual technological competence and institutional resource allocation. The current study extends their argument by demonstrating that these two variables interact to significantly influence AI usability among social sciences lecturers.

These findings also provide insights into the ongoing discourse on AI integration in social sciences research. O'Connor and Andrews (2020) previously noted that most studies on AI usability focus on science and technology disciplines, with limited attention given to social sciences educators. This study fills that gap by providing empirical evidence that social sciences lecturers, like their counterparts in STEM fields, can leverage AI for research if they possess adequate self-efficacy and access to online databases. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2017) further emphasised the growing demand for faculty members to develop digital skills for AI integration. The findings of this study reinforce this argument, highlighting the need for targeted policies that enhance technological training and improve access to academic resources for lecturers in social sciences.

The study confirms that technological self-efficacy and access to online research databases significantly influence AI usability for research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education in Oyo State. These findings have important implications for institutional policies and professional development programmes aimed at promoting AI adoption in higher education. Future research could explore additional factors such as institutional support, attitudes towards AI, and infrastructural constraints that may further shape AI usability in academic research.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide important conceptual and theoretical implications for understanding AI usability in research among social sciences lecturers in colleges of education. The study establishes that technological self-efficacy significantly influences lecturers' ability to engage with AI tools, reinforcing existing theories that highlight self-efficacy as a key determinant of technology adoption. However, unlike previous studies that primarily focused on general digital literacy, this study demonstrates that confidence in AI-specific tools is a critical factor in shaping research engagement. Additionally, access to online research databases emerged as a vital enabler of AI usability, underscoring the role of infrastructural support in facilitating technological integration. While prior research has examined the independent effects of self-efficacy and resource availability, this study extends the discourse by revealing their combined influence, showing that lecturers with both high self-efficacy and greater access to research databases exhibit significantly higher AI adoption rates.

These findings contribute to the broader debate on AI adoption in academia by offering new insights specific to social sciences lecturers, a group that has been largely overlooked in mainstream AI research. While existing literature predominantly focuses on AI usability in STEM disciplines, this study challenges the assumption that AI adoption is less relevant in the social sciences. Instead, it provides empirical evidence that social sciences lecturers, when equipped with the necessary skills and resources, can effectively utilise AI for research, just as their counterparts in science and technology fields. This study, therefore, calls for a re-examination of institutional policies to ensure that digital capacity-building initiatives and resource allocation strategies are inclusive of all academic disciplines. Addressing these gaps will not only enhance AI usability but also promote a more equitable digital transformation in higher education research.

Recommendation

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

Enhancing Digital Literacy Training for Lecturers: Since technological self-efficacy significantly influences AI usability for research, colleges of education should organise regular digital literacy workshops and AI training programmes for social sciences lecturers. These initiatives should focus on building lecturers' confidence in using AI-driven research tools, data analysis software, and automated content management systems.

Expanding Access to Online Research Databases: Given the strong relationship between access to research databases and AI usability, academic institutions should invest in subscriptions to major scholarly databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and JSTOR. Additionally, collaborations with open-access initiatives should be encouraged to ensure lecturers have unrestricted access to high-quality academic resources.

Integrating AI Tools into Institutional Research Policies: Institutions should develop policies that integrate AI-based research methodologies into academic workflows. This includes providing AI-powered research support services, such as virtual research assistants, plagiarism detection tools, and automated referencing systems, to enhance lecturers' efficiency in scholarly work.

Providing Institutional Support for AI Adoption: The combined influence of technological self-efficacy and database access on AI usability highlights the need for institutional interventions. Colleges of education should establish AI research centres or dedicated support units that provide technical assistance, mentorship, and resources to facilitate AI integration in social sciences research.

Encouraging Collaborative AI Research Networks: To further promote AI usability, lecturers should be encouraged to participate in collaborative research networks where knowledge on AI applications in social sciences can be shared. This can be facilitated through interdisciplinary research grants, faculty exchange programmes, and partnerships with technology-driven research institutions.

Bridging the Digital Divide in Higher Education: Given the disparities in AI adoption due to resource limitations, government and educational stakeholders should prioritise infrastructural development, ensuring that all colleges of education have adequate digital facilities, high-speed internet, and up-to-date research tools to support AI-driven academic research.

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NIGER MILITARY CRISIS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROLIFERATION OF ARMS: DRAWING LESSONS FROM LIBYA

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ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the Niger military crisis and its potential implications for the proliferation of arms in the region, drawing lessons from the aftermath of the Libyan civil war. By examining the linkages between insecurity, arms trafficking, and regional stability, the article explores how the ongoing crisis in Niger may exacerbate arms proliferation. Drawing from Libya's experience, it highlights the urgent need for preventive measures, regional cooperation, and international support to address the underlying drivers of arms trafficking and prevent further destabilization in the West African region. Qualitative sources such as newspapers, the internet, and scholarly works were used to examine the situation in Niger Military Crisis and the Implications for Proliferation of Arms. The study finds out the Arms Proliferation in the Sahel strengthen terrorism and Banditry that threatened the region. The study further noted that while security responses are needed, containing arms proliferation demands tackling its underlying drivers of instability. Vast socio-economic disparities, ethnic tensions, and lack of inclusive governance fuel grievances

that militant and criminal networks exploit for recruitment across the Sahel should be addressed.

Introduction

The Niger military crisis has threatens regional security through its potential to increase arms flows in the Sahel (Singer, 2022). A coup overthrew the democratically elected government, installing military head of state. The recent coup in Niger has sent shockwaves through the country, the region, and the global community. On 26 of July 2023, the Niger government was overthrown, and President Mohamed Bazoum was taken hostage, leading to a series of events that have had far-reaching implications. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) issued an ultimatum to the coup leaders, threatening military intervention if Bazoum was not returned to power. This has led to ECOWAS member states suspending relations with Niger and closing their borders with the country. The neighboring countries of Mali and Burkina Faso, both led by military coup leaders, also issued a joint statement warning of potential military responses (Gilles Yabia, 2023). The main coup leader, General Abdourahamane Tiani, outlined a transition roadmap in a televised address, calling for a period of no more than three years and an inclusive national dialogue. He also emphasized that Niger would defend itself in the event of military intervention. The crisis has drawn international attention, with France being accused of destabilizing Niger and the United States closely monitoring the situation due to its military presence in the region.

Gilles Yabia (2023) noted that Niger's strategic importance, despite its low economic and social indicators, is underscored by its geographical position at the crossroads of North, West, and Central Africa, its rich mineral and oil resources, its potential for renewable energy development, and its strong demographic growth. These factors explain the keen interest of medium and large powers in the crisis and its potential implications on the wider region. In analyzing the various perspectives surrounding the Niger coup, it is important to consider both the positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, the coup leaders have put forward a roadmap for a transition period and national dialogue, which could potentially lead to a more inclusive and stable government in the future. Additionally, the crisis has brought attention to the strategic importance of Niger and the Sahel region, potentially prompting greater international engagement and support for development efforts. However, there are also negative aspects to consider. The coup and its aftermath have created political instability and heightened tensions in the region, with the threat of military intervention looming large. The accusations against foreign powers and the potential for further conflict raise concerns about the security and stability of the country and the wider region. Looking towards the future, it is crucial for all parties involved to prioritize dialogue, reconciliation, and a peaceful resolution to the crisis. The international community can play a constructive role in supporting efforts towards stability and development in Niger, recognizing the country's strategic importance and the potential for positive change in the aftermath of the coup. Niger coup has had an outsized global impact, with implications that ripple through the country, the region, and the world. By considering the historical context, key figures, and influential individuals involved, as well as the perspectives and potential future developments, stakeholders can work towards a peaceful and sustainable resolution to the crisis.

However, the coup's destabilizing impact may extend far beyond Niger's borders due to pre-existing arms proliferation challenges in the region. The Sahel suffers from porous borders and the presence of militant groups which exploit weapons availability (Boas & Torheim, 2013). Chadian and Libyan stockpiles destabilized following their internal security crises, enabling the emergence of Boko Haram and al-Qaeda linked factions (Williams, 2016). Their unfettered access to arms challenges legitimacy of governments and fuels both intra and inters conflict situations in the Sahel (Boas & Jennings, 2007). Meanwhile, the G5 Sahel joint military force that is meant to counter these security menace is struggling against resource constraints despite international support (Hudson, 2019).

The 2011 conflict in Libya epitomizes how the loss of state control over arms can create an

increased violence. The deposition of Gaddafi led to his estimated 150,000 tons of weapons becoming dispersed and uncontrollably in circulation. (Kirschner, 2018). These weapons contributed greatly to conflict in Mali, and also fueled arms trafficking routes and strengthened the militant capabilities (Patriota, 2020). A similar scenario risks emerging from the Niger crisis without prudent policy. Coup leaders have sought to consolidate power through military appointments and decrees restricting protests (Bachir, 2022). However, they face challenges maintaining troop loyalty given the military's ethnic diversity (Dabiri, 2022). Defections or clashes could enable arms diversions from state stockpiles like those of neighboring Mali in 2012 (Boas & Torheim, 2013). Even without large-scale diversions, instability risks empowering criminal and militant networks to acquire weapons on the black market. Regional and international actors must urgently address this threat. While condemning the coup, they should prioritize stability through diplomatic engagement rather than isolation (Diallo, 2022). The targeted sanctions alone risk further destabilization without accompanying support for the effects of those sections. It also noted that most previous targeted sanction has not be able to reduce or stop the proliferation of arms (Williams, 2016). The lessons from past peacekeeping efforts emphasize the need for holistic, long-term support mechanism to addressing socio-economic drivers of conflict alongside security issues (Bellamy et al., 2010). They should work with ECOWAS to implement a monitoring mechanism over Niger's stockpiles and borders control (Bellamy et al., 2010). However, partners like France which has a military presence in Niger could support this through intelligence sharing (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). The Stockpile management training for security forces will go a long way to help maintain control during political transitions (Small Arms Survey, 2018).

Conflict Theory and the Niger Military Crisis: Implications for Arms Proliferation

The Military Crisis in Niger provides insight into how theory of conflict can explain the dynamics of power, resource competition, and socioeconomic grievances that help to create conditions for armed conflict. Stemmed from the foundation established by Karl Marx and Max Weber, conflict theory states that societal unrest emanates from deep-seated inequalities and the competition that exists among different classes for access to scarce resources. In this instance, large disparities in power and economy in Niger continue to raise tensions. Lund (2006) highlights that such struggle for the appropriation of resources such as land, minerals, and access to trade routes normally makes inequalities transform themselves into conflicts. This is aggravated by existing grievances among the marginalized classes, leading to instability and eventual violence. The Niger crisis saw various groups struggling to gain mastery over these resources, just as in Libya, where the collapse of state authority occasioned a large-scale arms proliferation, thereby precipitating conflict. Coser (1956) suggests that conflict is disruptive, but also potentially has a functional role to play in focusing attention on necessary adjustments and changes in society. In Niger, the military crisis can trigger essential talks over governance, resource management, and equitable sharing of wealth. The way one addresses the basic causes of conflict might bring in the reforms that will stabilize the region over the long term. But managing conflict constructively, avoiding its further escalation and proliferation of arms, remains the challenge. Recent analyses, such as those by Johnson and Owen (2018), demonstrate that International conflicts are often also very strongly based on economic interests intertwined with the struggle for power. The dynamics of the Niger crisis equally reflect this, whereby external actors may take advantage of the situation for their geopolitical gains, thus further complicating efforts toward conflict resolution. The crisis has been facilitating a massive flow of arms in this region, which is very dangerous not only for Niger itself but also its neighbors, similar to what happened after the civil unrest in Libya. Smith (2020) emphasizes the role of resource competition in exacerbating conflicts, as it is observed that the pursuit of economic gain may trigger violence. In Niger, competing claims over key resources by various groups raise the potential for armed violence that makes urgent policy action to resolve their root causes all the more imperative. Military crisis in Niger in the light of conflict theory helps to underscore the complex interrelationship between power imbalance and unequal economic distribution through resource competition. Understanding these dynamics is important for policymakers desiring to reduce conflict and prevent arms proliferation. This could be a pathway toward the stabilization of the region, taking lessons

from what happened in Libya by addressing root causes and making a call for fair resource distribution.

Insecurity and Vulnerability to Arms Trafficking

The Niger military coup threatens to deteriorate security conditions and create vulnerabilities exploitable by arms traffickers. Political transitions often coincide with instability enabling criminal exploitation (Williams et al., 2017). Coup leaders in Niger have struggled to establish full control, facing protests and the potential for factionalism given ethnic divisions (Dabiri, 2022). Such instability strengthens non-state actors seeking to profit from arms flows. The insecurity situation provides opportunities for traffickers to transport illicit weapons with fewer impediments. Weakened border controls during unrest allow for increased cross-border movement of goods, including arms bound for militant groups (Small Arms Survey, 2018). Niger shares borders with seven countries i.e Algeria, Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Lybia, Mali and Nigeria. These countries continuously experiencing instability. Longstanding arms trafficking routes from the lawless Libyan and Nigerian borders risk intensification (Williams, 2016).

Arm traffickers also exploit governance gaps arising from political crises. Coup leaders' priorities lie in consolidating power rather than addressing development issues (Bachir, 2022). Remote border regions experience reduced state presence and oversight during unstable periods. Arm traffickers capitalize on this to discreetly transfer weapons along porous borders (Boas & Torheim, 2013). They develop new smuggling routes that are difficult for under-resourced security forces to monitor (Patriota, 2020). Most African countries are littered with vast ungoverned space that are heaven for terrorism, bandits, organize crime and arms traffickers Weak governance and absence rule of law enables traffickers to operate with impunity. Corruption persists as a challenge in Niger even during stable periods (Transparency International, 2020). Political upheaval risks worsening corruption as oversight decreases. Traffickers can bribe officials to turn a blind eye to arms shipments or fabricate false export documentation (Small Arms Survey, 2018). They establish illicit arms bazaars near borders beyond government control (Bachir, 2022).

Heightened insecurity crises fuel arms demand which encourage arms trafficking. Civilians seek weapons for protection during unrest while non-state actors arm for offensive purposes (Williams et al., 2017). Coup leaders may divert state arms to arm loyalists (Boas & Torheim, 2013). Increased circulation of loose weapons perpetuates cycles of violence and crime that destabilize the region (Kirschner, 2018). Traffickers exploit this demand through weapons supplies. The Niger crisis exacerbates vulnerabilities that traffickers have long exploited in the Sahel. Political instability, falling state, poor governance and porous borders facilitate illicit arms flows which further deteriorate security. There is need for an urgent action to stem these trafficking threats that endanger stability across the region.

Lessons from Libya's Experience

The 2011 Libyan civil war provides stark lessons on the dangers of state collapse and uncontrolled arms proliferation for regional security. As dictator Muammar Gaddafi's 42-year rule ended, the death of Gaddafi created a power vacuum that allowed Libya's arms stockpiles and proliferation networks to wreak havoc across the North and West Africa (Boas & Jennings, 2013). Niger and the wider Sahel region have since then grappled with the destabilizing impacts of Libya's weapons outflows, however, most states in the Sahel has not demonstrated the needed prudent policy to prevent a similar scenario that may emerging from the current Niger crisis. Libya possessed enormous arms reserves as Gaddafi extensively militarized the country (Kirschner, 2018). NATO-backed rebels seized control of these stockpiles but lacked the capacity for oversight as fighting continued (Patriota, 2020). An estimated 150,000 tons of arms went missing including huge quantities of small arms, ammunition and even heavy weapons like surface-to-air missiles (Kirschner, 2018). With borders porous and proliferation networks intact, these weapons began spreading rapidly beyond Libya.

Arms trafficking routes through the Sahel that Gaddafi had turned a blind eye to for profit suddenly faced little obstruction (Williams, 2016). Non-state groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Tuareg separatists armed

heavily from Libyan sources (Boas & Torheim, 2013). This empowered militant capabilities and exacerbated unrest, such as the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali enabled by heavily armed returning fighters (Lacher, 2012). Proliferated arms also strengthened criminal networks like Boko Haram, worsening insecurity across the Lake Chad region (Williams & Alpaslan Ozerdem, 2019). The destabilizing impacts continue being felt years later. Weapons from Libya have been intercepted as far as the Philippines, fueling conflicts globally (Kirschner, 2018). In the Sahel, their widespread availability perpetuates cycles of violence through rampant crime and militancy that challenge governments (Kirschner, 2018). Terrorist attacks rose sharply across the region following the post-2011 arms diffusion (Williams, 2016). Border communities suffer arms-related human costs like violence and displacement on a massive scale (Fabre, 2018).

These consequences demonstrate that containing arms proliferation must be a priority during political crises to prevent conflict regionalization. Had international actors focused on securing Libyan arms depots and intercepting trafficking networks earlier, some impacts could have been mitigated (Patriota, 2020). Instead, short-term security efforts took precedence over longer-term stockpile management (Kirschner, 2018). Valuable lessons show governance, development and arms control must work in parallel from the Niger crisis' outset. The immense destabilization from Libya's uncontrolled arms proliferation underscores the urgent need for proactive policy to contain proliferation risks from Niger's instability. A comprehensive, holistic approach with regional coordination offers the best chance to avert conflict regionalization through cross-border weapons flows.

Impact on Regional Stability

The destabilizing impacts of arms proliferation transcend national borders in West Africa due to regional interconnectivity. Weakened governance in Niger risks enabling spill-over effects as conflicts regionalize through cross-border arms and militant flows (Williams & Alpaslan Ozerdem, 2019). Spikes in violence have occurred when instability in one state empowered non-state groups to access new weapons and recruits (Fabre, 2018). Increased arms availability fuels new conflicts and intensifies existing ones. Mali's 2012 rebellion emerged amid a proliferation-driven "perfect storm" of instability across borders in Libya and Algeria (Lacher, 2012). Armed violence rose across Liptako-Gourma, a tri-border area of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso as militant and criminal networks took hold (Williams, 2016). The proliferation-violence cycle risks worsening as more weapons enter this fragile borderland.

Militant safe havens also threaten to become hubs exporting instability. Conflicts risk crossing borders as groups gain strength from arms and operate across porous frontiers with impunity (Bachir, 2022). Boko Haram expanded its reach from Nigeria into the Lake Chad region with Libyan arms (Williams & Ozerdem, 2019). Al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates have gained footholds in the Sahel exploiting state weaknesses (Hudson, 2019).

Arms Trafficking Networks and Actors

Arms trafficking networks in the Sahel region utilize a diverse array of actors working together in complex and shifting illicit alliances to sustain conflict through weapons proliferation (Small Arms Survey, 2018). Understanding the dynamics between these groups is crucial to developing multi-pronged interventions that can effectively disrupt their activities. Transnational criminal organizations with experience smuggling other contraband play an important facilitating role in arms trafficking operations. As Williams et al. (2017) note, they leverage established transport routes and market connections to move weapons shipments. However, their primary motivation is financial rather than political, distinguishing them from militant factions.

Insurgent groups like Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara directly oversee trafficking to support operational goals. Cherkaoui (2019) explains they derive significant funds through taxes and direct involvement to enrich their organizations and increase arms availability, exacerbating conflict. This allows them to amass resources for attacks while deepening local control. Meanwhile, independent traffickers conduct business for profit, occasionally cooperating or competing with militant networks in pragmatic, shifting illicit alliances (Dabiri, 2022). Small Arms Survey (2018) observes networks leverage remote border areas with limited governance to establish routes. Bachir (2022) notes youth may be drawn

to participate due to lack of socio-economic opportunities.

Complicit officials also play an important facilitating role through corruption or intimidation (Williams et al., 2017). They provide logistical support like falsified documentation and early warnings of patrols in exchange for bribes according to the UNODC (2021). Addressing this complicity is key to containment efforts. Overall, these diverse actors cooperate where interests align despite occasional competition as no one group aims to fully undermine the broader arms trafficking industry (Small Arms Survey, 2018). A nuanced, multi-pronged approach must systematically address factors sustaining diverse network components through targeted security efforts, social and economic programs, and regional cooperation. With committed, long-term action, proliferation threats can be contained.

Preventive Measures and Regional Cooperation

As the complex dynamics sustaining arms proliferation across borders involve factors transcending national boundaries, a cooperative, comprehensive regional approach holds the greatest promise for containment (Bellamy et al., 2010). Information sharing between bodies like ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel must be strengthened to holistically monitor evolving network activities. Targeted intelligence can help coordinate enhanced border security through increased patrols, surveillance technology, and control points along high trafficking routes (Small Arms Survey, 2018). However, these efforts require adequate, sustained funding and training support to effectively monitor remote regions. Developed countries could play an important capacity building role through bilateral partnerships (Bachir, 2022).

Law enforcement actions must disrupt key network components through targeted sanctions and operations against trafficking kingpins (Williams et al., 2017). Regional cooperation is crucial to map illicit financial flows and trace arms shipments across porous borders. Joint investigations can dismantle routes and weaken networks by arresting high-level actors (UNODC, 2021). Yet non-kinetic measures are equally crucial. Alternative livelihood programs must accompany security crackdowns to reduce local incentives for participation (Dabiri, 2022). Development aid can bolster state authority and service provision in under-governed border areas through education, infrastructure and economic opportunities (Williams, 2016). This helps diminish militant influence over vulnerable populations.

Regional arms control regimes also require strengthening, such as harmonizing regulations and training local officials in stockpile management, marking and tracing techniques (Kirschner, 2018). Coordinated DDR initiatives facilitate the reintegration of at-risk youth, reducing recruitment pools (Bellamy et al., 2010). Regional cooperation ensures former combatants do not merely transit borders to continue involvement. A holistic "three D" approach of deterrence, development and dialogue offers the best framework. National ownership and sovereignty must be respected, with international partners playing a supporting role (Bachir, 2022). Only through committed, multifaceted and regionally coordinated action can the complex threats posed by proliferation across porous Sahelian borders be sustainably contained over the long term.

Addressing Root Causes of Insecurity

While security responses are needed, containing arms proliferation demands tackling its underlying drivers of instability. Vast socio-economic disparities, ethnic tensions, and lack of inclusive governance fuel grievances that militant and criminal networks exploit for recruitment across the Sahel (Williams et al., 2017). Niger suffers from widespread poverty, with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2020). Remote communities have limited access to basic services, healthcare, education or livelihood opportunities. This breeds discontent that armed non-state actors channel into violence (Dabiri, 2022).

Political systems also face legitimacy challenges. Coups reflect popular frustration with unrepresentative leadership failing to improve lives (Singer, 2022). Marginalized groups question the distribution of power and national resources between ethnicities that do not always coincide with state borders (Bachir, 2022). Militant narratives portray the state as corrupt and oppressive, pushing youth towards radicalization absent counter-messaging (Williams, 2016). Criminal networks similarly prey upon socio-economic vulnerabilities in the

absence of governance (Small Arms Survey, 2018). Lasting stability demands holistic reforms addressing community needs.

International Support and Counterterrorism Cooperation

International cooperation has an indispensable role to play through capacity building and technical assistance (Bellamy et al., 2010). Partners must avoid short-term security fixes and instead commit long-term development support coordinated through bodies like the UN and African Union (Williams, 2016). Targeted counterterrorism initiatives require regional intelligence sharing and operations against high-level militant leaders (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). Developed nations can leverage assets like surveillance technology to strengthen border controls if respecting sovereignty (Hudson, 2019).

Coordinated training bolsters the capacities of security forces in stockpile management, investigations, and human rights-compliant operations (Kirschner, 2018). Partnerships with INTERPOL and EUROPOL facilitate tracing illicit arms and disrupting trafficking routes across Africa (Small Arms Survey, 2018). International actors should condition aid to democratic reforms and good governance rather than solely counterterrorism metrics (Williams et al., 2017). Community defense groups require oversight to prevent human rights abuses and radicalization (Bellamy et al., 2010). Holistic development must address unemployment, education and community relations. While security assistance has a role, development must receive sustained, adequate funding prioritized over military responses (Bachir, 2022). Only through coordinated, locally owned efforts applying lessons from Libya and Mali can West Africa build resilience against instability (Patriota, 2020). International support remains pivotal if applied judiciously with African leadership.

Methodology

This research is a critical review of the Niger military crisis and its implications on arms proliferation in the region, drawing lessons from the aftermath of the Libyan civil war. A descriptive analytical framework was adopted to establish linkages between insecurity, arms trafficking, and regional stability. These data were collected from various qualitative sources: newspapers, scholarly articles, and internet publications. This was meant to provide a multi-faceted approach for a detailed look into the crisis in Niger as it unfolds and how it has the potential to contribute to arms proliferation. The tool of content analysis was utilized to analyze the data that was collected on especially root drivers of instability, and implications for security in West Africa.

Discussion on Findings

The results of the study show that the military crisis in Niger contributes significantly to the risks of arms proliferation in the region, with various similarities to the experiences in Libya following the civil war. The research underlines that the present crisis can reinforce terrorism and banditry, which already threaten stability in the region. This analysis therefore points out that while necessary, immediate security responses are imperative for effective containment of arms proliferation, tackling the root causes of instability remains crucial. The study further stresses that vast socioeconomic inequalities, ethnic tensions, and the lack of inclusive governance should be addressed to contribute toward removing those factors of grievance that militant and criminal networks exploit for recruitment across the Sahel. The conclusion of the study called for urgent prevention, regional cooperation, and international support in an effort to reduce risks of arms trafficking in the West African region, and such efforts would spur stability in this region. Basically, addressing the core issues is crucial in providing a robust security framework that would face up to the challenges posed by the crisis at hand.

Conclusion

The Niger military coup threatens to exacerbate insecurity and arms proliferation risks across West Africa's porous borders, as demonstrated by Libya's still unfolding consequences. If left unaddressed, these threats endanger stability through conflict regionalization, rising violence, and militant safe havens. However, the analysis shows lasting solutions lie not in security responses alone, but in tackling the underlying political, economic and social grievances fueling radicalization in Niger and the wider Sahel. Only through addressing needs in marginalized communities and strengthening inclusive governance can state

authority and resilience be built. Preventing unchecked proliferation demands a cooperative, multi-pronged approach respecting national sovereignty. Information sharing, targeted security efforts, and law enforcement actions must work in parallel with socio-economic programming, arms control regimes and development aid bolstering weak border regions. International partners play a supportive role through sustained cooperation, capacity building and funding prioritized over short-term military interventions. Regional bodies like ECOWAS are well-placed to coordinate holistic strategies applying lessons from past crises. If the right preventive measures are taken, with continuous long-term commitment from African nations and the international community, further destabilization of West Africa can potentially be avoided. By comprehensively addressing root instability drivers and containing cross-border arms flows, states like Niger may build stability and counter the cycle of violence facing the Sahel.

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MILITARY INTERVENTION AND ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA'S POLITICAL EVOLUTION, 1966-1979

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ABSTRACT
Beginning from the sixties of the twentieth century, military ascendancy was a major feature that exerted masculinity on Nigeria's political evolution. This accounted for the different experiences of military intervention and administration almost throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Essentially, the long-term impact of military governance in Nigeria's socio-political and economic development trajectory warrants more critical analysis. In light of this, the paper explores the military in the Nigerian political landscape from 1966, when the first military coup took place, to 1979, which marks the end of its first phase, which was succeeded by the second Nigerian republic. The paper adopts the conventional historical method, relying on secondary sources for its exploration. The paper found out that beyond the usual alibi of civilian incompetence, socioeconomic underdevelopment, corruption as well as electoral crisis; insurgent tendencies arising from ethnic nationalities as well as secessionist agitation were central to military intervention and administration in Nigeria during the period under evaluation. The paper concludes with reflections on the vestiges of military intervention and administration on Nigeria's civilian political culture and thereby recommends that attempts to address Nigeria's contemporary political acrimonies must necessarily appreciate the historical context and experiences of the nation's military governance, particularly between 1966 and 1979.

Introduction

Since the end of twentieth century, military ascendancy in Nigeria's political evolution has been laid to rest, yet historians and political scientists have not relaxed evaluation on the theme. This aspect of Nigerian history has remained an open discourse, most probably, because of its complex connection to the nation's colonial experiences, which necessarily midwifed its occurrence, and contributed to the nation's post-colonial realities. Adebile et al. (2016) examined military administration from an

African-wide perspective as a critical challenge to democratic stability in postcolonial political experiences. On the other hand, it has been argued that military intervention and administration were not entirely strange phenomena in the area now known as Nigeria. This has been substantiated by the nature of monarchical practices in pre-colonial Nigeria, which are mostly monocratic royal absolutism (Janowitz & Doorn, 1971; Kennedy, 1975; and Nordlinger, 1977). The latter indicates these trendy commonalities in Nigeria's pre-colonial political civilization and post-colonial military experiences. Though Afrocentric perspectives and interpretations may not readily accept such perception, the typical despotic manifestations associated with postcolonial military regimes do not make such critical explanations easily validated.

In light of the above, military intervention and administration in Nigeria's political evolution since independence seems a product of her colonial cum nationalism experiences as Eze Ogueri II maintained (Ogueri, 1976). The objective of this paper, however, is to explore the underpinnings of military intervention and administration in Nigeria's political frame between 1966 and 1979. The year 1966 was when the first military coup occurred, and 1979 marked the beginning of the Nigerian Second Republic following the end of what may be referred to as the first military epoch in the nation's historical evolution. It further attempts to critique the common perception that military ascendancy in Nigeria was primarily necessitated by civilian incompetence, socio-economic underdevelopment as well as political and electoral corruption, thereby drawing attention to a potential approach to addressing the nation's economic and political absurdities through an appreciation of Nigeria's historical experiences with the military in governance.

Context from Colonial Experiences

For the purpose of hindsight, it may be of some relevance to contextualize military forms in the nation's colonial experiences, this will provide insight into Nigeria's post-independence military interventions, if not actual insurgent reactions to civilian democratic governance. More so, it will be helpful to underline the foundations for such nature of reaction during the first half of the twentieth century, when the nation now studied as Nigeria was under colonial administration.

By the end of the nineteenth century was a period that experienced the efforts of a few elite Nigerians against colonial domination and administration, which took the form of religious as well as political movements.[1] After the Second World War, nationalist movements demanded considerable constitutional reforms, most of which were granted by the British. For instance, the first constitution by Governor Clifford in 1922 was criticized by many nationalists because it provided for a Legislative Council for Southern Nigeria and the Governor ruled by proclamation in the North. The Richards Constitution of 1946 provided for a Legislative Council for the whole country and Regional Houses of Assembly. This did not satisfy the nationalists, there were further demands for constitutional reforms resulting in the Macpherson Constitution of 1951. The latter provided for a strong centralized government with four ministers from each region as members of the executive council (Olusanya, 1980, p. 520). This encouraged the formation of two regional political parties; the Action Group (AG) and Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the West and the North respectively, while the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) remained the dominant party in the East, which used modern political methods to appeal to the people. Still, there was controversy over self-government. The political parties in the Western and Eastern regions of southern Nigeria began to push the colonial government to extend full internal self-governance to the regional assemblies. The Northern region continued to oppose the move, however, stating that it was not ready for self-government (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 153). Following further constitutional talks at Lagos and London in 1954 and 1957 accordingly, the Lyttleton constitution of 1954 was set up to incorporate the agreements reached by the three regions. Each region had the option of acquiring full internal self-government in 1956, but no region was compelled to become fully self-governing, and the Federation of Nigeria as a whole was to remain under British colonial authority for the time being. Hence, the Western and Eastern regions gained full internal self-government in 1957 and the Northern Region in 1959. This constitution established Nigeria as a federation of three regions, Northern, Western, and Eastern under which Nigeria gained independence in 1960. In 1957, Nigeria became a full-fledged Federation headed by Alhaji

Tafawa Balewa who became the first Prime Minister (Falola & Heaton, p. 153).

When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, hopes were high that, with mineral wealth and a handful of educated folks in Africa, Nigeria would emerge as African first superpower and a stabilizing democratic influence in the region. However, these lofty hopes were soon dashed and the country lumbered from crisis to crisis, with the democratic government eventually being overthrown in a violent military coup in January 1966 (Siollun, 2009, p. 7). Economically, from 1966 to 1979, Nigeria's clout grew from being just the most populous Black and African nation to a height of influence and glory. It became the richest African country and by far, the most influential in African affairs. The praise for this was partly due to the oil boom of the 1970s which spelt unprecedented national prosperity, as well as the personalities and preferences of some of the military rulers of the period (Fawole, 2003, p. 2). In a political sense, the decades of the 60s and 70s were perhaps, the touchiest epoch of Nigeria's historical evolution, during which the nation almost suffered disintegration, and Nigerian governments mastered the art of taking their country to the edge of an abyss and pulling back at the last moment. Nigeria was dominated by the military for over four decades of unstable governance – irregular coups supplanting democratically elected governments, the insurgent secessionist Biafra war (1966 – 1970) as well as imposed economic blockade that caused famine and pervasive deaths, reckless squandering of the country's oil wealth - which largely disrupted the country's political evolution (Siollun, 2009, p. 7).

The Military in Nigeria's Political Space from the 1960s

A brief historical excursion into the political antecedents of military involvement in Nigerian politics is necessary to make military rule more understandable. An army officer named Captain David Ejoor commanded the army guards at the midnight flag-raising ceremony on Nigeria's Independence Day on October 1, 1960. But little did Ejoor perceive the role he and his army colleagues would play in their country's post-colonial political evolution (Siollun, p. 11). The army that the departing British colonialists were bequeathing to the newly independent Nigeria had not fully imbibed the strict apolitical tradition of the British army. Hence, the army was still largely officered by British personnel, only 18 percent of its officers at independence were Nigerians. Its commanding officer up till 1965 was Major General Sir Christopher Welby-Everard (Luckham, 1971, p. 163), the Nigerian army therefore was a dedicated disciple of the British army. The army was not a nationalistic organisation, it was far from being political, ideological, or revolutionary. By 1966, the largest segment of the officer corps consisted of very conservative elements who devoted themselves to the attainment of the very top in their career. In some cases, they did this with the aid of top politicians and senior civil servants. Partly as a result of the nature of their training and orientation as well as their ambition to get to the top of their career as soon as possible, thus, many of them were prepared to do the bidding of the politicians (Falola et al., 2010, p. 143). The military came to power in January 1966 with the justification of a failed civilian rule in the country. The attainment of political independence in 1960 inaugurated a new era in which Nigerians assumed the responsibility of governing themselves with the birth of the First Republic. However, this First Republic was short-lived. The conduct of politics in the First Republic witnessed a series of crises which featured oppression, political violence, official corruption, rigged elections, ethnic baiting, bullying, and thuggery (Falola et al., 2010, p. 137). For example, the Action Group (AG) crisis of 1962, the census controversy of 1962/63, the rigged general elections of 1964, the rigged western Regional elections of October 1965, and the bloodletting, arson, and destruction that followed it (Fawole, 2003, p. 4). These attitudes led directly to the overthrow of the civilian democratic regime by several military officers in January 1966.

The politics of the bitterness that characterised the First Republic can be seen as a background to the advent of military rule in Nigeria. The ruthless race to win and consolidate party interests, ethnic supremacy as well as economic and political prospects, which had been gathering clouds since the late 1950s eventually climaxed in the 1962/63 census controversy. The manipulation of the census figures was calculated to entrench a certain ethnic group in the centre thereby dashing the hopes of the other groups (Akinbi, 1999, p. 29).

There was a serious political crisis in the West which started as an ideology but later developed

into a personality clash between the leaders of the Action Group. The Federal Government seized the opportunity to impose a state of emergency on the West for six months thereby assuming direct control over the region. A special Commission of Enquiry was set up and the AG leaders including Awolowo were arrested and imprisoned for treasonable felony which alienated the Yoruba (Eluwa et al., 1988 p. 273).

The coalition arrangement between the NPC and the NCNC for the control of the federal government had collapsed. Initially, the coalition government was an act of victimization calculated to reduce the overall influence of Awolowo and his Action Group; this did not augur well for the image of the Federal government. Struggle over the party that would control the federal government created serious tension and mistrust (Akinbi, p. 30; Adesote & Falade, p. 144).

Again, national morale was at its lowest ebb because of the corrupt practices and mismanagement of the economy by the politicians. These top politicians diverted public funds into the accounts of their political parties. They also used public institutions such as Regional Development Corporation and Regional Marketing Boards to enrich individuals who were staunch supporters of their respective parties (Falola et al., 2010, p. 138). For instance, as the Coker commission of enquiry fully demonstrated the Western Nigeria Marketing Board Funds seemingly reserved for social and economic development projects were cleverly reallocated through a complex chain of banking, construction, and real estate institutions to key AG leaders for use in financing the 1959 Federal elections and for generally strengthening the party at National and regional levels. The AG government of Western region and the NPC government of Northern region wasted about one million six hundred pounds of public fund through the purchase of the much overvalued assets of Arab Brothers Limited. The venture proved to be worthless to the two governments (Akinbi, 1999, p. 31). In the process of draining the country of its wealth, many of the politicians built luxurious houses brought expensive cars and indulged in all sort of prodigality.

The 1964 federal elections fiasco largely contributed to the political violence and takeover of civilian rule. In order to effectively contest the elections, the various political parties formed alliances. The United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) were formed. Thus, the election was characterised by electoral irregularities and increasing incidents of thuggery and intimidation leading to its boycotts by UPGA (Falola et al., 2010, p. 139). A national crisis was imminent and there were talks on possible takeover by the military. To avert such a development, the Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was invited by the President and agreed to form a government of National Unity thereby allowing a fresh election (Eluwa et al., 1988, p. 277).

Then came October 1965 Western Region election which actually was the immediate precursor to military intervention. During the campaign both the NNA and the UPGA used violence, murdering their opponents and destroying their properties. UPGA then accused the NNA of rigging the election. Thus, the election generated much controversy and later, large scale civil disturbance. For a period of almost three months, governmental activities were relatively paralysed in the region as the people reacted to the NNDP's victory. Lawlessness was on rampage, social disorder all over the west, burnings in towns and cities, including human beings. Yet, the Federal Government failed to intervene (Akinbi, p. 30; Eluwa et al, p. 278). Balewa seemed incapable of acting to quell the riots such that Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Johnson, the then Chief of Army Staff had to withdraw troops that had been earlier deployed to the region because many of the soldiers got sympathetic with the rioters. The social devastation, profiling deaths, and injuries of persons, most probably must have instigated military response to rescue and restoration of order to the region (Bourne, 2015, p.113). Histrionically, every significant issue gave rise to a serious political crisis and this prepared the ground for the coming of the military on 15th January, 1966. This was followed by a countercoup in July of the same year which ultimately led to the civil war in the year that followed.

The First Experience Ever

In the early hours of January 15, 1966, Nigeria's first military coup took place. The coup was led by ''five military majors'' namely, Kaduna Nzeogwu, Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Don. Okafor, Chris I. Anuforo and Adewale Ademoyega who were later dubbed, and operated out of each of the three regions of Nigeria and Lagos (Ademoyega, 1981; Falola &

Heaton, 2008, p. 172). The experience was a bloody one that saw the murder of the Federal Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, Premier Samuel Ladoke Akintola of the Western Region, Premier Ahmadu Bello of the Northern Region, and Minister of Finance Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, the young military officers believed, were responsible for the chaos of 1964 and 1965. Scores of Western and Northern top military officers were also killed during the coup, including Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun, Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari; Colonel R.A. Sodeinde, and Colonel Kur Mohammed; Lt. Col. J.Y. Pam; Lt. Col A.C. Unegbe and Lt. Col. A. Largema (Adesote & Falade, 2020, p. 150). The leaders of the coup claimed that their goal was to bring an end to the tribalism and corruption that had characterized the First Republic. They came with the notion to correct all the social, political, and economic ills of the politicians and restore sanity to governance. The coup only partially succeeded in the North and West while it failed woefully in the East and Lagos (Fawole, 2003, p. 6). The failure of the coup led to the demise of the First Republic and the emergence of military rule in the country. Unfortunately, it was not the original planners and executors of the coup that eventually became the rulers. That the coup failed was due to the inefficiency of the so-called revolutionaries rather than the alertness, discipline, and 'military preparedness' of the loyal troops (Falola et al., p. 145). Again, the Majors' coup probably failed because they simply did not have enough men and transport at their disposal to complete their operation of arresting and guarding leading political figures and senior army officers, disrupting communications networks, setting up roadblocks, defending themselves against counter-attacking forces and taking over broadcasting facilities. They did not even have enough military vehicles and some of them resorted to using civilian vehicles. Rather than launch simultaneous attacks on all the targets or assign one team to each target, the Majors were so undermanned that they had to sequentially move from one target to the next (Siollun, 2009, p. 64). For example, Major Ifeajuna arrested the Prime Minister, then set out for the Ikoyi Hotel, shot Brigadier Maimalari along the way, and then later shot Lt-Colonel Largema at the Ikoyi Hotel. This sequential execution is what allowed the warning to reach Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi and enabled him to organize a counter-attack. Additionally, the need for secrecy meant that a rehearsal of the coup was not possible. Major Nzeogwu was the only participant who was able to rehearse (under the guise of a military training exercise) (Siollun, p. 65).

Nevertheless, with so many of the most powerful political figures in Nigeria dead or imprisoned, the country was thrown into yet another major political crisis thereby creating an opportunity for the military to seize power from the federal parliaments (Falola & Heaton, 2008, p. 173). The new military government was welcomed with a massive outpouring of jubilation and goodwill. The vast majority of the public had never been in close contact with soldiers before and thus held them in a mixture of awe and fear. Having seen the ease with which the soldiers dispatched politicians they did not like, many civilians looked at soldiers as invincible and fearsome creatures. The soldiers' crisply starched uniforms, peaked caps, Sandhurst honor, and impeccable British accents (gained from their training by British instructors) reinforced positive public perceptions of them (Siollun, p. 65). Power quickly devolved to the commanding officer of the Nigerian army, Major General John Aguiyi-Ironsi, who immediately went about restoring order. Aguiyi-Ironsi broadcasted to the entire country proclaiming the new military government. Lt-Colonel Ejoor made a broadcast to the Eastern Region reiterating Ironsi's proclamation and stating that he would be the military government's representative in the Region. Lt-Colonel Ojukwu made a similar broadcast to the Northern Region and another broadcast was made to the Western Region. Lt-Colonel Ejoor went so far as to meet with Eastern civil servants to introduce himself. The announcements and introductions made to the various regions were confusing as the officers who made them were soon redeployed and assigned by Ironsi to regions other than those to which they had made their announcements (Siollun, p. 70). Notably, between 1966 and 1979, four military heads of states ruled the country namely; Major Genral J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, Lt. Col. (later General) Yakubu Gowon, General Ramat Muritala Muhammed and General Olusegun Obasanjo.

The emergence of Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi as military head of state of Nigeria on January 17, 1966 laid the foundation for military administration experience in the nation. The new Federal Military Government (FMG) was empowered to make laws for the "peace, order and good government of" Nigeria. Ironsi said his government would last only ''until such a time when a constitution is brought out according to

the wishes of the people" (Falola & Heaton, p. 173). He seemed to get off to a good start by initiating some popular actions at the outset. He appointed military governors who replaced the deposed Premiers in each of the country's four regions namely; Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka (''Emeka'') Odumegwu Ojukwu, Eastern Region; Lt. Col Francis Adekunle Fajuyi, Western Region; Lt. Col. David Ejoor, Mid-Western Region; and Lt. Col. Hassan Usma Kastina, Northern Region. Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon succeeded Colonel Kur Mohammed as the Chief of Staff at army headquarters (Falola & Heaton, p. 150). He abolished the posts of Prime Minister and President, and formed a new a Supreme Military Council (SMC) and Federal Executive Council (FEC). The SMC composed of the Head of Federal Military Government who was also the President/Chairman of the Supreme Military Council; Head of the Nigerian Navy, Commodore Joseph Wey; Head of the Nigerian Air Force, Lt-Colonel George Kurubo; Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Chief of Staff of the Nigerian Army, Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe; and the Military Governors of each of the four regions. The acting Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Kam Selem, was later added to the SMC (Siollun, p. 72).

He also suspended several parts of the 1963 constitution (mostly those parts dealing with party politics) and promulgated a number of Decrees. Decree No. 33 of 1966 abolished 81 political parties and cultural organisations. On 24 May, he issued Decree No. 34 of 1966, which, at a stroke, abolished Nigeria's Federal System of Government and introduced unitary System of Government in the country (Bourne, 2015, p. 117). Thus, the Federal Government became a "national government". The decree unified the senior civil service and made it possible to transfer civil servants across the former regional services. The regional structure of Nigeria ceased to exist, and was replaced by "groups of provinces." Both the military and the civil service, which had previously been administered regionally, were to be integrated and administered from the center. This unification decree was unanimous as the four military governors were against the establishment. Despite this, Ironsi went ahead and passed the decree (Akinbi, 1999, p. 33). Hence, the northerners interpreted this as an attempt to bring the northern region under southern control and Igbo domination. This singular act of betrayal by Ironsi destroyed the original vision of the planners for the country. Unfortunately, the political fragmented and unstable country simply went into more internal turmoil.

Northerners Reaction and the Counter Coup of July 1966

Ironsi's subsequent policies as head of state alarmed many northerners, however, who came to view the coup and Ironsi as part of a plan by southern – specifically Igbo – officers to use the military as a means of imposing a new era of Igbo domination. In many ways, circumstantial evidence corroborated such a view. In the first place, four of the five majors who led the January coup were Igbo. Of all the officers and politicians killed in the coup, only one had been Igbo, while the majority had been northerners. While the two most prominent figures in northern politics – Balewa and Bello – had been murdered along with their ally Akintola, the Igbo premiers of the Mid-Western and Eastern Regions had been arrested but later released. To many, this pattern indicated that the coup was primarily an Igbo strike against the north (Falola & Heaton, p. 173). He failed to put on trial the Igbo majors in the January plot. They were initially arrested and detained in Kirikiri before being dispersed to various prisons all over the country. While the members of the SMC wanted them tried, and while Ironsi was clearly afraid of them. Both the civilian and military elite of the Igbo insisted that they should not be tried. In other words, he allowed the coup plotters to remain in detention, rather than bringing them to trial for the crimes that northerners believed they had committed (Falola, et al., p. 146).

Making matters worse, Ironsi made several moves in the first half of 1966 that led many northerners to believe that he was part of an Igbo conspiracy. Ironsi was himself an Igbo, and, in an unwise political move, he tended to surround himself with Igbo advisers who by passed both the civil service and the study groups he had set up to look into the future constitutional, judicial and economic arrangements for the country (Falola & Heaton, p. 173). The appointment of Francis Nwokedi, an Igbo, as Sole Commissioner to inquire into the unification of the regional services was particularly tactless given Northern sensitivities about 'domination' by the better educated southerners. Furthermore, some of Ironsi's promotion in the army provided evidence that could be used to build up a case of nepotism. For instance, of the 21 promotions in April 1966, 18

Igbo officers were promoted to the rank of colonel against the advice of his Supreme Military Council (Akinbi, 1999, p. 33). The euphoric and provocative attitudes of the Igbos living in the North did not help the situation, for instance, Igbos were blamed for worsening economic conditions and rising food prices, as many of them were traders and Northerners reflexively attributed their worsening economic situation to the Igbo traders who had "control" of commerce and prices (Siollun, p. 83). Ironsi's public moves were centralist and anti-democratic. In the situation where northerners were alarmed at an Igbo takeover – some Igbos in the north were triumphalist. The most damning evidence against Ironsi in the eyes of northerners was the passing of the Unification decree. Given the relatively small number of educated northerners, the decree was regarded as being unfair to the North (Bourne, p. 117). Within a few days of the publication of the decree, what had been muted displeasure developed into large-scale communal killings of Southerners, particularly Igbos living in the North. Educated northerners, civil servants, staff and students at Ahmadu Bello University spearheaded violent anti-Igbo riots. Lives were lost in massacres, property was destroyed and Igbos began to retreat to safety in the East (Akinbi, p. 33). From then on, until the end of the civil war, the country faced a fearful degree of uncertainty.

On July 29, 1966, a redemptive counter-coup was launched by Northern Military officers such as Lt. Col Joseph Akahan, Major Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma, Major Abba Kyari, Major Martin Adamu, Major Shittu Alao, Major Musa Usman and including Major Murtala Muhammed who masterminded the coup (Adesote & Falade, p. 152). Aguiyi-Ironsi was staying at Ibadan with Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, Military Governor of Western Nigeria, when a detachment of northern soldiers arrived at the Government Lodge and killed them. Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe, Chief of Staff in Lagos, ordered troops to quell the mutiny, but they were ambushed with heavy losses. Ogundipe felt he had to negotiate with the rebels. Colonel Emeka Ojukwu, military governor in the east, phoned Ogundipe to offer his support if he wished to declare himself supreme commander. But Ogundipe was losing control of the army and declined. The rebels said there was strong pressure in the north for secession – the code name for the coup was Operation Araba ('secession') – and ideas were circulating for a simultaneous breakaway by both the north and the west (Bourne, p. 118).

For three days the country teetered without a head of state, until Lieutenant Colonel. Yakubu Gowon, the then Chief of the Army who had at first been taken prisoner by the rebels, agreed at their request to take over as Supreme Commander of the armed forces and the new head of state (Falola & Heaton, 174). He was thirty one-year-old, a Christian and from a small tribe, the *Ngas* (Angas), in the Bauchi/Plateau area; this categorized him as a northern minority figure, but from that middle part of Nigeria that was always likely to get squeezed in struggles between north and south and with an interest in keeping the polity together (Bourne, p. 118).

On 1st August, 1966 Lt. Col. Gowon announced that he had assumed control of the federal government and the leadership of the armed forces. Gowon immediately announced the repeal of Decree no. 34, indicating that Nigeria was committed to unity within a federal structure with respect for regional differences. Again, ethnicity re-echoed itself as Gowon was not the most senior surviving officer. At least, five surviving officers were senior to him, but he was the most senior Northern officer and Chief of Staff of the army (Akinbi, p. 34). Gowon was to find reconciliation difficult, however, particularly with Lieutenant Colonel Ojukwu, the Igbo military governor of the Eastern Region, who had many grave reservations about the legitimacy of the countercoup. In the first place, Ojukwu did not believe that Gowon had the authority to become supreme commander of the armed forces. Several still living officers had higher rank and more experience than Gowon, and Ojukwu argued that any of these officers had a greater claim to the title of supreme commander than the usurper Gowon (Falola & Heaton, p. 174). From August 1966 to July 1967, the country watched helplessly a strange struggle between Ojukwu and Gowon. Both officers held the country to ransom. The restoration of Northern hegemony in governance and the military did nothing to improve the political instability that had plagued the nation, especially from January 1966. If anything, the second coup merely worsens the sense of alienation that the Easterners felt as a widespread anti-Igbo pogrom began throughout the Northern region from September and October 1966 (Fawole, p. 52). A spate of massacres, many conducted by northern soldiers, took the lives of between 80,000 and

100,000 easterners during this period, the worst occurring in September. These massacres sparked revenge killings of northerners resident in the Eastern Region. Such events led Ojukwu to question whether Igbos could ever live in harmony within a federal Nigeria. He urged all easterners outside the region to return home and suggested that all northerners in the east do likewise. This led to large population movements in the latter half of 1966 and the early part of 1967 (Falola & Heaton, p. 174). After the collapse of the constitutional conferences and peace-meetings to reconcile the two contenders, on May 30, 1967 Ojukwu declared secession and the birth of independence of the Eastern Region, which he renamed the Independent Republic of Biafra. From the perspective of Gowon and the Federal Military Government, Biafra could not simply be allowed to secede. Hence, the country moved to one of its grimmest movements, the 30 months civil war which started from May 1967 and was finally terminated in January 1970. With the victory of the Federal Government over Biafra, and the successful conclusion of the civil war, the savior image of the military received a boost.

A Second Experience

Lieutenant Colonel. Yakubu Gowon emerged as Nigeria second military Head of State following the July 29, 1966 counter-coup. Gowon regime remains the longest serving military or civilian administration in Nigeria's political history. It lasted exactly nine years in power, from July 29, 1966 till July 29, 1975 when he was overthrown in a bloodless coup. It is remarkable not just for its long tenure but also for witnessing some of the most momentous events and laudable achievements in Nigeria's history (Fawole, p. 52). The political and administrative structures of government were established at the Federal and State levels as from 1967. However, these structures of government did not begin to function until after the civil war (Falola, et al., p. 146).

Gowon's government at the end of the civil war militarized the Federal structure thereby creating 12 states by Decree No. 14 of 1967. The former four regions were split into 12 states. The North was split into six states: North-Western, North-Central, North-Eastern, Benue-Plateau, Kano, Kwara; the East into three: East-Central, Rivers, South Eastern; the West into two: Lagos, Western; and Mid-Western region was left intact as a State (Adesote & Falade, p. 159).

He went ahead to initiate some populist programmes. One of such was the 3Rs – a policy toward reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation for the nation. This was launched to help wipe out bad memories, reduce resentful and hostile feelings and integrate the various parts of the Nigerian populace into a united Nigerian nation (Eluwa et al., p. 288). The main aim was to bring the country together again, resettle war victims (both internally displaced persons and refugees), repair and replace what was destroyed during the civil war.

This was followed by the Second National Development Plan which spanned between 1970 and 1974. The development plan launched was aimed to accelerating both economic and social developments by increasing agricultural productivity, growing the petroleum industry, and boosting the manufacturing industry (Adesote & Falade, p. 161). Also, in April 1975, the giant Third National Plan (1957-1980) that would consume a whooping sum of thirty thousand million naira was launched with fanfare.

Added to these was the Nine-Point programme of political transformation. This programme created an enabling environment for the envisaged return of governance to a democratically elected dispensation in 1976. It encompassed the reorganization of the armed forces; national reconstruction; creation of more states; preparation and adoption of a new constitution, implementation of a national development plan, and so on (Eluwa et al., p. 288).

Between 1971 and 1974, there was the fortuitous oil boom which enriched state coffers abundantly. It was due to the Middle Eastern war which curtailed the supply of Middle Eastern oil to the Western capitalist countries and the insistence of some militant oil-producing countries, notably, Libya on getting better prices for crude oil (Falola et al., p. 148). The proceeds went into gigantic projects like urban road construction, fly-over bridges, sea and airports across the country, telecommunication services, construction of stadia, medical institutions, educational institutions, and the National Theatre for hosting the Second African and Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977 (Akinbi, 1999, p. 34). Children from the age of

kindergarten to adulthood were sent out in thousands on government and private scholarships to study in different part of the world.

Gowon's government also projected the take-off in 1976 of a programme of Universal Free Primary Education (UPE). This scheme was aimed at extending literacy to the entire population of the country. A number of Federal Government Colleges were established across the country. Also, new federal universities were set up. In 1973, he introduced new currency into the country i.e, the Naira and Kobo which replaced the former Pound Sterling currency. In creating a spirit of self-reliance and national unity among Nigerian youths, Gowon established the National Youth Corps. According to the scheme, all tertiary institution graduates in the degree category who are less than 30 years of age are expected to participate in one year compulsory service to the nation in states/geographical zones outside theirs.

Unfortunately, however, Gowon's programmes did not earn him a lasting reputation because he seem not to have the political will and other necessary qualities to tackle the problems before him successfully. Incidentally, corruption got worse after the programme was made public. He could not remove or redeploy his military governors in the face of allegations of corruption against them. He was literally hostage to the depredations of his subordinates to the point that he virtually ceased to be an effective leader who was subjected to derision by Nigerians (Fawole, p. 55). One of the problems of Gowon's military administration was that soon after the creation of the twelve states; he thought it was wise to establish executive councils at the Federal and State levels. Consciously, he fell back on the same 'corrupt and decadent' politicians they had overthrown. Most of the top politicians were back in power again as members of the executive councils, these 'crafty' politicians were not accountable to him (Falola, et al., p.146). In addition, the Second National Development Plan was inadequately implemented owing chiefly to corruption, inefficiency and lack of executive and managerial capacity. Gowon's government failed to take firm and positive action over an ever-widening range of issues that serious affected the people's welfare. Among these were rising inflation, increasing congestion and chaos in ports, traffic congestion in Lagos, and mal-distribution of petrol around the country. There was also the disorganization brought about by the Second World Black Festival of the Arts and Culture (FESTAC). The worst in Gowon's catalogue of inaction was his setting aside of the transition programme. He had earlier promised to return the country to civilian rule but in 1974, according to him, he said it was impracticable (Eluwa et al., p. 289). The resultant was a successful bloodless coup staged against Gowon by General Muritala Muhammed On July 29, 1975.

The Third and Fourth Regimes

Between 1975 and 1979, Nigeria was governed by two successive Military regimes, namely Muhammed regime (1975-1976) and Obasanjo regime (1976-1979).

General Muritala Muhammed was appointed the third Military Head of Nigeria on July 30, 1975 following the overthrown of Gowon in a bloodless coup. He made his maiden speech to the nation as the Head of State of Nigeria and commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. He has, as second-in-command, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The new regime of Muritala Muhammed was welcomed with a great sense of relief by the generality of the Nigerian populace. In accordance with the expectation of the people, Muhammed was determined to do the things that Gowon had promised: to introduce a new constitution prior to elections, clean up corruption and the ballooning public service and create new states. Within weeks of taking over as Head of State on 30 July, the new leader had promptly and ably waded into the nation's enormous problems (Bourne, p. 134). The structure of the Federal Government was re-organised into three main organs, namely the Supreme Military Council, the National Council of States and the Federal Executive Council. He lost no time in replacing the twelve states governors with new ones. The new governors unlike their predecessors, were not members of the SMC. Muhammed ordered a prompt and energetic enquiry into corruption and inefficiency. He dismissed or retired some 11,000 civil servants and purged the police, the judges and four Vice-Chancellors (Eluwa, et al., p. 291). Gowon's twelve states became nineteen, Muhammed created seven new states which were Niger, Bauchi, Gongola, Benue, Ondo, Bendel and Imo. With regards to chronic congestion and overcrowding of Lagos by February 1976 the decision was taken to remove the Federal capital from Lagos to Abuja, a central

site dominated by a huge rock that looked like a sleeping elephant, in a small Hausa emirate ruled by Sulamainu Barau. The government also tackled the problem of congestion at the port, shortage of food, transportation network and petrol distribution. Muhammed took control over universities and primary schools, tightened controls on journalists and broadcasters and reorganised the trade unions. His regime cut back FESTAC, the second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, which was to be a global demonstration of African artistic achievements floated on Nigerian oil wealth. In 1975, Mohammed initiated a Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) for a new constitution. On the international affairs, he successfully and impressively promoted foreign policy and championed the African Liberation struggle of Angola. A four-year timetable, leading to a transfer of power to elected civilians on October 1, 1979, was announced. His announcement of plans to cut Nigerians army to size and the resentments of those who had done well with Gowon and were now sidelined by Muhammed led to a failed coup on 13 February 1976. The plot was led by Lieutenant Colonel Bukar Dimka, unfortunately, however, Muhammed was assassinated. He had been travelling with minimal security, part of his commitment to austerity, when his car was riddled with bullets (Bourne, p. 136). The mourning for Muhammed was national and authentic, his short but vigorous tenure and his untimely demise have made him a populist hero in Nigeria. Today the international airport in Ikeja (Lagos) is named for him, and he appears on the N20 note, one of the most commonly used bills in the country today.

Following the assassination of General Muritala Muhammed, the SMC appointed General Olusegun Obasanjo, the second-in-command as well as the Chief of Staff of the Army, as the Head of State of Nigeria. With this development, Obasanjo became the fourth and last Military Head during this period. He was a southern Yoruba who had also distinguished himself as a field commander during the civil war. In spite of Muhammed's assassination, Obasanjo continued with the transition programme. In fact, the transition between them in terms of goals and methods was so smooth that their tenures are usually considered together as the Mohammed/Obasanjo regime (Falola & Heaton, p. 188). There was a high degree of continuity between the Muhammed and Obasanjo governments, but Obasanjo was responsible for a reorganization of local government which made the local government system all over the country more democratic, purposeful, functional, and effective. He was also responsible for the Land Use Act, 1978, which decreed a kind of nationalization that was subsequently embedded in civilian constitutions. It vested all lands within the states in the military governors to be held in trust 'for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians' (Bourne, p.136). To tackle the yet unresolved corruption, he established the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau and Public Complaints Commission aimed at minimizing vices such as corruption, bribery, and nepotism in Nigerian society. This exercise led to many dismissals and compulsory retirements, confiscation of ill-gotten assets, and specific scandals like the cement over-ordering scandal. He launched the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme to eradicate illiteracy and boost food production respectively in the country. In 1977 Obasanjo hosted FESTAC '77, an international festival of black and African arts and culture designed to showcase the ''traditional'' cultures of Nigeria and facilitate interaction and discussion amongst the greatest leaders and minds of Africa and its diaspora. On the international scene, Obasanjo continued Muhammed's courageous and dynamic policy. He gave impressive support to the liberation effort of Zimbabwe. The CDC initiated by Muhammed in 1975 produced a draft constitution that was voted on by a Constituent Assembly in 1978, ultimately leading to federal and state elections in 1979. After some preparatory activities and a series of elections ending in the presidential election of August 11, 1979, the country returned to civilian government. On October 1, 1979, Obasanjo transferred power to Shagari, marking the end of thirteen years of military rule with the establishment of the Second Republic.

Conclusion

Thus far, we have explored military intervention and administration in Nigeria's political evolution (1966 – 1979). Our study has shown that Nigeria's political landscape witnessed four different military regimes with varying experiences in the period under evaluation. During this period of interregnum, the civilian populace yearned for an opportunity to again exercise their political and civil rights. This was however challenging to come by

because, in the view of the present study, it became clear that military intervention in Nigeria's political frame was particularly a result of insurgent tendencies arising from ethnic nationalities as well as secessionist agitation to overthrow the central government. Even though some people seem to have welcomed the idea following the coup of January 1966, it was mainly on the pretext of civilian incompetence, socio-economic underdevelopment, corruption as well as electoral crisis presented by the military for such 'noble' adventure for change. More so, Nigerians desired restoration of order, socioeconomic stability, and a political order that would manage the country toward a better future. Incredulously, the actual motive behind the military engagements in the nation's political affairs, which can be trapped in ethnic rivalry and insurgent reactions, turned out to be different from their vocalized excuses and motivations. This was responsible for the instability and irregularity that featured in the nation's political space for the first two decades of her independent experience with the involvement of the military. It follows that the military, instead of correcting the unusual disorder, further worsened the situation, since the top echelon of the junta shared the same traits with their civilian counterpart. Hence, the expected change was far from being realized during their period in power, which influenced their democratic transition agenda with the adoption of a new constitution that eventually instituted a second Nigerian republic on October 1, 1979.

However, it must be understood that the vestiges, if not legacies of military intervention and administration between 1966 and 1979 have remained evident in the nation's political culture in the post-1979 era. In essence, ethnicity, nepotism, civil unrest, corruption, and economic woes that characterised the military era have reared a complex of authoritarian rule, human rights violations, and economic mismanagement even in the nation's civilian dispensations. Despite the restoration of democratic governance in October 1979, military patterns in governance were not done away with, which has shaped the enduring nature of civil-military relations in the country (Babatunde, 2015). Even after the democratic triumph of 1999, military legacies have survived and continued to shape not just the nation's political culture but intensified the challenge of national unity, ethnic rivalry, and more recently the destructive rage of insurgency confronting the nation's political stability and socio-economic development. Overall, it is crucial to underscore at this juncture that any attempt to address Nigeria's contemporary political cum economic distortion requires an appreciation of the historical contexts and experiences of the nation's military governance, particularly between 1966 and 1979.

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[1] Some of these elite Nigerians include, Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikwe, Rotimi Williams, Ahmad Bello, Anthony Enahoro, Kudirat Abiola, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Aminu Kano and a handful of others.

AFFORESTATION AS A MECHANISM FOR MITIGATING VIOLENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN FARMERS AND HERDERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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"Climate change is not a distant threat –it is happening now. It is causing displacement and migration, and we must act swiftly to address it "Ban Ki-Moon

KEYWORDS
Afforestation, Conflict, Mitigation, Climate Change, Farmer, Herder

ABSTRACT
In the quest for sustainable peace against the spate of conflicts between Farmers and Herders in Northern Nigeria, this paper examined the viability of afforestation in taming the protracted violent embroil between the two land users which has claimed many lives and property across the region. The new thinking of using tree planting mechanism in ameliorating the causative agents of the conflicts is borne out of the capacity of trees in providing the desired vegetation for both Famers through its capacity to check climate change with its vulnerabilities such desertification, drought, erosion, erratic rainfall, heat waves etc. which often times trigger the South-Ward migration of herders in desperate search for greener pasture and water points which consciously or unconsciously leads to encroachment of famer lands and eventually sparks resentment, mistrust and violent conflicts. This study is obviously a shift from existing studies that pay little or no attention to applying the afforestation strategy in addressing the backgrounds to which conflict erupts between farmer and herders in Nigeria with specific reference to North-central region. The study relied on secondary sources of data collection mainly from newspapers, reports, published journals, and text books. The paper adopted Eco-Violence theory as a framework of analysis. Thus, the study discovered that, mass tree planting can go a long way in addressing our environmental condition through is natural ability to absorb Greenhouse Gases (GHG) which through emission deplete the ozone layer that over time caused change in climate condition,creat favorable vegetation that attract rainfall,etc To this end, the paper suggested greater collaboration of government with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs),

community heads, religious and traditional institution in achieving the renew thinking, inclusion of Climate Change Education in our schools curriculums and strengthening our legal frameworks for environmental protection against climate change among other policy recommendations.

Introduction

One of the major problems promoting unending discourse about the future of the world, is the issue of global warming. Today, Nigeria is a country whose majority of its federating units are confronted with the scorching impact of climate change in one form or the other. This confrontation is visible in different forms ranging from heat waves, extreme rains, flooding, land degradation, drought, fluctuating rainfall, desertification etc. What does this implies? The implication is that, the climate change variability is hitting hard on existing structures, lives and livelihoods causing violent conflicts, forced migration, and displacement with attendant effect on health, human security and food security across the world.

Nigeria is not an exception to the vulnerability of climate change especially in the Northern flank. This is manifested in the migratory trends of itinerary pastoralists. In the feasible manifestation of erratic rainfall, herders move to the Guinea Savannah and rain forest belts in search of grass and water which often times leads to encroachment of farmlands and water pollution.

In a study of climate change and global security, Okoye (2023) posits that, "at the moment, climate change constitutes one of the greatest challenges the world is battling with in the 21st century. He further clarifies that… Although climate change does not directly trigger violent conflicts, but its manifestations such as drought, erratic rainfall, desertification, water scarcity and shrinking of water bodies etc. contributes to the escalation of pre-existing conflicts and breeds new areas of conflicts, in other words posing what is called structural violence.

As a response to the consequences of shift in the climate, tree planting becomes imperative to tame the impending effects of the injured climate. As we speak, our ozone layer in the stratosphere that sits between 15km and 30km above the earth surface that shields us and other living things from the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation is severely injured. The harm to the natural canopy (ozone layer) is caused by two major factors; (a) natural process (Biogeographical) (b) human activities (Anthropogenic).

Our focus therefore, in the paper, shall be on the imperatives for tree planting as a viable strategy for reducing violent conflicts among farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria. Focus shall also be put on the implications of deforestation which is one of the contributors to the Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions that continues to harm the climate to the disadvantage of human security in Northern Nigeria.

A departure from other previous studies lies on the fact that, this paper stretched and advanced the scanty scholarship on the subject matter within the perspective of leveraging afforestation in addressing the protracted conflict between sedentary farmers and pastoralists in Central Nigeria. Many exiting studies dwelled much on the causes, effects, historical background of climate change and farmer-herder conflicts and little attentions is given to utilization of mass tree planting as a strategy to addressing the root cause of the continued violent conflicts among farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria.

It is against the foregoing that, this paper attempts to establish the nexus between climate change and the prolonged farmer-herder violent conflicts and to further establish how afforestation serves as a panacea to the embroils between the two land users in Northern Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Afforestation

Food and Agricultural Organization (2012), defined afforestation as the establishment of forest on land that is considered to not have been forest previously.

Afforestation also refers a deliberate act of converting land that has not been forested for a long period of time, is forested through planting of trees for a specific purpose. It also connotes the process of creating a forest through deliberate plating of trees with clear plans to preserve them for the purpose of preserving nature and other associated bio-diversities in it.

More to that, afforestation is a process of recovering lost grounds through tree planting and strategies putting in place to protect existing ones. This implies that, afforestation does not only connote plating of trees, it also implies careful measures taken to provide care to nurture exiting ones.

What has always been a challenge in this regard is the sustainability plans to preserved trees for a long period of time to serve the purpose in which it was planted. More often than not, trees planted are not taken care of and most times left at the mercy of stray animals, given rise to orphan's trees.

Conflict

The concept of violent conflict can better be appreciated after clear conceptualizations of conflict. Ezombi (2012), view conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. It is seen as the pursuit of incompatible interest and goals by different groups. In similar thought, Thomas (2006) asserts that, conflict represent disharmony, antagonism or hostility in a relationship which could arise due to incompatibility of the goals being pursued or incompatibility of the means used in pursuing the chosen goals.

In agreement to the above definitions, there is always a factor that sparks conflicts it is most time the process of achieving goals and objectives that is central to livelihoods or means to livelihoods that generates conflicts which can occur within a family, and between families, within communities, and between communities, within a country and between country, and within organization, and between organizations.

Coser (1956) cited in Hussein et al (2020),an American sociologist, defined conflict as the clash of values and interests, the tension between that is and what some groups feel ought to be. It is in the light of this that, conflict is seen to be either functional or dysfunctional

Therefore, what is central to this concept is that, conflict is a game of interest, although more often than not, it turns out to be violent, violent conflict and is when parties or a party uses arms or weapons to achieve their goals, resulting to loss of lives and property. It is in this context, this paper view the aged-long conflict between famers and herders as dysfunctional type of intergroup conflict given its destructive historical antecedents.

Thus, as a working definition, conflict is a situation in which different unacceptable interest, ideas or belief clashes against individual or group expectations, wishes, values, opinions, existence and survival.

Theoretical Basis

Eco-Violence Theory

The environmental resource scarcity theory is applicable in this research in attempting to equate the trends of farmers-herders upheaval across Nigeria. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999) is one of the major proponents of the theory alongside; Baechler; Percival and Gleditsch.

Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999), adduces wide arrays of empirical work linking environmental degradation with violent outcomes, and articulates a preliminary theoretical framework to explain these linkages.

The Theory holds that:

> *Decreased in quality and quantity of resources, population growth, and resource access at singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests, and fish. This can reduce economic*

> *productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity ad for the larger regional and national economies. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new area; while decreases in wealth can cause can cause deprivation conflicts (Homer-Doxon, 1999).*

The conflicts between the herders and crop growers on the transhumance corridors and routes of North-Central Nigeria typify ecological resources-conflict aggravated by the impacts of global climate change, what is at issue in the conflicts is livelihood struggles in a context of stiff ecological scarcity and competition. The desperation exhibited by the principal actors in the conflicts can only be properly conjectured by understanding the conflicts situation as a struggle for collective subsistence in an ecological domain fraught with resource-scarcity and do-or-die contestation. In this context, it becomes expedient for the parties to apply counter-group tactics in an attempt to live through the ecological struggle. This apparently explains the level of violence that has characterized such conflicts situation in contemporary time (Okoli, 2015).

The central thesis of the eco-violence theory is that, scarcity of renewable resource can, in combination with other social factors, contribute to macro-level violent outcomes such as ethnic clashes and insurgencies…. Violent outcomes are often the product of interactions between scarcity and a number of other factors, such as inequality, migration and the functioning of social institutions. He further presented an overview of intellectual currents over the last two centuries, first focusing the discussion around the broad trends of neo-Malthusian population-based ideas, economic theories of ingenuity and optimism, and resource distribution models. He then gives overviews of nine physical trends of global warming, ozone depletion, cropland scarcity, freshwater depletion, decline of fish stocks and biodiversity loss (Homer-Dixon, 1999).

Further advancement of the theory connotes that;

> *Decreases in the quality and quantity of renewable resources, population growth and unequal resource access act singly or in various combinations to increase the scarcity, for certain population groups, of cropland, water, forests and fish. This can reduce economic productivity, both for the local groups experiencing the scarcity and for the larger regional and national economics. The affected people may migrate or be expelled to new lands. Migrating groups often trigger ethnic conflicts when they move to new areas, while decreases in wealth can cause deprivation conflicts.*

According to Gleditsch and Blitt (1998) cited in Odoh and Chigozi (2012);

> *"The fundamental theoretical assumption of the theory is that resource scarcity is the product of an insufficient supply; too much demand and an unequal distribution of resources as a result of environmental hazards that forces some sector of a society into a condition of deprivation and violence. These four sources of scarcity are in turn caused by variables such as population growth, economic development, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental, pollution and obviously climate change. Thus, environmental resource, scarcity will constrain agricultural and economic productivity, further inducing the disruption of economic livelihoods, poverty and migration. Migration can occur either because of environmental quality of a habitat has become unlivable or, more commonly, because the migrants economic outcome is likely to strengthen the segmentation around already existing religious, class, ethnic or linguistic cleavages in a society".*

Accordingly, the environmental scarcity theory has three main dimensions: supply-induced scarcity, demand-induced scarcity and

structural scarcity. Supply-induced scarcity emerges when resources are reduced and degraded faster than they are replenished. Demand-induced scarcity arises out of population growth as against its source of livelihood, while structural scarcity exists because of inequitable distribution of resources due to their concentration in the hands of a few, while the rest of the population suffers from resource inadequacy (Homer-Dixion, 1999).

In agreement with that, Haugh and Ellingsen (1998) cited in Eje *et al* (2014), state;

> *"Increased environmental scarcity caused by one or more of these factors is assumed to have several consequences, which in turn may lead to domestic armed conflicts", with intervening variables such as decreased agricultural production, decreased economic activity, migration and a weakened state helping to build up the environmental scarcity and violent conflict. As people's quality of life diminishes due to decrease in environmental resources such as fertile land, there is the tendency that competition may ensue over the scare resources, such competition if unchecked could turned fierce, may result into violent conflict. This theory is adapted in this to provide support to structural conflict theory because of diverse meanings and explanations it brings to environmentally linked-resource conflicts. Unlike ecological balance which is linked directly to ecological degradation, resulting to human degradation as structural violence. Environmental scarcity in the case connotes the limited supply of grazing land, farmland and water".*

It is pertinent to note that one of the key strategies of adapting the effect of climate change and its environmental effects by the pastoralists is migration. Equating the violent conflict phenomenon between the Fulani herders and the agrarian communities within the framework of eco-violence theory, the four environmental resources (fresh water, cropland, forests and fish) are all vulnerable to climate change. Basically, the shrinking speed of Lake Chad basin has continued to exacerbate hardship of many dependents for farming purposes, fishing and cattle rearing.

Similarly, expansion of farmlands due to population growth and capitalists involvement in farming business, fast degradation of soil nutrients have constituted a serious concern and exacerbated worries and frustration among huge population across the Sahel region and Nigeria inclusive. With little or no attention to address the shrinking Lake Chad Basin, there is likelihood of increase in insecurity as migration increases, violence becomes inevitable. Homer-Dixon (1999) argues that, with environmental degradation comes increasing scarcity and that is likely to become more acute as time goes on, and so violent outcomes are likely to increase in the future.

Moreover, it is an established fact that climate change has huge consequences on livelihoods, especially on agriculture practices. From the background of the literature reviewed, this theory establishes the link between climate change, migration and insecurity across Nigeria. Poor attention in addressing this situation has continued to threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a political entity. As a result, insecurity, poor farm produces, frequent migration have become a symbol of North-central Nigeria.

Contextualizing the Manifestations of Climate Change in Nigeria

Climate change manifestation in Nigeria is in different phases, this can be seen through infrequent rainfall pattern, heat waves, short rainy reasons duration, erosion, desertification, sand dust etc. While human and industrial activities have contributed significantly to the act of provoking the climate, industrialized countries over the years in different international conventions failed in meeting their pledges in controlling gas emissions, neither are they active enough in supporting less industrialized countries that have less technological capacity to cushioned the effects of change in climate. Supporting this argument, (Ati, Agubamah & Abaje, 2018),submitted that While the activities of the developed countries are mostly responsible for the changing climate, the

developing nations are those suffering more of the impacts due to inability to cope as a result of poverty and low technological development

Ishaku (2018) expanded the argument:

> *The culprits of this gaseous emission were the industrialized countries of the world; the US, for example accounted for 5.7 billion tons of gaseous emission, representing 23% of the global total ;Africa ,in contrast, accounts for only a meagerly 920.000 tons (i.e 4%).However, the fact is that Africa is the most vulnerable to the effects of the climate change because about 40% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is generated through agriculture, an activity that is most at risk from global warming.*

In addition, lack of awareness and inability of Nigerian government to enforce existing legal frameworks for environmental protection also exacerbated the worsening condition of climate vulnerability in Nigeria.

It is on the strength of the above assertions that Nigeria is experiencing the following climate change effects:

a) **Increased climate variability:** The climate variability here refers to the ways our climate condition (e.g., temperature, rainfall,) fluctuates from year to year. It is the excessive climatic change that created unbearable environmental condition that withers the green vegetation and dried up water points, which eventually leads to forced migration that serves as a recipe for violent conflicts. According to Bashir (2018), high temperature has dried up most of the rivers and streams along with the lofty vegetation in their valleys .The combined effect of these twin forces produced a drastic decline in the pasture-livestock ratio thus igniting a destructive struggle on how to access these resources among humans and animals alike.

b) **Changing rainfall pattern:** The Nigerian rainfall pattern is sessional, with two main seasons; rainy and dry season. Usually, the rainy season commences early in the Southern parts of Nigeria around late February and April to October. But from recent experience in Northern Nigeria with specific reference to North-East, rainfall pattern has changed significantly with rainfall majorly starting around late May and ends mid-September**.** According to Bdliya (2018), rainfall amount has declined by 30% in Nigeria during the Sahel drought (late 1960s to 1990s).Other associated effects of drought include but not limited to heat waves, thunder storm, rise in sea level etc. Drought largely manifests in northern parts of Nigeria with ,35% of previously cultivated land in 11 northern states of Nigeria has been overran by desertification due to short duration of rainfall (Badru,2020).This further accentuate violent conflicts as resources become scares for both farmers and herders in many parts of Northern Nigeria such as Benue, Plateau,etc.

c) **Erosion:** This is another current issue due to climate change resulting to heavy rainfall pattern particularly in the Eastern part of Nigeria. According to Bashir (2018), in Anambra State alone, there are about one hundred and fifty devastating erosion sites, destroying physical infrastructural facilities, farmlands, etc. Similarly, destruction by wind erosion is seen all over Northern especially Kano, Kebbi, Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Zamfara, Sokoto, Jigawa, Benue amongst other affected stats in Northern Nigeria.

d) Evidence from violent massive flooding across the length and breadth of Nigeria suggests how violent rainfall causes erosion taking away people's houses, farmlands and other structures leading to loss of lives and property on yearly basis.

e) **Drought:** The environmental challenges resulting from climate change has many divergent components. It should be noted that, deforestation which is the excessive falling of trees for animal feeds, energy purpose, local bridge and house construction etc. gave birth to drought. Similarly, drought gives rise to desertification, while desertification gives rise to increase in temperature resulting to undesirable and unbearable ecosystem which subsequently becomes harmful to inhabitants. Drought can also be seen as a product of erratic rainfall especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria with adverse

consequences on losing biodiversity, intense flooding, degradation of land and increase in varying weather events, forced migration, displacement and increased diseases etc. These drought scenarios, more often than not, serve as a push factor in the perennial conflicts between sedentary crop farmers and Fulani pastoralists Northern Nigeria (Vahyala & Diah,2024)

Empathically, Abbass (2018), comprehensively posits that, The continuing violent clashes that ensured between Fulani pastoralists and farmers have usually been manipulated and thus taken as typical ethnic/tribal and religions/cultural conflict…He viewed the prolonged breach in security across the rural communities of North-Central Nigeria as a contest for survival…Since the occasional drought of the 1970s and 1980s, nomadic pastoralists have continued to increase pressures on farmers by penetrating the semi-arid and humid regions with their herds. This penetration has been much deeper, longer and with much greater intensity and numbers unprecedented in pastoralist nomadism in Nigeria.

Although Abbas is largely correct that, the prolonged conflicts is caused by context over scares resources useful to both the farmer and herder, but one aspect that cant not to completely over ruled is the religious connotation of the conflicts and the strong perceived agenda for land grabbing of ancestral land of the natives who are largely of the Christian faith.

Climate Change and Farmer-Herder Crisis: A Nexus

The farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria and across Africa has become one of the most pressing socio-economic and political challenges on the continent rooted in historical land –use conflicts. This has been exacerbated by the increasing impact of climate change, which has disrupted traditional livelihoods, fueled resource competition, and heightened tensions between farming and pastoral communities (Tobi, 2025).

This is evident from the myriad of violent conflict recorded in recent time across the North-central states of Nigeria.Thus,supporting the assertion, it is clear that land space for grazing is drastically shrinking due to farmland expansion, urbanization and population increase while water points are increasingly drying up due to advance effects of erratic rainfall and other associated issues.

Adding to the previous assertions, it is imperative to note that, the magnitude at which human lives and material resources are wasted as a result of farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria is worrisome. Emphatically. Mohanty et al (2021) further posits that, around 4,000 people died in Nigeria as a result of farmers-herders conflicts between 2016 and 2019. The dryness of the Lake Chad basin led to poor livelihood and lack of income generation opportunities in the region, hence compels young people to join rebel groups and engage in anti-social activities through extremist organizations.

Corroborating Mohanty submission, there are many assertions, including the position of this paper that, the shrinking of the Lake Chad basin has undoubtedly displaced large population of people who are before now surviving at the existence and flourishing of the water point.Soem of the former occupiers of the shores of the Lake are irrigation farmers, fisher men and women, herders among others. This suggest the economic viability and live sustainility potential of the large water deposit before its sudden reduction in volume e and size decades before now.

Aside that, the conflicts exacerbated climate change more often exposed tens of thousands into violent clashes with horrendous consequences on humanitarian displacement and resource destruction. Corroborating this assertion, Tobi (2025) put that, the farmer-herder crisis is not just an environmental issues but also a significant threat to national and regional stability. In Nigeria, thousands of people have been displaced due to recurring conflicts. The conflict has disrupted food production, increased poverty, and undermined agricultural productivity, contributing to food insecurity across the country.Additonally,extremist groups such as Boko Haram and other armed militias have agendas, complicating peace-building efforts.Neigboring African countries, including

Mali, Chad, and Sudan, have faced similar challenges, with climate-induced migration and resource competition straining already fragile state. (Tobi, 2025)

The conflict nature of most part of northern Nigeria, and central Nigeria to be specific can be imaged within the context of farmer-herder contestation for scarce resources such as water, flora and fauna. Adekunle and Adisa (2010) notes that, conflict arising from herders' search for resources such as water, forest and land in host communities have remained a "most important" problem faced by Fulani pastoralists in the course of tending their herds.

Of course, water scarcity is one of the reflection of the climate change variability. Water is a primary commodity for both the famer and the herder. The farmer uses the water for irrigation and domestics use while the herder takes his cattle water point among other uses. Thus, the conflicting point has always been that, while the herder who are mostly natives uses the water for drinking, the herder largely used the water for animal feeds. In this point the natives most times sees sharing water points with animals have a way of contaminating the water and thereby compromising the hygiene of the water and on the other hand ,the herders have the sense of entitlement to use the water for whatever purpose. It is this situation that, more often than not, serves as recipe to violent clashes between farmer and herder as far as water scarcity is concern.

According to Blench (2004);

> *As farmers take up more of the river-bank for farm, they come into conflict with the other users, especially the herders. The herders have been coming to the river for many years, for the grasses and tend to consider they have ownership rights when they arrive and find their grazing site now covered by plants they may become very angry. The farmers often desperate to feed their families in a situation where the old rain-fed system no longer work regards the herders as dangerous and intrusive. Too often, there are fights and people are sometimes killed.*

The above quotation underscores the arguments and assertions that, the protracted violent conflicts between the two land users is basically instigated by scarce resources occasioned by climate change. These violent communal reprisals have for long inundated many parts of northern Nigeria particularly north-central and north-eastern parts of Nigeria.

Buttressing the facts of this submission; Abbass (2015) pungently argued that;

> *"Clashes between farmers and pastoralists in northern Nigeria are ubiquitous and on the increase. These clashes generally centered on access to and competition for grazing land and water. As a pasture land shrinks, sequel to taking over of such land by farmers, conflicts become inevitable.*

According to International Crisis Group (ICG) (2017), herders migrating into the Savannah and rain forest of the central and southern states are moving into regions where high population growth over the last four decades has heightened pressure on farmland, increasing the frequency of disputes over crop damage, water pollution and cattle theft. Similarly, urbanization, mechanized farming, excessive grazing and bush burning also exacerbated the environmental degradation aid the sustained violent conflicts between farmers and herders in Northern Nigeria. In the absence of mutually accepted moderation mechanism, these disagreements increasingly turn into violence.

Environmental degradation through indiscriminate falling of trees for animal feeds is rampant and on the increase. This is one aspect in which open gazing is contributing to environmental disaster that culminates to worsening climate change in Nigeria. This is also one aspect to which herders contributes to increasing violent conflicts with other land users as falling down tree has a long time impact on the environment and its resources that is increasingly becoming scare by the day.

In our discourse about perennial conflicts between farmers and herders; the paper discovered that, water is central and formed the center stage of our analysis. This is borne out of the fact that both farmers and herders

depends largely on availability of water for domestic irrigation purposes and feeding herds respectively. Unfortunately, rainfall amount has significantly declined in already desert prone areas in Northern Nigeria with its negative effect on millions of people. The main cause of all these impending danger is the changing climate.

Central to the analysis is also the obvious and alarming receding of the Lake Chad Basin, one of the African largest freshwater bodies. According to Mohanty, Rotson, Ngueping and Nanda (2021), the Lake Chad Basin has shrunk by 90 per cent. Over 10 million people across the basin countries of Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon are in need of emergency assistance…the Lake in the Sahel straddled Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon is home to million people, it is blessed with rich aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity…for years, the Lake has been supporting drinking water, irrigation, fishing, livestock and livelihoods of over 30million people in the region. Sad enough, the lake has shrunk by 90 percent over the last 60 years, since the chronic drought surged at the beginning of 1970s. The surface area of the Lake was 26,000 square kilometers in 1963; it has now significantly reduced to less than 1,500 square kilometers. (Mohanty,et al,2021).

It is therefore, germane at this point, to establish that the depleting natural resources and grazing space in the region has exacerbated violent conflicts between Fulani pastoralists who are desperately searching for water and greeneries, and farmers who are constantly increasing their farm lands and in search of water for domestic purposes.

Thus, as the struggle for survival continues, the present reality of the Lake Chad keeps hitting hard as succinctly observed:

> *Up till today, the shrinkage of Chad Hydrological Basin has continued to attract migratory waves from far and near, especially from the countries ravaged by the Sahara Desert to the north, Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger. This has compounded the land resource and deficiency, both for human and animal needs in Nigeria and thus intensifying the struggle for land among farmers and pasture among herders (Bashir, 2018).*

The sudden disappearance of our forests as a result of human activities and neglects of supervising authorities, has continues to worsen the food and human security situations in Northern Nigeria .This is not peculiar to Northern Nigeria or Africa. United Nation Food and Agriculture Organization (2020) estimated that, 100 billion square meters of forest were cut down each year over the last decade, while tropical deforestation has contributed 8% of global emissions.

Relating this scenario to Nigeria, it is in the public domain that, our forests in Northern Nigeria are under intense pressure due to excessive abuse from people either for energy, building construction or grazing purposes. Equally, it is a known fact that, our forest are severely under attacks as a result of the ongoing fight against Boko-Haram insurgency in Sambisa Forest (North East Nigeria), fight against banditry in Zamfara State (Dan Sadau Forest, Dan-Gulbi forest, Bagega forest and Shububu forest) in North-west Nigeria.

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which human lives and material resources are wasted as a result of farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria is worrisome. Emphatically. Mohanty et al (2021) further posits that, around 4,000 people died in Nigeria as a result of farmers-herders conflicts between 2016 and 2019. The dryness of the Lake Chad basin led to poor livelihood and lack of income generation opportunities in the region, hence compels young people to join rebel groups and engage in anti-social activities through extremist organizations.

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According to Blench (2004);

> *It is therefore, established by this paper that, the sustained combat against insurgency and banditry has further exacerbated Nigeria environmental condition with its attendant implications on global warming. Corroborating this assertion, in a high powered delegation to New York, at a United Nations (UN's) High level segment roundtable on: Forest based solutions to the triple planetory crisis, Governor of Borno State, Zulum (2024) expressed that, "Borno state has been, significantly impacted by the crisis of insecurity caused by Boko-Haram insurgency… The loss of forest has resulted in soil erosion, reduced water availability, loss of biodiversity and increased vulnerability of climate change impacts".*

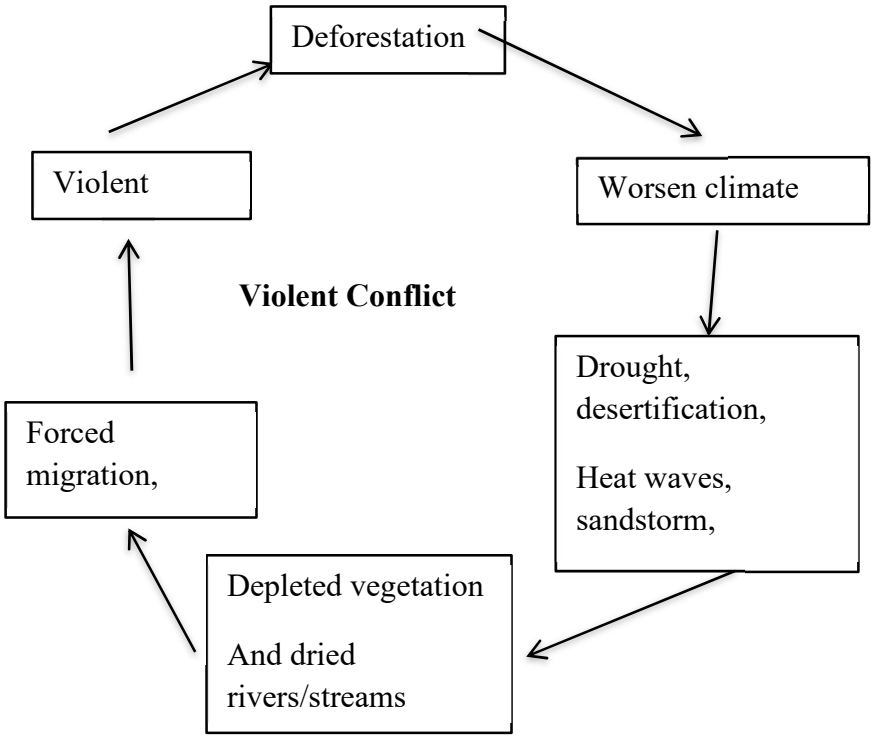


Fig 1: Vicious circle of conflict due to poor afforestation and reforestation, **Designed by the Author.**

Statistics of Lives Lost to Farmer-Herder Conflict in Recent Attacks

S/N	Nature of Attack	No. of Casualties/ Deaths	Year	Location/State	Source
1.	Farmer/Herder Clash	2,600	2021	Benue, Plateau, Nassarawa and Taraba States	Armed Conflict Locations and Events, 2023.
2.	Farmer/Herder Clash	1,868 deaths, 300,000 displaced	2018, 2019, 2020	Benue, Plateau, Nassarawa, Niger and Taraba States	International Center for Investigation Reporting, 2021.

3.	Farmer/Herder Clash	1,300	2018	Benue, Plateau, Adamawa and Taraba States	Relief Web International, 2018
4.	Farmer/Herder Clash	3,641	2018	Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Taraba, Kaduna and Nassarawa States	Amnesty International, 2018
5.	Farmer/Herder Clash	261	2024	Plateau State	Directorate of Research, Planning and Documentation, Plateau State Government, 2024.
6.	Farmer/Herder Clash	3087	2014-2019	Benue, Taraba and Kaduna States.	Nigerian Security Tracker (NST) in Olalekan, 2022.

Source: Compilation by the author from different reports, 2024.

Taming Famer-Herder Conflicts through Afforestation

Series of efforts have been made by various stakeholders in ending farmer-herder crises. But many do not recognize the potency of afforestation in addressing the problem. Therefore, against the foregoing life threatening capacity of climate change variability in Nigeria, sustainable measures are urgently needed in the right place and time to arrest the scorching effect of the new environmental phenomenon confronting the existence of living things and non-living things on the earth surface. Thus, the first action in this regard is to plant sufficient number of drought-tolerant trees to cushion the effect of climate change. This action becomes imperative in lieu of the fact that climate change is now a reality that we must acknowledged. Beyond acknowledging its presence and manifestations, we should all see it as a common "new" enemy to fiercely fight with all arsenals at our disposal.

Therefore, we should begin to see trees as viable tool for combating climate change variability in our society thereby preventing the trigger of conflicts most especially between famers and herders. This can be achieved through massive afforestation and reforestation (to recover lost forest). This is because indiscriminate cutting down of trees and destruction of forest can indeed be damaging to the environment and invariably worsen climate change effects. Trees and forests play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide and regulating the earth's climate.

Scientifically, when trees are cut down, it releases stored carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere contributing to greenhouse gases emissions. Additionally, deforestation can disrupt ecosystem, leading to loss of biodiversity and affect local communities who depend on forest for their survival. Thus, promoting sustainable tree planting and nurturing the existing ones are important measures in mitigating the reality effects of climate change in our society.

Other associated value of trees includes but not limited to the followings;

a. They help to ameliorate the effect of climate change; trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releases oxygen, helping in reducing the effects of global warming.

b. Trees improve air quality because they naturally absorb pollutants and other injurious gases that are inimical to our health.

c. Trees prevent soil erosion as they help to maintain soil nutrients and protects the land against slides and other natural phenomenon.

d. Trees provides home for wildlife like birds, insects and other living things, helping to aid biological diversity and promote sustainable ecosystem.

e. Trees provide canopy and coolers, making our environmental climatic condition more comfortable and habitable for living things.

f. Trees serve as sources of pharmaceutical drugs and provide herbs for local medicine.

g. Trees serve as good and healthy sources of food to human beings and animals.

h. Trees serve as a reliable wind tracker which helped in prolonging lifespan of buildings and prevent them from violent destructions.

i. Trees serve as a source of building construction materials which eased the housing challenges for million population in our societies.

It is the position of this paper that, the natural climate solution and a mitigation strategy to reducing the impact of desertification, refreshers ecosystem, eliminate $C2^0$ from the atmosphere and mitigate violent conflict between farmers and herders lies on afforestation.

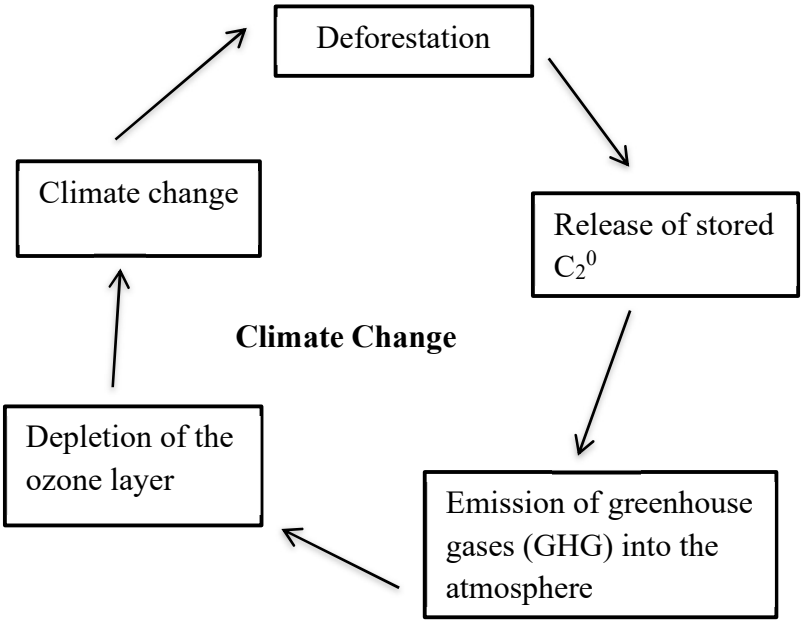


Fig 2: Relationship between Deforestation and Climate Change: **Designed by the author**

Thrust of the Paper

The security crisis between famers and herders have far reaching consequences that have contributed negatively to the agricultural and security development of the Northern Nigeria it is on this premise paper basically examined the protracted violent conflict between farmer and herders and how climate change mitigation through afforestation could be utilized in addressing the fundamental causes of the perennial disharmony in Northern Nigeria. Although, there exist numerous scholarly work around climate change phenomenon, farmer-herder conflicts, notable among the groundbreaking research include but not limited to, Abbass (2024) .No Retreat, no Surrender: Conflicts for Survival between Fulani pastoralists and Farmers in Northern Nigeria Bdliya,(2018).Climate change ,Receding Lake Chad and the challenges of Farmers/Herders in Nigeria., Bashir,(2018).*The Exploits of Yesteryears and the Price of Today: Environmental Degradation and Development Challenges in Contemporary Nigeria (An Environmental History),,*Chris-Kwaja, and Bukola,*(2018).Responses to conflicts between farmers and herders in the Middle Belt:* Mapping Past Efforts and Opportunities for Violence Prevention. Okoli, Edward, & Suleiman ,M.A. (2023) Climate Change and Rural Violence in Northern Nigeria: A discursive reflection etc Among all the references, none of the them clearly explode the potentials of mass tree planting as a strategy to mitigating the phenomenon of climate change viz-a-viz addressing the violent conflicts between the two land users occasioned by diminishing resources (green grass and water) in Northern Nigeria.

Therefore, the argument of this paper lies on the fact that, deliberate environmental rebirth through afforestation can go a long way in resuscitating the lost grounds to desert encroachment thereby creating a habitable and favorable environment with abundant resources for all to strive.

Additionally, this paper scientifically established the natural abilities of trees in

refreshing our environment and also how its absence can translate to conflict. This is where many previous studies differ from the position of the paper.

Conclusion

This paper examines the efficacy of afforestation in curtailing the disturbing resource based conflict between farmers and Fulani pastoralists in Northern Nigeria. It is on record that, northern Nigeria particularly, north-central and north-east have been noted for violent conflicts between the two land users for decades. It is on this premise, that, the paper identifies climate change as a push factor to the protracted conflicts between farmers and herders and therefore, advocates for afforestation as a viable strategy for ameliorating the effects of climate change which invariably would mitigate the occurrence of violent conflicts between farmers and herders in northern Nigeria.

The paper unequivocally advocates for aggressive trees planting to tackle the menace of desertification and drought in the interest of securing sustainable environment for all living things on the surface of the earth.

Specific Policy Recommendations

a. The government in collaboration with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) community heads, religious institutions should be deliberate in reversing the acceleration of desertification through massive and aggressive tree planting in the region.

b. In the obvious reality of climate change today, federal, state and local authorities, including the private sectors, should invest more in institutions and agencies that are essential to responding to the challenges of climate change to invent and produced improved drought-tolerant seedlings to fight the new phenomenon.

c. In search of a sustainable, resilient and endearing environment and lasting peace between sedentary agrarian communities and Fulani pastoralists against violent competition for scares resources, we should as a government and citizens embarked on environmental rebirth by claiming our lost forests through massive afforestation and reforestation.

d. We need a sustained climate campaign through sponsored media (old and new) awareness with a transparent reward - driven policies to individuals or group that promotes and practices tree plantings with a clear frameworks to nurture the tree(s) to maturity.

e. Our education curriculum at all levels should be tinkered with, to accommodate contents that promotes teaching and understanding to what I called Climate Change Education, its effects on human existence, and viable ways of mitigating its impacts.

f. Nigeria's legal frameworks for combating climate change should be strengthen and international protocols and convention against climate change be adequately domesticated in adherence to global best practices.

g. Government must should invest in climate adaptation strategies, such as reforestation programs, and water conservation projects, and development of drought -resistant seeds to keep both the farmer and the herder on the job and also boast food sufficiency and productivity.

h. Critical to the subject matter is, government should strengthened traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and promote consistent dialogue between farming and pastoral communities.

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IMPACT OF THE STATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AN EXPOSITORY ANALYSIS OF ROAD, ELECTRICITY AND HEALTH

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KEYWORDS
Economic development, state, infrastructural facilities, good health, road network

ABSTRACT
This study views most study on infrastructure as pertinent due to their wholistic approach and theoretical orientation towards. But this study is a particular and pragmatic approach to the nexus between state and infrastructure like road electricity and health consequently, we explores the reciprocity between the state and development of infrastructure. The research questions were (1) Has the Nigeria state provided adequate and motor able roads for its citizen, (2) Has the Nigeria state provide constant electricity supply for the teeming population, (3) To what extent has the National health policies of government provided improved the quality of health for Nigerian citizens. Our methods of data collection was documentary which enabled us to use secondary sources of data like the documentary materials.The study was predicated on the structural functional analysis or structural functionalism as a theoretical framework. We adopted content analysis as the mode of analysis. With regard to validity of the study we adopted the content or face validity method together with the use of external criteria. Our findings revealed that government has not done enough in provision of health facilities, due to bad governance it has not provide adequate road network for the populace also that there is poor power supply. We concluded that if the government is able to provide good health facilities, adequate road network and relative stable electricity supply the situation will improve. The study recommended that Government should assume a renewed commitment to the construction of motorable roads in the six geopolitical zones of the country, it should endeavor to provide electricity supply. This can be achieved by providing money to improve the national grid, finally it should through the National Health Insurance Scheme, be duty committed in terms of the provision of stable and reliable health care services.

Introduction

The state in an attempt to proffer justification for its existence is fundamentally saddled with the constitutional mandate of improving the material well-beings of its citizen. In an attempt to realize this constitutional mandate, it participate in the development of road, health and electricity. The state is defined as a group of people occupying a particular territory with a government. People who make up a state may be of the same nation, thus nations are component of a state in that sense it becomes a nation-state.Example of a nation state is Nigeria, while a good example of a nation is Israel. State states the features of definite territory government, population, sovereignty, permanence. Okpata, etal., (2000 p 10).

Ubong, 2023, Okorontah & Uruakpa, (2023) made fundamental attempt at explicating the nexus between industrialization and sustainable development, in Nigerian state. The contribution of Krokeyi and Bassey (2023) in solving the endemic problem of poverty alleviation as a medium of developing the state is also significant. The above scholar, has expended collosal intellectual energy in discussing our subject matter but the scholarly disposition of this work is to identify the problem posed by the unavailability of motorable road, electricity and affordable health. Consequently, the study is extending existing scholarship.

One of the most contentious and yet the most fundamental problems that has defile political diagnosis and treatment remains the concept of the state, (Onuoha 2020). The above disparaging comments in the state was prompted by the discouraging and abysmal or depreciating performance of the state especially in the Nigerian State that triggered the above reports.

Defining the term infrastructure is also problematic on account of its definitional fuzziness specially relating to how the state has impacted on it in Nigeria. The account normally given by pro-government loyalist is often different from what is actually going on in the state due to the coloration of political economy on the intention of such writer. Some colorful publications are in some case put toward especially on the inter-state level to decorate the political aspirations of government in Nigeria. If one examines the role of the Nigeria state in promoting infrastructural development one cannot but confront a dismal picture and a direct opposite of what is proclaimed by the 1999 constitution, on how the role of the state in economic development should portray. Nwanne, (2023) contend that Nigeria state is in a deep coma not to talk of health and electricity this parlous condition does not in the least favorable to economic development In fact the debate on the actual meaning, nature, character and role of the state especially when it comes to infrastructural development has remained intractable (Onuoha, 2020). Nigerian road needs maintenance while electricity continues to struggle with inefficiencies and insufficient supply many health centers are not functional due to epileptic financial provision.

According to Backman, (1983), infrastructural development is often within the purview of the state.From 2005 to 2024 Nigeria has experienced mixed results in health sector such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate have shown improvement but still lag behind global averages. NBS, (2020) has insisted that accordingly, life expectancy increased from 47 years in 2005 to 54 years in 2020 but it is still below the global average of 72 years.Nigerian road needs maintenance while electricity continues to struggle with inefficiencies and insufficient supply, many health centers are not functional due to epileptic financial provision It is sad to note that in spite of all these imperatives, the Nigeria Government has not made significant improvement in infrastructural development. This poses a formidable structural pathology to economic development like road electricity and health the country.

Against this background, this study focuses on the impact of the state in the development of infrastructure an expository analysis of road, electricity and health.

Structure of the Study

For the sake of clarity and lucid comprehension of the subject matter; the study is organized consecutively as follows: introduction, structure of the study, origin of infrastructure methodology, validity and reliability, conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, causes of poor infrastructural development, access to electricity, state of road, state of health, summary, concluding remark, recommendation and references

Origin of Infrastructure

In the world, the origin of infrastructure dates back to the early days of human civilization. The Roman Empire believed infrastructure engineering to be a tragic investment by the state since with infrastructure; people can work together and provide specialized services to one another. Early development of infrastructure is also traceable to the days of Dairus the Great a Persian King between 522-486 Before Common Era (BCE) (quoted in Nwanne, 2021). He invested in infrastructure; the Roman Empire also emulated him. King Dairus built canals and road throughout the provinces of his empire which stretched from modern day Iraq to Egypt and Iran. It was gradually through the historical background traced here that other infrastructural facility started, Nwanne, (2023)

In Nigeria, the cradle of infrastructural development can be logically and historically traced to Pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial era. In pre-colonial time, infrastructural development was accomplished through the establishment of major trade routes during the Tran-Saharan trade leading to linking up of Kano and Katsina. The colonial era (1861-1960) railways were constructed to primarily facilitate the extraction and export of resources example was the construction of Lagos-Kano railway which was completed in 1917 to connect the interior with the coastal area.Utilities like electricity, water supply were established by the European settlers. During the post-independence era. 1960 till Present day, expansion of road network was anchored on expanding road network to facilitate connectivity between the three regions then. It included construction of expressways like Lagos – Ibadan, establishing airport, hydroelectric dam, and power plants. The oil bloom of the 1970's and 1980's increased investment in infrastructure, including the construction of new roads and bridges before the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) propelled a decline in infrastructure,on account of reduction in public spending. With the return of democratic governance in 1999 there came a novel commitment though mostly on paper to infrastructural development in Nigeria. On a general note, the cradle of infrastructural development in Nigeria has been fundamentally influenced by historical, economic and political forces Ake, (1981).

Research Questions

The study shall proffer solution to the following research questions;

i. Has the Nigeria state provided adequate road network for the populace?

ii. Has the Nigeria state provided constant electricity supply for the teeming population?

iii. To what extent has the National health policies of government improved the quality of health of Nigerian citizens

Methodology

In this study, the documentary methods of data collection was relied on. This will allow us to gather data from secondary sources. Our justification for the use of documentary method is that it is well suited for content analysis and it is important if the aim is to examine, clarify explain and pinpoint vital ideas in order to draw inference from the existing evidence (Nwanne, 2023). Hence official document, from Federal Ministries of Health, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, will be utilized in the course of this study. In order to concretely analyse the corpus of qualitative data generated in the course of this study, we adopted content analysis. The strength of this method of analysis is that numerous documentary material can be analysed in a clear and systematic manner, convincing evidence can be produced to test the hypotheses, and the analysis can be replicated to confirm the results (Burnham, Gillan, Grant, & Layton-Henry, 2004). Content analysis is a method of putting behavioural data into categories to allow individual screen the content for the purpose of summarization and tabulation. White, (1999, p.241) "contend that content analysis allows individual to screen the content of a document with the intention of comprehending its innate structure, ideas and concepts and to measure the information it relates".

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity and reliability are not only necessary for quantitative research but also for qualitative one. Goode and Hart (1952) believe that a scale has validity when it really measures what it claims to measure, however reliability means the ability of a measuring tool to give consistent result across time when applied to the same sample, Goode and Hart, (1952), Black and champion, (1976); McCormick and Tiffins, (1975).As regards validity of the study, we made use of the content or face validity method together with the use of external criterion to ensure the veracity of the findings of the instrument.

Conceptual Clarification

In political science, the "state" is typically defined as a sovereign political entity with defined geographical boundaries, a permanent population, a government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states (Nwanne ,2017). Infrastructure according to Online Oxford English Dictionary, as (cited in Nwanne, 2023) is defined as the Basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of the society or an enterprise. According to the structural/functionalist theorists. The progress or otherwise of a society depended largely on the functional structures of that society. What this means is that structures in the societies will largely determine the economic development.

Ajayi (2003) noted that the term infrastructure refers to the technical structures that enhance living condition in any society which included health facilities, agricultural facilities, good road network and telecommunications as well as energy and water supply.

Thus, infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society like industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health services, governance and so on. It is the enterprise or the products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function (Sullivan and Schifrin, 2003). The World Development Report elaborated by the World Bank (1994) defined infrastructure as long-life engineering structures, equipment and facilities, and also the services that are derived from Furthermore, the definition of infrastructure has been shifting from one focusing on physical fixed assets such as roads, airports, sea ports, telecommunications systems, energy, water distribution systems and sanitation (public utilities). It now often embodies notions of 'softer' types of facilities such as information systems and knowledge bases (Button, 2002).

The World Bank landmark study on infrastructure (World Bank, 2004) cited in (Nwanne, 2023) highlighted the critical role of infrastructure in the development process. The importance of delivering quality infrastructure has also been underlined by the United Nations declaration of the Millennium Development Goals. now SDGs. According to Hirschman (1958) in Olayiwola and Adeleye (2005), infrastructural facilities refer to those basic services without which primary, secondary and tertiary productive activities cannot function. Broadly this includes all public services like education, public health, transportation, communications and water supply.

Theoretical Framework

Nwanne and Ayogu, (2015) believe that theoretical framework is a device or scheme for adopting or applying the assumptions, postulations and principles of a theory in the description, explanation, analysis and prediction of a research problem. Clearly, It is a way of describing analyzing, interpreting and predicting phenomena Obasi (1999).In order to philosophically, academically and concretely justify and explain the relationship between the state and the provision of basic infrastructure like road health and electricity and health in Nigeria, we predicate our analysis on the structural functional theory or analysis or structural-functionalism.

Structural-functionalism as a theoretical framework is intended to explain the basis for the maintenance of order and stability in society and the relevant arrangements with the society which maintain the said order and stability (Haralambos and Heald, 1980). Structural functional analysis originated in the biological and mechanical sciences as part of systems analysis. It was adopted and adapted as a mode of analysis in sociology and anthropology as is evident in the works of Emile Durkhiem and Talcott Parsons. It was developed for political analysis. By Gabriel Almond.Varma (1975)

observed that structural-functionalism revaluates around two main concepts – functions and structures, on the basis of which three basic questions could be posed as follows: (a) What basic functions are fulfilled in any given political system, (b) By what structures, (c)Under what condition? This study uses the above theory to demonstrate how structure and functions relates in economic development of the state. Thus, we used the above theory specifically to demonstrate that governmental structures perform different functions of economic development with specific focus on road, electricity and health

The basic assumption of the structural-functional framework is that all systems have structures which can be identified and theses structures perform functions within the system necessary for its persistence. Thus, it is perceived by Almond (1966) that all political systems, regardless of their type, must perform a specific set of tasks if they are to remain in existence. In various political systems, those functions may be performed by different kinds of political structures and sometimes, even by structures which are not overtly recognized as being, primarily, 'political' Varma, (1975) argued that there is no one-to-one correspondence between functions and structure a particular function may be fulfilled by a complex combination of structures, just as any structural arrangement may perform functions which might have different kinds of consequences for the structure.

In the analysis of political systems, the analyst compares not the political structures since these may not actually be the mechanisms through which all the necessary functions are being performed or they may not be performing the functions originally allocated to them. Structural functional analysis tries to shift the focus of analysis away from the observable institutional political mechanisms to any area where the actual performance of the functional requirement of the system is located. Political systems are then compared in terms of the manner in which structures perform the expected functions in society. There are three output functions which include: Rule making, Rule application, Rule adjudication. All input functions are seen as being performed by non-governmental sub-system of the political system, such as the society, pressure groups, and interest groups, schools, families, political parties, independent newspapers, etc. The output functions are all governmental and it is the government and their bureaucracies that performs that.

Political systems can therefore be analyzed and compared in terms of the degree to which their political structures are specialized. Whether specific functions are performed through particular structures or a particular structure can perform a number of functions. In some political systems such as those of the advanced industrial nations of America and Europe, structures are specialized, political roles differentiated and functions specific.

In a nutshell, it is to be noted that while the yardstick by which systems are measured consists of the functions which are performed by the political system, the units which are being analyzed, and compared are the various structures which compose individual political systems.

Thus, with Almond's method it becomes possible to relate various types of structures to a particular function. While the list of functions is limited, the list of structures can be indefinitely expended depending on the characteristics of particular systems. The justification for the use of this theory among other competing theories is that infrastructure is something that is used for the enhancement of good living condition. According to Jeremy Bentham and J.S Mill, the primary purpose of government is to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people (quoted in Nnoli (2003). Aristotle 384-322 BC, noted that government exists for the sake of the best life. Verma (1975) argued that structural functionalism revolves around two major concepts that is function and structure. Since our study focuses on development in Nigeria, the theory becomes without mincing words a sine-qua-non for the explanation and analysis of the issue under investigation.

Causes of Poor Infrastructural Development

From 2016 till date, the Nigerian State was confronted with chronic recession, economic instability and stagnancy which grossly eroded the government fiscal capacity. This precipitated protracted inflation and currency devaluation which eroded the financial capacity of the government. Bureaucratic bottlenecks was another formidable factor that delayed

infrastructural provision in Nigeria in the recent years, couple with poor planning, budget deficit, and acute bad governance. It should however be noted that the most significant single factor that impeded the development of infrastructural facilities was debt which we see in this study as unproductive. It is seen as unproductive debt because the money borrowed by the government was not used to do reasonable things increasing debt burden caused by the Buhari's administration was largely responsible for the delay in infrastructural development in the recent years (Nwanne, 2023).

The honest truth remains that the major causes of poor infrastructure development that permeate Nigeria nation and indeed many African countries find their roots in the structural, systemic and socio-political lapses that are inherent from the past historical realities of colonial administration. This is worsened by the contemporary experience of the neo-colonialism and the current political maneuvering of the present bourgeois democrats since 1999. There has been no clear and implemented political manifesto and ideology with regards to good governance in Nigeria especially since independence. Mohammed (2008), believe that one of the challenges of development process in Nigeria is that other African societies has been most pronounced in the area of good governance. It lies with the operators of the system of governance in the country, the local and international elites and their perception of what democracy entails, represents and meant for society. (Ezeogidi, 2015).

Good governance remained a theory that has not found relevance in the concept of empiricism and testability in Nigeria; it remained a utopian and unrealizable theory, a million miles journey that is waiting for a takeoff grant. Only God knows when the wind of good governance will begin to blow in Nigeria. According to Achebe (1983) the Nigeria problem is squarely the problem or failure of leadership. Associated with the conundrum of the good governance is the cankerworm called corruption which has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian economy.

According to Oluleye and Obi (2012), corruption can be said to be largely responsible for the under development of Nigeria. Funds appropriated for development purposes are either diverted or misappropriated for self-aggrandizement with the consequence that those projects remain undone or uncompleted. A visit to some of the Uncompleted projects or abandoned projects that are scattered all over Nigeria will give a hind sight and information on how very sound developmental projects which would have boosted the infrastructural state of the economy were abandoned at the detriment of the Nigerian poor masses. Some of these projects may have received certificate of completion from the appropriate authority even when they have not been completed.

The global effect of the poor infrastructure is that as a result of hardship and frustration occasioned by bad governance and corruption, Nigerians migrates to other countries with no assurance of what to expect. Some of them met a worse condition while some were stranded and could not find their ways back. Hence some of them in the latter category resorted to different types of sinister or illicit businesses thereby posing a social menace to the host country. In the recent past, some Nigerians were deported from various locations in Europe, South Africa and North America.

Access to Electricity in Nigeria

According to Mahdi (2004) the most spectacular failure of successive Nigeria Governments from 1966 till date, which actually boarders on criminality has been in the field of energy and power supply. In line with the Mahdi's view, Akinwumi and Ukase (2010) believed that the electricity demand in Nigeria far outstrips the supply and the supply is annoyingly epileptic in nature, a development which is hindering the nation's development notwithstanding the enormous vast natural resources in the country. The situation of power supply has degenerated so much in Nigeria that one can hardly boast of availability of power for six hours uninterrupted in a day. This can be dangerous and expensive for industries and domestic users. The effect is enormous. Mahdi (2004), also argued that it is obviously impossible and unthinkable that investors would contemplate on investing in Nigeria when the country has been for most of the time in total black out.

There is no doubt that many industries folded principally as a result of poor power supply and the high cost of operating with private generator and plant. The reason is that operating with plant and generator resulted in high overhead

cost which knocks off the product in the market as a result of competition with foreign products. It is almost impossible to talk of economic development as a reality in 21st century in a situation where greater percentage of operating cost of an industry is on power generation and maintenance. The annoying thing about this epileptic power is that the people are suffering in the mist of plenty. There is no doubt that Nigeria being the sixth largest oil producing country is blessed with natural resources which included energy. The nation had a proven reserve of 25 billion barrels of crude oil in 1999. This increased substantially to 34.5 billion barrels in 2004. Sambo (2008) projected that Nigeria's oil reserve will reach 68 billion barrels by 2030. The infrastructural state in Nigeria is in comatose stage

Moreover, accesses to electricity in rural areas show that the percentage of the population that has access to electricity in rural area is highly unimpressive.

The electricity sector has recently recorded further system collapse with some parts of the country thrown into darkness due chiefly to equipment failure. This is due to the lackluster attitude of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN). For example, the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) in charge of Kogi, Niger and Nasarawa state as well as FCT, lament that they have only 20 megawatts (MW) of electricity allocated to it as against over 400MW that it has been receiving in recent time (Ejoh, 2021). In a related development the Eko Electricity Distribution Company added that there has been a collapse in the national grid due largely to the general instability in the electricity system in Nigeria. This disappointing and epileptic power supply fundamentally undermines economic development in Nigeria since electricity and other infrastructure is indispensible for development.

In a related development, Ohiare, (2015) lamented that the challenge of inadequate electricity supply in rural area is further compounded by lack of cogent electrification plan which have posed a formidable challenge to the development of infrastructure in Nigeria. The 2017 United Nations declaration of international year for sustainable energy for all highest for all highlights the rationale for sufficient electrification project to accelerate the pace of development. But despite the above, electricity supply remains elusive in most parts of developing countries to the extent that about 1.3 billion people are have no access to electricity with 85 percent of them living in rural areas of Asia and sub-Saharan African (Ohiare 2015) (Goldemberg, Rovere & Coelho 2004).

For International Energy Agency (IEA) 2011 sub-Saharan Africa has an electrification rate of 32 percent. Again, 70 percent of those lacking access to energy live in a handful of countries including Nigeria. Moreover, it is evident in works of Ohiare (2015), ESMAP (2005), that the Northern parts of Nigeria suffer more for this lack of electricity while an estimated 73 million Nigerians lack electricity going by the NBS figure of 2013. Kano state has the highest number of households without electricity. Approximately average of 769,000 households in each state of the federation of Nigeria lack access to electricity while the state with the least number of un-electrified households is Edo at 106,000 households approximately (Ohiare 2015). Taraba is the least electrified state so far in Nigeria (Ohiare,2015).

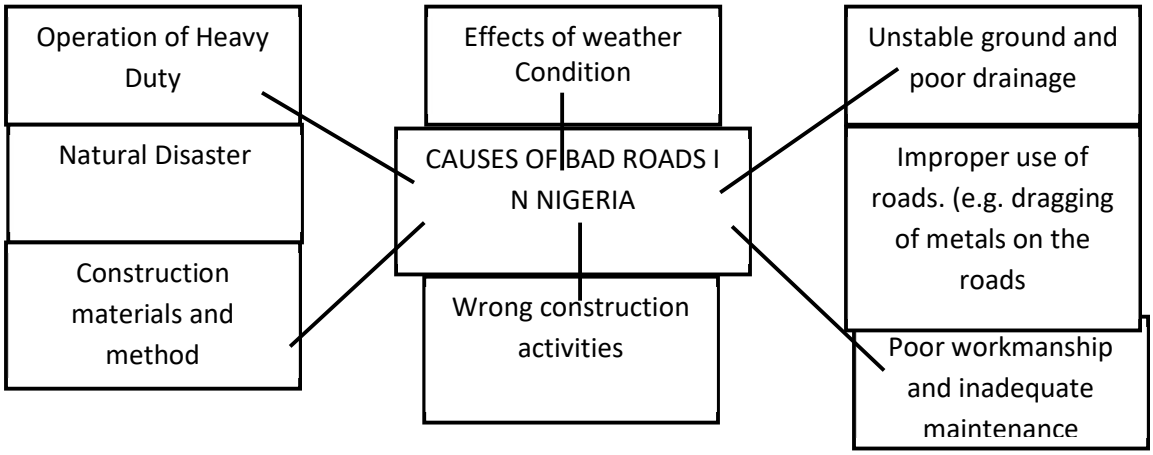
Nevertheless, the non-availability of electricity has worsened over the years, in Nigeria; its commercial sectors have become heavily reliant on self-generated power using petrol. Nigeria's shortage of reliable power supply is a constraint on its economic growth. The lack of economic diversification or the dominance of oil sector in our economy is implicated in in in the current poor economic development in Nigeria. Moreover, the state of transport infrastructure has been generally poor as roads, rails, air and water transport system have for scores of years been afflicted by deplorable condition such that most rural areas cannot link up with the rest of the country. Again, the different transport modes are not properly linked to several socio- economic needs of the people in Nigeria." The federal government claims that they are doing their best to improve infrastructural development for Nigeria to exist but the effects has not been seen in Nigeria" (Edo and Ikelegbe 2014 p 15).

State of Road in Nigeria

Apart from the provision of electricity by government, road network has been suffering the same fate in Nigeria. For example Enwerem and Ali (2016), Abdulkareemand Adeoti(2005), Agbonkhese (2013), explore the economic effect of bad road network on both SMEs, large

industries and motorist who convey finished goods to their final destination. The overall impact of bad road has cause extra havoc for SMEs especially the agro-based SMEs who have to move their products from one location to the other. Many roads in Nigeria has fallen beyond expectation structural failure of roads is due to some of the reasons figured out below. This affects development.

Figure.1. A Typical Road Problem in Nigeria



Source Enweren & Ali (2016 p.763)

The figure above present a typical road problem in Nigeria which ranges from the operation of heavy duties, effects of weather condition, unstable ground poor drainage system, natural disaster, improper use of road for example, dragging of metals on the roads, construction material and wrong construction , including poor workmanship and inadequate maintenance as illustrated in the figure above.

Nigerian roads are owned by federal, state and local government. The table below shows the structure and state of road ownership by the different tiers of government

T**able 1. Structure of Road Ownership in Nigeria**

	Federal	**State roads**	**L.G. Roads**	**Total**	**Percent**
Paved roads	26,500	10,400	-	36,900	19%
Unpaved main roads	5,600	20,100	-	25,700	13%
Urban roads	-`	-	21,900	21,900	11%
Main rural roads	-	-	72,800	72,800	38%
Village access roads	-	-	35,900	35,900	19%

Total	32,100	30,500	130,600	193,200	100%
Percent	17%	16%	67%	100%	

Source: CBN, (2003) cited in Enwerem& Ali 2016. p.7

The table above shows the total number of road network in Nigeria. The estimated current total road network in Nigeria is about 194,000 one hundred and ninety-four thousand kilometers CBN, (2003) but only 19 percent of these roads are paved road, while the rest are at different stages of dilapidation. The table also shows the numbers of paved main road, unpaved main roads, urban roads, main rural roads and village access roads in the federal, state and local government in Nigeria and their various percentages. From CBN report as cited in Enwerem and Alli, 2016, the annual loss due to bad roads is valued at N80 billion, while additional vehicle operating cost resulting from bad roads is valued at N53.8 billion (Enwerem&Ali, 2016), bringing the total loss per annum to N133.8 billion. The worst of all is that this causes air pollution, delayed movement, armed robbery and incessant accident on the road all this impact negatively on infrastructure and consequently economic development in Nigeria.

Nigeria road has su**ffe**red persistent and considerable neglect over the years from 2005 to 2024. The federal government only made a theoretical statement of embarking on road. Construction and rehabilitation geared towards reviving and supporting economic development. However, on a practical note the prospect has not been cheerful as our roads has turned to mere death traps. For instance, once you pass Lokoja when going travelling the Southern parts of the Nigeria, your movement halts to a mere crawl due to dangerous pot holes which have accumulated over the years. The last straw that breaks the camel, back is travelling from Auchi to Agbor which is hardly motorable especially in this rainy season due to poor drainage system which is supposed to be a cardinal responsibility of government based on the spirit of effective democracy and good governance (Nwanne, 2023).

According, NBS (2024) Nigerian roads are in a poor condition due to poor maintenance and utilization materials are grossly below standard p.22. Again, inspite of the exclusive task of the federal road maintenance Agency. The agency is fundamentally bedeviled with administrativebottlenecks which erode its effectiveness. This poor status of Nigeria roads has led to excruciating and frequent road accidents in the recent years (NBS, 2024). Again, the NBS has recently made available comprehensive data on poor road development, the data revealed that road maintenance remains a critical factor.

Health Infrastructure

World Health Organization (WHO, 1984) has defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This definition that used to be the most acceptable definition of health is bedeviled by concerted criticism based on the use of the phrase “complete physical , mental and social well-being”.Critics have contended that no person could be in the state of complete health in the strict sense of the word. They argued that healthy is a matter of one’s ability to adjust to one’s condition. What it implies is that when an individual is not able to adjust to one’s condition, that individual suffers from ill-health. Consequently, this adjustment is a matter of urgency and should be regular. This is because achieving and maintaining health is an ongoing process, shape by both the evolution of health care knowledge and practices, as well as personal strategies and organized interventions for staying healthy (Jadad and Grady, 2008).

This makes health policy necessary. A policy is a formalized set of procedures designed to guide behavior. Its purpose is to either maintain consistency in behavior or alter behavior to achieve specified goal. It is a management strategy, like what might be implement for a business (or organization) to achieve a desired profit or an NGO to achieve its social mission (Magretta, 2002)

Health policy can be defined as the "decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific healthcare goals within a society World Health Organization, (2017). According to WHO, an explicit health policy can achieve several things; it defines a vision for the future; it outlines and prioritize the expected roles of different groups; and it builds consensus and inform people (WHO, 2017) Based on the above criticism of the WHO definition, Alex Jadad and Laura Grady (2008) (cited in BMS 2011) propose a new definition of health as "the ability to adapt and self-manage in the face of social, physical and emotional challenges according to them, if health is the goal of healthcare and research, we then need to know what it looks like and how to measure it. They explain that the currently accepted definition, formulated by WHO in 1948 is no longer helpful and is even counterproductive. Its emphasis on "complete physical and social well-being" was radical in its days for stepping away from defining health as the absence of disease.

Health Policies in Nigeria

A Policy is a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with matters of concern (Anderson 1975 p1). Essentially**,** a nation's health policy is the blueprint and step by step guidelines of how health issues are handled, promoted or treated by health practitioners at all levels be it primary, secondary or tertiary. It is a formal statement or procedure within institutions (notably government) that defines priorities and parameters for action on health matters. A health policy is intended to be a vehicle for the exploration and discussion of health issues aimed at enhancing communication between the practitioners and consumers otherwise referred to as the public.

The goal of the Nigeria Health Policies is to bring about a comprehensive health care system, based on primary health care that is promotive, protective, preventive, restorative and rehabilitative to every citizen of the country within the available resources so that individuals and communities are assured of productivity, socialwellbeing and enjoyment of living. The health services, based on primary health care, shall include among other things: education concerning prevailing health problems and the methods of preventing and controlling them. But unfortunately, the Nigerian health system has failed woefully since all efforts to convince the government to improve it has ended in a monumental fiasco in the recent years.

Nigeria's Health System

Nigeria health infrastructure is in a parlous state. Unfortunately, the position of Nigeria is very poor as the country's position in World Health Organization (WHO) ranking is 187 out of 190 countries. This shows that Nigeria is only better than three countries as seen in the table below.

World Health Organization Ranking; The World's Health Systems and Position of Nigeria

1	France
2	Italy
3	San Marino
4	Andorra
5	Malta
6	Singapore
7	Spain
8	Oman
9	Austria

10	Japan
11	Norway
12	Portugal
13	Monaco
14	Greece
15	Iceland
16	Luxembourg
17	Netherland
18	United Kingdom

19	Ireland
20	Switzerland
21	Belgium
22	Colombia
23	Sweden
24	Cyprus
25	Germany
26	Saudi Arabia
27	United Arab Emirate
28	Israel
29	Morocco
30	Canada
31	Finland
32	Australia
33	Chile
34	Denmark
35	Dominica
36	Costa Rica
37	USA
38	Slovenia
39	Cuba
40	Brunei
41	New Zealand
42	Bahrain
43	Croatia
44	Qatar
45	Kuwait
46	Barbados
47	Thailand
48	Czech Republic
49	Malaysia
50	Poland
51	Dominican Republic
52	Tunisia
53	Jamaica
54	Venezuela
55	Albania
56	Seychelles

57	Paraguay
58	South Korea
59	Senegal
60	Philippines
61	Mexico
62	Slovakia
63	Egypt
64	Kazakhstan
65	Uruguay
66	Hungary
67	Trinidad and Tobago
68	Saint Lucia
69	Belize
70	Turkey
71	Nicaragua
72	Belarus
73	Lithuania
74	Saint Vincent &the Grenadines
75	Argentina
76	Sri Lanka
77	Estonia
78	Guatemala
79	Ukraine
80	Solomon Islands
81	Algeria
82	Palau
83	Jordan
84	Mauritius
85	Grenada
86	Antigua and Barbuda
87	Libya
88	Bangladesh
89	Macedonia
90	Bosnia-Herzegovina
91	Lebanon
92	Indonesia
93	Iran
94	Bahamas

95	Panama
96	Fiji
97	Benin
98	Nauru
99	Romania
100	Saint Kitts and Nevis
101	Moldova
102	Bulgaria
103	Iraq
104	Armenia
105	Latvia
106	Yugoslavia
107	Cook Island
108	Syria
109	Azerbaijan
110	Suriname
111	Ecuador
112	India
113	Cape Verde
114	Georgia
115	El Salvador
116	Tonga
117	Uzbekistan
118	Comoros
119	Samoa
120	Yemen
121	Niue
122	Pakistan
123	Micronesia
124	Bhutan
125	Brazil
126	Bolivia
127	Vanuatu
128	Guyana
129	Peru
130	Russia
131	Honduras
132	Burkina Faso

133	Sao Tome and Principe
134	Sudan
135	Ghana
136	Tuvalu
137	Ivory Coast
138	Haiti
139	Gabon
140	Kenya
141	Marshall Island
142	Kiribati
143	Burundi
144	China
145	Mongolia
146	Gambia
147	Maldives
148	Papua New Guinea
149	Uganda
150	Nepal
151	Kyrgystan
152	Togo
153	Turkmenistan
154	Tajikistan
155	Zimbabwe
156	Tanzania
157	Djibouti
158	Eritrea
159	Madagascar
160	Vietnam
161	Guinea
162	Mauritania
163	Mali
164	Cameroon
165	Laos
166	Congo
167	North Korea
168	Namibia
169	Botswana
170	Niger

171	Equatorial Guinea
172	Rwanda
173	Afghanistan
174	Cambodia
175	South Africa
176	Guinea –Bissau
177	Swaziland
178	Chad
179	Somalia
180	Ethiopia
181	Angola
182	Zambia
183	Lesotho
184	Mozambique
185	Malawi
186	Liberia
187	**NIGERIA**
188	Democratic Rep of the Congo
189	Central African Republic
190	Myanmar

Source: https://www.who.int/healthinfo/paper30
Published on;
http://thepatientfactor.com/canadian-health-care-information/world-health-organizations-ranking-of-the-worlds-health-systems,
Friday, 21st June, 2019.

The position of Nigeria on the world health system is nothing to write home about. As the most populous country in Africa and the most endowed with resources of all kinds, our placement on the world health system is a complete disappointment and slap in the face to the so called "giants of Africa". African countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, Gambia, Gabon have been ranked to have a better, more standard and highly affordable healthcare system in comparison to Nigeria. The highest with the best healthcare system in the world is France because they have made healthcare a second oxygen to the people, both rich and poor alike. It is both highly affordable and effective. In contrast,the lowest is Myanmar, of which Nigeria is above by just two spots. They are ranked thus for the reason of sub-standard or lack of proper healthcare facilities and delivery services.

This poor health provision affects developmentin Nigeria, since a healthy man is a wealthy man. The government proves conservative and adamant to providing health infrastructure for the populace. As Africa's most populous country and one of its biggest economies, Nigeria's health indicators are of national concern.

National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)

National Health Insurance Scheme, or NHIS for short, is a corporate body that provides health insurance in Nigeria. It was formally established in 1999 by the Act 35 of the Constitution. Its main goal is to provide accessible healthcare to all Nigerians regardless of their social status or income. NHIS aims to provide quality affordable healthcare by providing its participants with pre-paid plans. These payments are collected into a collective fund, which is then used to cover any expenses for medical services and supplies that participants might need. (Awoyinfa, 2019).

The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) is a combination of both compulsory and voluntary contributory health insurance schemes targeted at formal sector workers as well as informal sector workers. It aims at ensuring access to quality health care services, provide financial risk protection, reduce rising cost of health care services and ensure efficiency in health care,(Aregbesola, 2018).

Percentage of Nigerians Covered By NHIS

Although formally established in 1999, Nigeria only launched the NHIS in 2005, after several attempts at introducing legislation on health insurance, since the 1960s. Years after it was launch in 1999, NHIS is yet to achieve the aim for which it was established, with less than five percent of the Nigerian population, mainly federal government workers and their dependents being covered by the scheme. (Aregbesola, (2018). In fact, less than seven million out of the 180 million people in the country are covered, of which the majority of the enrollee are the Federal Government workers, according to the NHIS. The scheme has not done much to reduce maternal death. A maternal death is defined as the death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth or within 6 weeks after birth, but not from accidental or incidental (such as self-harm) causes. The maternal mortality rate is given as the number of maternal deaths per 1 00,000 live births in a specified period. The UN views a rate of fewer than 100 deaths per 100,000 live births as low. Once the rate crosses the 300 barrier, it is considered high and above 500 very high. Nigeria's maternal mortality rate (about one mother's death in every one hundred delivered) is one of the highest in the world. Some other health status indicators like under-5 mortality rate and adult mortality rate are higher than the average for sub-Sahara Africa .It has been estimated that Nigeria loses 2,300 children under the age of five and 145 women of child bearing age every single day, and accounting for the second largest number of maternal and child deaths in the world (Ifijeh, 2016).

The Maternal Mortality Rate of Women of Childbearing Age, 2001-2010

Years Mortality	Population of Mothers	Deaths of Mothers	Maternal mortality
2001	448	15	3348.21
2002	488	31	6352.46
2003	526	26	4942.97
2004	468	18	3846.15
2005	501	19	3792.42
2006	466	30	6437.77
2007	484	13	2685.95
2008	650	21	3230.77
2009	671	29	4321.91
2010	254	19	7480.32

Source: OlabisiOnabanjo University Teaching Hospital, Sagamu, 2013

http://files.aisciencc.org/journal/articie/pdf/70240018.pdf Accessesed on 20|9|19

A maternal death is defined as the death of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth or within 6 weeks after birth, but not from accidental or incidental (such as self-harm) causes. The maternal mortality rate is given as the number of maternal deaths per 1 00,000 live births in a specified period. The UN views a rate of fewer than 100 deaths per 100,000 live births as low. Once the rate crosses the 300 barrier, it is considered high and above 500 very high.

It is worthy to note that fifty percent of economic growth differentials between developed and developing nations are attributable to ill-health and low life expectancy (World Health Organization (WHO), 2005). Available data indicated that on the average about 2.1%-5.8% of total government expenditure was expended on health between 2015 and 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics (2020). The belief is that this would improve the health of the citizenry which can translate into a healthy human capital base with effects on economic growth and development. Statistics have shown that the country's public expenditure on health as a percentage of GDP is 4.1 percent against the 4.6 percent African average and over 9.3 percent in developed countries. On the other hand, the 2020 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme shows that Nigeria's human development index increased, but her ranking continued to be at the low levels of human development.

The assertion by Ibrahim Waziri Abubarkar (2011) equally serve as a cardinal point in over-viewing the state of health service in Nigeria. He contends that, Nigeria's health sector has been performing below expectation for so long despite the billions of naira spent for it. Policies have been produced, refined, panel beaten and changed: agencies have been created to focus on specific health matters all sorts of foreign aids and assistance has been solicited yet Nigerians still die of health conditions and diseases that would have been easily preventable.

The obvious truth is that cost of assessing medical services is very high, and in most cases are not affordable to the majority of the populace. Only few percentages of Nigeria can afford to travel to Overseas for a better treatment especially for such ailment that may not be treated well in Nigeria or not treated at all. Problems like heart transplant, kidney and liver problems and some other complicated ailments may cost over two million naira to treat in India, Pakistan, United States. The cost is above the total earnings of an average Nigeria civil servant for five years, assuming he decided not to spend one naira out of his entire earnings. The cost does not include, transport fare, feeding and accommodation of the sick and his attendant. The alternative to this high cost is that people resorted to the patronage of quark doctors and other alternative medical solutions. . It is true that the federal government has come up with the National Health Insurance Service Scheme. This is beneficial and applicable mainly to the civil servants who are still finding it difficult due to the associated deductions from their meager salary after other deductions including taxes. Hardly could the National Insurance Scheme be assessed by the rural dwellers. Pearce (2001) noted that from colonial period, the pattern of medical care delivery and infrastructural provision favoured the Urban population in particular at the expense and detriment of the rural settlers. It should be noted that, most of the medical centers located in the rural areas were built by the Christian missionaries who were largely for evangelism. According to Ademiluyi and Aluko (1982) this medical centers in the real sense were merely mobile clinics and at most communities' dispensaries or outposts to treat primary health problems such as snake bite and minor injuries

Although there have been some seeming improvement in infrastructure, such improvement is only a tip of the ice berg. This is not unconnected with the fact that many rural communities are grossly plagued by lack of basic health facilities, couple with the poor funding associated with most government hospital, where the government no longer provide basic amenities especially for pregnant women and nursing mothers. In 2010, health expenses was 5.4 percent of the national budget with a slight increment to 7.2 percent in 2015 and 8.7 in 2020. The above increase notwithstanding, the health sector remains abysmally under funded with the concomitant and hydra-headed challenges of inadequate staffing, and deficient medical

supplies. It has fallen short of the 15 percent target as provided by the Abuja declaration (NBS, 2024) the NHIS covers only 5 percent of the population which remains grossly infinitesimal. This was as of the year 2020 (NBS, 2024).

Summary, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The central thrust of this paper here to examine how government has been doing with regard to provision of road, electricity and health in Nigeria we made ground breaking remark by interrogated the works of other scholars in this area of research but here the central thesis of this paper is to expand the frontiers of what they have done before this is seen in the structure of the paper

Singapore once celebrated 25 years of constant electricity supply while Nigeria cannot boast of a full day electricity. Ghana has enjoyed tremendous electricity supply, while South Africa is vehemently blessed with good roads, many African countries are enjoying relatively good health. Achieving the three critical infrastructural provision mentioned here is seen as a sine-qua-non for economic development in Nigeria Adam Smith and the classical economics clarified that provision of basic subsistence for the masses or providing enabling environment for the masses to provide basic subsistence for themselves remains the fundamental hallmark of political economy.

This has become necessary since current experience has shown that agencies like NHIS only concern itself with those working under government public administration is the use of human and material resources to achieve the policy of the government. So public administration is state or government administrant which is expected to carter for the interest of all people whether they are government staff or not. The essence of government and the state is to administer the people, since in most cases, the state and government in Africa are used interchangeably. According to Waldo (Cited in Nwanne, 2023 p 10) public administration has been conceptualized as the management of men and material to achieve the purposes of government. The word "men" in this context is generic and does not specify only men under government payroll. In some advanced countries state are solely responsible for the social welfare or their citizen it is therefore not understood why Nigerian situation has been a different thing. Spencer quoted in Nnoli (1986) stated that government and by implication the state exist to prevent individual from infringing the rights of another. Thus government becomes a joint-stock protection company for mutual assurance. According Laski as (quoted in Igwe (1989), the state becomes an organization enabling the masses of men to realize social good on the largest possible scale. So electricity, road and health are parts of the social goods mentioned here. The government is conceived as the highest institution of the state, an impartial arbiter with a central authority which claims allegiance from all members of the state, capable of imposing its will on all members of the state if need by means of force and which is ready to protect the lives and properties of all members within its confine. On this note government under the capacious and all-embracing umbrella of the state is expected to provide adequate health for all state members.

Findings

In the course of our systematic exploration of the impact of the state on infrastructural development in Nigeria with optimum focus on road, electricity and health. We found out that government under the instrument of National Health Insurance Policy has continued to put the country on a reverse gear due to blatant and deliberate neglect of the health to the peril of the ordinary man. Couple with mangrove insufficiency of motor-able road network which have continued to exacerbate the sufferings of mankind. We also concluded that insincerity and the spoil or patronage system in politics has made government neglect the power sector The absence of good governance over a long period of time in Nigeria has been seen as the fundamental cause of the souring state of basic infrastructure in Nigeria, one cannot give what he does not have the Nigerian government over the years are fundamentally bereft of good conscience and has refused to listen to the yearning and aspirations of the people Unaccount of the above findings, we proffer the following recommendations .

Recommendations

1. Government should assume a renewed commitment to the construction of motorable roads in the six geopolitical

zones of the country. This can be achieved by giving contracts of road construction to people of relatively impeccable character and proven integrity. The government while doing this, should ensure that anyone who refuses to execute contract given to him/her should have the contract revoked and appropriate punishment be given to him or her. Also periodic road maintenance operation should be carried by the government it should be carried out through Federal Maintenance Agency (FERMA).

2. Government should endeavor to increase the provision of adequate electricity supply. This can be achieved by providing money to improve the national grid and megawatts of electricity which has continue to dwindle on daily basis. There must be through and periodic inspection of Electricity Distribution Company, which is charged with the executive responsibility of supplying electricity to Abuja must be inspected periodically.

3. The government through the National Health Insurance Scheme, must be duty committed in terms of the provision of adequate health care services to avoid people from going outside the country seeking medical care. It is our contention that if the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, the problem will be a thing of the past government should as matter of urgency and necessity continue to provide money for the provision of necessary materials in hospitals and primary health care centers. Again, the NHIS should continue to cover those not working under government.

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