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Editorial

This edition of NIU *Journal of Social Sciences* focuses on Development Administration, Social Psychology as well as Business and Entrepreneurship Education.

The first part of the Journal addresses issues in Development Administration such as Foreign Direct Investment, Election Management, Waste Management, Public Accountability, Local Governance and other Public Welfare Services. It is emphasized in one of the papers that there is need for comprehensive electoral reforms, including enhanced voter education, improved transparency, and stricter enforcement of electoral laws to address the problem of lack of confidence in the legitimacy of elected officials and the integrity of election results. This is because it is believed that this will foster a more transparent, accountable, and legitimate electoral system, thereby strengthening public trust in the democratic process.

Papers in the second part are on Social Psychology. It is revealed in one of the papers in this section that most of the lifestyles of the students were tailored in line with their favourite celebrities and role models. Also, imitating friends' dressing styles has become a norm among students due to the confidence it creates and sometimes alters the student's lifestyle. Hence, the study recommends that universities and related tertiary institutions should regulate the dressing behaviour of students to reflect the ideal standard behaviour after schooling.

In the last section on Business and Entrepreneurship Education, one of the papers reveals that regulatory barrier, such as complex compliance requirements and high costs, present significant obstacles to fintech adoption among SMEs. Furthermore, insufficient technological infrastructure, particularly in terms of reliable internet connectivity and stable electricity supply, limits access to fintech services. The paper therefore recommends future research is recommended to explore fintech adoption patterns across specific industries and investigate the impact of socio-cultural factors on digital financial engagement among SMEs.

Readers are advised to make proper use of the ideas presented by the various authors in this issue of *NIU Journal of Social Sciences*. Some of these papers are empirical in nature while others have theoretical base. Each of them focuses on one specific social and management problem or the other; trying to proffer solutions to them.

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Part One

Development Administration



Legitimacy Crisis, Accountability, and Local Government Elections in Nigeria: Lessons from KWASIEC 2024 LG Election

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Abstract. This study investigates the electoral process, accountability, legitimacy, and public trust in local government elections in Kwara State, Nigeria. Using a survey of local residents, the study evaluates public perceptions of electoral transparency, the professionalism of election officials, the accountability of local government officials, and the legitimacy of elected representatives. The findings reveal a moderate level of awareness about the electoral process but highlight significant concerns regarding transparency, electoral malpractice, and the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms. A lack of confidence in the legitimacy of elected officials and the integrity of election results is evident. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive electoral reforms, including enhanced voter education, improved transparency, and stricter enforcement of electoral laws to address these challenges. The recommendations aim to foster a more transparent, accountable, and legitimate electoral system, thereby strengthening public trust in the democratic process.

Keywords: Electoral process, Accountability, Legitimacy, Public trust

1. Introduction

Local government (LG) in Nigeria has undergone significant transformation since its establishment. The evolution of local governance in the country can be traced to colonial rule, during which native authorities served as the administrative framework for indirect

rule. Post-independence, successive reforms sought to enhance LG autonomy and effectiveness, particularly with the introduction of the 1976 LG Reform, which institutionalized LG as the third tier of government. This reform emphasized democratic principles, including popular participation and grassroots development. The democratization of local government in Nigeria gained prominence with the adoption of the 1979 Constitution, which prescribed elected councils for LG administration. However, the democratization process has been plagued by systemic challenges, including weak institutional frameworks, electoral malpractice, and pervasive corruption. Adejumbi, S. (2000). These issues have created a persistent legitimacy crisis, where elected LG officials often lack public trust and authority. Osei, B., & Amoako, P. (2016).

In the context of Kwara State, these challenges are particularly pronounced. Kwara State, located in Nigeria's North-Central region, has a rich history of political and socio-economic evolution, with local governments playing a vital role in grassroots development. However, the state's local government system has been marred by similar issues observed at the national level, including irregularities in elections, lack of accountability, and weak public engagement. The KWASIEC (Kwara State Independent Electoral Commission) 2024 LG election exemplifies these challenges, as reports of vote-buying, low voter turnout, and administrative inefficiencies dominated the electoral process. Carothers, T. (2006).

This study explores the interrelationship between legitimacy, accountability, and LG elections, focusing on the KWASIEC 2024 LG election as a case study. By analyzing the electoral processes and their implications for governance at the grassroots level in Kwara State, the paper aims to contribute to the discourse on democratization and accountability in Nigeria's local government system. Ayee, J. R. A. (2008). This localized approach provides nuanced insights into the broader national issues, highlighting specific lessons from Kwara State that can inform policy reforms and governance strategies across Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Democracy

Democracy is a system of governance in which power is vested in the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives. At its core, democracy emphasizes popular participation, rule of law, and accountability. Finkel, S. E., & Geisler, M. (2003). In the context of local government, democracy ensures that governance is inclusive and reflective of the people's will, promoting legitimacy and sustainable development.

2.2 Elections

Elections are the hallmark of democratic governance, providing a mechanism for citizens to choose their representatives. Daalder, H. (2015). In Nigeria, LG elections have been characterized by irregularities, including voter suppression, manipulation of results, and lack of transparency. These issues undermine the credibility of elections and erode public trust in democratic institutions.

2.3 Local Government

Local government serves as the closest tier of government to the people, tasked with promoting development and delivering essential services. Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2002). Effective local governance requires democratic practices, institutional accountability, and adequate resources. However, in Nigeria, LGs often struggle with weak autonomy and overdependence on state governments.

2.4 Accountability

Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials to answer for their actions and decisions. Ugoh, I. E., & Ukpere, W. I. (2013). In a democratic setting, accountability ensures that elected officials act

in the public's interest, adhering to legal and ethical standards. Beetham, D. (2013). In Nigerian LGs, a lack of accountability has fostered inefficiency and corruption, weakening public confidence in governance.

2.5 Legitimacy

Legitimacy denotes the perception of authority as justifiable and appropriate. In the context of local government elections, legitimacy is derived from free, fair, and credible electoral processes. Dunning, T. (2012). When elections are perceived as fraudulent, they result in a legitimacy crisis, undermining the authority of elected officials and the effectiveness of governance. Nyang'oro, J., & Basu, S. (2018).

3. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Social Contract Theory as its theoretical framework. This theory posits that governance is based on an implicit agreement between the governed and those in power, where authority is legitimate only if it serves the people's interests. Applied to local government, this framework underscores the importance of accountability and credible elections in maintaining the social contract and ensuring the legitimacy of governance.

4. Methodology

This study adopts descriptive research. The descriptive design is chosen to provide a detailed account of the KWASIEC 2024 LG election processes and outcomes, emphasizing participants' perceptions and experiences. The sample size for the study is 30 participants, drawn from key stakeholders in Kwara State, including voters, election officials, and civil society representatives. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who were directly involved in or knowledgeable about the 2024 LG election. This approach ensures that the insights gathered are relevant and reflective of the studied phenomena. Data were collected using a structured Likert scale questionnaire, which was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the electoral process, accountability, legitimacy, and recommendations for improvement. The questionnaire covered key areas such as awareness of the election, transparency, professionalism of officials, accountability mechanisms, and public trust in elected officials. Additionally, qualitative insights were gathered through informal interviews with selected respondents to contextualize and enrich the quantitative finding. The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive

statistics, including mean scores, percentages, and frequency distributions. These statistics provide an overview of respondents' opinions and highlight trends across the key themes.

5. Presentation of Data

Section 1: Electoral Process

Awareness: Mean score of 3.8 indicates moderate agreement that respondents were informed about the election.

Transparency: A low mean score of 2.5 suggests dissatisfaction with electoral transparency.

Malpractice: 60% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that malpractice was minimal.

Professional Conduct: Mean score of 3.2 shows neutrality regarding KWASIEC officials' professionalism.

Respondents perceive significant room for improvement in election management.

Section 2: Accountability

Accountability of Officials: 40% agreed that LG officials are accountable, but a mean score of 3.0 shows mixed views.

Effectiveness of Mechanisms: A mean score of 2.8 indicates a perception of ineffective accountability measures.

Transparency in Resource Management: 55% disagreed with the statement, reflecting concerns about resource mismanagement.

Interpretation: There is a lack of confidence in the accountability of LG officials and mechanisms.

Section 3: Legitimacy and Public Trust

Free and Fair Elections: Mean score of 2.6 highlights doubts about electoral fairness.

Trust in Results: Only 30% expressed trust in the announced results.

Legitimacy of Officials: Mean score of 2.9 reflects uncertainty about the legitimacy of elected officials. Issues in the election process undermine the perceived legitimacy of officials.

Section 4: Recommendations

Transparency Reforms: Mean score of 4.5 indicates strong agreement on the need for reforms.

Voter Education: 70% strongly agreed on the importance of education initiatives.

Electoral Laws: A high mean score of 4.6 shows consensus on stricter enforcement.

Stakeholders strongly advocate for systematic improvements in the electoral process.

The analysis reveals critical areas requiring intervention, such as enhancing transparency, improving accountability mechanisms, and rebuilding public trust. The findings can guide policy reforms tailored to Kwara State and beyond.

6. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study highlight several key insights into the electoral process, accountability, legitimacy, and public trust surrounding local government elections in Kwara State. Below is a detailed discussion of the findings, interpreting their implications for policy reforms and improvements in the electoral system.

1. Electoral Process

Awareness: The mean score of 3.8, indicating moderate agreement, suggests that while there is a general awareness of the election, the level of engagement and access to relevant electoral information might still be insufficient. Despite this moderate awareness, further efforts are required to ensure that all segments of the electorate are adequately informed, especially in rural areas where access to information may be limited.

Transparency: The low mean score of 2.5 reflects a significant concern about the transparency of the electoral process. This dissatisfaction points to a lack of faith in the openness and fairness of the elections. Transparency in electoral processes is critical for public trust, and this finding underscores the need for greater openness in the conduct of elections. Measures such as real-time reporting, independent monitoring, and increased scrutiny of electoral bodies may help address these concerns.

Malpractice: The finding that 60% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that malpractice was minimal is alarming. This suggests that a large portion of the electorate perceives electoral malpractice, such as vote-buying or ballot stuffing, as prevalent. The perception of widespread malpractice erodes public confidence and calls for more stringent measures to prevent electoral fraud. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms, both domestically and through international observers, could contribute to reducing malpractice.

Professional Conduct: The mean score of 3.2 indicates neutrality, suggesting that respondents

neither strongly approve nor disapprove of the professionalism of KWASIEC officials. This indicates that while there may not be overt allegations of misconduct, there is a perception of inefficiency or inadequacy in their operations. Improving the professionalism of election officials through training, ethics guidelines, and accountability systems would enhance the credibility of the election process.

2. Accountability

Accountability of Officials: The mixed views on the accountability of local government officials (40% agreement) and the mean score of 3.0 suggest that citizens are divided on whether their representatives are held accountable. Effective accountability mechanisms are crucial for ensuring that officials serve the interests of their constituents. The findings indicate that there is a need for more robust systems that hold elected officials accountable, such as public hearings, regular audits, and mechanisms for citizen feedback.

Effectiveness of Mechanisms: The mean score of 2.8, indicating ineffective accountability measures, highlights a significant gap in how well existing accountability systems function. If the mechanisms in place are not viewed as effective, citizens are less likely to trust them. There is an urgent need to reform these systems, perhaps through enhanced oversight from independent bodies, greater participation of civil society, and the introduction of digital platforms for reporting misconduct or inefficiency.

Transparency in Resource Management: The fact that 55% of respondents disagreed with the statement regarding transparency in resource management suggests widespread concerns about the misuse of public resources. This is a critical area, as the management of public funds is fundamental to the legitimacy of local government institutions. Steps should be taken to ensure transparency in budgeting, procurement, and spending, possibly through the introduction of open data platforms and more rigorous audit systems.

3. Legitimacy and Public Trust

Free and Fair Elections: The low mean score of 2.6 indicates widespread skepticism about the fairness of the elections. Concerns about the electoral process's fairness likely contribute to the erosion of public trust in the democratic system. To restore public confidence, there needs to be a comprehensive effort to ensure that elections are genuinely free and fair. This could include the introduction of more

transparent voting procedures, independent election monitoring, and legal reforms that guarantee the integrity of the electoral process.

Trust in Results: Only 30% of respondents expressed trust in the announced results, a concerning finding. A lack of trust in the election results undermines the legitimacy of elected officials and the democratic process itself. Efforts to rebuild trust should focus on ensuring that election results are promptly and accurately reported and that any disputes are transparently resolved through independent judicial processes.

Legitimacy of Officials: The mean score of 2.9 regarding the legitimacy of elected officials reflects uncertainty among the public about whether those in power have a valid mandate. This uncertainty can stem from perceptions of electoral irregularities, lack of transparency, or ineffective governance. Strengthening the electoral process, improving accountability, and ensuring transparency are essential for enhancing the legitimacy of elected officials.

4. Recommendations

Transparency Reforms: With a high mean score of 4.5, respondents strongly agree that transparency reforms are needed. This finding reflects the widespread belief that improvements in transparency are essential to restoring faith in the electoral process. Transparent election procedures, such as the use of technology for result transmission and public access to information, should be prioritized.

Voter Education: The strong consensus on the importance of voter education (70% strongly agreed) highlights the critical role that informed citizens play in a democratic system. Comprehensive voter education campaigns, focusing on electoral rights, voting procedures, and the importance of participating in elections, should be implemented.

Electoral Laws: The high mean score of 4.6 indicates strong support for stricter enforcement of electoral laws. This suggests that respondents believe that legal frameworks governing elections are either too lenient or not properly enforced. Strengthening electoral laws, imposing harsher penalties for malpractices, and ensuring rigorous enforcement can contribute to a more fair and credible electoral process.

The findings of this study highlight significant concerns in Kwara State's electoral process, including issues of transparency, accountability, public trust, and the legitimacy of elected officials. To address these

challenges, policy reforms should focus on enhancing the transparency of elections, improving accountability mechanisms, and rebuilding public trust through education and stricter enforcement of electoral laws. These reforms will not only address the current gaps in the electoral system but also contribute to the broader goal of strengthening democracy in the region.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process, accountability, legitimacy, and public trust in the local government elections of Kwara State. The findings reveal significant concerns regarding electoral transparency, accountability of officials, the legitimacy of elected officials, and the public's trust in the election results. The study highlights that while there is a moderate level of awareness about elections, dissatisfaction with transparency and the prevalence of electoral malpractice have undermined public confidence in the electoral system.

The study also emphasizes the need for reform in key areas such as voter education, electoral transparency, and accountability mechanisms. Ultimately, the findings underscore the importance of addressing the gaps and challenges within the electoral system to ensure free, fair, and credible elections. By implementing the recommended reforms, Kwara State can enhance its electoral integrity, rebuild public trust, and strengthen the legitimacy of its elected officials. These efforts will not only improve local governance but will also contribute to the broader goal of strengthening democracy in Nigeria. The study's recommendations offer a roadmap for policymakers, electoral bodies, and other stakeholders to create a more transparent, accountable, and democratic electoral system that better serves the needs of the electorate.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the issues identified in the electoral process, accountability, legitimacy, and public trust in Kwara State. These recommendations aim to foster a more transparent, accountable, and legitimate electoral system, while rebuilding public confidence in local government elections.

1. Enhance Electoral Transparency

Establish Real-Time Result Transmission: Implement digital platforms that allow for real-time transmission and public access to election results. This would reduce the potential for tampering and enhance public confidence in the results.

Independent Monitoring: Increase the involvement of independent election observers, both local and international, to monitor the electoral process. This should include monitoring the voter registration process, voting, counting, and result declaration. Independent observers can provide unbiased reports on electoral integrity, thereby building public trust.

Transparency in Electoral Funding: Implement systems to disclose funding sources and expenditures of electoral campaigns. This will help prevent the influence of money in elections and ensure fairness.

2. Strengthen Accountability Mechanisms

Create Independent Oversight Bodies: Establish independent commissions or bodies tasked with monitoring and evaluating the performance of local government officials. These bodies should be empowered to investigate complaints, conduct audits, and ensure that officials are held accountable for their actions.

Implement Public Accountability Forums: Regular town hall meetings or open forums should be instituted where local government officials report on their activities, budgets, and policy implementations. This allows citizens to ask questions and engage with their representatives, ensuring that officials are directly answerable to the public.

Strengthen Citizen Participation: Facilitate stronger citizen participation in decision-making processes through digital platforms, allowing residents to engage in budget discussions, policy creation, and the evaluation of public projects.

3. Improve Electoral Legitimacy and Public Trust

Address Electoral Irregularities: Strengthen measures to prevent and address electoral malpractice, including vote-buying, ballot box stuffing, and voter intimidation. This could involve the use of biometric identification systems to ensure that voters are who they claim to be, and stricter penalties for those caught engaging in electoral fraud.

Ensure Fair and Free Elections: The electoral body (KWASIEC) should enforce stricter regulations to ensure a level playing field, where no party or candidate is given an unfair advantage. This includes the fair distribution of campaign materials, access to

media for all parties, and ensuring that voting locations are accessible to all.

Post-Election Dispute Resolution: Strengthen the processes for resolving election disputes in a fair, transparent, and timely manner. Establish clear and accessible channels for individuals and parties to challenge election results if necessary, ensuring that all claims of malpractice or mismanagement are taken seriously and adjudicated impartially.

4. Promote Voter Education and Awareness

Launch Comprehensive Voter Education Campaigns: Develop and implement educational programs targeting voters of all demographics. These programs should focus on the importance of voting, how to vote, the impact of elections on local governance, and how citizens can hold officials accountable.

Use Multiple Platforms for Outreach: Utilize traditional media (radio, television) and digital platforms (social media, websites, mobile apps) to reach a broad audience. Special attention should be given to reaching younger voters and underrepresented communities.

Collaborate with Civil Society Organizations: Partner with NGOs and civil society groups to deliver voter education and facilitate community outreach programs. These organizations can help in mobilizing and educating voters, especially in rural or marginalized areas.

5. Reform Electoral Laws and Enforcement

Strengthen Electoral Legal Frameworks: Review and revise electoral laws to close gaps and address identified weaknesses, such as the need for stronger penalties for electoral malpractices and clearer procedures for the handling of election disputes. This also includes the regulation of party financing and the role of political elites in elections.

Introduce Strict Enforcement Mechanisms: Ensure that violations of electoral laws are met with strict penalties. Establish an independent election tribunal with the authority to investigate electoral fraud and misconduct, and that decisions are made transparently and swiftly.

Enforce Transparency in Political Party Funding: Implement and strictly enforce laws that require full disclosure of political party funding sources and campaign expenditures. This transparency will help limit the influence of illicit funds and ensure that the political environment is fair.

6. Ensure Effective Resource Management

Implement Public Resource Management Systems: Introduce open data platforms that allow citizens to track the allocation and use of public resources in local governments. These systems should provide real-time data on government spending, contracts awarded, and progress on development projects.

Create Anti-Corruption Units in Local Governments: Establish dedicated anti-corruption units within local governments that monitor resource allocation, procurement processes, and project implementation to prevent mismanagement and corruption.

Regular Public Audits: Mandate annual or bi-annual audits of local government finances and make the results publicly available. These audits should be conducted by independent third-party organizations to ensure their credibility.

7. Build Public Trust in the Electoral System

Promote Civic Responsibility and Engagement: Encourage citizens to view voting as a civic duty and emphasize its importance in shaping the future of their community. Highlight the role of citizens in ensuring that elections are free, fair, and transparent.

Enhance the Role of Media: Foster collaboration between the media and election authorities to provide accurate, unbiased reporting on the election process. The media can play a vital role in educating voters, exposing electoral malpractice, and holding officials accountable.

Rebuild Trust Through Consistent Reforms: Trust in the electoral system can only be rebuilt through consistent, long-term reforms that address voter concerns. Implementing the above recommendations will signal a commitment to a fairer, more transparent, and accountable electoral system.

By implementing these actionable recommendations, Kwara State can significantly improve its electoral system, increase accountability, and restore public trust in the election process. These reforms will not only enhance the integrity of elections but also create a more transparent, responsive, and effective local government system that serves the needs of its citizens. Ultimately, these actions will contribute to strengthening democracy in Kwara State and across Nigeria.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Section 1: General Information

Age, gender, and location within Kwara State

Section 2: Electoral Process

Were you aware of the KWASIEC 2024 LG election before Election Day? (Yes/No)

How would you rate the transparency of the electoral process? (Very Transparent, Transparent, Neutral, Opaque, Very Opaque)

Did you witness or experience any electoral malpractices, such as vote-buying or intimidation? (Yes/No)

What do you think were the major challenges during the election? (Open-ended)

Section 3: Accountability

Do you believe the elected LG officials are accountable to the electorate? (Yes/No/Not Sure)

How effective are existing mechanisms in ensuring accountability for LG officials? (Very Effective, Effective, Neutral, Ineffective, Very Ineffective)

In your opinion, what measures can improve accountability at the local government level? (Open-ended)

Section 4: Legitimacy and Public Trust

Do you believe the KWASIEC 2024 LG election was free and fair? (Yes/No/Not Sure)

How much trust do you have in the results of the election? (High, Moderate, Low, None)

What impact do you think the election's credibility has on the legitimacy of LG officials? (Open-ended)

Section 5: Recommendations

What reforms would you suggest to improve the LG electoral process in Kwara State? (Open-ended)

How can the government and KWASIEC address voter apathy in future elections? (Open-ended)



Economic Policy Uncertainty and Foreign Direct Investment in Nigeria: Evidence from Quantile Regression

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Abstract. Nigeria has faced significant challenges in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with economic policy uncertainty (EPU) emerging as a key deterrent. Persistent policy instability, regulatory inconsistencies, and macroeconomic volatility have created an unpredictable investment climate, discouraging foreign investors. Moreover, theoretical and empirical literature has been inconsistent in explaining the impact of EPU on FDI. Therefore, this study investigated the effect of EPU on FDI in Nigeria from April 2016 to June 2023, employing Quantile Regression and the VAR Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Test to analyze the relationship. The study concluded that EPU had a detrimental impact on FDI, particularly at higher quantiles, where increased uncertainty significantly reduced investment inflows. Additionally, exchange rate fluctuations dampened FDI, while strong GDP growth and increased domestic credit to the private sector were more effective in attracting investment. The causality test further confirmed that EPU Granger-caused FDI, reinforcing its role as a significant driver of investment trends in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the Nigerian government adopt predictable economic policies to create a more stable investment climate and implement sound macroeconomic strategies to stabilize the exchange rate, thereby improving Nigeria's attractiveness to foreign investors.

Keywords: Economic policy uncertainty, foreign direct investment, quantile regression, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Economic growth is a fundamental goal for all economies, as it drives prosperity, reduces poverty, and enhances overall development (Virjan et al, 2023; Aljadani et al, 2025). One of the key instruments for

achieving sustainable economic growth is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which plays a crucial role in capital formation, technology transfer, employment generation, and industrial expansion (Appiah et al, 2023; Sare et al, 2025). Recognized as a major driver of growth, FDI aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. Countries that effectively attract FDI benefit from increased productivity and improved industrial capacity. However, the success of FDI largely depends on a stable and predictable economic environment, as investors seek markets with clear policies and minimal uncertainty. In Nigeria, while efforts have been made to foster a conducive investment climate, economic policy uncertainty remains a critical challenge, impacting investor confidence and the sustainability of foreign inflows, thereby posing a significant barrier to achieving long-term economic development (Idrisu et al, 2025; Odionye et al, 2024)

Economic policy uncertainty refers to the unpredictability surrounding government policies, regulations, and macroeconomic direction, which can significantly influence investment decisions (Adeloye et al, 2024; Okonkwo & Okereke, 2025). When uncertainty is high, investors may delay or withdraw their investments due to concerns over policy reversals, inconsistent regulations, or abrupt shifts in economic strategies. Nigeria, as a key investment destination in Africa, has experienced fluctuations in foreign inflows due to various uncertainties, including changes in fiscal policy, foreign exchange regulations, and trade policies. According to Bureau of Statistics (2024), in Q1 2024, FDI in Nigeria recorded the lowest share of total capital importation, amounting to \$119.18 million (3.53%). Nigeria's FDI for 2023 stood at \$1.87 billion, reflecting a staggering 1102.46%

decline from 2022, when FDI was - \$0.19 billion, representing a 105.64% decrease from 2021. In contrast, FDI in 2021 was \$3.31 billion, marking a 38.9% increase from 2020. This reduction is partly attributed to macroeconomic instability and inconsistent policies, which create apprehension among foreign investors (Ejedegba, 2023; Obikaeze et al, 2023).

Over the years, Nigeria has implemented several policies to attract FDI, including the National Industrial Policy, the Foreign Exchange Act, and the establishment of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC). These efforts aimed to provide incentives such as tax holidays, free trade zones, and investment protection mechanisms. Despite these initiatives, issues such as policy summersaults where governments frequently reverse or modify policies have discouraged long-term investments. For instance, abrupt foreign exchange restrictions, sudden tax law amendments, and shifting trade policies have created an unpredictable business climate. As a result, foreign investors remain cautious, fearing that policies favoring them today might be reversed tomorrow (Adegboyo et al, 2021).

In the literature, there is no clear consensus on the relationship between economic policy uncertainty and foreign direct investment. Some scholars argue that uncertainty reduces FDI, as seen in studies by Ogbonna et al (2022), Hammed et al (2025), Nguyen and Lee (2021), and Jarde et al (2023), which found that investors tend to delay decisions in the face of policy instability. Conversely, others suggest that policy uncertainty can increase FDI, as investors take advantage of regulatory gaps and market inefficiencies to maximize returns (Shabir et al, 2022; Choi et al, 2021; Gao et al, 2024). This divergence in findings leaves policymakers at a crossroads should they prioritize stability at the expense of flexibility, or should they allow some level of uncertainty that might attract risk-taking investors? Given Nigeria's reliance on foreign investments to drive industrialization and economic development, understanding the impact of policy instability is crucial for formulating effective strategies. This study, therefore, investigated how economic policy uncertainty affects FDI inflows and whether Nigeria's experience aligns with existing theoretical perspectives. Also, to determine the direction of causality between them.

Aside from the introduction, the rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review, Section 3 outlines the methodology, Section 4 discusses the empirical results, and Section 5 provides the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Foreign Direct Investment refers to the long-term investment made by individuals, companies, or governments from one country into business ventures or assets in another country (Amade, 2022). According to the International Monetary Fund (2023), Foreign direct investment refers to direct investment equity flows in the reporting economy. It is the sum of equity capital, reinvestment of earnings, and other capital. Direct investment is a category of cross-border investment associated with a resident in one economy having control or a significant degree of influence on the management of an enterprise that is resident in another economy.

Figure 1 shows the trend of FDI in Nigeria between April 2016 and June 2023. The trend exhibits significant fluctuations, reflecting the impact of economic policies, global investment conditions, and domestic macroeconomic challenges. Initially, FDI was relatively high in 2016, showing investor confidence in Nigeria's market. However, a noticeable decline occurred between late 2016 and 2017, attributed to foreign exchange (FX) shortages, regulatory uncertainties, and concerns over Nigeria's heavy reliance on oil revenues.

Between 2018 and 2021, FDI inflows experienced moderate fluctuations. A significant downturn occurred in early 2018, likely due to policy uncertainty and concerns over business regulations. However, a gradual recovery from late 2018 to early 2019 coincided with increased investments in financial services, ICT, and manufacturing. The Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) intervention in stabilizing FX access and encouraging foreign participation in key sectors played a role in the temporary improvement. However, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 severely impacted investment flows, causing stagnation. In early 2021, FDI rebounded, driven by post-pandemic economic recovery efforts and renewed investor interest in Nigeria's growing technology and fintech sectors.

Despite the brief recovery, a drastic collapse in FDI occurred in late 2021, reflecting investor uncertainty over capital repatriation, multiple exchange rate regimes, and heightened regulatory risks. The government's restrictions on FX repatriation made it difficult for foreign investors to withdraw profits, leading to declining investor confidence. The situation worsened in 2022, as FDI inflows reached historically

low levels, coinciding with election uncertainties, rising inflation, and global economic instability.

The 2022–2023 period saw a historically low FDI inflow, reaching near-zero levels in mid-2022. This was likely due to severe FX liquidity crises, declining investor confidence ahead of the 2023 elections, and

restrictions on capital repatriation. The sharp decline reflected Nigeria's worsening business environment, ranking low in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index. However, in early 2023, a moderate recovery was observed, possibly due to post-election optimism, proposed economic reforms, and a renewed push to improve investor confidence.

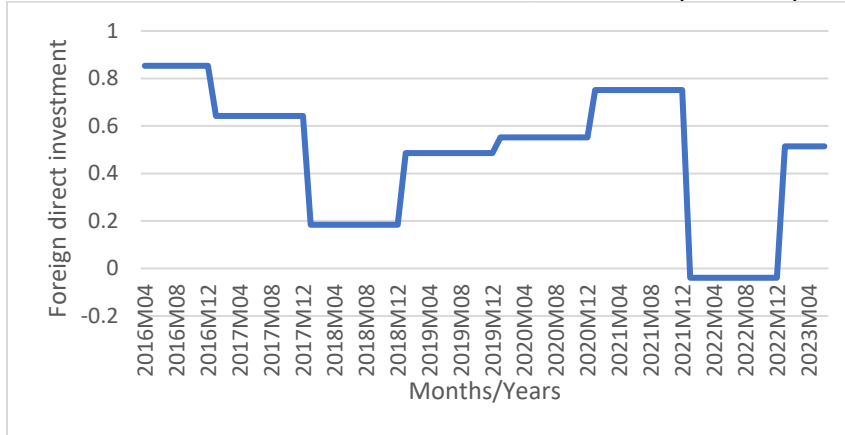


Figure 1: Trend of FDI net inflows (% of GDP) in Nigeria

2.2 Economic Policy Uncertainty

Baker et al (2016) define economic policy uncertainty as the uncertainty surrounding government policies, regulations, and economic decisions that affect businesses, investors, and households, leading to unpredictable economic conditions. They quantify EPU using news-based indices, firm-level surveys, and economic forecasts. Gulen and Ion (2016) describe it as the unpredictability in government actions related to taxation, spending, regulations, and monetary policies, which can deter investment and slow down economic growth.

Figure 2 shows the trend of economic policy uncertainty (EPU) in Nigeria from April 2016 to June 2023. Initially, in 2016, EPU was relatively high, reflecting concerns over Nigeria's economic recession, which was triggered by falling global oil prices and a severe foreign exchange (FX) crisis. The uncertainty was further exacerbated by capital control policies and a lack of clarity in government responses to economic challenges. However, following the introduction of the Investor and Exporter (I&E) FX Window in 2017, EPU saw a slight decline, suggesting a temporary improvement in investor confidence and economic predictability.

Between 2018 and early 2020, the EPU index displayed moderate fluctuations. The uncertainty observed in 2018 was largely driven by concerns over business regulations, multiple FX rates, and upcoming

elections. The 2019 general elections further contributed to a rise in uncertainty, as investors and businesses adopted a wait-and-see approach due to potential policy shifts. However, after the elections, EPU temporarily stabilized as the government continued its policy of intervention in FX markets and investment incentives.

In 2020, economic policy uncertainty spiked due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to economic lockdowns, disruptions in global supply chains, and declining oil revenues Nigeria's major export. The uncertainty was further intensified by fiscal pressures and the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) controversial policy decisions, including restrictions on FX access and currency devaluation. By early 2021, as the economy started recovering from the pandemic, EPU declined slightly, reflecting gradual stabilization efforts.

From 2022 to early 2023, economic policy uncertainty remained persistently high. This was influenced by election-related uncertainties, inflationary pressures, and the government's handling of monetary policies. The continued existence of multiple exchange rates, restrictions on foreign transactions, and inconsistencies in fiscal reforms contributed to elevated uncertainty. However, towards mid-2023, there was a slight moderation in uncertainty, possibly driven by post-election optimism, discussions on economic reforms, and renewed efforts to address FX liquidity constraints.

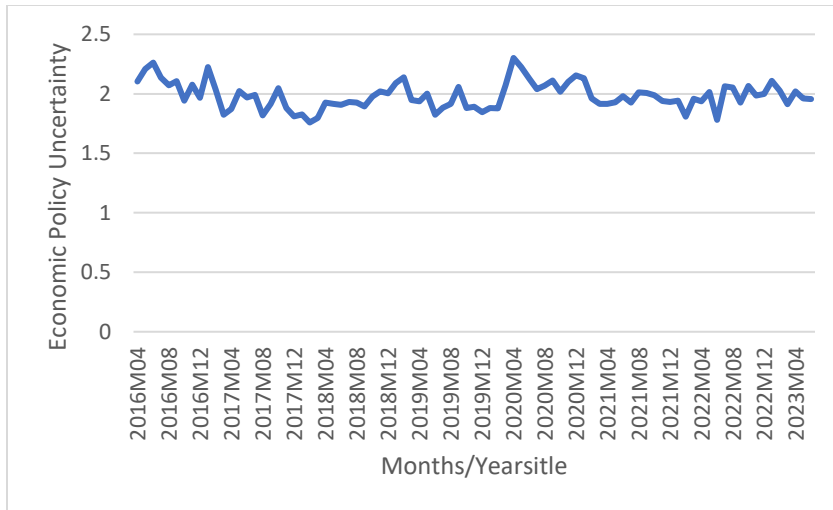


Figure 2: Trend of Economic Policy Uncertainty in Nigeria

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Institutional Theory, propounded by Douglass North (1990), which emphasizes the role of institutions in shaping economic activities, including foreign direct investment (FDI). Institutions, both formal (laws, regulations, and policies) and informal (social norms and business practices), provide the framework within which economic transactions take place. North (1990) argues that well-structured institutions reduce uncertainty and transaction costs, thereby fostering economic growth and investment. Conversely, weak or unpredictable institutions create uncertainty, deterring foreign investors from committing capital due to the risks associated with policy instability, regulatory inconsistencies, and weak enforcement mechanisms.

Institutional theory is highly relevant to this study as economic policy uncertainty (EPU) is a critical aspect of institutional stability. In Nigeria, frequent changes in tax policies, exchange rate regulations, and trade policies contribute to heightened uncertainty, discouraging foreign investment. Foreign investors seek environments with stable and predictable policies to minimize risks and ensure the security of their investments. When economic policies are unstable or ambiguous, investors may delay or cancel planned investments, leading to reduced FDI inflows.

The theory has its ability to explain the role of governance and policy stability in attracting FDI. It acknowledges that beyond economic fundamentals, institutional factors such as policy transparency, property rights, and regulatory effectiveness play a crucial role in shaping investment decisions. The theory however lacks quantifiable measures for institutional factors, tends to overemphasize institutions, and sometimes overlooking economic fundamentals such as market size and labor costs.

Empirical studies have applied institutional theory to examine the impact of policy uncertainty on FDI. Julio and Yook (2012) found that political and economic uncertainty reduces cross-border investment, as firms delay capital commitments during periods of policy instability. Baker, Bloom, and Davis (2016) demonstrated that higher policy uncertainty leads to lower FDI inflows globally. Similarly, Handley and Limao (2015) showed that trade policy uncertainty discourages foreign firms from entering unstable markets.

2.4 Empirical Review

Hammed et al. (2025) investigated the impact of economic policy uncertainty on various components of foreign investment inflows into Nigeria, including foreign direct investment, foreign portfolio investment, and other investment portfolios. The study employed a recently developed uncertainty index for Nigeria and utilized the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) approach to analyze monthly data spanning from January 2010 to November 2022. Their findings established that an increase in domestic EPU significantly reduced the volume of foreign investment inflows in both the short and long run. However, while the adjustment to disequilibrium in the system was found to be instantaneous for FDI, it was slower for FPI.

Akpilic (2025) investigated the factors influencing foreign direct investment, with a particular emphasis on global uncertainties. Using panel data from 122 countries and applying the system Generalized Method of Moments (GMM), the study found that the determinants of FDI varied depending on the level of economic development. Specifically, global uncertainties, as measured by the World Uncertainty Index, were found to significantly reduce FDI inflows in emerging, middle-income, and low-income economies, as investors tended to shift toward safer assets and delay long-term investment projects. In contrast, advanced economies demonstrated greater resilience to global uncertainties, largely due to their more stable macroeconomic conditions and robust institutional frameworks.

Gao et al. (2024) investigated the impact of economic policy uncertainty (EPU) on foreign direct investment (FDI) using data from 264 Chinese cities between 2005 and 2014 and found a negative relationship between EPU and FDI inflows. Their heterogeneity tests revealed that this effect was more pronounced in cities with higher marketization, stronger financial development, and a larger industrial sector, indicating that while these cities attract more foreign investments, they are also more vulnerable to policy uncertainty. Additionally, the study found that FDI became more sensitive to EPU fluctuations after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, suggesting that heightened global uncertainty exacerbates investor risk aversion.

Odinoye et al (2024) investigated the heterogeneous impact of capital flight and economic policy uncertainty (EPU) on domestic investment in Nigeria using the quantile-based nonlinear autoregressive distributed lag (QNARDL) model. The findings revealed that capital flight negatively affected domestic investment, particularly in the upper quantiles, suggesting that higher levels of capital flight led to a more significant decline in investment. Additionally, both domestic and global EPU had a significant adverse impact on investment. The study further established a unidirectional causality from EPU both domestic and global to capital flight, indicating that policy uncertainty weakens the business climate, heightens investor fears, and discourages investment.

Phan et al. (2024) investigated the impact of economic policy uncertainty (EPU) on foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, with a specific focus on greenfield investment and cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As). Using a panel dataset covering 213 countries from 2003 to 2020, the study employed the panel ordinary least squares (OLS) with fixed effects estimator. The findings revealed that higher levels of EPU led to a decline in overall FDI inflows. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic further reduced FDI inflows, although its effects varied between different types of FDI. The study also found that while greenfield investment declined during periods of heightened uncertainty, cross-border M&As increased when uncertainty was triggered by the health crisis, suggesting that firms sought acquisitions as a strategic response to economic instability.

Elejeda (2023) investigated the empirical relevance of macroeconomic instability and policy uncertainty on aggregate investment behavior in Nigeria. Using time series data from 1990 to 2020, obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, the study employed the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation model and utilized the Generalized Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity (GARCH) model to measure instability and uncertainty. The findings revealed that macroeconomic instability, worsened by policy uncertainty resulting from inconsistent government economic policies, significantly constrained investment performance in Nigeria since the 1990s.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Requirement and Source

The study was carried out in Nigeria, spanning from April 2016 to June 2023. The dataset included foreign direct investment net inflows (% of GDP), economic policy uncertainty (EPU), the official exchange rate (LCU per USD, period average), annual GDP growth rate, and domestic credit to private sector (% of GDP). The EPU data were obtained from the Economic Policy Uncertainty Index developed by Tumala et al. (2023), while all other variables were sourced from the World Development Indicators and subsequently computed.

Model Specification

The functional form of the model takes

$$FDI_t = f(EPU_t, EXR_t, GDPgr_t, DCPS_t)$$

1

Where:

FDI_t = Foreign Direct Investment at time t

EPU_t = Economic Policy Uncertainty at time t

EXR_t = Exchange Rate at time t

$GDPgr_t$ = GDP Growth Rate at time t

$DCPS_t$ = Domestic credit to private sector at time t

Equation 1 is specified in econometric model as

$$FDI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EPU_t + \beta_2 EXR_t + \beta_3 GDPgr_t + \beta_4 DCPS_t + \varepsilon_t \quad 2$$

Where: β_0 = Intercept term. $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, and β_4 = Coefficients measuring the impact of each independent variable on FDI and ε_t = Error term capturing unobserved factors

In order to reduce heteroscedasticity, normalize the distribution of variables, and improve the interpretability of coefficients, equation 2 is respecified in log form as:

$$\ln FDI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln EPU_t + \beta_2 \ln EXR_t + \beta_3 GDPgr_t + \beta_4 DCPS_t + \varepsilon_t \quad 3$$

On a priori we expect $\beta_1 < 0$; $\beta_2 \leq 0$; $\beta_3 > 0$; and $\beta_4 > 0$.

3.2 Estimation Technique

This study employs the quantile regression technique. Unlike ordinary least squares (OLS), which estimates the mean relationship between the dependent and independent variables, quantile regression provides a more comprehensive analysis by capturing the impact of explanatory variables across different points (quantiles) of the FDI distribution. This is particularly useful in understanding how the determinants of FDI behave at various levels, such as low, median, and high FDI inflows.

Quantile regression is preferred in this study for several reasons. First, FDI inflows are often skewed and subject to extreme values, making mean-based estimation methods less reliable. Second, it allows for heterogeneity in the impact of explanatory variables, meaning that the effect of economic policy uncertainty may vary across different levels of FDI inflows. Third, it is robust to outliers, which is crucial given the volatility of FDI in Nigeria due to economic shocks, policy changes, and global financial conditions.

Mathematically, the quantile regression model for this study is specified as:

$$Q_\tau \left(\frac{FDI_t}{X_t} \right) = \beta_0^\tau + \beta_1^\tau \ln EPU_t + \beta_2^\tau \ln EXR_t + \beta_3^\tau GDPgr_t + \beta_4^\tau \ln DCPS_t + \varepsilon_t \quad 4$$

Where $Q_\tau \left(\frac{FDI_t}{X_t} \right)$ represent the τ – th quantile of FDI given the explanatory variables, and β^τ captures the impact of each determinant at different points of the FDI distribution.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Figure 1 shows the descriptive trends of key macroeconomic variables in Nigeria from 2016 to 2023. The FDI graph reveals fluctuations, with significant declines around 2019 and 2023, suggesting periods of investor uncertainty, possibly linked to policy instability or economic shocks. Meanwhile, EPU exhibits persistent volatility, especially between 2016 and 2021, which could indicate uncertainty in government policies, regulatory changes, or external economic pressures affecting investment decisions. After 2021, a relative stabilization in EPU suggests improved policy clarity, which might support investment recovery.

The Exchange Rate graph demonstrates a continuous depreciation of the Nigerian currency over the observed period, reflecting macroeconomic instability, inflationary pressures, and external shocks. This depreciation can negatively impact foreign investment by increasing transaction costs and reducing investor confidence. The GDP Growth Rate graph displays fluctuations, with noticeable downturns in 2019 and subsequent recovery in 2021, likely driven by post-COVID-19 economic recovery measures. However, growth appears to stabilize at a lower level afterward, indicating persistent structural challenges in sustaining economic expansion.

Domestic credit to the private sector in Nigeria exhibited a downward trend, with a more pronounced decline in 2018, likely due to tightening monetary policies, economic uncertainty, or reduced lending capacity by financial institutions. However, a gradual recovery began in 2019 and continued until 2021, driven by improved economic conditions, policy interventions, or increased access to credit. Since then, credit to the private sector has been on a decline, which could be attributed to factors such as rising interest rates, inflationary pressures, regulatory constraints, or reduced investor confidence in the economy.

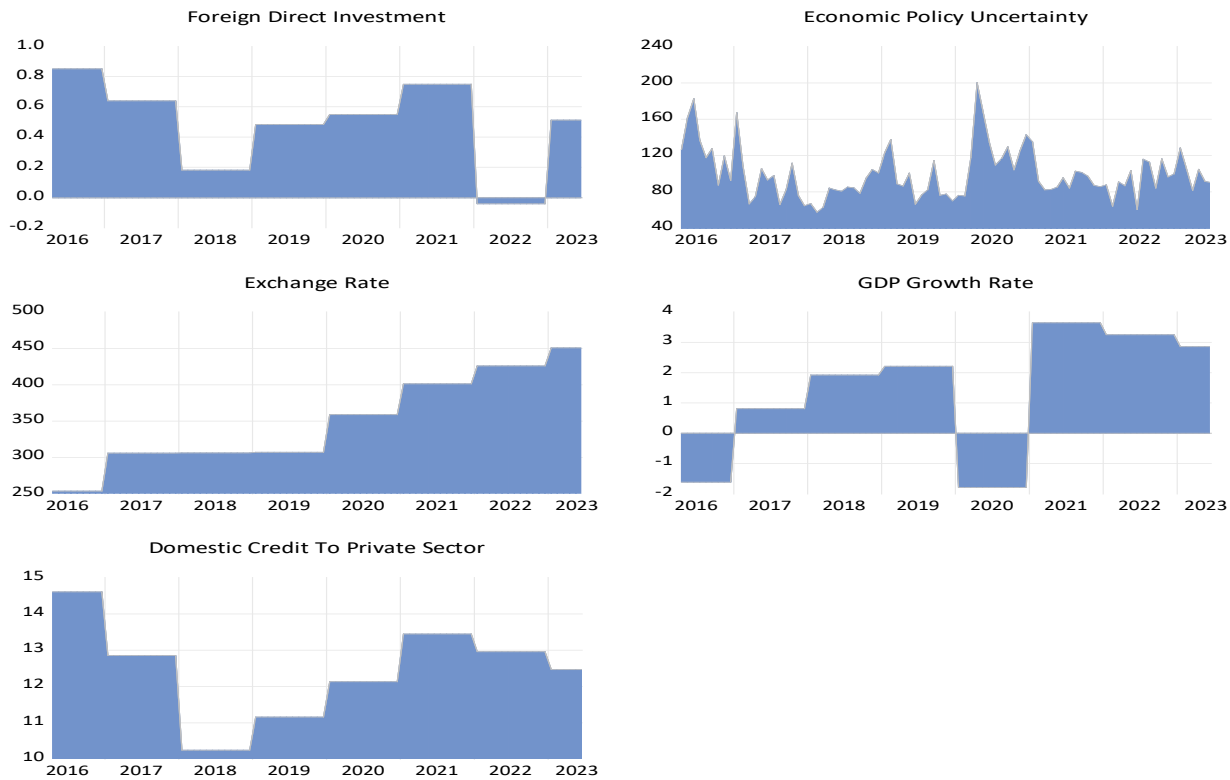


Figure 3: Area Plot of the Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables used. Foreign Direct Investment, measured as a percentage of GDP, has a mean value of 0.479, indicating that, on average, FDI inflows constitute approximately 0.48% of Nigeria's GDP over the period examined. The standard deviation of 0.281 suggests moderate variability in FDI inflows, reflecting fluctuations in investment attractiveness. The maximum FDI recorded is 0.853% of GDP, while the minimum is -0.039%, indicating periods of both significant inflows and occasional disinvestment or capital outflows. Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU), measured as an index with a base value of 100, has an average of 100.000, signifying a balanced level of uncertainty over the study period. The standard deviation of 27.813 indicates considerable variations in uncertainty levels, potentially due to economic shocks or policy changes. The highest recorded EPU value is 200.180, reflecting a period of extreme uncertainty, while the lowest is 57.395.

The exchange rate, measured in Nigerian Naira per US dollar, has an average value of 347.622, showing the typical exchange rate level over the period. With a standard deviation of 60.499, the exchange rate exhibits significant fluctuations, likely due to currency depreciation, external shocks, or changes in monetary policy. The highest exchange rate recorded is 450.806 NGN/USD, while the lowest is 253.492 NGN/USD, reflecting periods of both relative currency stability and volatility.

GDP growth rate (GDPGR), measured in percentage terms, has a mean value of 1.415%, indicating slow economic growth over the study period. The standard deviation of 1.971% suggests significant variations in economic performance, likely driven by external shocks, fiscal policies, and global economic conditions. The highest growth rate recorded is 3.647%, reflecting periods of economic expansion, while the lowest is -1.794%, representing times of economic contraction or recession.

Domestic credit to the private sector (DCPS), measured as a percentage of GDP, has an average value of 12.412%, indicating the extent of financial sector support to private enterprises. The standard deviation of 1.268 suggests moderate fluctuations in credit availability. The highest value recorded is 14.608%, while the lowest is 10.247%,

reflecting variations in credit supply influenced by monetary policy, financial sector stability, and economic conditions.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	FDI	EPU	EXR	GDPGR	DCPS
Mean	0.479	100.000	347.622	1.415	12.412
Median	0.552	92.893	306.921	1.923	12.852
Maximum	0.853	200.180	450.806	3.647	14.608
Minimum	-0.039	57.395	253.492	-1.794	10.247
Std. Dev.	0.281	27.813	60.499	1.971	1.268

Source: Computed by Authors from WDI

4.3 Correlation

Table 2 shows the correlation matrix, which presents the pairwise relationships between the variables in the study. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) exhibits a negative and significant correlation with Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU) ($r = -0.283^{**}$, $\rho < 0.05$), indicating that higher uncertainty in economic policies is associated with lower FDI inflows. FDI also has a significant negative correlation with the exchange rate (EXR) ($r = -0.376^{**}$, $\rho < 0.05$), meaning that as the exchange rate depreciates, FDI inflows tend to decline. Additionally, FDI is negatively correlated with GDP growth rate (GDPGR) (-0.423^{**} , $\rho < 0.05$), indicating that foreign investors may withdraw investments during economic downturns due to reduced business opportunities and profitability.

Conversely, FDI has a strong positive correlation with domestic credit to the private sector (DCPS) ($r = 0.501^{**}$, $\rho < 0.05$), meaning that an increase in financial sector support for businesses is associated with higher FDI inflows. This significant relationship suggests that better access to credit fosters an investment-friendly environment, as foreign investors may be more willing to invest in a well-financed economy with efficient capital allocation.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

		FDI	EPU	EXR	GDPGR	DCPS
FDI	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
EPU	Pearson Correlation	-.283**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(0.008)				
EXR	Pearson Correlation	-.376**	-0.074	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(0.000)	(0.496)			
GDPGR	Pearson Correlation	-.423**	-.467**	.490**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		
DCPS	Pearson Correlation	.501**	.318**	0.108	-.227*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(0.000)	(0.003)	(0.318)	(0.0340)	

Source: Author, 2025. Note: *** and ** denote significance at 1% and 5% respectively

4.4 Unit Root Test

Table 3 presented the unit root test results using the Phillips-Perron (PP) test and the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test. The results indicated that Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU) was stationary at level (I(0)), suggesting that it did not exhibit a unit root and was not influenced by past trends. However, all other variables Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Exchange Rate (EXR), GDP Growth Rate (GDPGR), and Domestic Credit to Private Sector (DCPS) were non-stationary at level but became stationary after first differencing (I(1)). This implied that these variables exhibited

persistence over time, meaning that past values significantly influenced future changes, and external shocks could have long-term effects on their behavior.

Table 3: Unit Root Test

	PP		ADF	
	Level	First Difference	Level	First Difference
FDI	-2.369 (0.154)	-9.119*** (0.000)	-2.302 (0.174)	-9.119*** (0.000)
EPU	-5.065*** (0.000)		-5.065*** (0.000)	
EXR	-0.891 (0.787)	-9.659*** (0.000)	-0.951 (0.767)	-9.597*** (0.000)
GDPGR	-2.225 (0.199)	-9.151*** (0.000)	-2.179 (0.215)	-9.151*** (0.000)
DCPS	-1.953 (0.307)	-9.139*** (0.000)	-1.944 (0.311)	-9.139*** (0.000)

Note: *** denote significance at 5%

4.5 Regression Result

Table 4 presents the quantile regression results for the effect of economic policy uncertainty, exchange rate, GDP Growth Rate, and domestic credit to private sector on foreign direct investment across different quantiles (10th to 90th percentiles). From the result EPU has positive impact on FDI in the 10th and 20th quantile. This shows that in Nigeria, Economic Policy Uncertainty (EPU) initially encourages FDI at lower quantiles, particularly at the 20th quantile, where a 1% increase in EPU raises FDI by 0.149%. However, as FDI levels increase, policy uncertainty becomes a deterrent, significantly reducing investment from the 30th quantile onward. The negative effect intensifies in the upper quantiles, with a 1% rise in EPU leading to FDI declines of 0.301%, 0.322%, and 0.401% at the 70th, 80th, and 90th quantiles, respectively. This suggests that while Nigeria may experience slight increases in FDI at low investment levels possibly due to speculative capital inflows or short-term risk-taking sustained and high FDI inflows require a stable policy environment. At higher levels of investment, foreign investors in Nigeria become more cautious, prioritizing economic predictability and long-term stability. The findings are in line with Odunoye (2024), Hammed et al (2025) as well as Phan et al. (2024).

Exchange rate have a consistently negative impact on FDI across all quantiles, with the effect being more severe in the lower quantiles. At the 10th, 20th, and 30th quantiles, a 1% increase in exchange rate depreciation reduces FDI by 3.071%, 2.783%, and 2.578%, respectively, indicating that lower levels of FDI are highly sensitive to exchange rate instability. As FDI increases, the negative effect weakens but remains significant, with declines of 1.204%, 1.038%, and 0.787% in the middle quantiles (40th to 60th). The impact continues to diminish in the upper quantiles, though it remains statistically significant, with FDI reductions of 0.666%, 0.617%, and 0.561% at the 70th, 80th, and 90th quantiles, respectively. This pattern suggests that exchange rate volatility in Nigeria discourages foreign investment, particularly at lower levels, where investors may lack the financial resilience to absorb currency risks. The result is in line with Okonkwo et al (2021); Nwagu (2023)

The effect of GDPGR on FDI varies across quantiles, showing a negative and significant impact in the lower quantiles but turning positive in the upper quantiles. At the 10th, 20th, and 30th quantiles, a 1% increase in GDPGR reduces FDI by 0.658%, 0.569%, and 0.505%, respectively, indicating that when FDI inflows are low, economic growth does not necessarily translate into increased foreign investment, possibly due to structural economic constraints or policy uncertainties. However, as FDI moves to the middle and upper quantiles, the effect becomes less negative and eventually turns positive, with a slight but insignificant impact at the 50th quantile (-0.030%). In the 60th to 90th quantiles, the relationship becomes positive and significant, with a 1% increase in GDPGR raising FDI by 0.047%, 0.084%, 0.099%, and 0.117% at the 60th, 70th, 80th, and 90th quantiles, respectively. This suggests that higher economic growth in Nigeria is more effective in attracting larger FDI inflows, as investors are more likely to respond

positively when the economy is already experiencing substantial foreign investment. The findings supported Fazaaloh (2024); Olorogun et al (2022).

For DCPS, the results indicate a consistently positive and significant effect on FDI across all quantiles, with the impact strengthening as FDI increases. In the lower quantiles (10th, 20th, and 30th quantiles), the effect is positive but less pronounced, as a 1% increase in DCPS leads to FDI increases of 1.072%, 1.427%, and 1.681%, respectively, showing that even at low levels of FDI, access to domestic credit supports investment inflows. The impact becomes stronger in the middle quantiles (40th to 60th quantiles), with a 1% increase in DCPS raising FDI by 3.374%, 3.579%, and 3.889%, highlighting the role of financial sector development in enhancing foreign investment. In the upper quantiles (70th to 90th quantiles), the effect is most pronounced, with FDI increasing by 4.038%, 4.098%, and 4.168% for every 1% increase in DCPS, confirming that a well-developed financial sector significantly boosts foreign investment at higher FDI levels. The findings supported the outcome by Muzaffarli and Mahmudlu (2024)

Table 4: Quantile Regression Result

	Location	Scale	Lower Quantile			Middle Quantile			Upper Quantile		
			10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
EPU	-0.119 (0.020)	-0.019 (0.013)	0.155 (0.280)	0.149** (0.030)	-0.144** (0.031)	-0.115** (0.025)	-0.189** (0.029)	-0.206** (0.044)	0.304*** (0.003)	-0.322** (0.034)	-0.401** (0.022)
EXR	-1.402 (0.000)	0.868 (0.000)	3.071*** (0.000)	2.783** (0.000)	-2.578** (0.000)	1.204*** (0.001)	-1.038** (0.010)	-0.787** (0.021)	0.666*** (0.000)	-0.617** (0.034)	-0.561** (0.040)
GDPR	-0.142 (0.269)	0.268 (0.003)	-0.658** (0.021)	0.569** (0.021)	-0.505** (0.047)	-0.081** (0.032)	-0.030 (0.818)	0.047** (0.027)	0.084** (0.013)	0.099** (0.025)	0.117** (0.028)
DCPS	3.131 (0.000)	1.071 (0.001)	1.072 (0.287)	1.427 (0.100)	1.681** (0.029)	3.374*** (0.000)	3.579*** (0.000)	3.889*** (0.000)	4.038*** (0.000)	4.098*** (0.000)	4.168*** (0.000)

Note: *** and ** denote significant at 1% and 5% respectively

4.6 Causality Test

Table 5 presented the VAR Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Test results, which were conducted to validate the reliability of the estimated findings by examining the predictive relationships between variables. The results indicated that economic policy uncertainty (EPU) Granger-caused foreign direct investment (FDI) at a 1% significance level with ($\chi^2 = 8.829, p < 0.05$), confirming that fluctuations in policy uncertainty significantly influenced FDI inflows in Nigeria. This finding supported the argument that investors closely monitored economic policy stability before making investment decisions, as heightened uncertainty deterred FDI. The test results further revealed that exchange rate (EXR), and GDP growth rate (GDPR) significantly Granger-caused foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria ($\chi^2 = 8.829, p < 0.05$; $\chi^2 = 8.829, p < 0.05$), while domestic credit to the private sector (DCPS) did not with ($\chi^2 = 2.423, p > 0.05$), implying that access to domestic credit was not a primary driver of foreign investment. The joint causality test ($\chi^2 = 18.837, p < 0.05$) confirmed the collective influence of all variables on FDI, stressing the importance of macroeconomic stability in attracting foreign investments to Nigeria.

Table 5: VAR Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Test Result

Excluded	Chi-Sq	Prob
Dependent Variable: LNFDI		
LNEPU	8.829***	0.003
LNEXR	6.007**	0.022
LNGDPGR	11.013***	0.000
LNDPCS	2.423	0.546
ALL	18.837***	0.000

Note: *** and ** denotes significant at 1% and 5% respectively

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated the effect of Economic Policy Uncertainty on foreign direct investment in Nigeria from April 2016 to June 2023, employing quantile regression and the VAR Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Test to analyze the relationship. The study concluded that economic policy uncertainty had a detrimental impact on foreign direct investment in Nigeria, particularly at higher quantiles, indicating that heightened uncertainty discouraged investment inflows. However, EPU also stood as a key driver of FDI, suggesting that while investors reacted negatively to uncertainty, it still played a role in shaping investment decisions. Additionally, the study found that exchange rate volatility dampened FDI, whereas strong GDP growth and increased domestic credit to the private sector (DCPS) were more effective in attracting investment. The policy implication of these findings was that reducing economic policy uncertainty through consistent and transparent policymaking would enhance investor confidence and promote FDI inflows in Nigeria. Based on these conclusions, the study recommended that the Nigerian government should adopt stable and predictable economic policies to minimize uncertainty and create an investor-friendly environment. Furthermore, enhancing macroeconomic stability through sound monetary and fiscal policies would help mitigate exchange rate fluctuations, thereby improving the attractiveness of Nigeria as an FDI destination.

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Unveiling Political Participation Dynamics: The Impact of Social Media Skits on Youth Engagement in the 2023 Nigerian General Elections

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Abstract. The issue of apathy among young people towards participating in political activities, such as campaigns and voting, has sparked numerous discussions throughout Nigeria. Notably, the 2023 General Election in Nigeria witnessed a noteworthy increase in youth involvement in political activities. However, the extent to which this participation can be attributed to political campaigns and mobilization on social media, particularly through the use of media skits, remains unclear. This study explores the role of social media skits in shaping youth political engagement during the 2023 general election in Nigeria. With the surge of social media as a political tool and the unique infusion of creative skits, this research addresses the impact on youth participation, perceptions of political candidates, and potential drawbacks of this digital phenomenon. Grounded in Cultivation Theory, the study utilises a descriptive survey approach with 340 participants in Lagos State, Nigeria. Findings indicate that social media skits positively influence youth political knowledge and behaviour, yet concerns about misinformation emerge. Recommendations encompass fact-checking for content creators, critical media literacy for youths, comprehensive social media strategies for political parties, and the implementation of regulatory frameworks by governments to balance freedom of expression and prevent misinformation. The study contributes insights into leveraging social media for effective youth engagement in political discourse.

Keywords: General election, media skits, politics, social media, youths

1. Introduction

Nigeria, with its burgeoning youth population, has witnessed a paradigm shift in the way political

discourse unfolds. The emergence of social media as a prominent platform for information dissemination and community building has redefined political engagement, providing a unique space for the youth to voice their opinions, concerns, and aspirations (Sanusi, Adelabu & Esiri, 2015; Ajodo-Adebanjko, 2018). Against this backdrop, the infusion of creative and often humorous political skits into the digital sphere has become a noteworthy phenomenon deserving scholarly attention. The 2023 general election in Nigeria saw a new dimension different from the usual, due to the active role of social media.

This implies that a good number of Nigerians have now tapped into different social media platforms (Olumuji & Okwoli, 2020). The media platforms have been identified as a key factor that has changed the way politics and elections used to be, bringing everyone together to participate and share their opinion freely.

The youth demographic in Nigeria constitutes a significant voting bloc, and harnessing their support is crucial for any successful political campaign (Ajodo-Adebanjko, 2018). Social media provided a means to bridge the gap between election and the younger generation (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Okunbor, 2022). By leveraging popular social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, skit creators crafted humorous, relatable, and shareable content that resonated with young voters.

Social media skits offered a unique opportunity to political parties in the elections to present their candidates at the grass roots in a manner socially friendly and acceptable by the electorates (Tsandzana, 2023). Instead of relying solely on traditional campaign speeches and press conferences, the skits

added a sense of humor, to everyday interactions. This allowed voters to see a more approachable side of the candidates, fostering a sense of familiarity and trust. By breaking down barriers, the skits helped bridged the barrier between the voters (youths in particular) and political candidates.

This study, therefore, examines the Nigerian youth and political participation in the 2023 General Election using social media skits. It gives issues on how social media skits played key roles in engendering youth participation in the General Election that manifests in the form of debates on probity, accountability, transparency, anti-democratic cultural reviews, and advocacy for action. This is very important because of how Nigeria's democratic space continues to grow with mixed signs.

1.1 Objectives of Study

- To determine the place of social media skits in youth knowledge of politics.
- To ascertain the influence of social media skits on youth political behavior, such as voting, attending political rallies, and engaging in political discussions.
- To examine the potential drawbacks and limitations of social media skits as a means of political engagement among young people.

Research Questions

- What is the place of social media skits in youth knowledge of politics?
- What is the influence of social media skits on youth political behavior, such as voting, attending political rallies, and engaging in political discussions?
- What are the potential drawbacks and limitations of social media skits as a means of political engagement among young people?

2. Theoretical Review

Cultivation Theory holds that long-term exposure to media shapes how media consumers perceive the world and conduct themselves. The cultivation hypothesis states that the more people are engaged on a media platform, the more likely they are to hold a view of reality closer to media's depiction (Anaeto, Onabajo, & Osifeso, 2008; Baran & Davis, 2010). For many individuals, the distorted and partial reality portrayed in media represents what the world is "really" like.

This theory implies that those exposed to media interpret social realities according to how such realities are portrayed in the media (Anaeto, Onabajo, & Osifeso, 2008). Cultivation theory is a communications and sociological framework which posits that long-term exposure to media shapes how the consumers of media perceive the world as well as conduct themselves in life (Nabi & Riddle, 2008)

The social media's ability to stabilize and homogenize societal views is an example of cultivation theory. Youths who spend time on various social media platforms, Instagram, Facebook, WeChat, WhatsApp, etc. have notably more stereotypical views of the society than youths who are not active social media users. Of particular interest to this research is the possible impact of exposure to political participation by users of social media skits.

Cultivation Theory in social media suggests that prolonged engagement with social media skits can shape users' perceptions of reality, like the effects of long-term television viewing. Users' views on societal norms, values, and expectations may be influenced by the most recurrent themes and portrayals on social media, potentially leading to distorted perceptions of reality or an altered sense of social norms and behaviors.

3. Social Media Skit

Social media skits, through platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, have emerged as influential tools in shaping political engagement, particularly among the youth demographic in Nigeria (Olumuji & Ogba, 2018; Ekharefo & Umoro, 2020). These skits, characterised by their humorous and relatable content, have effectively bridged the gap between political figures and the younger generation.

By leveraging social media skits, political candidates have been able to connect with young voters on a more personal level, presenting themselves as approachable and relatable individuals rather than distant figures. This humanization of politicians has fostered a sense of familiarity and trust among voters, ultimately garnering their attention, engagement, and support.

Moreover, social media skits have proven to be effective vehicles for delivering key campaign messages in a concise and entertaining manner. Skit creators adeptly weave party policies, promises, and visions into humorous narratives, ensuring better recall and leaving a lasting impression on viewers.

One of the significant advantages of social media sites is their potential for viral reach and organic growth (Tsandzana, 2023). When a skit resonates with viewers, they are inclined to share it with their social networks, exponentially expanding its reach and generating buzz around the candidate.

The emergence of the social media skit industry in Nigeria reflects the evolving landscape of digital entertainment and its influence on cultural, economic, and political spheres. Skit-makers, such as Mr. Macaroni, Taooma, and others, have become symbols of power and influence, capitalising on the popularity of their content to engage audiences and shape perceptions.

To maintain relevance and enhance visibility, skit-makers regularly upload new content, leveraging social media algorithms to increase their reach and engagement. This form of platform labour underscores the dynamic nature of the social media skit industry and its role in shaping entertainment experiences in the digital age.

In addition to their entertainment value, social media skits have become a platform for social commentary and advocacy, with celebrities often participating in skits to endorse causes and promote prosocial messages. This trend further amplifies the impact of social media skits on cultural and political discourse.

Overall, the rise of social media has transformed the landscape of political communication (Tsandzana, 2023) and entertainment in Nigeria, highlighting the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping societal norms and behaviors (Ajodo-Adebanjko, 2018). Through humour and relatability, social media skits have emerged as powerful tools for engaging audiences, influencing perceptions, and driving social change.

4. Intersection of Social Media and Politics in Nigeria

In the wake of the social media era, politicians in Nigeria have embraced these platforms as crucial tools for gauging their political relevance, connecting with supporters, and advancing their political agendas (Ajodo-Adebanjko, 2018; Mamman, 2019). The utilisation of social media, especially during elections, has become pervasive among Nigerian politicians. Platforms such as Facebook serve as arenas for politicians to articulate their positions, address issues, and update the public on their administration's progress.

Politicians extensively use Facebook for detailed communication, while Instagram becomes a visual showcase of campaign rallies in various regions, carefully curated to emphasise positive reception (Tsandzana, 2023). Notably, WhatsApp is employed for direct communication within campaign teams, maintaining a level of exclusivity. Twitter, on the other hand, serves as a space for concise public statements and direct interactions with voters. However, it is essential to acknowledge that some social media channels are also conduits for spreading misinformation and hate speech in Nigeria (Ekharefo & Umoro, 2020; Okunbor, 2022).

The widespread adoption of social media has catalysed the democratisation and political development processes in Nigeria, revolutionising communication beyond traditional constraints. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and others have become integral to various aspects of people's lives, influencing social, political, and economic activities.

Social media's interactive nature makes it a versatile tool for purposes ranging from socialisation and education to governance and political participation (Tsandzana, 2023). It serves as a conduit for information dissemination, fostering relationships, and connecting people across geographical boundaries (Olumuji, Asemah & Edegoh, 2013). Noteworthy social media applications include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, contributing to the creation of a thriving social media skit industry (Ajodo-Adebanjko, 2018; Ekharefo & Umoro, 2020).

In the political landscape, social media offers politicians innovative ways to govern by facilitating online opinion polling, informal interaction with the public, and gauging the political atmosphere before campaigns. This direct connection aids politicians in presenting themselves as approachable and in touch with the needs of the citizens.

However, the use of social media for political participation is not without challenges. Issues such as misinformation, political harassment, rumours, fake news, propaganda, and trolling have emerged as drawbacks (Ekharefo & Umoro, 2020). The echo-chamber effect, where users are exposed to content that aligns with their viewpoints, exacerbates polarisation, limiting genuine political discourse. Additionally, social media's susceptibility to foreign interference in elections poses a significant concern.

Despite these challenges, the benefits associated with social media have led political leaders worldwide to

adopt the platform for campaigning, voter solicitation, and maintaining transparency with citizens. In the 2023 Nigerian presidential elections, social media played a historic role in facilitating political communication and participation, even influencing the collation of election results in various states.

5. Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research approach to investigate use of social media skits in encouraging youth participation in politics. The population of the study consists of youths who are active on social media in any platform residing in Lagos State of Nigeria. They were chosen to represent the Nigerian youths because most of them fall within the definition of youths who are on different social media platforms adopted for this study. In addition to this, most of them are literate, prolific users of social media and are also politically active. The population of youths in Lagos who are active on social media is estimated at 18,702,394. The sample size for this research was determined using the Australian calculator as provided

by the National Statistical Services (NSS) of Australia. The calculator offers a streamlined approach for determining sample sizes based on the following metrics:

Confidence level: 95%

Population: 18,702,394

Confidence interval: 0.04918

The sample size of 398 was determined.

The study used purposive sampling technique, this sampling technique helped to identify youths within the study area, who are up to the voting age and are active on social media. The researchers used an online approach for questionnaire administration by using Google Forms, a programme designed for survey administration. Google Forms enables researchers to conveniently update surveys online while immediately saving the collected data to a spreadsheet. A descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyse the data gathered through questionnaire using percentages, frequency count, and tables.

6. Data Presentation

The analysis of this study was based on the 340 copies of the questionnaire that were filled and considered appropriate for this work.

Table 1: Place of social media skits in youth knowledge of politics

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean $\bar{x}$
Social media skits help young people understand political issues	106 (31.2%)	211 (62.1%)	12 (3.5%)	11 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	4.20
Expressing political news through social media skits makes it appealing	141 (41.5%)	170 (50.0%)	10 (2.9%)	16 (4.7%)	3 (0.9%)	4.27
Social media skits effectively simplify complex political concept for a younger audience	104 (30.6%)	220 (64.7%)	5 (1.5%)	10 (2.9%)	1 (0.3%)	4.23
Social media skits offer a creative and engaging way to introduce youths to political concept	93 (30.6%)	229 (64.7%)	7 (2.1%)	11 (3.2%)	0 (0%)	4.19
Social media skits have the potential to contribute a more informed and politically active younger generation	57 (16.8%)	256 (75.8%)	13 (3.8%)	11 (3.2%)	3 (0.9%)	4.04

Source: Survey 2023

From Table 1 above, a substantial 93.3% (strongly agree + agree) of respondents acknowledge that social media skits contribute significantly to helping young people understand political issues, with a mean score of 4.20. The majority, 91.5% (strongly agree + agree), find that expressing political news through social media makes it appealing. The mean score of 4.27 underscores the effectiveness of this medium. Social media skits are seen as effective in simplifying complex political concepts for a younger audience, with 95.3% (strongly agree + agree) agreement and a mean score of 4.23. A noteworthy 95.3% (strongly agree + agree) believe that social media skits offer a creative and engaging

way to introduce youths to political concepts, earning a mean score of 4.19. While slightly lower, 92.6% (strongly agree + agree) recognise the potential of social media to contribute to a more informed and politically active younger generation, with a mean score of 4.04.

The data underscores the positive impact of social media skits on youth engagement, suggesting that they serve as effective tools for simplifying political content, making it appealing and engaging for the younger demographic. The high mean scores and agreement percentages across all variables indicate widespread recognition of the potential of social media to enhance political knowledge and participation among youth.

Table 2: Social media skits influence youth political behavior

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean $\bar{x}$
Social media skits increased youth interest in political events like campaigns, walks and rallies	57 (16.8%)	244 (71.8%)	19 (5.6%)	18 (5.3%)	2 (0.6%)	3.99
Social media skits prompted youths to research political candidates in political parties	46 (13.8%)	243 (71.5%)	37 (10.9%)	13 (3.8%)	1 (0.3%)	3.94
Social media skits prompted youths to register to vote in the election	42 (11.0%)	284 (74.3%)	33 (8.6%)	22 (5.8%)	1 (0.3%)	4.38
Social media skits inspired youths to register and belong to a political party	48 (13.3%)	250 (69.4%)	41 (11.4%)	21 (5.8%)	1 (0.3%)	3.91
Social media skits prompted youths to contest (become a candidate for political office) in the election	22 (6.5%)	172 (50.6%)	91 (26.8%)	49 (14.4%)	6 (1.8%)	3.46
Social media skits motivated youths to actively campaign for candidate(s) of their choice	46 (13.5%)	248 (72.9%)	32 (9.4%)	12 (3.5%)	2 (0.6%)	3.95
Social media skits encourage youth to vote in the elections	44 (12.9%)	264 (77.6%)	22 (6.5%)	9 (2.6%)	1 (0.3%)	4.00

Source: Survey 2023

From table 2, a substantial 88.6% (strongly agree + agree) believe that social media has increased youth interest in political events. The mean score of 3.99 indicates a positive impact, though opinions are not overwhelmingly strong. A significant 85.3% (strongly agree + agree) claim that social media skits prompted youths to research political candidates, indicating a positive influence with a mean score of 3.94. An impressive 85.3% (strongly agree + agree) assert that social media skits prompted youths to register to vote, with a notably high mean score of 4.38, indicating a strong positive influence on this aspect of political behavior. While still positive, this aspect has a slightly lower agreement at 82.7% (strongly agree + agree) with a mean score of 3.91, revealing that social media skits inspired youths to register and belong to a political party. This variable shows a more divided sentiment, with 57.1% (strongly agree + agree), indicating a moderate positive influence, and a mean score of 3.46 showed that social media skits prompted youths to contest the election. A significant 86.4% (strongly agree + agree) believe that social media skits motivated youths to actively campaign for candidates, with a mean score of 3.95. An overwhelming 90.5% (strongly agree + agree) agree that social media skits encourage youth to vote in elections, with a mean score of 4.00.

The data suggests a generally positive influence of social media on various aspects of youth political behaviour, including increased interest in political events, research on candidates, voter registration, and motivation to vote. The slightly lower agreement on inspiring youths to register and belong to a political party and prompting youths to contest in the election highlights potential areas for further exploration. Overall, social media skits appear to play a significant role in shaping and encouraging positive political behaviours among the youth.

Table 3: Drawbacks and limitations of social media skits as a means of political engagement among young people

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean $\bar{x}$
Social media skits were used to propagate false information about political parties and their candidates	36 (10.6%)	167 (49.1%)	32 (9.4%)	95 (27.9%)	10 (3.0%)	3.37
Social media skits can lead to the spread of misinformation due to lack of detailed context	42 (12.3%)	232 (68.2%)	26 (7.7%)	39 (11.5%)	1 (0.3%)	3.81
Social media skits contribute to presenting political issues in an abused manner	35 (10.2%)	204 (60.0%)	48 (14.1%)	79 (23.1%)	9 (2.6%)	3.83
Social media skits often trivialize important political issues and discussion	30 (8.8%)	194 (57.1%)	42 (12.4%)	71 (20.9%)	3 (0.9%)	3.52

Source: Survey 2023

From Table 3, a notable 59.7% (strongly agree + agree) express concerns that social media skits were used to propagate false information about political parties and their candidates. The mean score of 3.37 suggests a significant level of agreement on this drawback. The majority, 80.5% (strongly agree + agree), believe that social media skits can lead to the spread of misinformation due to a lack of detailed context, with a mean score of 3.81 indicating substantial agreement. Concerns are raised by 70.3% (strongly agree + agree) that social media skits contribute to presenting political issues in an abused manner. The mean score of 3.83 reflects a notable level of agreement on this limitation. A considerable 65.9% (strongly agree + agree) are concerned that social media skits often trivialise important political issues and discussions, with a mean score of 3.52.

The findings suggest that while social media skits contribute positively to youth political engagement, they also carry drawbacks and limitations. Concerns about the propagation of false information, the spread of misinformation due to a lack of detailed context, the abuse of presenting political issues, and the trivialization of important political discussions indicate the need for a critical assessment of the content shared through this medium. Addressing these concerns is crucial for harnessing the positive potential of social media for political engagement among young people.

7. Discussion

The survey reveals a strong consensus among respondents regarding the positive impact of social media skits on youth knowledge of politics. The majority strongly agree or agree that these skits help young people understand political issues, make political news appealing, simplify complex political concepts, offer a creative way to introduce youths to

political concepts, and have the potential to contribute to a more informed and politically active younger generation. The high mean scores across these variables (ranging from 4.04 to 4.27) indicate a widespread acknowledgment of the educational and awareness-raising potential of social media skits which affirms Ekharefo & Umoro (2020) and Tsandzana (2023) position that social media improves political communication.

The data further suggests a positive influence of social media skits on various aspects of youth political behavior. A significant proportion of respondents believe that social media skits increased youth interest in political events, prompted youths to research political candidates, encouraged voter registration, inspired youths to belong to a political party, motivated youths to actively campaign for candidates, and encouraged youth participation in elections. The high mean scores (ranging from 3.91 to 4.38) indicate a generally positive impact on these aspects of political behaviour. This finding establishes Ajodo-Adebaryko (2018) stance that polity apathy among youths can revamped if they are effectively engaged and motivated especially on social media. Furthermore, the finding on youth participation further validates the Cultivation Theory which interprets social realities in line with how they are portrayed in the media and in this case in social media skits (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008).

However, the survey also highlights concerns and limitations associated with the use of social media skits for political engagement among young people. A substantial percentage of respondents express worry about the propagation of false information about political parties and candidates through social media skits. There are also concerns about the potential spread of misinformation due to a lack of detailed context, the presentation of political issues in an

abused manner, and the trivialization of important political discussions. The concern about false information affirms Ekharefo & Umoro (2020) and Okunbor (2022) positions that social media peddle false information. These findings emphasize the need for critical evaluation and responsible content creation within the realm of social media skits to ensure their positive impact.

The positive findings regarding the impact of social media skits on youth political knowledge and behavior suggest that these platforms can be powerful tools for political engagement. Politicians and campaign strategists can leverage the popularity and influence of social media skits to effectively communicate political messages, connect with the youth demographic, and inspire active political participation.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the survey findings underscore the dual nature of social media skits in political engagement among young people in Nigeria. While they have a positive impact on knowledge and behaviour, there are legitimate concerns about the quality and impact of the content. Striking a balance between the creative expression inherent in social media skits and the responsibility of political messaging is crucial for maximising their positive potential in shaping a politically informed and engaged youth population.

The study therefore recommends that content creators should prioritise fact-checking and accuracy in their social media posts, particularly when dealing with political topics. Providing verifiable information helps prevent the spread of false information and misinformation. Content creators should approach political subjects with sensitivity and responsibility. They should avoid sensationalising or trivialising important political discussions and instead strive to present them in a balanced and respectful manner.

In addition, youths should critically evaluate the content they consume on social media, including social media skits. They should question the accuracy and reliability of the information presented and seek out multiple sources for verification. They also need to be mindful of the content they share on social media platforms. They should avoid spreading false information or misinformation and prioritise sharing content that is accurate, reliable, and ethically produced.

The study also recommends that Political parties should develop comprehensive social media engagement strategies that leverage the popularity of

social media to connect with young voters. This includes creating engaging and shareable content that resonates with youth demographics. Political parties should prioritise transparency and authenticity in their social media communications. By being open and honest with voters, they can build trust and credibility, which is essential for effective political engagement.

Governments should consider implementing regulatory frameworks to govern social media content, including social media skits. These frameworks should balance freedom of expression with the need to prevent the spread of false information and misinformation. The government should invest in digital literacy programmes to educate citizens, particularly youths, on how to critically evaluate and responsibly engage with content on social media platforms. This includes teaching skills such as fact-checking, critical thinking, and media literacy.

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Fake News and Vaccine Hesitancy in Ijebu-Ode LGA, Ogun State: Assessing the Role of Misinformation in Public Health Decision-Making

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Abstract. This study explores the impact of vaccine misinformation on vaccine hesitancy and refusal in Ijebu-Ode LGA, Ogun State, Nigeria, using the Health Belief Model (HBM) as a theoretical framework. The research employed a quantitative approach, surveying 384 respondents with a structured questionnaire to examine the prevalence, sources, and effects of vaccine misinformation. Findings reveal that social media (72.4%) and word of mouth (58.1%) are the most common sources of misinformation, significantly influencing vaccine hesitancy (56.8%) and (59.4) refusal. 30.7% of the respondents are indifferent about the effectiveness of government and public health responses to vaccine misinformation. However, 21.4% respondents perceive public health responses as somewhat ineffective and 25.5% consider the government and public health efforts to be somewhat effective, suggesting a need for stronger intervention strategies. Recommendations include the enhancement of public awareness campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and the involvement of community leaders to combat misinformation. Strengthening social media regulations and offering vaccination incentives were also suggested. In conclusion, addressing vaccine misinformation through targeted communication and policy strategies is crucial for improving vaccine acceptance, enhancing public health outcomes, and achieving herd immunity in Ijebu-Ode LGA

Keyword: Fake news, Misinformation, Vaccine hesitancy, Ijebu-Ode, Public health

1. Introduction

The spread of misinformation and fake news has emerged as a major challenge to global public health, influencing vaccine hesitancy and undermining efforts to control preventable diseases. Vaccine hesitancy, defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite their availability, has been identified as one of the top threats to global health (World Health Organization: WHO, 2015). In Nigeria, vaccine hesitancy is driven by a range of factors, including misinformation, language barrier, religious and cultural beliefs, distrust in government and health institutions, and historical precedents of medical controversies (Adeloye et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2021). The rise of digital technology and social media platforms has further accelerated the spread of fake news about vaccines, complicating public health interventions aimed at improving immunization coverage. In Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun State, where a significant portion of the population relies on social and traditional media for health information, misinformation has the potential to significantly shape public attitudes toward vaccines.

Misinformation about vaccines typically includes exaggerated or completely false claims regarding vaccine safety, efficacy, and intentions behind immunization programs (Skafle, 2022). Some common misinformation narratives include beliefs that vaccines cause infertility, contain harmful substances, or are part of a larger conspiracy to harm certain populations (Islam et al 2021; Skafle, 2022). Such claims, often propagated through social media

platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, have led to widespread fear and scepticism, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas where fact-checking resources are limited. In Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria, where access to primary healthcare facilities and credible health information varies across different socio-economic groups, misinformation can thrive, leading to low vaccine uptake and increasing the risks of disease outbreaks.

Historically, Nigeria has faced significant challenges related to vaccine hesitancy due to misinformation. One of the most notable examples was the polio vaccine boycott in 2003, primarily in northern Nigeria, following rumours that the vaccine was contaminated with substances that could cause sterility or HIV infection (Jegede, 2007). This led to a resurgence of polio cases, not only in Nigeria but also in other African countries, as the virus spread beyond national borders. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed new dimensions of vaccine misinformation, with widely circulated fake news claiming that COVID-19 vaccines contained microchips for population control or that they could alter human DNA (Islam et al 2021, Xiao, 2024). In Ogun State, including Ijebu-Ode, similar narratives contributed to vaccine hesitancy, making it difficult for health authorities to achieve high vaccination rates, particularly in the early stages of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Despite efforts by the Nigerian government, public health organizations, and fact-checking platforms such as Dubawa and Africa Check to counteract vaccine misinformation, the problem persists. Many residents of Ijebu-Ode rely on word-of-mouth communication and community opinion leaders, making it difficult to correct false information once it has been widely accepted. Moreover, the lack of stringent regulations on digital misinformation means that misleading claims about vaccines continue to circulate unchecked. This has serious implications for public health, as vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, polio, and hepatitis remain endemic in certain parts of the country.

Given the impact of misinformation on vaccine uptake, this study seeks to investigate how fake news influences vaccine hesitancy among residents of Ijebu-Ode LGA, Ogun State. The research will explore the primary sources of vaccine misinformation, the platforms through which such misinformation spreads, and the extent to which misinformation affects individuals' willingness to receive vaccines. Furthermore, the study examines public perceptions of

health authorities and fact-checking organizations in combating misinformation, as well as propose strategies for improving vaccine communication in the region.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To analyse the prevalence of vaccine misinformation in Ijebu-Ode LGA.
- To examine the sources of vaccine misinformation among residents.
- To assess the impact of fake news on vaccine hesitancy and refusal in Ijebu-Ode LGA.
- To assess the effectiveness of government and public health responses to vaccine misinformation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Fake News and Misinformation: An Overview

Fake news refers to fabricated information presented as news, typically with the intent to mislead or deceive. It encompasses both *misinformation* and *disinformation*. Misinformation involves the spread of false or inaccurate information without malicious intent, often arising from misunderstandings or miscommunications. In contrast, disinformation is false information designed to mislead others and is deliberately spread with the intent to confuse fact and fiction. Disinformation is deliberately crafted to deceive or manipulate an audience, often with political, financial, or ideological motives (Palfrey & John, 2025). These forms of fake news can vary widely, from exaggerated headlines to entirely fabricated stories, affecting public opinion and social cohesion.

2.2 Psychology of Misinformation

The spread and acceptance of fake news are deeply rooted in cognitive and emotional psychology. Cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias, play a significant role in shaping how people process information. Confirmation bias leads individuals to favour information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, making them more susceptible to accepting fake news that supports their views (Piksa, 2024). Emotions, especially fear and anger, also significantly influence the spread of misinformation. Research shows that emotionally charged content is more likely to be shared, as it evokes stronger reactions and engages people's attention (Aghazadeh & Ibrahimli, 2024). Furthermore, social influence—where individuals trust information based on the opinions of

their peers or social groups—further perpetuates the cycle of misinformation.

2.3 Social Media and Fake News

Kayode-Adedeji and Nwakerendu (2022) submits that Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have become major vehicles for the dissemination of fake news. These platforms allow rapid information sharing, making it easier for false narratives to spread quickly across wide networks. Algorithms that prioritize engagement and sensational content amplify misinformation by promoting posts with high emotional appeal, often regardless of their truthfulness (Vosoughi et al., 2018). As a result, users are frequently exposed to misleading or fabricated news, which shapes their perceptions of reality. WhatsApp, in particular, has been a prominent platform for the spread of fake news in many regions, given its encrypted and private nature, which makes fact-checking more difficult (Thivakaran, 2024).

The spread of fake news often follows specific patterns. Viral loops occur when sensational stories are shared rapidly among users, who then share them with their networks, leading to exponential spread. Echo chambers, where individuals are repeatedly exposed to similar viewpoints and information, further entrench false narratives by reinforcing existing beliefs. Influential figures, such as political leaders and celebrities, also play a crucial role in spreading fake news. Their large followings amplify the reach of misleading messages. Moreover, as opined by Thivakaran (2024) online communities, including fringe groups and forums, can act as echo chambers for extreme or misleading ideas, making it difficult for fact-based narratives to compete.

2.4 Vaccine Hesitancy

Vaccine hesitancy refers to the reluctance or refusal to accept vaccines despite the availability of vaccination services. This phenomenon is influenced by a complex combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors. Fear is one of the primary drivers, with individuals expressing concerns about the potential side effects or long-term health risks associated with vaccines, many of which are based on misinformation or misconceptions. Trust in healthcare providers and organizations is a significant predictor of vaccine acceptance. Positive relationships with healthcare practitioners and trust in their knowledge can boost vaccine uptake, whereas distrust can lead to hesitancy, particularly among populations with a history of scepticism (Goje & Kapoor 2024).). Additionally, religious and cultural beliefs often play a significant

role, with some communities resisting vaccines due to perceived conflicts with their spiritual values or moral frameworks. Misleading information, particularly spread through social media, intensifies these concerns, creating a cycle of scepticism.

A significant aspect of vaccine hesitancy is the spread of vaccine misinformation. One of the most persistent myths is the claim that vaccines cause infertility, particularly in the context of COVID-19 vaccines. Despite extensive scientific evidence debunking this claim, it continues to circulate and influence decision-making, especially in certain communities. Another longstanding myth links vaccines to autism, a belief that originated from a now-discredited study in the late 1990s (Davidson, 2017). These myths, along with conspiratorial narratives about government control or population manipulation through vaccines, remain widespread, especially in online forums where individuals seek out information that aligns with their pre-existing fears and biases. These false claims, amplified by algorithms on social media platforms (Vosoughi et al., 2018; Rodrigues 2024), further distort public understanding of vaccine safety and efficacy

The rise of vaccine hesitancy is a global phenomenon, affecting both high-income and low-income countries. In developed nations, vaccine hesitancy is often found among well-educated but misinformed individuals who are influenced by anti-vaccine movements or the spread of misinformation through social media (Wilson & Wiysonge, 2020). In lower-income countries, hesitancy may be driven by limited access to healthcare, historical distrust in government institutions, or misinformation about vaccines' safety and effectiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the global nature of this issue, with hesitancy being prevalent in various regions, including Europe, North America, and parts of Asia and Africa. To counteract this, global health organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) have been working to restore trust through public education, transparent communication, and community engagement efforts aimed at addressing these concerns

3. Public Health Decision-Making

Public health decision-making is a complex process influenced by a variety of factors that shape how individuals make choices about their health. Information plays a central role in these decisions, but its impact can vary depending on how it is presented and the source from which it originates. Personal beliefs, such as cultural norms, religious values, and

past experiences, also significantly influence health decisions. For example, an individual's perception of a healthcare intervention, like vaccination, may be shaped by their understanding of its risks, benefits, and alignment with their personal or community values. Social influence is another critical factor; people often look to family members, friends, or peer groups for advice and validation when making health decisions, especially in situations where uncertainty or fear is involved. Finally, trust in healthcare providers, governments, and public health organizations plays a vital role in shaping how individuals respond to health information. Without trust in these institutions, people may be more likely to question or disregard health recommendations, even in the face of credible evidence (Goje & Kapoor, 2024).

Risk perception is closely linked to how people assess the potential benefits and harms of health-related behaviours, such as vaccination (Ferrer & Klein, 2015). How individuals perceive the likelihood and severity of health risks influences their willingness to engage in preventive actions. For instance, if a person perceives the risk of contracting a disease as low or the potential consequences as minimal, they may be less inclined to accept a vaccine. The challenges of communicating health risks to the public are compounded by emotional factors, cognitive biases, and misinformation. Sheehan (2021) submits that effective health communication requires providing clear, accurate, and timely information. In the bid to complete the circle of the effectiveness of the health messages, Sharkiya (2023) added that addressing the emotional and psychological concerns that influence risk perceptions can also facilitate good health communication outcomes between patient and physician. Health messages must be framed in a way that resonates with the audience's values and experiences to increase the likelihood of behavioural change. Various public health communication models help explain how people process health information and make decisions. The *Health Belief Model* suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviour if they perceive themselves to be at risk, believe the health intervention will be effective, and feel that the benefits outweigh the costs (Rosenstock, 1974).

Public health decision-making is shaped by a combination of information, personal beliefs, social influences, and trust in health authorities. Understanding how people perceive risks and how they process health messages is crucial for developing effective health communication strategies. Theories like the Health Belief Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model

provide valuable insights into how individuals make health decisions and can inform the design of more effective public health campaigns. By addressing the cognitive and emotional factors that influence health choices, public health organizations can better guide individuals toward healthier behaviours.

3.1 Health Communication and Information Spread

Health communication plays a critical role in shaping public health decisions, including vaccination, by ensuring individuals have access to accurate, timely, and relevant information. One important aspect of health communication is health literacy, which refers to being able to access, understand, appraise and use information and services in ways that promote and maintain good health and well-being. Health literacy significantly influences vaccination decisions because individuals with lower levels of health literacy may struggle to comprehend complex health messages or the significance of vaccination. This can lead to misunderstandings about vaccine safety, efficacy, or the potential consequences of not vaccinating (Sayer et al (2023). When people cannot interpret or apply health information correctly, they are more likely to be influenced by misinformation or fail to take action to protect themselves and their communities.

The media plays a central role in health communication by shaping public health behaviours and attitudes. Traditional media, including newspapers, television, and radio, has historically been a primary source of health information (Kanchan, & Gaidhane., 2024; Smith et al., 2011). However, in the digital age, social media platforms, blogs, and online forums have become major vehicles for spreading health-related content. While these platforms offer a broader reach, they also introduce challenges, particularly in the form of misinformation and unverified claims. Research has shown that the framing of health issues in the media, such as the portrayal of vaccine risks or benefits, can significantly influence public attitudes and behaviours (Gallagher, & Updegraff, 2011). Digital media's interactive nature allows users to engage with content, share personal stories, and seek support, but it also opens the door for viral misinformation that can have serious public health consequences.

During health crises, such as pandemics or disease outbreaks, risk communication becomes particularly critical. Effective risk communication involves providing timely, accurate, and accessible information that enables people to make informed decisions. Public health authorities must respond quickly to

changing information, using clear, understandable language and avoiding jargon that could confuse or alarm the public. Additionally, transparent communication about uncertainty—such as acknowledging gaps in knowledge or the evolving nature of health recommendations—is essential to maintaining public trust (Dube, 2022). The goal is to empower individuals to make decisions that will protect their health and the health of others, while also minimizing panic and confusion. In the age of misinformation, social media fact-checking has become an essential tool in combating false claims about vaccines. Fact-checking organizations, such as Dubawa, PolitiFact or the WHO's Health Alert initiative, work to verify vaccine-related information and correct misleading or false narratives. Social media platforms have also taken steps to limit the spread of misinformation by removing false content, flagging misleading posts, and promoting authoritative sources.

4. Theoretical Review

4.1 The Health Belief Model and Vaccine Hesitancy

The Health Belief Model (HBM) has been widely applied in health communication and behavioural research to explain individuals' decisions regarding preventive health actions, particularly vaccination. Originally developed by Rosenstock (1974), the HBM posits that health behaviours are influenced by individuals' perceptions of susceptibility to a disease, the severity of the disease, and the benefits of taking preventive action, and the barriers to that action. Given the prevalence of misinformation in shaping vaccine attitudes, the HBM serves as a valuable framework for understanding vaccine hesitancy and how misinformation influences public health decisions.

A central tenet of the HBM is that individuals are more likely to engage in preventive behaviours, such as vaccination, when they perceive themselves as

susceptible to a disease and believe the disease poses serious health risks (Zampetakis, & Melas, 2021). However, misinformation can distort these perceptions. Studies have shown that misinformation about the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases can lead individuals to underestimate their susceptibility. For instance, Romer (2022) discovers that respondents subjected to vaccination misinformation were more hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Additionally, some individuals prefer natural immunity, reducing their perceived need for vaccination. Participants in the study conducted by Ebrahimi (2021) beliefs in the superiority of natural immunity as compared to vaccination was measured by asking them to rate the statement

The HBM also emphasizes the role of perceived benefits and barriers in health-related decision-making. Vaccine acceptance is often contingent on individuals recognizing the benefits of immunization. However, misinformation can erode trust in vaccine efficacy, leading to scepticism. Islam et al 2021 and Skafle, 2022 (2017) highlight that false claim about vaccines causing long-term health problems, such as infertility or DNA alteration, create psychological barriers that outweigh perceived benefits.

5. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to collect data from residents of Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area (LGA), with an estimated population of 394,000, according to macrotrends.net (2024). A sample size of 384 respondents was calculated using the survey Monkey sample size calculator to ensure statistical significance. Convenience sampling was used to select participants who were easily accessible within the study area. Data collection was done through a structured questionnaire designed specifically for the research, focusing on respondents' perceptions of vaccine hesitancy and misinformation. Out of the 384 questionnaires administered, 372 were completed and returned for analysis.

6. Results

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	189	49.2
	Female	195	50.8
Age	18–24 years	58	15.1
	25–34 years	91	23.7
	35–44 years	86	22.4
	45–54 years	69	18
	55 years and above	80	20.8
Education Level	No formal education	31	8.1
	Primary education	39	10.2

	Secondary education	101	26.3
	Tertiary education	179	46.6
	Postgraduate education	34	8.9
Occupation	Student	51	13.3
	Employed (Public/Private)	149	38.8
	Self-employed	61	15.9
	Unemployed	59	15.4
	Retired	25	6.5
	Others (e.g., homemaker)	39	10.1
Marital Status	Single	179	46.6
	Married	151	39.3
Income Level	Divorced/Widowed	54	14.1
	Below ₦30,000	111	28.9
	₦30,000–₦60,000	89	23.2
	₦60,001–₦100,000	76	19.8
	₦100,001–₦200,000	61	15.9
	Above ₦200,000	47	12.2
Ethnicity	Yoruba	251	65.4
	Igbo	81	21.1
	Hausa	29	7.6
	Other	23	6

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of 384 respondents in Ijebu-Ode LGA. The gender distribution is almost equal, with males representing 49.2% and females 50.8%. The highest proportion of respondents (46.6%) attained tertiary education, while a notable percentage (26.3%) have secondary education. In terms of employment status, 38.8% are employed in public or private sectors, while 15.9% are self-employed. The age distribution shows a relatively balanced spread across different age groups, with the highest concentration (23.7%) falling within the 25–34 years category. Regarding ethnicity, Yoruba respondents form the majority (65.4%), followed by Igbo (21.1%) and Hausa (7.6%). The marital status breakdown indicates that 46.6% of respondents are single, while 39.3% are married. Income distribution reveals that 28.9% earn below ₦30,000, while 23.2% fall within the ₦30,000–₦60,000 range. Higher-income groups (above ₦200,000) constitute a smaller proportion (12.2%). The findings provide an overview of the diverse socio-economic and demographic landscape of the study population.

Objective 1: To analyse the prevalence of vaccine misinformation in Ijebu-Ode LGA

Table 2: Encountering False or Misleading Vaccine Information

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Have you ever come across information about vaccines that you later discovered was false or misleading?	Yes	384	100
	No	0	0
	Not Sure	0	0
Total		384	100

The response to table 2 reveals that every participant (100%) has encountered false or misleading information about vaccines, underscoring the pervasive nature of vaccine misinformation within Ijebu-Ode LGA. This finding indicates that misinformation is not an isolated issue but rather a widespread challenge that potentially affects the entire population.

Table 3: Frequency of Encountering Potentially False Vaccine Information

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
How often do you encounter information about vaccines that you believe may not be true?	Frequently	101	26.3
	Occasionally	195	50.8
	Rarely	81	21.1
	Never	7	1.8
Total		384	100

The responses in table 3 illustrate the frequency at which respondents come across potentially false vaccine information. A significant portion (50.8%) encounters such misinformation occasionally, while 26.3% report frequent

exposure. Similarly, 21.1% state that they rarely encounter misleading vaccine-related content. Meanwhile, 1.8% of respondents claim they have never come across such information.

Objective 2: To examine the sources of vaccine misinformation among residents

Table 4: Sources of Misleading or False Vaccine Information

Question	Source	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
From which of the following sources have you encountered misleading or false information about vaccines? (Select all that apply)	Social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.)	278	72.4
	Word of mouth (family, friends, etc.)	223	58.1
	News outlets (television, radio, newspapers)	18	4.7
	Religious or community leaders	147	38.3
	Online forums or websites	131	34.1
	Other (please specify)	41	10.7
Total		384	100

Table 4 highlights the primary sources of misleading or false vaccine information, with social media being the most commonly cited (72.4%), followed by word of mouth (58.1%). News outlets contribute a smaller portion (4.7%), reinforcing the idea that traditional media plays a limited role in spreading misinformation within this community. However, misinformation from religious/community leaders (38.3%) and online forums/websites (34.1%) remains significant. Additionally, 10.7% of respondents reported encountering misinformation from other unspecified sources. These findings suggest that misinformation is primarily disseminated through digital and interpersonal channels rather than through formal media outlets.

Table 5: Perceived Reliability of Vaccine-Related Information Sources

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
How reliable do you consider the sources of vaccine-related information you come across?	Very reliable	32	8.3
	Somewhat reliable	58	15.1
	Neutral	122	31.8
	Somewhat unreliable	109	28.4
	Very unreliable	63	16.4
Total		384	100

Table 5 indicates that most respondents are skeptical about the reliability of vaccine-related information they encounter. A significant portion (31.8%) remains neutral, while 28.4% view these sources as somewhat unreliable, and 16.4% consider them very unreliable. Meanwhile, only 8.3% perceive the sources as very reliable, and 15.1% consider them somewhat reliable. These findings suggest that uncertainty about the credibility of vaccine information is prevalent, which could contribute to misinformation and vaccine hesitancy within the community.

Objective 3: To assess the impact of fake news on vaccine hesitancy and refusal in Ijebu-Ode LGA

Table 6: Impact of Misinformation on Vaccine Hesitancy

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Has any misinformation you've encountered about vaccines made you feel hesitant about getting vaccinated?	Yes	218	56.8
	No	152	39.6
	Not sure	14	3.6
Total		384	100

Table 6 reveals that a substantial proportion of respondents (56.8%) report feeling hesitant about getting vaccinated due to misinformation they have encountered. Meanwhile, 39.6% do not experience hesitancy despite exposure to

misinformation, and a small fraction (3.6%) remains uncertain. These findings suggest that misinformation plays a significant role in vaccine hesitancy within the community, although a considerable number of individuals remain unaffected by it.

Table 7: Vaccine Refusal Due to Misinformation

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Have you or anyone close to you refused to take a vaccine due to misleading information or fake news?	Yes	228	59.4
	No	142	37
	Not applicable	14	3.6
Total		384	100

Table 7 reveals that 59.4% of respondents, or someone they know, have refused to take a vaccine due to misinformation or fake news, making this the most common response. Meanwhile, 37.0% report that neither they nor anyone close to them has refused a vaccine for this reason, while 3.6% consider the question not applicable. This underscores the significant influence of misinformation on vaccine refusal in the community, highlighting a clear link between exposure to fake news and vaccine hesitancy.

Objective 4: To assess the effectiveness of government and public health responses to vaccine misinformation

Table 8: Perceived Effectiveness of Government and Public Health Responses to Vaccine Misinformation

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
How effective do you believe the government and public health responses have been in addressing vaccine misinformation?	Very effective	42	10.9
	Somewhat effective	98	25.5
	Neutral	118	30.7
	Somewhat ineffective	82	21.4
	Very ineffective	44	11.5
Total		384	100

Table 8 shows that 30.7% of respondents have a neutral stance on the effectiveness of government and public health responses to vaccine misinformation. Meanwhile, 25.5% consider the efforts to be somewhat effective, while 10.9% view them as very effective. On the other hand, 21.4% believe the efforts are somewhat ineffective, and 11.5% rate them as very ineffective. These findings suggest that while some respondents acknowledge efforts to combat misinformation, a significant portion remains dissatisfied, highlighting the need for more robust and targeted strategies to counter vaccine misinformation.

Table 9: Government and Public Health Strategies to Combat Vaccine Misinformation

Question	Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
What actions do you believe the government and public health organizations should take to combat vaccine misinformation? (Select all that apply)	Increase public awareness campaigns	300	78.1
	Fact-checking and debunking misinformation	251	65.1
	Engage community leaders to promote accurate information	199	52.1
	Strengthen social media regulation	181	46.9
	Offer incentives for vaccination	131	33.8
	Other (please specify)	41	10.4
Total Respondents		384	100

The data presented in table 9 highlight the preferred actions that respondents believe the government and public health organizations should take to address vaccine misinformation. The most widely supported strategy is increasing public awareness campaigns, with 78.1% of respondents endorsing this measure. This suggests that the majority of participants

recognize the importance of large-scale educational initiatives in countering misinformation. Fact-checking and debunking misinformation is the second most supported action, with 65.1% of respondents advocating for this approach. This indicates a strong demand for reliable verification mechanisms to correct false information circulating within the community.

Similarly, 52.1% of respondents believe that engaging community leaders to promote accurate information is crucial. This reflects the perceived influence of trusted local figures in shaping public perceptions of vaccines.

Additionally, 46.9% of respondents support strengthening social media regulations as a means of curbing the spread of misinformation. This finding underscores concerns about the role of digital platforms in amplifying false narratives and suggests a call for stricter oversight. Offering incentives for vaccination is supported by 33.8% of respondents, implying that financial or other benefits could serve as motivators for vaccine acceptance. Finally, 10.4% of respondents suggest alternative measures not specified in the survey. Overall, the findings indicate that respondents favor a multi-faceted approach to combating vaccine misinformation, with a strong emphasis on public education, fact-checking, and regulatory measures. The support for engaging community leaders also highlights the role of social influence in shaping vaccine perceptions. These insights suggest that an integrated strategy incorporating both traditional and digital communication efforts may be most effective in addressing vaccine misinformation.

7. Discussion of findings

The findings from this study provide critical insights into the prevalence, sources, and impact of vaccine misinformation in Ijebu-Ode LGA, as well as the preferred strategies for combating misinformation. The demographic analysis reveals a balanced representation of gender and a diverse socio-economic background among respondents, which enhances the generalizability of the results within the study area.

One of the most striking findings is that all respondents (100%) reported encountering false or misleading vaccine information. This suggests that vaccine misinformation is a pervasive issue in the community, necessitating urgent intervention. The frequency of exposure to misinformation varies, with 50.8% encountering it occasionally and 26.3% frequently, while 21.1% rarely come across such content. Notably, 1.8% claim they have never encountered vaccine misinformation, indicating that while misinformation is widespread, it does not reach all individuals equally. The primary sources of vaccine misinformation were identified in Table 4, with social media being the most cited (72.4%), followed by word of mouth (58.1%). This finding aligns with global trends where digital platforms serve as major conduits for misinformation. Additionally, misinformation from religious/community leaders (38.3%) and online

forums/websites (34.1%) further underscores the need for targeted interventions across various information channels. Traditional news outlets play a relatively minor role (4.7%) in spreading misinformation, suggesting that mainstream media remains a more reliable source for vaccine-related information.

A critical aspect of this study is the impact of misinformation on vaccine hesitancy. The findings indicate that 56.8% of respondents report feeling hesitant about getting vaccinated due to misinformation, while 39.6% remain unaffected. This suggests that misinformation significantly influences vaccine decisions for a majority, reinforcing the need for effective countermeasures. Furthermore, 59.4% of respondents, or someone they know, have refused a vaccine due to misinformation. This high percentage highlights the tangible consequences of misinformation, demonstrating its ability to deter individuals from making informed health decisions. Respondents also expressed scepticism regarding the reliability of vaccine-related information, with 31.8% remaining neutral and 44.8% considering it somewhat or very unreliable. This uncertainty about credible sources could further contribute to misinformation-related vaccine hesitancy. These findings emphasize the need for trustworthy, evidence-based health communication strategies to restore public confidence in vaccine information.

The study also examined perceptions of government and public health efforts in addressing vaccine misinformation. While some respondents (36.4%) find these efforts effective, a notable proportion (32.9%) consider them ineffective. Additionally, 30.7% remain neutral, indicating mixed opinions on the effectiveness of current strategies. This suggests that while some progress has been made, a substantial portion of the population remains unconvinced about the success of these interventions.

Regarding preferred strategies for combating misinformation, increasing public awareness campaigns emerged as the most widely supported measure (78.1%). This indicates that respondents recognize the importance of large-scale educational initiatives in countering misinformation. Fact-checking and debunking misinformation (65.1%) also received strong support, highlighting the demand for mechanisms that provide accurate information. Additionally, engaging community leaders (52.1%) and strengthening social media regulations (46.9%) were seen as important measures, reflecting the role of both interpersonal influence and digital regulation in mitigating misinformation. Offering incentives for vaccination (33.8%) was less favoured but still seen as a potential motivator for vaccine acceptance.

Overall, these findings suggest that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to address vaccine misinformation. A combination of educational initiatives, regulatory measures, and community engagement appears to be the most effective strategy for combating misinformation. Given the significant role of social media and word of mouth in spreading misinformation, interventions should focus on improving digital literacy, enhancing fact-checking mechanisms, and fostering trust in credible sources. Additionally, empowering community leaders and local influencers to disseminate accurate information could be instrumental in shifting public perceptions and encouraging informed decision-making about vaccines.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the survey, the following recommendations can be made to address the challenges posed by vaccine misinformation in Ijebu-Ode LGA:

Enhance Public Awareness Campaigns: It is crucial for government and public health organizations to intensify efforts in educating the public about vaccines, their benefits, and the dangers of misinformation. Campaigns should be widely disseminated through both traditional and digital media platforms to reach a broader audience.

Fact-Checking and Misinformation Debunking: It is essential for government bodies, health organizations, and independent fact-checkers to collaborate in identifying and countering false claims about vaccines. Platforms such as social media, which are major sources of misinformation, should be monitored and used for correctional messages.

Engage Trusted Community Leaders: Public health campaigns should involve local influencers, including religious leaders, community organizers, and respected individuals, to disseminate trusted vaccine information. These figures can play a key role in overcoming cultural and social barriers to vaccine acceptance.

Strengthen Social Media Regulation: Given that social media is a significant source of misinformation, public health authorities should work with social media platforms to strengthen regulations around the sharing of false health information. This can include flagging and removing harmful posts and collaborating with social media companies to promote factual, evidence-based content.

Address Vaccine Hesitancy Through Targeted Interventions: Health messages should directly address common misconceptions and provide clear, accessible information to alleviate concerns. Interactive forums, Q&A sessions with health experts, and educational workshops could also be effective.

Offer Incentives for Vaccination: Public health authorities could explore implementing incentive-based programs, such as discounts, vouchers, or access to community services for vaccinated individuals, to encourage vaccination uptake and reward responsible health behavior.

Improve Public Health Communication Strategies: A comprehensive and integrated approach, which includes timely responses to misinformation and community engagement, should be adopted to strengthen public trust and ensure the widespread acceptance of vaccines.

Collaborate with Media Outlets: Despite a lower percentage of respondents citing news outlets as a major source of misinformation, traditional media remains important. Public health authorities should collaborate with credible media outlets to regularly provide factual, evidence-based information and counteract misleading narratives surrounding vaccines.

9. Conclusion

The study highlights the significant role of misinformation in shaping vaccine attitudes in Ijebu-Ode LGA. The findings reveal that social media, word of mouth, and community leaders are the primary sources through which residents encounter misleading or false information about vaccines. This misinformation has had a considerable impact on vaccine hesitancy, with a substantial proportion of respondents reporting hesitation or refusal to take the vaccine due to exposure to fake news.

While government and public health efforts have been recognized, the survey suggests that these responses are perceived as somewhat ineffective, emphasizing the need for more robust, multi-faceted strategies to combat vaccine misinformation. Public awareness campaigns, fact-checking initiatives, and the active involvement of trusted community leaders were identified as key actions for improving vaccine acceptance and reducing misinformation.

To address the ongoing challenges posed by vaccine misinformation, it is essential that public health agencies prioritize clear, targeted communication efforts and collaborate with various stakeholders,

including the media, social media platforms, and community leaders. Additionally, offering incentives for vaccination and strengthening social media regulation could further enhance vaccination uptake.

Ultimately, addressing vaccine misinformation is crucial not only for increasing vaccination rates but also for safeguarding public health. By implementing the recommendations from this study, Ijebu-Ode LGA can foster a more informed, engaged, and health-conscious community, contributing to the broader goal of achieving herd immunity and controlling vaccine-preventable diseases.

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An Assessment of Corrupt Practices in Nigeria's Political System: A Rawlsian Approach

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Abstract. It is no longer only conjecture that corruption exists in Nigerian society; rather, it is now seen as a national embarrassment. In contemporary Nigerian society, it is among the primary issues brought on by the persistent corruption. Many attempts to halt the spread of this beast have been made at different times throughout the history of our nation. The research paper employed conceptual, critical, and analytical methodologies to try to answer the question of what Rawls' ethical philosophy would suggest and recommend about the effects of corruption on contemporary Nigerian society. According to Rawls, the primary concerns of ethical philosophy are proper human behavior and the underlying tenets of society. Rawls contends that rather than being coercive or punitive in nature, policies should be created that are primarily preventative. Codes of ethics that specify appropriate conduct for both individuals and governments are examples of such policies.

Keywords: John Rawls, Corruption, Ethical Philosophy, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Nigeria is certainly wealthy in both people and natural resources. However, the poverty there is partly caused by corruption and dishonest behavior, as well as the consequences for the country's aspirations for

development. As stated by Adefarasin (2009), "the phenomenon of corruption seems to be the unofficial ideology, the universal language spoken and understood in all parts of Nigeria." This sums up the danger of corruption. One of the primary problems Nigeria is now facing is corruption. Corruption remains a deadly disease in Nigeria. Corruption has led to the breakdown of the economy, the infrastructure, the health and education systems, and other aspects of day-to-day existence. Numerous Nigerians are still impacted by it. The Nigerian Christian Church cannot claim to be independent of it. What facets of Nigerian society are free from corruption? Does it fall under the purview of our government's executive branch, legislative branch (such as the Senate, House of Representatives, State Assemblies, Local Governments), judicial branch (such as courts), uniformed establishment (such as the military, police, immigration and customs services, prisons, civil and administrative services, education and health sectors, or private sector? The entire nation is facing problems that require immediate attention, if we are not deceiving ourselves. The church and all Nigerians must decide to eradicate corruption in Nigeria at all costs (Emenyeonu, 2007).

The detrimental nature of corruption, according to Shehu (2006), includes givers and takers who are unable to acknowledge the existence of corruption as

well as cases of bribery and extortion. Its complexity also means that we still don't completely comprehend the extent of its impacts. If corruption is a complicated issue, then a thorough comprehension of its impacts must take into account both the individuals involved and the particular circumstances surrounding it. Corruption, whether on a major or local scale, is seen to be more prevalent in countries with lax enforcement of the law. Additionally, corruption might be either active or passive.

Whatever the classification, it has its own contextual consequences. According to a related development, corruption is a real issue that affects most Africans. It includes overt theft, embezzlement of public funds or other wrongdoing of state property, nepotism and favor-giving to personal acquaintances, and the misuse of public power to demand benefits and payments (Desta 2006). Political corruption is the illegal, immoral, and sanctioned use of one's official or political position for one's own benefit or profitability. Political corruption uses the word "political" to imply public affairs. With its organized public institutions, the state is a human community. The word refers to the state's official assets, resources, fortunes, enterprises, and institutions. An official may engage in corruption against the state or its agencies in order to further personal or private advantage. This is referred to as political corruption. The word "political" therefore describes something that is governmental, public (as opposed to private), or administrative. It implies that an act of corruption directed at a private or non-governmental group will not be considered political corruption. John Rawls' Ethical Philosophy as a Solution to Endless Corruption in Contemporary Nigerian Society is what the research aims to explore in order to achieve this. In order to provide solutions, the research will attempt to apply this theory to the problem as it relates specifically to Nigeria.

1.1 A Brief Description of Rawls' Theory of Justice

Rawls bases his ethical theory on what he calls the conditions of justice. Rawls argues that when these criteria are satisfied, the issue of justice typically arises. Objective circumstances and subjective circumstances are the two types of conditions of justice that Rawls distinguished. These circumstances, in Rawls' view, are what enable cooperation and make it necessary in day-to-day interactions. (1) According to Rawls, the objective circumstances of justice are comprised of three elements: a shared physical location, a justifiable lack of resources, and the capacity to help or harm. The two elements that make up subjective circumstances of justice are disagreement and mutual indifference. Rawls argues

that this is a collaborative effort for both parties' gain. The distribution of the venture's benefits is determined by the guiding concept of fairness, according to Garcia (2005:14–15). Thus, in Rawls' theory, we may substitute "justice" for "morality" and "morally" for "justly." The two guiding principles of Rawls' theory are the original position and an egalitarian notion of justice. It is a process for assessing and justifying possible justice principles in order to determine which of them is the most logical. The vision is liberal in that it aims to bring the concepts of equality and liberty together in a single paradigm, but it is controversial in that it stresses some liberties more than others and promotes a particular kind of equality.

The Equal Liberty Principle is the first of Rawls's principles, while the second is occasionally divided into two parts: Equitable Treatment of All defended by the First Principles. According to Rawls (1999:53), these include the following: political liberty, which includes the freedom to vote, hold public office, and participate in free speech and assembly; freedom of conscience and thought; freedom of the person, which includes the freedom from physical assault and dismemberment (including psychological oppression); the right to own personal property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure. The objective is to safeguard civil rights that may very well be enshrined in a political constitution. Rawls argues that the Principle of Equal Liberty is one of the principles that self-interested rational persons behind the curtain of ignorance would choose to structure society around because society is egalitarian and every individual has an equal right to the greatest extent of liberties that are compatible with similar liberties for all. All applicants must be allowed to compete for jobs and benefits under reasonable competition, according to the second principle, the Principle of Equal Opportunity. "Fair equality of opportunity may be contrasted with formal equality of opportunity of career open to talent," Garcia states (2005: 14).

Regardless of their experience or suitability for the post, a position is considered to be in accordance with the concept when it is open to all interested parties. These jobs include those in universalities, desired employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities that necessitate financial access. It is a violation of formal equality of opportunity when benefits are given out in any manner other than based on the credentials of the candidates. In a culture where only children from affluent homes may develop the skills and other qualities that make them good candidates, this criterion may be met. It is necessary to establish institutions that guarantee all individuals with similar intrinsic abilities and goals an equal opportunity to

effectively compete for jobs that award above-average shares of core social goods. To ensure equitable equality of opportunity, this is required. In a sense, the perfect example of a meritocracy is a society that maintains equitable equality of opportunity. According to the Difference Principle, social and economic inequalities should be designed to maximize benefits for the most disadvantaged person. This concept ensures that people can acquire privileged positions without faced prejudice on the basis of trivial requirements. Fundamental liberties are further protected by the added condition that the first principle has strict lexical precedence over the second.

This shows that one cannot accept a lower level of civil liberty when doing so would greatly help the most disadvantaged elements of society in terms of fair equality of opportunity or other goods, nor can one trade fundamental rights for advantages under another justice principle. People who are "free and rational person could choose or accept as a fair basis for social cooperation," in Rawls' words (1971:11), have to decide on this in a "initial situation." The principle of diversity is also strictly linguistically subordinated to the nondiscriminatory idea of fair equality of opportunity.

Only when economic expansion produces an atmosphere that permits individuals to effectively exercise their fundamental rights- and not previously- is this concept appropriate. According to Rawls, inequalities will always exist among the constituents of any particular social system. These differences include social, political, economic, and natural status differences. The morality (or justice) principle that Rawls feels ought to direct human connections in an ideal society may thus be determined by proposing a "original position" in which individuals congregate and agree to adopt a set of rules to regulate their social activities.

The original position, according to Rawls and Kant, is a hypothetical one in which individuals are free to choose morally righteous values without prejudice since they are living in the "veil of ignorance," or without knowing who they are or where they belong into society. Each individual must make a "rationally prudential choice" about the kind of social organization they will join as humans are only permitted to have a broad awareness of "life and society," according to Rawls. Man is forced to adopt a global perspective that is closely related to ethical reasoning in the lack of any specific self-knowledge. In order to establish the "original position," Rawls presents a theoretical "veil of ignorance." The evil of ignorance allows a particular conception of justice to be chosen by consensus because no one knows, first

and foremost, where they fit into society, their class, their position, or their social status, nor do they know how their natural abilities and endowments, such as intelligence and strength, will be distributed. Arneson (2007) claims that the original position argument exemplified a fair procedurals standard of justification, meaning that what is right is what people who subscribe to an ideal procedure would accept as right.

Additionally, no one comprehends his moral compass, his well-thought-out life plan, or even the distinctive features of his character, such his pessimism, risk aversion, or liability. (1971, Rawls, 140–141) According to Rawls, the primary objective of the original agreement was to preserve the principles of justice for the basic welfare of society. The principles of justice are determined by the choice that rational persons would make in this hypothetical scenario of equal liberty. In a starting position of equality, these are the ideas that free and rational individuals concerned with advancing their own interests would accept as defining the essential conditions of their partnership (Rawls, 1971:11–12).

Drawing from this assertion, Rawls's hypothetical situation enables individuals to make decisions based on a generally recognized framework that states: a. All individuals have an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme for all; and b. Only those political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be guaranteed their value in this scheme. b. In order for social and economic differences to be considered favorable, they must be primarily advantageous to the most disadvantaged elements of society and must be connected to employment and positions that are available to everyone under fair equality of opportunity. According to Rawls's theory, an individual's advantages are represented by their ownership of multifunctional commodities, often known as main social goods. These goods, in Rawls' view, are those that a person would logically want more of rather than less of given everything else they desire. To acquire and execute two moral powers—the capacity to embrace and pursue a conception of the good and the ability to interact with others on fair terms—any rational person would prioritize and strive for fundamental goods, according to (Rawls, 1996:106 and 178. The core social goods are thought to be the fundamental freedoms and rights safeguarded by the first portion of the second principle, which includes fair equality of opportunity, freedom of movement and choice of work, income and wealth, and the social foundations of self-respect (Rawls 1996:180).

A society is composed of individuals who come together to construct it, according to Rawls. A society is said to be well-ordered if all of its members share the same moral and ethical values and are aware that the core social institutions typically uphold these values. When considering justice, Rawls argues that what is most essential is the basic structure of society—the ways that significant institutions like the family, the political system, and the economic system interact to affect people's prospects in life. As a result, the principles of justice are supposed to control society's basic structure. Furthermore, social justice imposes ancillary duties on individuals: if there are just institutions, they must abide by their rules; if not, they must endeavor to create just institutions, to the degree that doing so is likely to be successful and does not put the striving individual at undue risk. This implies that any set of ideals that are universally embraced must also be equitable for all people, as they wouldn't be embraced by everyone if they weren't equitable for everyone. Considering this,

2. An Examination and Evaluation of John Rawls' Theory of Justice

A Theory of Justice, his landmark work that was released in 1971 and sparked important discussions in political theory and ethics. It is crucial to talk about simply the fundamentals of this theory of justice because a thorough discussion is not feasible in the current intellectual endeavor. The goal of Rawls was to develop an alternative to utilitarianism for the idea of justice. According to Rawls, who believes utilitarianism poses a threat to society, any theory, no matter how beautiful or cost-effective, must be rejected or altered if it is false, and any laws or institutions, no matter how effective and well-organized, must be changed or eliminated if they are unfair. Therefore, justice rejects the idea that a larger benefit shared by all justifies the sacrifice of freedom for individuals. It does not permit the greater total of benefits received by many to offset the sacrifices made by a select few. Truth and justice are unwavering as they are the primary qualities of human endeavor (Rawls, 1971:10).

Hence, Rawls' political and moral views are in line with those of social contract theorists like as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. He began by proving that fairness is a fundamental virtue of all social institutions and that society is governed by a social contract. Having studied under Kant, Rawls clearly framed his objective as Kantian by stating that in order for justice to prevail, a set of moral precepts must be generally accepted. The Kantian interpretation of Rawls's work has been disputed, though; this will be

covered in more detail later in this chapter. The fact that Rawls's work draws philosophical resources from both the rationalist and sentimentalist enlightenments, according to Frazer (2007), enriches it. When it comes to enlightenment, Immanuel Kant represents the rationalist school, whereas David Hume and Jean Jacques Rousseau represent the sentimentalist school.

Furthermore, Frazer clarified that it is useful to comprehend their opposing conceptions of moral and political reflection as incorporating two distinct parts in order to appreciate Rawls's debt to both the sentimentalist and the rationalist Enlightenment. To use Hume's most well-known distinction, they provide both a theory of what "is" and a theory of what "ought to be"—a descriptive moral psychology that explains what happens when we reflect on morality and politics, and a normative psychology that explains why the standard we arrive at through such reflection needs to be regarded as authoritative. In contrast to sentimentalism, which views contemplation as including both feeling and imagination, rationalism views reflection as involving just logical knowledge. Although rationalism views normativity as authoritative legislation by the faculty of reason here linked with our genuine, free self, sentimentalism views normativity as the reflective stability of a mind capable of bearing its own comprehensive survey. Frazer 2007:4

3. Assessment and Reactions to Rawls's Theory of Justice

Many philosophers have interpreted and questioned Rawls' theory of justice in different ways. We'll talk about the fundamental viewpoint and objections here. These consist of the egalitarian objection of social justice principles, the liberal interpretation and examination, and the Marxist interpretation and assessment.

3.1 A Liberal Discussion of Rawls's Justice Theory

Liberalism generally addresses questions about the nature of society and the essence of the individual. Individualist social analyses are typically linked to it. Over the past few decades, collectivist interpretations of liberal society have gained popularity again under the moniker "collectivism to support communitarian." According to Sandel's well-known critique of Rawls from 1982, liberalism had to be predicated on an abstract idea of people as distinct individuals with commitments, values, and interests that belong to but never comprise the self. However, the "liberal-communitarian" discussion eventually entailed extensive moral, political, and sociological

disagreements over the characteristics of communities as well as the rights and obligations of their constituents; the debate's central question was what liberal selves were. Sandel believed that Rawls's liberalism's fundamental fault was its unrealistically abstract conception of the self, as Rawls's theory of justice can only be meaningful if the individual adopts the motion of the pure autonomous chooser. According to Rawls, it makes sense to distinguish people who possess a pure capacity for choice. These persons may reject any or all of their attachments and ideals while still maintaining their identity. According to Sandel, a theory of the person, or more specifically, a theory of the moral subject, must address the concerns at one end of a theory of justice.

3.2 Marxist Examination of Rawls's Justice Theory

Isham (2010) offers three main arguments of Rawls's principles of justice from a Marxist standpoint. The first is that the concept of justice is entirely ideological and aims to justify social inequality. When Marxists assert that views about justice are ideological, they may be referring to notions that are exclusive to a class or social group or that serve to legitimize a dominating political authority. The capitalist class, the bourgeoisie, or the owners of the means of production would be the specific social class in question for a Marxist; however, a close examination of Rawls's principle of justice favors the proletariat over the bourgeoisies, and their focus on extolling production over distribution (a tendency towards historical materialism) forms the basis of their ideological argument. Rawls is accused of ignoring a fundamental inequality between capitalists and workers, to which Rawls' theory suggests that workers control the means of production (2001:139).

According to Rawls, wealth and authority are both subject to the difference principles because "the second (principle of justice) hold that social and economic inequalities, for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just only if they result in the compensating benefits for everyone, and in particular for the least advantaged members of society" (Rawls, 1971:14-15). A Rawlsian might also argue that if there is a fundamental inequality (in decision-making or income) between capitalist and worker, the contracting parties in the original position behind the veil of ignorance would not choose a society in which the capitalist-worker relationship existed. A Rawlsian could accept the class interest argument and ask how classes band together to change their historical circumstances. Thirdly, there is the question of whether or not justice talk is useful. Marx is credited by some with arguing that class interest should take

precedence over calls for social change, as he believed that ethical claims and well-developed arguments were of little to no value to the ruling class. In the fight for social transformation, appeals to justice and ethics have played a significant role and will continue to do so. Additionally, it should be noted that these appeals, though they might not accomplish much on their own, play a crucial role in fostering action and strengthening the collective will.

3.3 An Egalitarian Examination of Rawls's Theory of Justice

All people are, in principle, equal and ought to have the same social, political, and economic rights and opportunities, according to egalitarian principles. In line with Rawls, the difference principle, also known as the democratic interpretation of equality, is a strongly egalitarian concept in that it holds that an equal distribution should be chosen unless there is a distribution that benefits both parties. Although Nozick agree with Rawls that utilitarianism is not a sufficient theory for morality, Nozick's "Entitlement Theory" (1974) criticizes the procedures by which Rawls's rule of justice is arrived at with a strong criticism pointing at economic and political concerns in Rawls's principle of justice. In contrast to process principles, the fundamental claim is that Rawls' principles can only produce end result principles. Furthermore, because Rawls' conception of justice is not merely normative, critics like as Amartya Sen, Leonard Choptiany, and Olivier Johnson contend that his logical reasons cannot be really binding as principles of justice. According to Sen (2008:335), Rawls's theory of justice begins with the demand for fairness in order to arrive at his principles of justice. The main focus of this theory is the notion of mutual obligations for social cooperation due to shared benefits, which is the mainstream in theories of justice.

He does, however, point out several shortcomings in Rawls' theory of justice. Rather than focusing on how to make society fairer, Rawls' theory of justice is accused of essentially guessing on the characteristics and requirements of the perfectly just society. Sen states that "this" focus lends a transcendental quality to the philosophy of justice. Sen calls Rawls' approach "transcendental institutionalism" and contends that any workable theory of justice must start by acknowledging that there are often conflicts between ideals. Sen maintains that justice may be achieved in conflicting situations by weighing the available options, negating the need for Rawls' ideal conception of justice (Sen, 2008). He goes on to say that while the transcendental approach to justice is not new—it dates at least to Thomas Hobbes' works from the

seventeenth century—recent ideas have significantly strengthened its support.

The character of a completely just society as viewed from the standpoint of fairness is thoroughly examined by Rawls in his study of "justice as fairness." While some political philosophers have adopted a different stance regarding the needs of justice" (Sen, 2008). Cohen (1992) claims in his *Egalitarian Critique* of Rawls that socialist egalitarians view equality as a means of improving the condition of the poor rather than as a core principle. For example, Rawls tends to believe that the transcendental method is the only one that can help us comprehend what justice is. There is a significant disagreement between Nozick and Thomas Nagel about the significance of entitlements and historically grounded rights, while their departures from Rawls are more nuanced (Sen, 2008:337-338). The second is the realization of the fundamental liberty principle, which states that the Difference Principle should regulate how social goods are distributed. Inequalities should only be justified if and when they are required to improve the least fortunate people's circumstances; in fact, it would be illogical to reject them in favor of strict equality among people if certain wealth and power disparities would frequently improve everyone's lot (Rawls, 1971:546).

4. Political Discourse and Ethical Standards

The question of whether politics and ethics are related has been argued by philosophers and politicians from the beginning of intellectual thought. The issue of where to put those crucial ideas that are immediately relevant to the conversation, such right, good, virtue and vice, individual liberty, and the public interest, was also meant to be addressed. The most important question, however, is how much politics should be governed by accepted moral standards and ideals. This inquiry has given rise to two conflicting points of view. The Aristotelian and Machiavellian schools of thought are two extremes, diametrically opposed factions. Moral virtue, according to Aristotle, is the ultimate aim of all human endeavors, including political activity, since it ultimately ensures the happiness of the individual and the community as a whole. The Machiavellian advice offered to "The Prince," however, asserted that the rise of the concept of morality in politics was not necessary due to either human nature or political mechanisms. He exhorted candidates and political leaders to put politics aside when evaluating the potential impact of morality.

Regardless of one's stance, politics and ethics appear to be related in some manner. Politics and ethics both have a part in guiding and regulating human conduct.

Politics, with the administration of state power at its center, regulates relationships between groups, various socio-political institutions, and the state, whereas ethics regulates individual interactions and group exchanges. The difference between private and public morality in social interactions is indicated by the extent to which these two ideas may be connected in various ways. Every person is a moral being with a private and public existence, according to the message. The distinction between politics and morality was minimal, if it existed at all, in the early theories of politics and ethics. Plato and Aristotle did not distinguish between these two concepts in their moral and political theories. In other words, it is pointless to engage in political activity without defining individuals' roles within it. People's moral position basically justifies the significance of political acts in their lives.

Since "ethics is at the same time politics" in their thoughts, Aristotle believed that politics and personal morality were inseparable. According to Aristotle's teleological philosophy, human activities need to be judged by the results they produce. Happiness for all is the most important thing to him. In his book "The Leviathan," Thomas Hobbes contrasted Aristotle's ideas. People are self-interested, he said. His famous idea of "war of all against all," which he asserted would happen in the natural state and lead to horrible conflict amongst humans, served as an example of this. Hobbes contends that in such a disorderly and conflict-ridden setting, moral and fair norms are out of place (Gareth, 2001). Hobbes' viewpoint was opposed by early intuitionists like as Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, and Samuel Clarke. They hold that morality is objective and universal (Clarke, 1996). Other philosophers, such as Hume and Hutcheson, maintained that moral judgment cannot be founded purely on reason. Moral principles must be central to political activity as politics cannot exist without them. To put it another way, we ought to focus more on the ethical implications of the political choices we make.

5. Corrupt Practices within Nigeria's Politicians

Members of Nigeria's political decision-makers have been involved in several examples of corruption, some of which are examined in this article. Political leadership class corruption dates back to the colonial era, as was previously mentioned. Corruption has been a part of Nigerian politics since the country's contemporary public service administration was established (Ogbeidi, 2012). The Foster-Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry looked into Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's role in the operations of the now-defunct African

Continental Bank in 1956. Azikiwe was the premier of the erstwhile Eastern Region. The norm of conduct for public officials states that a government official's private economic interests must be put aside while they hold a position of public trust. Ogbeidi (2012). General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, a former military leader, the late General Sani Abacha, a former head of state, and the late Alhaji Abdulkadir Ahmed, a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, were accused by the 1994 Okigbo Panel Report on the Reorganization and Reform of the Central Bank of Nigeria of mismanaging an estimated \$12.4 billion oil windfall between 1988 and 1994 (Ogbeidi, 2012).

The federal government received a summary of the panel's conclusions, which claimed that the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida colluded with top officials from the Central Bank of Nigeria to use the full money for questionable or ineffective projects. Using covert accounts and other means, Babangida's successors persisted in embezzling the country's funds even after he left office in August 1993. According to the Okigbo Report, General Babangida approved the 1988 commitment of 65,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil to finance high-priority projects such Shiroro Hydroelectric Projects, Itakpe Iron Mining, and Ajaokuta Iron & Steel (Ogbeidi, 2012). Political parties have been the main conduits for the spread of corrupt practices in Nigeria, such as extortion and godfatherism. More than N1 billion in bribes were allegedly given to delegates at the ruling People Democratic Party (PDP)'s 2003 Special Convention, where the presidential flag bearer was chosen, on the ninth floor of the Hilton Hotel in Abuja. The account was also intended to be used to build up reserves and pay off foreign debt. The amount was then increased to 105,000 barrels per day, and then to 150,000 barrels per day at the beginning of 1994 (Adekeye, 2003: 29).

6. Assessment of Corruption in Nigeria's Political Structure

Corrupt practices are a worldwide issue, and no country is completely immune to their terrifying hold. On the other hand, the degree of corruption's prevalence and the people's sincere, committed desire to abolish it are what set one nation apart from another on the perception of corruption index (Ochulor and Bassey, 2010). Nigerian society is rife with corruption, which affects both public and private industry and trade, civil society, and politics. Our moral principles and values have deteriorated as a result of this pervasive corruption. Without a basic dependence on ethical principles like justice, transparency, compassion, accountability, and service-oriented

leadership, it emphasizes the pointlessness of trying to create a democratic community. It is an example of a leadership style that puts the vested interests of a small group of individuals ahead of the masses, which philosophers often proclaim to be the cornerstone of political society (Uduigwomen, 2009). Explaining the moral justifications for our actions is the aim of ethics, which encompasses all human activity as long as it is moral. Ethical ideals are based on the metaphysical foundations of man as a rational, free, and morally oriented being who is oriented toward goodness, moral self-actualization, and perfection; as a being with an intrinsic teleological orientation toward God; as a moral agent with an innate moral principle- an innate conscience open to divine and human positive laws; and as a social being who can only be fully satisfied in the context of continuous social interaction.

Nigeria has had corruption since before colonization. A Colonial Government Report (CGR) from 1947 states that the Africans' historical background and public moral beliefs are very different from those of modern Britons. The financial security of the African government worker is an issue. (Okonkwo 2007). Government representatives were charged of misusing monies for their own gain prior to independence (Storey, 1953). Over time, Nigeria's wealth has declined while the standard of life for its citizens has barely increased. Widespread corruption characterized the First Republic, which was headed by Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and President Nnamdi Azikwe. Government employees stole from the public coffers with no repercussions. Federal officials and ministers shamelessly showed off their wealth. In actuality, it seemed like there were no morally upright persons in the First Republic's political leadership. The First Republic Nigerian upper class's political orientation was centered on utilizing politics to achieve their financial objectives, which included earning money and leading comfortable lives. Nigerians had long waited for such a wind of change to free them from the grip of the ruling elite, and the military gained popular support for the coup as a direct result of the First Republic's corruption. Although some important First Republic figures died, the nation celebrated widely (Ogbeidi, 2012). Political leadership is defined as the governing elite in charge of a political entity's business and financial activities.

This is accomplished by setting and influencing policy priorities that affect the territory through a variety of organizations and decision-making mechanisms meant to promote the territory's orderly growth. It may also be considered the human element overseeing a ruled territory's administrative systems. According to Ogbeidi (2012), this encompasses both people who are

in positions of authority inside the government and those who want to become so through elections, coups, appointments, election fraud, conquest, inheritance, or other methods. However, in a broader sense, political leadership encompasses both the ruling elites who directly manage the affairs of a territory and the entire political class that has the ability to influence how government functions, even in the background (Ogbeidi, 2012). Whilst there is no widely acknowledged or comprehensive definition of corrupt action, the bulk of definitions put a significant focus on exploiting public authority or positions for personal benefit. The phenomena is defined as "a weakening of virtue and moral ideas" in a basic lexicon (Lewis 2006). According to the World Bank and Transparency International (TI), a well-known global company that keeps an eye on and fights corruption, corruption is the abuse of public office for one's own benefit or the benefit of a third party.

Political corruption may be broadly defined as immoral action that contravenes the laws of the political system in light of these criteria (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 1993: 6). To put it simply, political corruption may be done to maintain power as well as for individual and group benefit. It is customary to link these two types of political corruption. In actuality, both strategies are connected to some of the most well-known instances of political corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). In addition to stealing and showing partiality, politicians frequently engage in public and private sector wrongdoing, including bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud. Good governance, sustainable development, democratic procedures, and moral business conduct are all threatened by corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012).

7. Conclusion

Political corruption, which is the abuse of one's official or political position for one's own benefit in defiance of accepted moral or legal standards, has been demonstrated by this research to be a prevalent feature of government operations across all human civilizations. Even though it is constantly denounced, corruption remains a global issue. It is obvious that an acceptable explanation for this phenomenon has to be found. The majority of social scientists seem to think that defects in the legal and political processes, as well as the economic standing of individuals, are the causes of political corruption. To accomplish all of these objectives, it is advised that Nigeria's anti-corruption laws be harmonized to increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption campaign. The government must improve living standards in order to fight corruption. In order for Nigerians to understand, uphold, and

practice their moral and ethical behaviors, education is also necessary.

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Roadway Environmental Conditions and Road Traffic Crash Occurrence, Injury and Death in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The road mode remains the most integrated, accessible, and widely utilised form of global transportation. However, it presents significant challenges to global health and safety due to traffic crashes. While previous studies have often focused on the causative factors of traffic crashes, limited attention has been given to the influence of roadway environmental elements using GIS-referenced data, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria. This study employs GIS and statistical methodologies to evaluate the impact of roadway environmental factors on road traffic crashes in Oyo State. Adopting an ex post facto research design, crash records from the Oyo State Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) for 2020–2022 were analysed. Attributes examined include date, time, location, crash type, causes, casualties, and weather conditions. Key findings reveal that roadway defects ($p = 0.001$), crash timing ($p = 0.007$), road surface condition ($p = 0.018$), and weather conditions ($p = 0.021$) significantly influence crashes. Binomial Logistic Regression shows that crashes involving partial road collapse, absence of road guards, fog, rainfall, and inadequate shoulders are 4.5, 3, 3, 2, and 2 times more likely to result in injuries than fatalities, respectively. Furthermore, Pearson Correlation indicates a moderate inverse relationship between roadway elevation and crashes ($r = -0.426$, $p < 0.01$). The study concludes that roadway environmental conditions significantly contribute to traffic crashes in Oyo State. It recommends frequent blackspot patrolling, redesign of high-risk locations, routine road inspections, maintenance of vulnerable segments, and improved signage to mitigate road traffic crashes in the area.

Keywords: Blackspot, Geo-reference, Crash Scene Light, Roadway Environment

1. Introduction

Transportation by road is the most available mode of transportation available to mankind. It provides services at door step level unlike other modes such as air, rail, maritime and pipeline as such road network is the most intensely utilised globally, effort to organise movements on the roadways lead to improvements such as tarred roads, markings and signage's among other rules and regulation that guides its safe operation. In spite of these efforts road traffic crashes (RTCs) represent a significant worldwide challenge causing substantial morbidity and mortality, “an average of 1.19 million people die each year from road traffic crashes globally” (WHO, 2023).

Movements along the roadway may be loosely divided into two categories; people and cargo, the categorisation of these movement types is ensured in many nations by permit requirements and safety laws. Just as a horse or an ox can go down a road, so can a car, truck or motorbike. While passengers may be transported by car or bus for mass transit, cargo can be delivered by trucking firms. Modern roadways are calibrated to accommodate these various types of movement and are often distinguished by well-marked lanes, signs and other roadway characteristics to enhance road safety. “Nigeria has the largest road network in West Africa, with a national network of roads currently estimated to be about 194,200 km of which 129,580 km (or 66.7%) are local and rural roads, 30,500 km (15.7%) are state-owned roads and the federal government owns 34,120 km (17.6%)” (Lamidi, et al 2022).

Although the road transport system is pivotal to economic progress and remains indispensable among transportation modes, it is also regarded as the most perilous and costly in terms of human lives lost (Raji and Solanke, 2013). This is due to the persistent occurrence of road traffic

crashes (RTCs) in Nigeria, which have varied in magnitude over the years. Numerous factors have been identified as contributing to these incidents. Road traffic crash is a vehicular crash situation involving moving vehicles on the roadway, the vehicles could veer off the roadway into the immediate environment, resulting in injuries or deaths as well as causing damage to goods and property being transported (Al-Khaledi, et al (2022). World Health Organization (WHO, 2023) opined that “a traffic crash can also be explained as the road-vehicle-driver system failing to complete one or more tasks necessary for finishing a journey without causing any harm and damage to people and property respectively”. Road crashes are mostly caused by inadequate upkeep of the road network, ineffective and irregular enforcement of traffic laws (Wang et al 2023).

2. Literature Reviews

Aslam et al. (2019) state that the goal of the current work is to identify accident hotspots utilising geographic information systems (GIS) and fuzzy logic in various places. Accident types and timing were among the information used. Spatial temporal analysis was used to study injury and fatality as well. In addition, by utilising the findings from the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), accident hotspots were forecasted through the widely employed weighted overlay method (WOM) and the fuzzy overlay method (FOM). Both techniques are essential for informed decision-making and alternative analysis. The two approaches discussed above produced hotspots in an urban area, which were then verified using the point density (PD) method. Irbid City in Jordan's hot locations for traffic accidents were identified using data from accidents that happened between 2013 and 2016.

This study used traffic collision data from Houston, Texas, to explore factors impacting crash length and geo-statistical analysis. According to Xu and Wei (2018), there are 14 independent elements connected to time, the highway and the environment that might determine how long a road accident lasts.

The influence of traffic collisions, varying in severity, on the highway network was assessed by analyzing the delays caused by these incidents as a key indicator. Furthermore, ArcGIS kernel density analysis techniques were utilised to investigate the spatial distribution patterns of key impact factors under various conditions within the region. The integration of these two methodologies is both logical and practical for comprehensive analysis. The results reveal a higher likelihood of accidents occurring during nighttime and holiday periods.

Wesam et al. (2012) conducted an evaluation of traffic accidents in Amman by utilizing temporal and geographical frameworks to identify accident hotspot zones within the study area. To attain a thorough comprehension of the temporal distribution of accidents and to discern the most critical incidents according to a range of factors which includes the year of occurrence, accident severity, road type, and lighting conditions—they analysed the spatial distribution of accidents over a three-year period. By employing GIS-based statistical and spatial analytic techniques, they identified blackspots, which represent clusters with high concentrations of accidents.

The distribution pattern of traffic accidents was analysed using the Nearest Neighbour Index (NNI), focusing on specific characteristics. Alamirew et al. (2021) emphasised that identifying hazardous highway areas through spatial pattern analysis of collisions, as well as assessing crash linkages with surrounding regions and other pertinent factors, is essential for effective road safety practices. Over the years, safety experts have utilised diverse methodologies to assess historical road traffic crash (RTC) data via advanced GIS-based blackspot analysis. This study considered the severity levels of RTCs to analyse and rank areas identified as accident blackspots. Spatial autocorrelation tools in ArcGIS 10.5 were employed to investigate the geographical patterns of RTCs, while the Getis-Ord G_i^* statistic was used to identify regions characterised by high and low severity crash clusters. The findings underscored the efficacy of this analytical approach.

Road traffic crashes are still prevalent in the sphere of human existence, both in developed and developing societies. The impact may vary but the casualties are the same, as it leads to the death and paralysis of people and the destruction of goods and properties. Many factors have been adduced by scholars across the world to be responsible for road traffic crash occurrences (Liu et al (2024), Al-Khaledi, et al (2022). These includes human behaviour and failure in the vehicular system; however, not much of the environmental factor is emphasised. Road traffic crashes remain a prevalent issue globally, significantly impacting both developed and developing societies. The casualties, including deaths and injuries, are a common consequence, with developing nations experiencing a higher fatality rate. Nigeria ranks 54th in the global index of road traffic crash with deaths reaching 41,693 (WHO, 2020).

Oyo State is located in the southwestern region of Nigeria, is no exception to this situation as it is ranked 4th in road traffic crash rankings Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC 2023). The state's capital; Ibadan is one of the largest cities in Nigeria and a major transportation hub,

contributing to the high volume of vehicular movement. There high fatality rate in developing world than in the developed countries is another question begging and waiting for answer with 20–27% of road traffic crash produces deaths of about 100,000 people, against the 4–9% death in developed world (WHO, 2020). What could be the source of this discrepancy in the casualty of road traffic crashes? It is common knowledge that the roadway

environment in developing countries is not what it should be in terms of safety. Different factors that relate to the natural environment in which the roadway is situated calls for re-evaluation to produce an improved knowledge with regards to road traffic crash occurrences. Despite various factors such as human behavior and vehicle system failures being identified, the role of environmental factors is less emphasised.

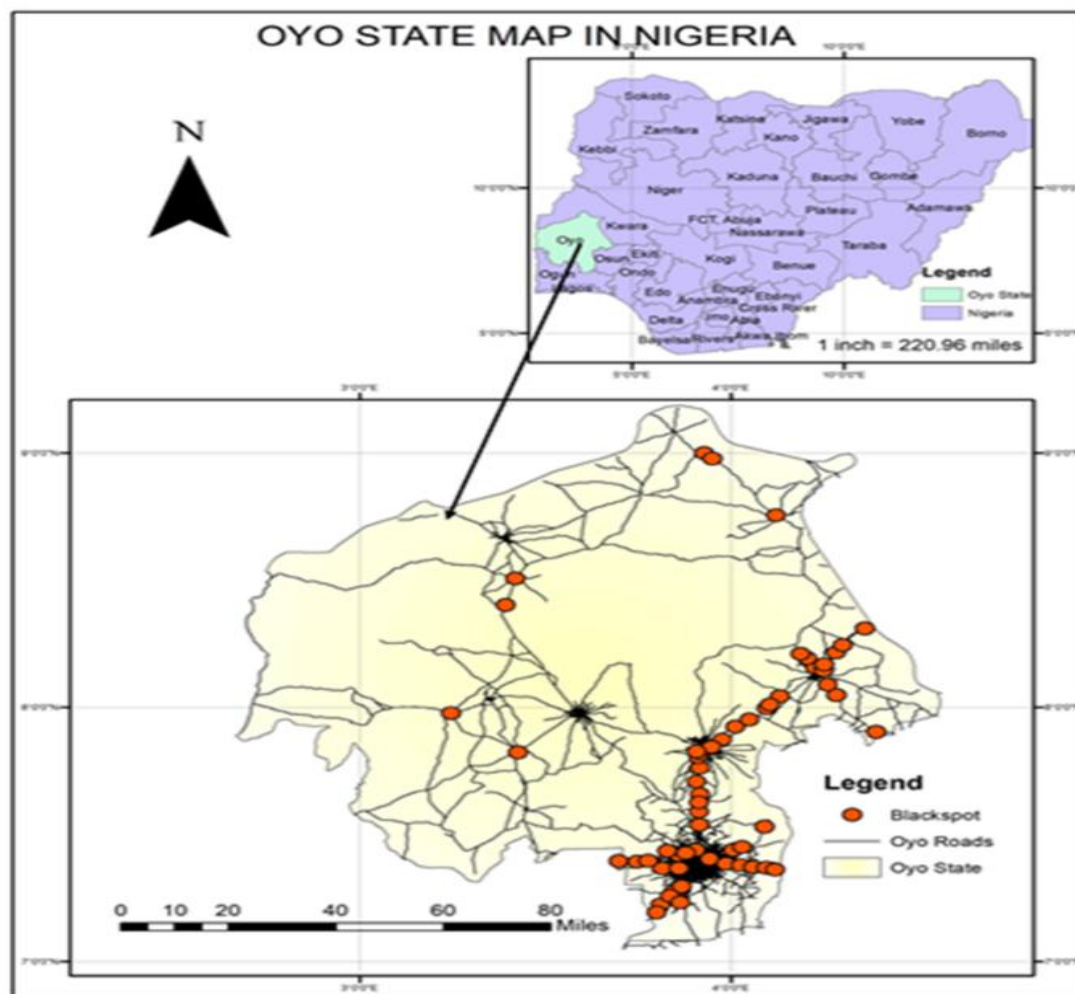


Fig: Map of Oyo state showing the blackspots

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1. Research Methodology

3.1 The Study Area

The approximate location of Oyo State is 7° 22' N and 3° 58' E on the Greenwich Meridian. That being said, the region, often known as the metropolitan area, lies between latitudes 7°15' and 7°30' north of the equator and longitudes 3°45' and 4°00' east of the Greenwich Meridian. It is located in the southwest of the nation and is bordered to the east, north, and south by Osun State, Lagos State, and Kwara State. Oyo State is one of the states that form the Nigerian Federation. It's around 145 kilometres northeast of Lagos. Lagos' most direct connection forms its western boundary with the Republic of Benin; nonetheless, the city is directly connected to several locations in Nigeria by a network of highways, trains, and air lines. Ibadan is a key break-bulk point for trading products from the southwest to the north and from the north to the southwest, and it is traversed by the railway that leads to the northern states.

Road Safety International 2020 states that, in the 1980s, when the Victorian blackspot programme began in Australia, a site had to have 12 fatalities in three years in order to be classified as a "blackspot." Today, that need is reduced to three fatalities in five years. A blackspot is an area where there are a lot of fatal, major, or minor collisions. It might be a stretch of road or a junction (road segment). The most crucial information used to achieve the accomplishments consists of: • Where the crash occurred (location) When (time) it happened (day/night) revealing scene light. The road users involved (causality level) Conditions at the time were rain, wind, fog, and sun. Roadway characteristic assessment

3.2 Research Design

Correlational and descriptive research design was employed for this investigation. This made it possible for the researcher to collect the necessary data, understand how road safety is managed, and identify any possible connection between the state of Oyo's traffic crashes and the state's road environment.

3.3 Data Gathering

This includes gathering feedback from the blackspot locations determined by the FRSC Oyo State Sector, as shown in Fig. 1. This research is primarily concerned with the roads that the FRSC covers in Nigeria's Oyo State in order to evaluate the state of the road in connection with determining the environmental factors that encourage traffic accidents along the different road segments. The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) traffic collision database in Oyo state sector 2020–2022 served as the researcher's primary source of data. Georeferenced maps of Oyo State, road network maps, satellite images (Landsat and Google Maps), and data from road segments with identified traffic crash blackspots were collected during a field survey. These locations were measured, and the picked coordinates were recorded using a handheld GPS device to make them easy to recognise in a GIS environment.

3.4 Sources and Data Collection Instruments.

The data collection processes are as follows:

Personal Observation: The researcher conducted a field survey of the identified road segments in the study area in order to identify these road segments with traffic crash black spots, observe their unique physical properties, and create an attribute table for the various road segments.

Secondary Data: The data used for this study include the satellite imagery of Landsat and Google Earth with spatial resolutions of 30 and 5 metres, respectively, which were acquired and used to extract the route for the study area, the coordinates of the crash segments with the aid of GPS, and the crash record of the study area obtained from the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) with the attribute data below:

Time of occurrence of crash

Location or route of the crash

Number of vehicles involved

Type of crash (fatal, severe, major, or minor)

Causes of the crash

The number of people involved in the crash

2. Results and Discussions

The table below shows the roadway environmental characteristics, sub-elements, number of crashes, injuries, deaths, and fatalities as reported by the FRSC.

The Roadway Environmental Factors and Roadway Traffic Crash.

Table 1: No of crash related to each environmental factors.

S/N	Environmental Factors	Condition	NO. RTC occurrences	No of injuries crash	No of death crash	Fatality
1	Crash scene light	Day Sunrise	3571	1246	315	353
		Night Sunset	4995	1282	493	511
2	Weather:	Clear	384	168	50	58
		cloudy	282	112	38	54
		Foggy	4057	1484	380	398
		Stormy/rainy	3783	748	335	349
3	Roadway segment geometry.	4-way intersection	266	110	27	29
		Narrow single lane	962	155	92	95
		Roundabout	229	114	35	43
		Straight flat Up hill	47	424	182	43
		Straight/ curved road	87	35	7	7
4	Roadway surface condition:	Dry	229	114	35	43
		pot holes	29	12	4	4
		Wet	8308	2402	769	817
5	Roadway defect:	Defective/ No lighting	1947	627	139	141
		inadequate road shoulder	4669	1317	458	494
		Lack of standard road guard	15	5	4	4
		Partial road collapse	182	1706	465	172

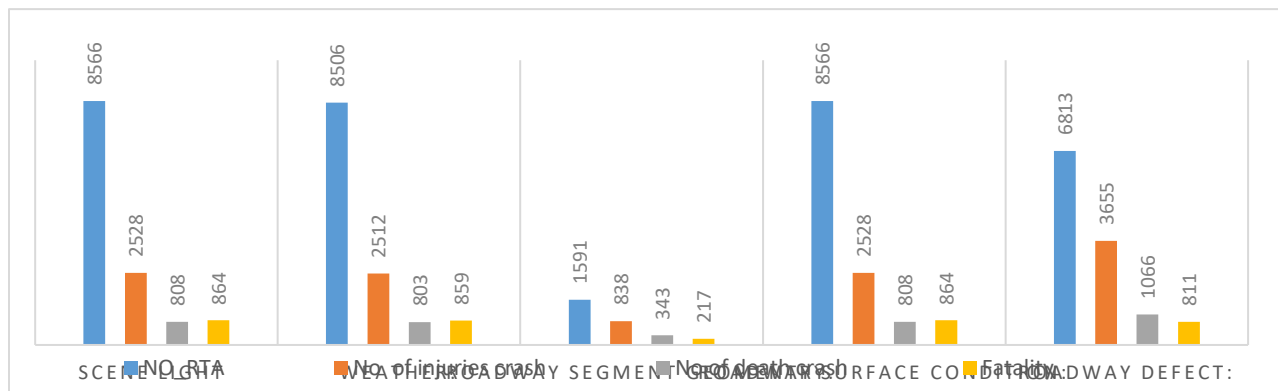


Fig: 2 Chart Bar showing crash related to each environmental factors

The chart in Fig. 2 shows that roadway defects produce the highest level of injury and death crashes, even with the second-lowest occurrence of roadway traffic crashes in the study area. Other influencers of roadway traffic crashes are the time of crash (scene light) and roadway surface condition, which have equal contributions to injuries and deaths. Roadway segment geometry has the lowest influence on causing roadway traffic crashes, with the lowest injuries and deaths associated. Weather is associated with the second highest roadway traffic crash occurrence and the third highest injury level of death crash.

The statistical assessment of the effect of roadway environmental factors on roadway traffic crash occurrences is to statistically evaluate the significance of the relationship between roadway traffic crash occurrence and roadway environment using multiple regression analysis.

2.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables. It allows us to understand how the independent variables collectively relate to or influence the dependent variable. By controlling for the effects of other variables, multiple regression helps us identify which independent variables have a significant impact on the dependent variable and to what extent. According to Gulden, Kaya Uyanik and Nese Guier (2013) found that it can be used to assess the importance of the independent variable in a given regression equation. In this study, multiple regression is used with a view to finding out the level of importance or contribution of the independent variables (time of crash, roadway alignment, and roadway surface condition) to road traffic crash occurrence by analysing the beta coefficients to show the importance of each coefficient, as exemplified by Kaya Uyanik and Nese Guier (2013). The magnitude indicates the size of the impact that a specific independent variable has on the dependent variable. A larger absolute beta coefficient value suggests a stronger influence. While statistical significance is determined by the p-values associated with the beta coefficients. Multiple regression model is stated as below:

H_1 : There is no significant impact of roadway environment factors on traffic crash occurrence.

Table 2 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.751a	.564	.430		.290	.564	4.203	4	13	.021

The R-value represents the correlation between the dependent and independent variables, which is .751, which implies that there is a 75.1% correlation between the dependent (roadway traffic crash occurrence) and independent variables, with the R square value at .564, meaning that the model explains 56.4% of the variance in road traffic crash occurrences. While the adjusted variable of .430 implies that 43% of the variance of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.

Table 3 Coefficients

Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1						
Regression	1.410		12	.352	4.203	.021
Residual	1.290		13	.084		
Total	2.500		17			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Roadway segment geometry, Roadway surface defect, Road Surface Condition, Time of crash
b. Dependent Variable: Road traffic crash.

Important Model: We reject the null hypothesis because the p-value (0.021) is less than the standard alpha threshold of 0.05, which shows that at least one of the independent variables has a significant relationship with the dependent variable, indicating that the regression model strongly predicts the dependent variable. Overall Fit: The large F-value of $F(4,13) = 4.203$ suggests that the model accounts for a sizable percentage of the variation in the dependent variable (road traffic crash). The multiple regression model is statistically significant, as indicated by the ANOVA table, which suggests that the independent variables together offer a strong match for predicting the dependent variable at $R^2 = .564$, indicating that the model explains 56% of the variance in road traffic crash occurrence.

Table 4 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	.762	.508		1.500	.158	-.336	1.860
Time of crash	.634	.197	.851	3.219	.007	.209	1.059
Road Surface Condition	-.757	.279	-.677	-2.716	.018	-1.360	-.155
Roadway defect	.192	.048	1.060	4.005	.001	.088	.295
Roadway geometry	.039	.049	.159	.798	.439	-.067	.145
Weather condition	.211	0.38	1.099	3.061	.021	.071	.311

Dependent Variable: Road traffic crash.

The unstandardized coefficient, or B, is 0.762. This is the projected value of the dependent variable when all independent variables are zero, or the intercept of the regression line. 1.500 is the t-value. To see if the constant deviates noticeably from zero, use this value. P-value (signature): 0.158. This result indicates that the constant is not statistically significant because it is bigger than 0.05. Time of crash B: 0.634. Keeping all other factors fixed, the dependent variable is predicted to grow by 0.634 units for every unit increase in crash time.

The standardised coefficient, or beta, is 0.851. This suggests that there is a significant positive correlation between the dependent variable (road traffic crash occurrence) and the time crash t-value: 3.219. This figure determines whether the coefficient deviates noticeably from zero. Significance: 0.007. This number is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance for the time of crash for B, the 95% confidence interval is 0.209–1.059.

Road surface condition, B: -0.757. The dependent variable (road traffic crash) is predicted to fall by 0.757 units for every unit increase in the road surface condition (assuming higher values imply poorer conditions), keeping all other factors constant. Beta is -0.677. This suggests that the dependent variable and road surface condition have a strong negative connection. t-value:-2.716. Significance: 0.018. The road surface condition is statistically significant because this value is smaller than 0.05. B's 95% Confidence Interval: -0.155 to -1.360.

Roadway defect: B: 0.192. Keeping all other factors equal, the dependent variable (road traffic crash) should rise by 0.192 units for every unit increase in highway defect. Beta is 1.060. This suggests that there is a highly significant positive correlation between the dependent variable and the roadway defect. 4.005 is the t-value. Significance: 0.001. Roadway defect is statistically significant since this value is smaller than 0.05. For B, the 95% confidence interval is 0.088–0.295.

Roadway geometry: B is 0.039. Keeping all other factors fixed, the dependent variable (road traffic crash) is predicted to rise by 0.039 units for every unit increase in roadway geometry. Beta: 0.159. This suggests that the roadway geometry and the dependent variable have a weakly positive correlation (t-value: 0.798). Significance: 0.439. The roadway geometry is not statistically significant, as this value is more than 0.05. -0.067 to 0.145 is the 95% confidence interval for B. Zero is included in this interval, confirming its absence of importance.

Weather Condition B is 0.211: Keeping all other factors fixed, the dependent variable (road traffic crash) is predicted to rise by 0.211 units for every unit increase in weather condition. Beta = 1.099: This suggests that there is a highly significant positive correlation between the dependent variable and the weather condition. 3.06 is the t-value: **Significance: 0.021:** The weather condition is statistically significant since this value is smaller than 0.05, for B = 95%. The confidence interval is 0.071–0.311.

Significant Predictors: The dependent variable (road traffic crash) may be statistically predicted by the time of the crash, roadway condition, and roadway defects. Non-Significant Predictors: There is no statistically significant correlation between the roadway geometry and the constant. Connections: The dependent variable (road traffic crash) has a positive correlation with the time of the crash, weather condition, and road defect. There is a negative correlation between the dependent variable (road traffic crash) and road surface condition. Repairing road imperfections and enhancing road surface conditions may have a big effect on road traffic crashes.

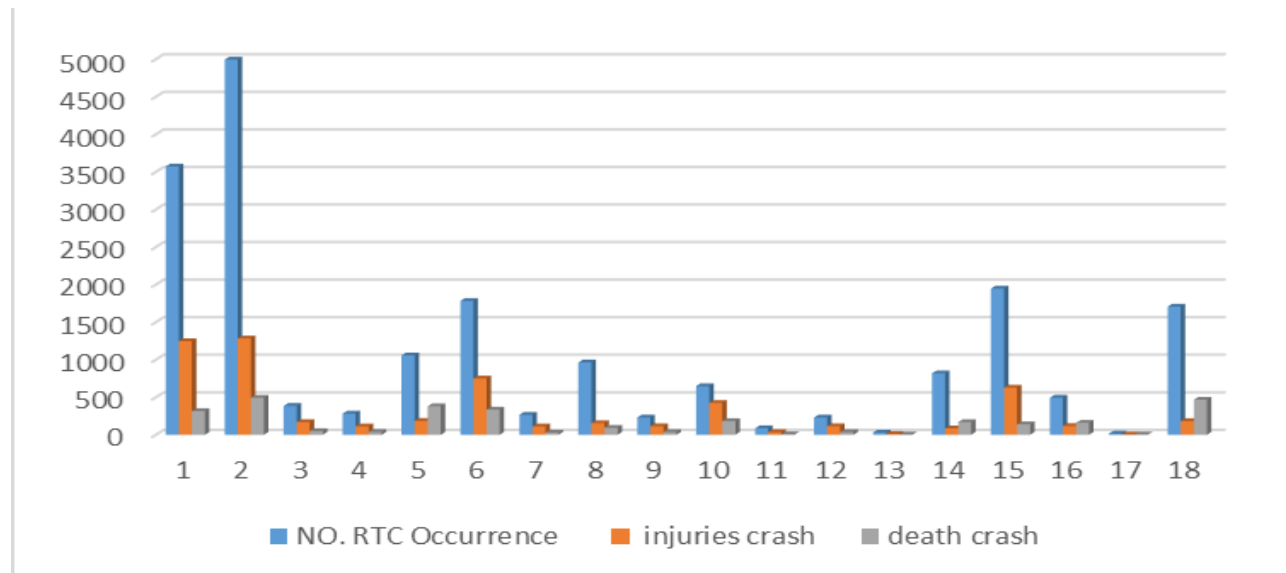
In testing the null hypothesis, which states that "there is no significant effect of roadway environment factors on traffic crash occurrence," looking at the elements of the roadway environmental factor, which are time of crash, road surface condition, Roadway defect, Roadway geometry and weather condition as the independent variables. We can conclude that there is significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant effect of roadway environment factors on traffic crash occurrence, and hence state that "there is a significant effect of roadway environment factors on traffic crash occurrence."

Factors Causing High Odd of Death and Injuries Crash

There is no significant effect of the elements of roadway environmental factor on roadway traffic crash resulting to death and injuries.

Table 5: No of crash related to each environmental factors.

S/n	Elements	Factors	NO. RTC	injuries crash	death crash	Serious crash	minor Crash
1	Time of Crash	Day Sunrise	3571	1246	315	353	1657
		Night Sunset	4995	1282	493	511	2709
2	Weather:	Clear	384	168	50	58	108
		cloudy	282	112	38	54	78
		Foggy	1057	184	380	98	395
		Stormy/rainy	1783	748	335	349	351
3	Roadway geometry. segment	4-way intersection	266	110	27	29	100
		Narrow single lane	962	155	92	95	620
		Roundabout	229	114	35	43	37
		Straight flat Up hill	647	424	182	40	1
		Straight/ curved road	87	35	7	7	38
4	Roadway condition: surface	Dry	229	114	35	43	37
		pot holes	29	12	4	4	9
		Wet	817	84	169	308	256
5	Roadway defect:	Defective/ No lighting	1947	627	139	141	1040
		inadequate road shoulder	494	117	158	169	50
		Lack of standard road guard	15	5	4	4	2
		Partial road collapse	1706	182	465	172	887


Fig.3: Comparison of RTC Occurrences, Injury and Death Crashes.

The blue bars represent the total number of Road Traffic Crash (RTC) occurrences. Element 2, 1,15,6 and 18 (Day Sunrise, Night Sunset, Defective/No lighting, Stormy/rainy and Partial road collapse) respectively having the highest occurrences frequency. The total number of RTC occurrence, RTC resulting in injuries are represented in orange bars. The peaks in injury crashes correspond to spikes in RTC occurrences, especially in element 1, 2, 6, and 15 (Night Sunset, Day Sunrise, Stormy/rainy, Defective/No lighting,) suggesting that these high-frequency crash areas or conditions also lead to a higher number of injuries. The gray bars represent crashes resulting in death which are consistently lower in magnitude compared to injury crashes more evident in categories such as 2, 18, 5, and 6. Day Sunrise, Partial road collapse, Foggy Stormy/rainy.

The hypothesis investigating the substantial link between roadway traffic crash fatalities (injuries and deaths) and roadway environment parameters was prompted by the knowledge that roadway environmental elements have a variety of effects on the fatality of road traffic crashes. A binomial logistic regression model was created to assess the odds and probability of the fatality of a crash under the combination of various roadway environmental factors, allowing the researcher to determine which of the component variables of the roadway environment factors in this study contributes the most to the fatality of roadway traffic crashes (death and injuries)

4.2 Binomial Logistic Regression.

Table 6: Predictors' Unique Contributions in the binomial Logistic Regression

Predictor	x	df	p-value
Time of crash	0.005	1	0.94
Weather	2.173	1	0.34
Road Segment alignment	1.773	1	0.18
Road Surface Condition	0.096	1	0.76
Roadway Defect	1.425	1	0.53

From the predictor table 4.10, it is observed that the roadway environmental factors predators have no significant association with roadway traffic crash fatalities. However, with further investigation into the elements within these environmental factors, applying multinomial logistic regression, we are able to ascertain the odds of death and injury fatalities shown in Table 6.

Binomial logistic regression is used when the outcome variable is not more than two categories of predictors, These odds ratios compare the odds of an event occurring (roadway traffic crash) given a factor to the odds of an event occurring in the absence of that factor. The fatality of a road traffic crash in this study is defined by the number of deaths and injuries in a crash at a given location and at a particular time. Each coefficient β_i represents the change in the log odds of the dependent variable being 1 for a one-unit change in the corresponding predictor X_i , holding all other predictors constant. The odds ratio can be computed as e^{β_i} . An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates an increase in the odds of the outcome with an increase in the predictor, while an odds ratio less than 1 indicates a decrease.

Table 7: Coefficients of factors on road traffic crash fatality

Factor	Coefficient (β)	Odds Ratio (OR)
Night Sunset	0.5	$e^{0.5} \approx 1.65e^{0.5} \approx 1.65$
Cloudy	0.2	$e^{0.2} \approx 1.22e^{0.2} \approx 1.22$
Foggy	1.0	$e^{1.0} \approx 2.72e^{1.0} \approx 2.72$
Stormy/Rainy	0.7	$e^{0.7} \approx 2.01e^{0.7} \approx 2.01$
Narrow Single Lane	0.3	$e^{0.3} \approx 1.35e^{0.3} \approx 1.35$
Roundabout	0.1	$e^{0.1} \approx 1.11e^{0.1} \approx 1.11$
Straight Flat Up Hill	0.6	$e^{0.6} \approx 1.82e^{0.6} \approx 1.82$
Straight/Curved Road	-0.1	$e^{-0.1} \approx 0.90e^{-0.1} \approx 0.90$
Pot Holes	0.4	$e^{0.4} \approx 1.49e^{0.4} \approx 1.49$
Wet	0.5	$e^{0.5} \approx 1.65e^{0.5} \approx 1.65$
Inadequate Road Shoulder	0.7	$e^{0.7} \approx 2.01e^{0.7} \approx 2.01$
Lack of Standard Road Guard	1.2	$e^{1.2} \approx 3.32e^{1.2} \approx 3.32$
Partial Road Collapse	1.5	$e^{1.5} \approx 4.48e^{1.5} \approx 4.48$

Time of Crash with regards to Night Sunset (OR = 1.65), deaths crashes occurring during Night Sunset are 1.65 times more likely to result in death compared to those occurring during Day Sunrise. This indicates that night-time conditions might be more hazardous, leading to more severe outcomes. However, injuries conversely, crashes during Night Sunset are less likely to result in injuries compared to Day Sunrise. This suggests that while night-time crashes are less frequent, they tend to be more severe when they do happen.

In the case of the Weather, Cloudy (OR = 1.22), deaths crashes occurring in cloudy weather are 1.22 times more likely to result in death compared to clear weather. Cloudy conditions might reduce visibility or make road conditions slightly more dangerous. In the case of injuries crashes in cloudy weather are less likely to result in injuries compared to clear weather. This indicates that crashes in cloudy conditions are somewhat more severe.

For Foggy (OR = 2.72), deaths crashes occurring in foggy conditions are 2.72 times more likely to result in death compared to clear weather. Fog significantly reduces visibility, leading to more severe accidents. Injuries crashes in foggy conditions are much less likely to result in injuries compared to clear weather. This shows that foggy conditions greatly increase the severity of crashes.

While stormy/Rainy (OR = 2.01), deaths crashes occurring in stormy or rainy conditions are 2.01 times more likely to result in death compared to clear weather. Wet and slippery roads contribute to more severe accidents. While injuries crashes in stormy or rainy conditions are less likely to result in injuries compared to clear weather, indicating a higher severity of crashes.

Whereas roadway segment geometry, narrow single lane (OR = 1.35), deaths crashes occurring on narrow

single lanes are 1.35 times more likely to result in death compared to those occurring at 4-way intersections. Narrow lanes can be more dangerous due to limited space for maneuvering. Injuries crashes on narrow single lanes are less likely to result in injuries compared to 4-way intersections. This implies that crashes on narrow lanes tend to be more serious. With regards to roundabout (OR = 1.11), deaths crashes occurring in roundabouts are 1.11 times more likely to result in death compared to 4-way intersections. Roundabouts might cause confusion, leading to more severe crashes. Injuries crashes in roundabouts are slightly less likely to result in injuries compared to 4-way intersections, suggesting a slightly higher severity.

For a straight flat uphill (OR = 1.82), deaths crashes occurring on straight flat uphill segments are 1.82 times more likely to result in death compared to 4-way intersections. The higher speeds possible on these segments can contribute to more severe crashes. Injuries crashes on straight flat uphill segments are less likely to result in injuries compared to 4-way intersections, indicating a higher severity of crashes.

Relating with straight/curved road (OR = 0.90), deaths crashes occurring on straight or curved roads are 0.90 times as likely to result in death compared to 4-way intersections, meaning they are less likely to be fatal. Injuries crashes on straight or curved roads are more likely to result in injuries compared to 4-way intersections, suggesting that these crashes are less severe.

Concerning roadway surface condition, Pot Holes (OR = 1.49): Deaths crashes occurring on roads with pot holes are 1.49 times more likely to result in death compared to those occurring on dry roads. Pot holes can cause vehicles to lose control, leading to severe crashes. Injuries crashes on roads with pot holes are less likely to result in injuries compared to dry roads, indicating a higher severity of crashes.

In the case of wet road condition (OR = 1.65), deaths crashes occurring on wet roads are 1.65 times more likely to result in death compared to dry roads. Wet roads can be slippery and increase the likelihood of severe crashes. While Injuries: Crashes on wet roads are less likely to result in injuries compared to dry roads, suggesting that crashes in wet conditions are more severe.

Regarding roadway defect, inadequate Road Shoulder (OR = 2.01), deaths crashes occurring on roads with inadequate road shoulders are 2.01 times more likely to result in death compared to roads with no defects.

Lack of proper shoulders can prevent safe recovery if a vehicle goes off the road. Injuries crashes on roads with inadequate road shoulders are less likely to result in injuries compared to roads with no defects, indicating higher severity.

About lack of standard road guard (OR = 3.32), deaths crashes occurring on roads lacking standard road guards are 3.32 times more likely to result in death compared to roads with no defects. Road guards prevent vehicles from veering off the road or into oncoming traffic. Injuries crashes on roads lacking standard road guards are significantly less likely to result in injuries compared to roads with no defects, indicating much higher severity.

In the case of partial road collapse (OR = 4.48), deaths crashes occurring on roads with partial road collapse are 4.48 times more likely to result in death compared to roads with no defects. Road collapses can cause severe crashes due to sudden loss of road structure. Injuries crashes on roads with partial road collapse are substantially less likely to result in injuries compared to roads with no defects, indicating extremely high severity.

3. Conclusion

Like in most cities across the world and in Oyo State, Nigeria the task of ensuring roads are safe is enormous road infrastructures lack functional street lights, road signs and symbols, road markings, etc., which must be put in place to ensure these roads do not become death traps for the user. The current road traffic crash situation is less desirable and urgent steps must be taken to reduce the rate of traffic crash occurrence and the associated severity. This study investigated roadway environmental element and road traffic crashes in Oyo State. The study achieved several objectives and revealed several critical issues relating to road traffic crashes in Oyo State.

Based on the results from the field, roadway environmental element (time of crash, roadway surface condition and roadway defect.) have a significant relationship with road traffic crash occurrences in Oyo State.

The study investigated the correlation between various roadway environmental element and road traffic crashes on 18 routes known to have blackspots. The analysis identified several key factors that significantly affect the likelihood of crashes. In particular, the timing of crashes was found to have a considerable impact, with a p-value of 0.007, indicating strong statistical significance. The beta

values for this factor ranged from 0.634 to 0.757 showing a substantial effect size. With type of result day time driving is encouraged as night driving is very risky because of the danger posed by the immediate roadway environment that is always dark.

Road Surface Condition this factor had a p-value of 0.018, highlighting its significant role in crash occurrences. Poor road surface conditions contribute to higher crash rates as movement of the vehicle is made difficult which result to the vehicle losing its tyres, veering off the roadway or can collide with another vehicle while trying to avoid a pothole. Defects such as partial road collapse had an odds ratio (OR) of 4.48 lack of standard road guards had an OR of 3.32 and inadequate road shoulders had an OR of 2.01. These defects significantly increase the likelihood of crashes, with p-values of 0.001. These defects are as a result of the fact that the roads were not build to meet the required international standards safety wise.

Adverse weather conditions also played a crucial role, with fog having an OR of 2.72 and stormy or rainy conditions having an OR of 2.01. The p-value for weather conditions was 0.021, indicating a significant correlation. These conditions reduce visibility while driving as such movement on the roadway at such times should not be encouraged. Surprisingly, roadway geometry did not have a significant impact on crash occurrences in this study.

The study's analysis revealed that certain roadway defects and adverse weather conditions significantly increased the odds of death and injuries crashes. For instance, partial road collapse increased the odds by 4.48 times, lack of standard road guards by 3.32 times and inadequate road shoulders by 2.01 times. Similarly foggy conditions increased the odds by 2.72 times and stormy or rainy weather by 2.01 times. These elements are seen to increase the likeness of a crash situation resulting to deaths or injuries, factor relating to roadway surface condition leads followed by roadway defect factors and lastly weather conditions. The high odds ratios associated with roadway defects indicate a pressing need for infrastructure improvements. Authorities should prioritise repairing partial road collapses, installing standard road guards and ensuring adequate road shoulders to enhance roads safety.

Adverse weather conditions, particularly fog and stormy or rainy weather significantly increase the likelihood of fatal crashes. Implementing weather-responsive measures such as enhanced road lighting, reflective road markings and real-time weather updates for drivers could mitigate these risks.

4. Recommendations

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) is the government agency with the responsibility to ensure the roads are safe. However, the traffic crash situation remains significantly below acceptable standards. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for the effective and efficient management of road safety in the study area:

- The government should empower the road safety corps to enhance better patrol of the blackspot locations.
- There is a need to put in place roadway lighting to illuminate the roadway and its surroundings, as most of the road segments where black spots were discovered lacked this infrastructure.
- Implementing weather-responsive measures such as enhanced road lighting, reflective road markings and real-time weather updates for drivers could mitigate these risks.
- Identified high-risk locations should be prioritised for safety interventions through the reconstruction, redesign, and resurfacing of roadways to improve their safety and functionality in all seasons.
- Engineering solutions such as better guardrails and road leveling could be considered

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Surface Water Pollution in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract. Surface water is one of the most vulnerable in terms of pollution in Lagos State. The risks of surface water were high in many areas of the state because of polluted activities on the water bodies. And this has reduced the quality of surface water and made it unfit for human use. The primary data for the study was collected through direct oral interviews of 25 residents of the state through random sampling technique. It also involved the use of secondary data like textbooks, newspapers and journals. This paper focused on the causes of surface water pollution in Lagos State Nigeria, which include, industrial wastewater, agricultural effluence, sawdust seepage, direct flush of septic tanks into the seas and commercial sand dredging. The research therefore concluded that revocation of hazardous activities around surface water in Lagos State such as, open defecation, commercial sand dredging and relocation of sawmills to area that could contain them without causing problems to the surface water will preserve the quality of surface water in the state.

Keywords: Lagos State, Sand dredging, Sawdust seepage, Sustainable development Surface water, Water Pollution.

1. Introduction

Water is one of the most important resources to man and environment from beginning of human existence, without water of adequate quality and quantity sustainable development will not be possible. Surface water resource deterioration is now a global problem and is increasing at a faster rate. Many rivers in Lagos State received industrial effluents, domestic waste, agricultural waste and constant commercial dredging. These effluents caused deterioration of surface water quality in the state, the accelerated pace of development and population growth have led to the

scarcity of potable water. So, the knowledge of extent of pollution and the causes of surface water pollution become essential in order to preserve the valuable resources of surface water for future generation.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Scholars such as Ayadi and Alo (2020) and Ajayi (2022) have done some works on waste and environmental pollution in Lagos State. These two recent works examined: effectiveness and efficiency of solid waste services in Lagos State, challenges and opportunities for reducing food waste in Lagos Metropolis. However, none of these works examined the Surface Water Pollution in Lagos State.

1.2 Methodology

The primary data for the study was collected through direct oral interviews of 25 residents of the state through random sampling technique. It also involved the use of secondary data e.g. textbooks, newspapers, journals etc.

1.3 Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to examine the causes of surface water pollution in Lagos State Nigeria.

1.4 Research Question

What are the causes of surface water pollution in Lagos State Nigeria?

1.5 Limitation of the Study

The limitations encountered during the field work included some respondents were hesitant to provide sufficient information relevant to the research, while

some were unwilling to participate or cooperate due to the sensitive nature of the study. Despite these challenges, the researchers remained determined and reassured respondents that their responses would be kept confidential.

2. Review of Related Literature

Water pollution is the presence of harmful substances in water that can make it toxic to humans, animals, plants or the environment (Yohannes and Elias, 2017). It can be caused by natural events like volcanic eruptions or man-made activities like industrial waste (Praveen et al., 2016). Water pollution is when water contains micro-organisms of human or animal origin, poisonous chemical substances, industrial or domestic sewage, organic and inorganic substances. Water pollution is the contamination of natural water bodies such as lakes, rivers, oceans, and groundwater by chemical, physical, radioactive or pathogenic microbial substances that change in the quality of water that has a harmful effect on any living thing that drinks or uses or lives in it (Abambagade, 2020). Most pollutants result from non-point source pollution activities including runoff from agricultural lands, urban areas, construction and industrial sites and failed septic tanks (Yohannes and Elias, 2017). About one thousand five hundred substances have been listed as pollutants in freshwater ecosystems and a generalised list of pollutants includes acids and alkalis, anions (sulphide, sulphite, cyanide), detergents, domestic sewage and farm manure, food processing water, gases chlorine, ammonia, heat, metals (cadmium, zinc, lead), nutrients (phosphates, nitrates), oil and oil dispersants, organic toxic wastes (formaldehydes, phenols), pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls and radionuclides, in addition to oxidizable materials, domestic sewage contains detergents, nutrients, pathogens and a variety of other compounds (Abambagade, 2020).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

An ecological perspective of change and development: The perspective is associated with the works of Wilkinson and Boulding (1973). The theory is concerned with issues of change and development in contemporary societies, especially as they relate to environmental changes and/or ecologically related trends of population growth and the need to devise and sort out techniques of tackling development problems. The theory stated that, as the population of a society increases in size, individual members of the society exert more pressure on scarce available resources such as land and other natural endowments for survival. They directly or indirectly carry out socioeconomic

activities that pollute the environment/society, and further cause harm (degradation) to the environment/society. The socio-economic activities, according to these theorists include subsistence agricultural activities of people in agrarian societies of Africa, Latin America etc. The commercial and industrial activities of people in Urban industrialised societies of the Western-Europe and North America. The perspective further argued that development is needed when a society outgrow its resource base and productive system. The perspective therefore posits that as the established economic system of a given environment/society is proved inadequate and productive system becomes more problematic, societies are therefore driven to change their methods. For instance, as the population of a society outgrows the available resources, especially in agrarian societies, people are forced to migrate to urban centres/cities in search of job opportunities. Whereas some engage in several other commercial and agricultural investments such as livestock; some still carry out some technical and entrepreneurial businesses, all for survival. The urban and city dwellers establish and carry out industrial activities that equally pollute the society. Wilkinson and Boulding concluded that these activities directly and/or indirectly pollute the environment with its attendant consequences on biodiversity (Evelyn and Tyav, 2013).

2.2 Critical Analysis

2.2.1 Causes of Surface Water Pollution in Lagos State

2.2.1.1 Industrial Wastewater

Rapid industrialization and industrialization caused larger volumes of wastewater to be produced and its uncontrolled discharge threatened the reliability of surface water and causing harm to human health (Adeniran et al., 2017). United Nations estimated that ninety percent of all wastewater were untreated and discharged directly into surface water bodies in Sub-Saharan Africa (Tefera and Adane, 2017). As a result, water borne illnesses that are triggered by the contaminated waters abound. The unsafe wastewater disposal practice also seriously undermined the sustainability of aquatic life and the string of human benefits derived from aquatic ecosystems including food and medicines that were often taken for granted. In addition, it is responsible for the emergence and persistence of de-oxygenated dead zones which are growing rapidly within seas and oceans. The issue of untreated wastewater discharge was primarily a concern of surface water in Lagos State Nigeria. In

view of all these problems, the world faces a water quality crisis in the 21st Century, and water may aptly be described as a resource under considerable pressure (Saad et al., 2017)

Although Lagos is an island with twenty one percent of its 3,577 square kilometers made up of lagoons and water ways (Abambagade, 2020). These surface waters have historically been unfitted for human consumption on account of pollution from urban and industrial waste, thus giving rise to a sad paradox of scarcity in the midst of plenty, as well as to an endless search for good water sources (Agbesola, 2013). As a highly industrialised city, repeated discharges of industrial effluents into surface water bodies polluted surface water, making the water too contaminated and too costly to treat for public supplies. Foster observes that dwindling and easily exhausted water resources in large cities usually compel a resort to alternative sources of water such as importations from locations that are costly and beyond the urban limits in order to meet the water needs of the growing populations. Water supply shortage is a perennial problem for Lagos State. Unable to use most of its own surface waters on account of pollution and salinity. The major potable surface water source is the Ogun River in Akute, Ogun State, a bordering state. The Water Corporation has consistently but unsuccessfully struggled to increase capacity and to find new water sources to meet the needs of the ever-increasing numbers of residents in Lagos State. In spite of its efforts to increase capacity and to find alternative sources of water however, the city's ever-growing

population renders these series of capacity expansions inadequate after a few years and the Corporation met only a fraction of water demand. Likewise, the industrial wastewater were full of heavy metals, which resulted into chemical pollution of the water bodies. Such heavy metals were mercury, arsenic, copper, cyanide, iron, lead, cadmium, chromium, nickel, phenols etc which caused chronic diseases such as cancer in the inhabitants of the State and neighbouring countries using the same coastal waters, because pollution has no boundary.

2.2.1.2 Domestic Source

A combination of the increasing population, the flat terrain and lack of adequate sewage and domestic waste disposal made many localities potential health hazard areas for their inhabitants. Sanitary and sewage systems in many homes were poor and where they exist were poorly managed. Some people do not care how they dispose their trash and it was not surprising there were serious pollution problems in the communities. The heavy rainfall, flat terrain, poor drainage (blocked drains due to waste dumps, and built up of silt, etc) or lack of drainage system could lead to serious flooding problems even with minimal precipitation. In most houses, only faeces were discharged through a septic system and all other household liquids were discharged directly to storm drains where they exist into the street which later ended in surface water in the state (Olorunnibe, Oral interview, 2023).

Figure 1: Clogged drain and Surface water pollution in Lagos State



Source: Researcher's Photography

2.2.1.3 Commercial Source

Commercial source refers to shops, super markets, road side markets and business centres that were consistently battered by the sellers of different food items and cosmetics, other daily markets and weekly community markets where residents were buying and selling farm produces, such as cattles, donkeys, sheeps, poultry and other household materials. These types of markets constituted more than ninety percent of the markets available in Lagos State. During daily operations reasonable quantities of different wastes that were dumped on surface waterways were consistently

generated. Road side sellers, disposed various items such as cans of soft drinks, banana and orange peels, wrappers of sweets, street mechanic dusts. Abattoirs in the state were generally performing opposite (anti-sanitation) function, blood, faeces and related wastes from animal slaughter find their ways into gutters and the so-called drainage system and the final destinations were surface streams like rivers and lagoons (Efe, Oral interview, 2023).

Figure 2: Commercial waste



Source: Researcher's Photography

2.2.1.4 Agricultural Effluence

Agriculture, as the single largest user of surface water on a global basis and as a major cause of degradation of surface water resources through erosion and chemical runoff. The associated agro- food processing industry is also a significant source of organic pollution in most countries of the world. A wide range of contaminants can reach these rivers, lakes and streams either by groundwater or through drainage ditches including artificial fertilizer residues, insecticides, herbicides, pesticides and farmyard waste all of which were potentially harmful. The primary agricultural pollutants were nutrients (particularly nitrogen and phosphorus), sediment, animal wastes, pesticides and salts. Agricultural waste polluted surface water through direct surface runoff or through seepage to ground water that discharges to a surface water outlet. Various farming activities resulted in erosion of soil particles (Chukwu, 2017). The sediment produced by erosion can damage fish habitat and wetlands and often transported excess agricultural chemicals resulted in contaminated runoff. This runoff in turn affects changes to aquatic habitat such as temperature increases and decreased oxygen. The most common sources of excess nutrients in surface water were chemical fertilizers and manure from animal facilities. Such nutrients caused eutrophication in surface water. Eutrophication is thus depriving the river of oxygen (called oxygen debt). As algae dominated and turn the water green, the growth of other water plants were suppressed. (Chukwu, 2017). Death of invertebrates and fishes follow on and their dead remains in turn lead to excess bacterial activity and fishing is an occupation to some of the populace in Lagos State especially areas like Badagry, Bayeku, Ebute Meta, Eko, Epe, Majindu, Makoko, Isheri, Ipakodo, Ijede, Ofin, where they were blessed with rivers, lagoons and oceans while some eat the aquatic organisms most especially the fishes (Olorunnibe, Oral interview, 2023)

2.2.1.5 Sawdust Seepage.

Lagos has a ascendent population and this led to increased business activities. The city is located close to the rain forest with a lot of trees transported to the state which resulted in many sawmills of different sizes located on the shores of the Lagos Lagoon. Oko baba in Ebute Meta is a typical example of such area where the lagoon is being used as a commercial sawmill zone known for residential and commercial activities. Woods which used majorly for construction activities were processed in this area and logs were suspended on the lagoon to increase the durability and quality of woods, because the longer it stays in water, the stronger it becomes (Elijah and Elegbede, 2015). A lot of solid waste were generated by these sawmills which include sawdust, wood off cuts, wood backs, plain shavings and wood rejects that were not properly discarded. It became a habit that these solid waste materials were burnt in

open air along banks of the Lagos Lagoon caused serious air pollution or these substances are dumped into the lagoon (Dosumnu and Ajayi, 2002). Wood waste decomposed when left over long periods of time and it released a harmful greenhouse gas such as methane also these heaps became the breeding ground for pests and vectors of diseases (Owoyeni et al., 2016). The major waste product from these sawmills was sawdust which is a threat to the environment, water resources, ecology and human health as massive amounts of this wood product was accumulated on the banks of the Lagos Lagoon.

Figure 3: Saw dust seepage on Lagoon in Lagos State



Source: Researcher's Photography

2.2.1.5 Direct flush of septic tanks /soak ways in to the sea.

The risks of surface water were high in many areas of Lagos State, because of unhygienic and inadequate excreta and waste disposal provisions. The main sanitation systems available in the major residential areas of Lagos State was water closet septic tank (Gbehe, 2004). However, the major environmental concerns in Lagos State were collection, treatment and disposal of sewage and other related wastewater problems. Although the use of pail system (soil men) in Lagos metropolis has been banned, yet the government machinery via Lawma and Laswmo of ministry of environment has not totally devised an efficient system of disposing of the septage from septic tank / soakaways (Efe, Oral interview, 2023). Therefore, all these untreated excreta together with the commercial and industrial wastewater are usually discharged into the Lagos lagoon. For example, in Badagry, Bayeku, Ebute Meta, Epe, Lagos Island, Ipakodo, Makoko, Mile 12, Majindun and Ofin toilet pipes were ran directly to Lagoon. It was on record that sewage and waste products were discharged into water bodies, scientific evidence has also shown that residents in many instances delight in defecating on the ground surface, sometimes directly into nearby streams and water channels (Efe, Oral interview, 2023). Human excreta contain a lot of organisms, which are major vectors of water-related diseases. These organisms include viruses, which can cause poliomyelitis, viral meningitis, hepatitis, fevers, diarrhea, cholera and typhoid.

Figure 4: Construction of toilets on Lagoon in Lagos State

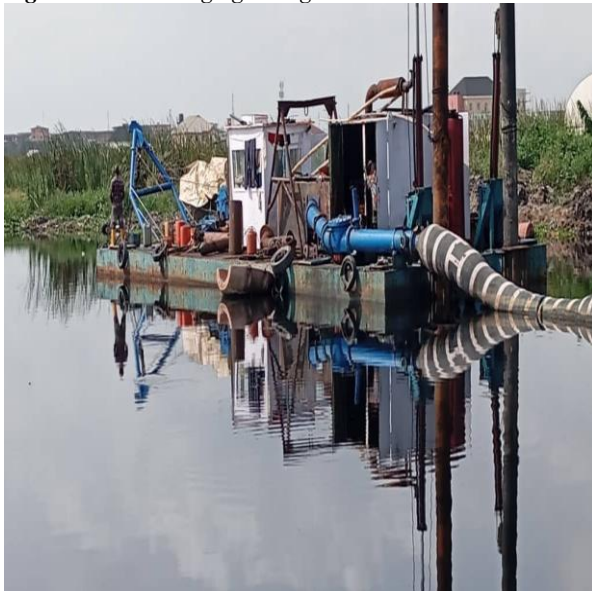


Source: Researcher's Photography

2.2.1.6 Sand Dredging

Lagos water bodies are under intense pressure due to various kinds of human activities. The most noticeable one is the indiscriminate extraction of construction grade sand by dredging operators. The sector faced with the daily dredging activities that caused a major change for surface water. Sand dredging was equally a direct cause of erosion which has destroyed lives and property of citizens and still threatens lives and property of others in the State. It also impacts negatively on aquatic life, as sea animals that depend on sandy beaches for their nesting are sent into near extinction, destroys fishery and caused economic problems for people who rely on fishing for their livelihood. Also, it puts fisher folks out of business, thereby worsening poverty and encouraging criminal activities as these people become desperate for survival. Sand dredging can be classified into two, namely, hydraulic and mechanical dredging (Sowunmi et al., 2016). Hydraulic dredges remove and transport sediment in liquid slurry form. They are usually barge mounted and carry diesel or electric-powered centrifugal pumps with discharge pipes ranging from 6 to 48 inches in diameter. The pump produced a vacuum on its intake side and atmospheric pressure forces water and sediments through the suction pipe. The slurry is transported by pipeline to a disposal area (Sowunmi et al., 2016). Mechanical dredges remove bottom sediment through the direct application of mechanical force to dislodge and excavate the material at almost in situ densities. Backhoe, bucket ladder, bucket wheel, and dipper dredges are types of mechanical dredges. Sediments excavated with a mechanical dredge are generally placed into a barge or scow for transportation to the disposal site. Hydraulic dredging is the most common among the large-scale sand dredging firms while there were small scale sand dredgers that make use of locally made boats and baskets (Efe et al. Oral interview, 2023).

Figure 5: Sand dredging in Lagos State



Source: Researcher's Photography



3. Conclusion

The research concluded that deposition of commercial waste, agricultural waste, sawdust, sand dredging and other industrial wastes in the surface water has reduced the quality of surface water and made it unfit for human use in Lagos State Nigeria. However, there is need to develop workable monitoring mechanisms, regulations and enforcement measures by relevant regulatory bodies in the state to secure future of surface water resources.

4. Recommendations

In other to control surface water pollution in Lagos State, the following point could be adopted:

- Revocation of hazardous activities around surface water in Lagos State, such as open defecation, commercial dredging etc.
- Relocation of sawmills to area that could contain them without causing problems to the surface water in the state.
- Regular biological assessment must be carried out on the surface water in the state.

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Lessons of Burma Campaign 1942-1945: A Case Study of General Bill Slim's Leadership and Military Qualities

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Abstract. This paper examines the background, strategies, tactics and battlefield experiences and qualities of General Bill Slim, one of the greatest British General of World War II. As a Commander of the battle fields from 1914-1958, Bill Slim's most impressive triumphs came to limelight in India and Burma in the long war against the Japanese. This paper highlights the military qualities of General Bill Slim, he employed in his military strategies the principles of flexibility and surprise. that foreshadowed modern British Military doctrine. Thrust into a desperate situation, he orchestrated the longest retreat in British Army History in the withdrawal from Burma. The turning of the tide occurred when he turned on the Japanese when they invaded India, shattered their army and pursued them to destruction in Burma. This paper points out General Slim's great military victories, he left a legacy of training and morale building that endures in the British Army to this day. This paper draws out lessons to be learnt from General Bill Slim's Military Leadership Experiences by examining some of Slim's greatest battlefield experiences and the strategies and tactics employed, Administration, Command and Control that set him apart from his counterparts. This paper has sourced both primary and secondary sources, archival materials and documents, books and journals.

Keywords: Leadership and Military Qualities of Commanders, Battlefield, Strategies, Tactics, Administration, Command and Control, Morale.

1. Introduction

Wars have been fought for centuries but each time they have been fought differently, and have left us with things to remember. They left us with some ideas or lessons that have been applied in subsequent wars. The fundamental principles may remain unchanged, but as

each war is fought and we look on it the pattern looks different. The system of control, the admin of forces involved, the strategy employed, the character of the forces involved, the command set up, and concept have always gone through some revolutionary changes after each war.

Burma, was known for its thick jungle (Burma Jungle), unfavourable terrain and climate. Burma had recorded fierce battles and campaigns of all times. The Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 was motivated by expansionist tendencies, her quest for raw materials, her fear of China and the Soviet Union as the dominant power in Asia. The attitude of Britain and USA towards her. The Japanese attack on South-East Asia had begun the previous December simultaneously with the period of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December, 1941. Lyman states that By February the Japanese had captured Rangoon, sweeping the weak and unprepared British forces before them. General Sir Harold Alexander commanded the Burma Army having arrived as Rangoon fell, and weeks later he was provided with a Corps Commander-Slim (rapidly promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General) to command the two weak Divisions that remained. The 17th Indian Division had lost much of its strength at the Sittang River, while 1st Burma Division was made up mainly of paramilitary troops not tr (Burma Jungained or equipped to take on a first-class enemy. The one real blessing he possessed was 7th Amour Brigade. Also newly arrived with their stuart light tanks and better experience from North Africa.

Slim was determined to fight, but it very quickly became clear that the Japanese held virtually every advantage. They moved fast, were well led and had command of the sky. The country was in turmoil, with refugees blocking roads and the Japanese could

outflank defensive positions prepared by the British almost at will. It became clear that a fighting retreat back to Indian Manipur was the only thing that could save the remaining troops and prevent another humiliation like Singapore. Slim planned and commanded the withdrawal with calm brilliance.

1.1 Geography of Burma

When considering the Geography of any country in the context of Military History the essential thing to consider are Physical Features, Climate, Drainages, Vegetation and their effects on Military Operations. The Geography of Burma played a significant role in the Burma Campaign. It is therefore important to be familiar with the location, terrain, drainage, climate and vegetation of Burma for a better understanding of the various operations. Burma is a small country in South East Asia. It is bordered by China in the North East, French Indo-China and Siam in the East, India in the West and North West and the Bay of Bengal in the South.

It stretches 1,300 miles North to South and about 575 miles East to West. The total mass is approximately 260,000 square miles. Burma terrain is composed of three main geomorphological structures; the Arakan Yoma, Shan Plateau and the Central Basin. These are further sub-divided into the following 7 natural regions. The location had a lot of effects on movement of vehicles and personnel tactics as well as battle formation. The general effects on operations is no limited to restriction on operation to specific periods of the year. Their movement tactics was affected, they also have visibility obstacles from air and ground. It also helped to increase supply in the forest during raining season. Burma officially called Union of Burma is the largest country by area located to the South east Asia. Burma is also known as Myanmar. Burma has long coastline that borders the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

1.2 The Military Significance of Burma

Until 1937 Burma was part of the Indian Empire. It formed the largest province. In 1937, it became a separate country of the British Commonwealth. Burma forms barrier between the India sub-continent and the rest of Asia and constitutes a natural strategic shield of the Japanese conquest in South West Pacific. Japanese believed that once Burma was conquered, threat to her conquest would be minimal. The Japanese also believed that Burma was the corridor to the Indian sub-continent.

It is important to note that: The Japanese invasion of Burma was motivated should exhibit by

- Expansionist tendencies
- Her quest for raw materials
- Her fear of China and the Soviet Union as the dominant power in Asia.
- The attitude of Britain and USA towards the Japanese.

The geography of Burma is of fundamental military significance. The effects of the surface of the land, the vegetation, the climate and drainages on military operations cannot be over emphasized.

2. Conceptual Clarification.

2.1 Leadership

The essence of leadership encompasses everything that a leader is, knows and does that affects mission accomplishments. Leadership is a process by which a soldier applies his beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills to influence others to accomplish the mission. In essence, leadership is tough and complex. Good leadership focuses on the creation of cohesive, disciplined units that can withstand the stress of battle and win.

The follower is the common denominator for leadership. One cannot be a good leader unless he has a basic understanding of human nature and a clear understanding of the particular attributes of his subordinates. The leader must understand the follower's values, character traits, knowledge, skill, needs, fears, experience, education and goals if he is to communicate with them and influence them to accomplish missions. Commanders at all levels must be placed in circumstances where they must make decisions and live with the consequences.

2.1.1 Leadership and Military Qualities of A Commander

- A Commander should have the moral and physical courage to carry out greater responsibilities
- Calmness and decisions in a crisis
- The necessary balance of professionalism, intelligence and practicality to carry the added breath and weight of the responsibility that goes with promotion.
- The ability to innovate successfully and confidently rather than implement another plan.

2.2 Morale

Morale according to Smith is “the spirit that seeks to triumph in adversity and arms a man against the shock of battle. It is a measure of the cohesion and power of that individual or group’s resolve to pursue its object come what may”.

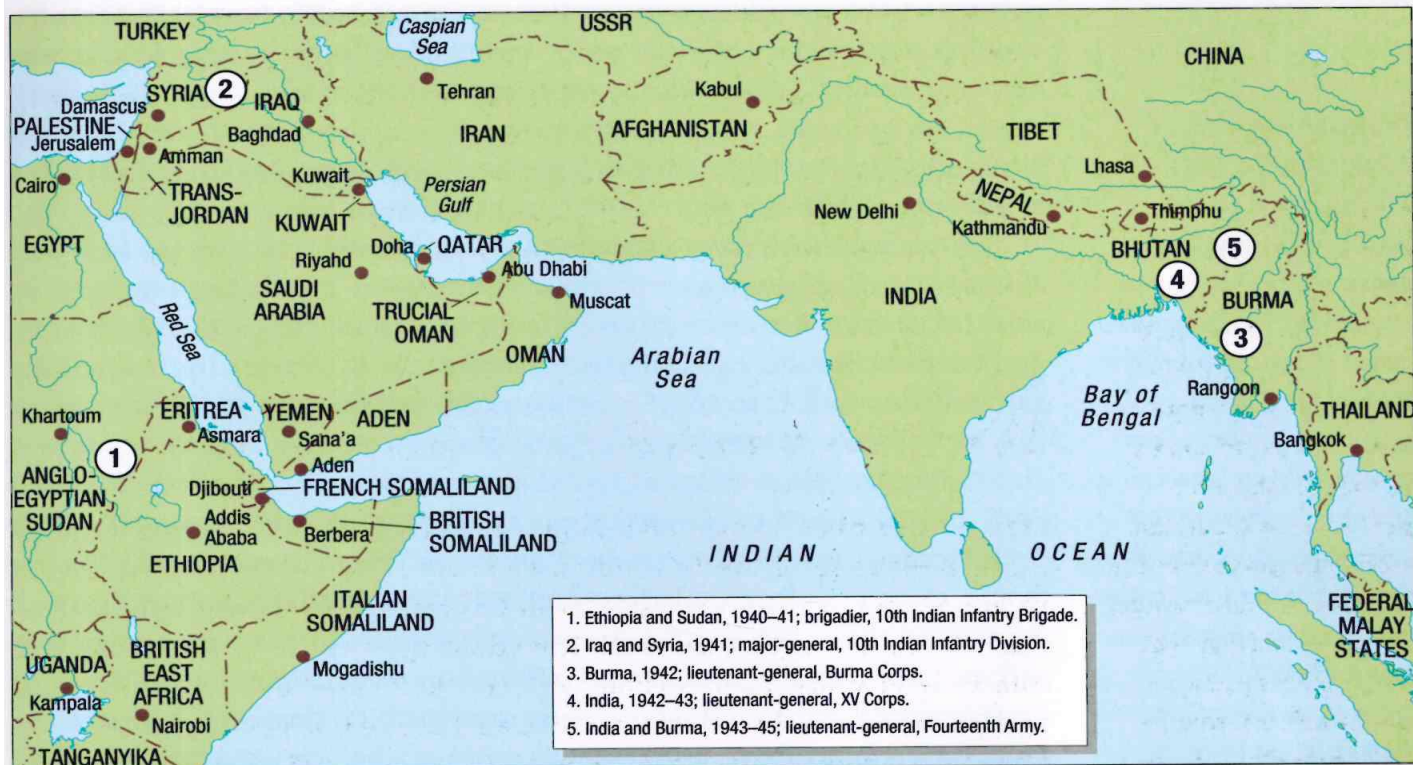
Between 1943 and 1944 General Bill Slim transformed the utterly defeated British Eastern Army into the ever-victorious Fourteenth Army. Here Morale describes how he helped the men to believe in themselves. Morale is a state of mind. It is that intangible force which will move a whole group of men to give their last ounce to achieve something, without counting the cost to themselves.

2.2.1 The Essentials of Morale

The essence of morale is that it should endure - have certain foundation. These foundations are Spiritual,

Intellectual and Material, and that is the order of their importance. Spiritual first, because only spiritual foundations can stand real strain. Next, intellectual, because men are swayed by reason as well as feeling. Material last-important, but last-because the very highest kinds of morale are more often met when material condition are lowest. High morale is the quality which maintains human dignity in battle and at the same time develops man’s heroism. High morale is crucial to the success of any undertaking whether it be an attempt by an individual a military organization or a nation. Morale, is the mental and emotional condition (as of enthusiasm, confidence or loyalty) of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand a sense of common purpose with respect to a group; esprit de corps. The quintessence of morale in war was captured eloquently by Patton who wrote that "wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.

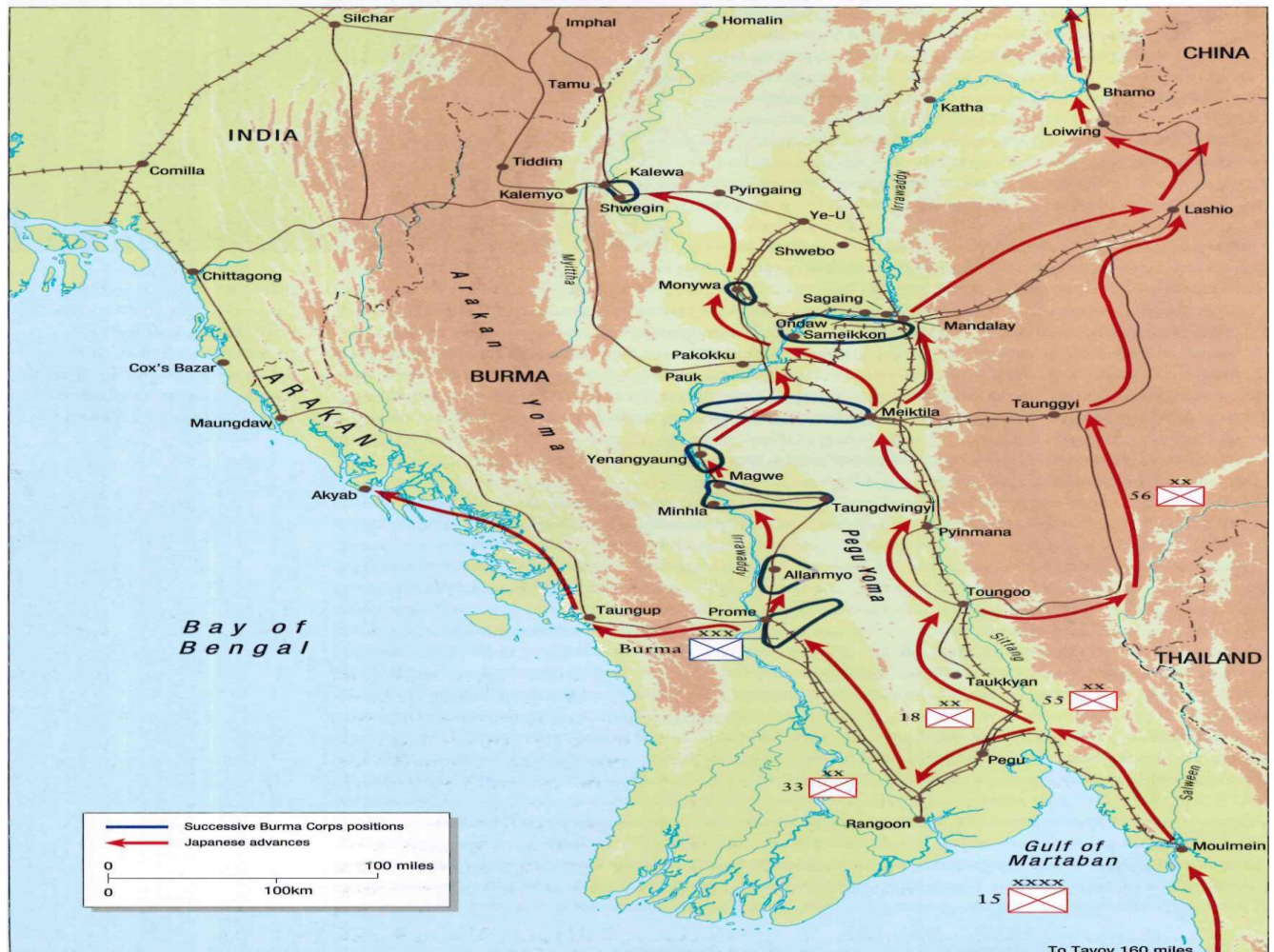
The extent of operations in which Slim was involved, 1940–45



Source: Robert Lyman, *BILL SLIM, Leadership, Strategy Conflict*, Great Britain, Osprey Publishing, 2011. P. 13.

Source: Robert Lyman, *BILL SLIM, Leadership, Strategy Conflict*, Great Britain, Osprey Publishing, 2011. p.20.

The retreat from Burma



2.3 The Retreat From Burma

The British troops in Burma could not stop the Japanese advance due to tactical and administrative problems.

The situation in Europe and North Africa made it impossible for British to give enough attention to Burma. Though they were aware of the threat to Burma following the fall of Malaya, troops and materials were not readily available to checkmate Japanese advance. The advance was so rapid that the Allied troops embarked on retreat from Burma

2.4 The First Arakan Campaign, 1942-1943

The First Arakan Campaign failed for the following reasons:

- Lack of adequate preparation
- Failure to grasp the Japanese infiltration tactics.
- The effect of the terrain and climate of Burma on Military Operations.
- The use of large number of troops instead of small scale patrol.
- 15th Division fighting in the Mayu Range, Arakan, February 1944

After the disastrous first campaign in Arakan in late 1942 and early 1943, Slim began retraining his army. The essential requirement in combat and support units alike, was for well trained, motivated troops exceptionally confident in their fighting skills, their tactics and their leaders. Such could be achieved in only as a result of hard and realistic training. Even administrative and support units had to be able to stand fast in the event of encirclement and defend their perimeter against attack. Under rigorous new leadership new life began to cascade through the veins of what was shortly to become Fourteenth Army. Every man was rigorously trained as fighter. Live training with artillery, mortars, and medium guns was carried out. All ranks practiced fighting with tanks, artillery, mortars and aircraft as well as bayonet and grenade. The fighting in Arakan from February 1944 countered Japanese superiority on the battlefield with their confidence restored the Japanese offensive in Arakan was decisively repelled.⁹

The Second Arakan campaign



Source: Robert Lyman, *BILL SLIM, Leadership, Strategy Conflict*, Great Britain, Osprey Publishing, 2011. p.28

2.5 Wingate First Mission (First Chindit) and Second Arakan Campaign

2.5.1 The Chindits

Lyman was of the assertion that, “while Mutaguchi and Slim struggled for dominance in the bloody battles of Imphal and Kohima, Major General Orde Wingate launched his second Chindit offensive into the heart of Burma”. In August 1943 Churchill and Roosevelt had given Wingate a force of 23 Infantry Battalion and a vast American-supplied air armada (a military fleet or armed ship that fight wars at sea) to mount an operation into Burma in 1944. The propaganda following his first expedition in 1943, Operation Longcloth, together with Churchill’s flattery and support had led Wingate to believe he had come up with a winning strategy to defeat the Japanese

His idea was to fly a powerful army into the heart of Japanese held Burma, there to destroy the Japanese from within. The concept centered upon the creation by the Chindit force of strongholds capable of self defence, in areas inaccessible to Japanese armour and artillery to provide bases for guerilla raids against the Japanese lines of communication supporting their offensive against Stilwell’s Chinese in the far north of Burma. By September, 1944, Stilwell had two Chinese Divisions. According to Lyman, “they would be properly garrisoned and would contain an airstrip so that supply could be flown in and casualties flown out as well as ground and anti-aircraft artillery, the lack of which had proved to be a severe deficiency during Operation Longcloth,

Wingate considered that the greatest benefit of this plan was that it would avoid the perils of a ground offensive across the Chindwin. Although, a remarkable and inspiring battlefield Commander, he was not a strategist, and Slim was convinced that Wingate’s conception was dangerously flawed.¹²

2.5.2 Imphal to Kohima and the Libration of Arakan

The Japanese at no time abandoned their plans to invade India. Right from the time they invaded Burma, plans were made for the invasion of India. “The March to Delhi” was to be a “U” Operation against the Allied Manipur front:

Seize the main Allied Advance base at Imphal

Deprive Stiwell’s American-Chinese troops of supplies by cutting the Bengal –Assam railway line. The plan in 1943 was to strengthen the Chinese who were also fighting the Japanese.at North Burma Operations.

Overrun Assam and deprive Chinese mainland of supplies.

2.6 The Allied Courses of Action

The Allies had three possible courses:

Anticipated the Japanese advance, cross the Chindwin and fight them in Burma

Resist the Japanese river crossing by occupying the line of the Chindwin in strength

Fight the Japanese on the Imphal plain.

General Slim, the Allied Commander chose to fight the Japanese on the Imphal plain.

2.6.1 The Allied Forces

The Allied IV Corps had three Divisions:

- The 17th Indian Div to the South watching Tiggim and Kalemio
- The 20th Indian Div to the East protecting the frontier approaches to the Chindwin
- The 23rd Indian Div North East of Imphal.

2.6.2 The Japanese Forces

The Japanese Fifteenth Army has three Divisions in the area:

- The 23rd and 15th Divs in Imphal area
- The 31st in Kohima area
- The South East Asian Command became operational in October 1943.

Lord L Mountbatten became the Supreme Allied Commander with his Headquarter in India and later in Ceylon.

Lord L. Mountbatten's Directive:

- Clear the Japanese out of North and Central Arakan
- Establish a bridge –head at Taungup

Open the Taungup-Prome Road (before the Monsoon if possible) Develop Air Base at Akyah and Kyaukpyu

Lord Mountbatten's directives shows that the liberation of Arakan was key to the entire operations in Burma.

Allied Reaction - The Allies did not fall back. Supplies were airdropped and 26Div was rushed in. At this time the Japanese found themselves trapped. Meanwhile, Admin Area and Corps Headquarters held firm. The Japanese were deprived of air support and short supplies tried to pull out in February 1944, but it was too late. This was the first time major Allied victory against the Japanese in Burma was recorded. The Allied morale began to soar.

To the east were the 81st West African Division. The Division advanced into Kaladan valley where they built a 75 mile track called the "African Way". They also fought in Tamadu, Dalet and Arakan. Airstrips were also built. The 81 and 82 West African Div which was also comprised of the Nigeria Regiment of the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) continued to drive the Japanese before them and after heavy fight at Myohaung, Lemro River was crossed and Minbya was captured and occupied. The Nigeria Regiment of the RWAFF as West African Forces of the 82 Div fought valiantly well on the side of the British and the Allied Forces during the Burma Campaign defeating the Japanese and won Distinguished Medals medals for their gallantry role.

Tamadu was taken by the 82 West African Div comprising the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) assisted by 25 Div crossed to contain the Japanese and rounded them up by 13 May, 1944. The Japanese could not escape. The Taungun was occupied thus completing the Liberation of Arakan. The Japanese resistance after the liberation of Arakan gradually diminished.

3. Chindwin to Irrawaddy and the Last Phase

Slim's plan was to effect a rapid crossing by IV corps, dash eastwards cut Kimura's line of communication to Rangoon and encircle the Japanese 15th and 33rd Armies. The Allied IV and XXXIII Corps had to regroup, Slim's plan to divide the Japanese attention, draw their forces to the North and effect the Southern crossing is a masterpiece of strategic planning. The decision to cut the Japanese line of communication with Rangoon brought about absolute victory over the Japanese who became confused. It left Kimura the Japanese's Commander with the choice of either to withdraw or wait for annihilation. Slim's decision to press on despite the approaching Monsoon and shortage of administrative resources kept Kimura off balance. The decision was key to the final phase of the Burma Campaign.¹⁶

Slim's reconquest of Burma



Source: Robert Lyman, *BILL SLIM, Leadership, Strategy Conflict*, Great Britain, Osprey Publishing, 2011, p. 41.

4. Morale and Leadership in War: A Case Study of General Bill Slim (Later Field Marshal)

General Bill Slim (later Field Marshal), the man responsible for destroying two Japanese armies during World War II, the first in India, around Imphal and Kohima in 1944 and the second in Burma around Meiktila and Mandalay, in 1945. Every analysis of Slim's achievements in Burma provides evidence of remarkable military talent. Most are effusive in their praise for him as a military commander. In a masterful

summary of the higher command of the Burma Campaign, the historian, Frank McLynn states:

There are solid grounds for asserting that when due allowances have been made...Slim's encirclement of the Japanese on the Irrawaddy deserves to rank with the great military achievements of all times—Alexander at Gaugamela in 331 BC, Hannibal at Cannae (216BC), Julius Caesar at Alesia (58 BC), the Mongol General at Subudei at Mohl (1241) or Napoleon at Austerlitz (1805). The often made—but actually ludicrous—comparison between Montgomery

and Slim is relevant here... there is no Montgomery equivalent of the Irrawaddy Campaign. His one attempt to prove himself a master of the war of movement- OPERATION MARKET GARDEN against Amhem- was a signal and embarrassing failure. Montgomery was a military talent; Slim was a military genius. Yet, in 1942 Bill Slim presided over the British Army's longest ever retreat, 1000 miles (1,600 km) from Burma into India. How did he find himself in command of a triumphant, all conquering army in India in 1944 and Burma in 1945? The story of the transformation of this army from defeat into victory- The title of his best- selling War Memoir in 1956 is not just the story of British arms in the Far East between 1942 and 1945, but the account of Slim's rise to military greatness. At the end of the war he commanded the largest British Military Force ever assembled and at Imphal in 1944 (to say nothing of Mandalay-Meiktila in 1945) had dealt what one Japanese commentator, a veteran diplomat, considered to be the greatest defeat Japan had ever suffered in its history.

Slim was successful as a commander for two reasons. He was first and foremost, a born leader of men. He was constantly mindful of the predicament of the men who had to fight battles designed by men who would often be far to the rear when the bullets began to fly. Slim instinctively knew that the strength of an army lies not in its equipment or its officers, but in the training and morale of its soldiers.

His basic premise was:

That the fighting capacity of every unit is based upon the faith of soldiers in their leaders., that discipline begins with the officer and spread downward from him to the soldier; that genuine comradeship in arms is achieved when all ranks do more than is required of them... in battle, the soldier has only his sense of duty, and his sense of shame. These are the things which make men go on fighting even though terror grips their heart. Every soldier, therefore, must be instilled with pride in his unit and in himself, and to do this he must be treated with justice and respect.

Slim knew his men and could communicate with them man to man, because he was one of them and from the bloody days of in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia during World War I and in the inter-war years on North-West Frontier, had experienced their bitterest trials Slim understood his men, he spoke their language and moved among them from forward positions to training bases. Wherever he moved he lifted morale.²⁰ In addition to giving them the mental and practical wherewithal he instilled confidence in his men to fight the Japanese, one of the most fearsome armies the

British have ever had to face. Slim, took many practical steps to improve his men's health and welfare. His approach to the building up of the fighting power of an army- from a situation of profound defeat and in the face of crippling resource constraints – was built on the twin platforms of rigorous training and development of each individual's will to win, through a deeply thought-out programme of support designed to meet the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of each fighting man.

As a result, the men of Fourteenth Army- British, India, African and Gurkha- gave him their loyalty in a way rarely seen in the annals of command. Slim's second legacy was his approach to warfare. His entire approach to strategy was to exploit his enemy's weakness and so undermine his will to win. He did this successfully in Syria, India, and Burma by concentrating force to achieve surprise, psychological shock and physical momentum. By so doing he attempted to achieve moral dominance on the battle field over his enemies...

According to Lyman

Slim sought opportunities at every turn to trick and deceive his enemy. In the fighting in Burma, this required realistic physically demanding training: the use of air power to supply forward troops, new tactics to fight the Japanese, the delegation of command to the lowest possible level, a self-help approach to logistical deficiencies and a relentless exploitation of the pursuit, to ensure that an enemy caught off guard had limited opportunities to recover its equilibrium. The campaigns in India and Burma in 1944 and 1945 were to reward Slim's approach to warfare with a victory that few if any in 1942 or 1943 foresaw.²¹

Slim Drafted a Summary of the Key Tactical Ideas That Had Impressed Him in Burma Some of Which Were Lessons Learnt Directly From the Japanese.

The individual soldier must learn by living, moving, and exercising in it that the jungle is neither impenetrable nor unfriendly. When he has once learnt to move and live in it, he can use it for concealment, covered movement and surprise.

Patrolling is the master key to jungle fighting. All units, not only infantry battalions, must learn to patrol in the jungle, boldly, widely, cunningly and offensively.

All units must get used to having Japanese parties in their rear, and this happens, regard not themselves, but the Japanese as surrounded

In defence, no attempt should be made to hold long continuous lines.

Avenues of approach must be covered and enemy penetration between our posts dealt

with at once by mobile local reserves who have completely reconnoitered the country.

There should rarely be frontal attacks and never frontal attacks on narrow fronts. Attacks should follow hooks and come in from flank or rear, while pressure holds the enemy in front.

Tanks can be used in almost any country except swamp. In close country they must always have infantry with them to defend and reconnoiter for them. They should always be used in the maximum numbers available and capable of being deployed. Whenever possible penny packets must be avoided. "The more you use, the fewer you lose".

There are no combatants in jungle warfare. Every unit and sub-unit, including medical ones, is responsible for its own all-round protection, including patrolling at all times.

If the Japanese are allowed to hold the initiative, they are formidable. When we have it, they are confused and easy to kill. By mobility away from roads, surprise and offensive action we must regain and keep the initiative.

These principles outlined the key requirements necessary to enable the individual soldier to master the art of fighting in the jungle against a skillful, determined and resourceful opponent by day and night. Training was central to the discipline soldiers needed to control their fear, and that of their subordinates in battle; to allow them think clearly and shoot straight in a crisis, and to inspire them to maximum physical and mental endeavor. Slim recognized that the psychological dimension of battle against the Japanese was formidable. The Japanese were not bogeymen, as many in Burma corps had realized during the retreat, but myth of their invisibility had swept the British Indian Army following the unprecedented disasters of the loss of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. The Japanese soldier was, nevertheless, well trained and hardy, prepared to accept almost hardship and sacrifice.²²

Slims aim was to train the Army ruthlessly to live by these new standards.... By October 1943, he had developed a plan of action to rebuild the fighting spirit of his troops based on three (3) principles of action. These dealt with spiritual intellectual and material factors in turn.

By the 'spiritual' principle he meant that the Army must be a great and noble object, its achievement must be vital the method of achievement must be active and aggressive and each man must feel that what he is and what he does matters directly towards the attainment of the object. It was critical, he argued, that all troops, of whatever rank, background and nationality believed

in the cause they were fighting for. The cause itself had to be just. In Burma, Slim wrote, "We fought for the clean, the decent, the free things."

By the 'intellectual' principle he meant that soldiers had to be convinced that the object could be attained. The principle task was to destroy the notion that the Japanese soldier was invincible. Equally the soldier had also to know that the physical care of a soldier in the field has a direct bearing on his performance in battle: lack of food, water, medical support or contact with home tend to weaken the resolve, over time, of even the stoutest man. By the material

foundation Slim meant that each man had to feel that he would get a fair deal from his Commanders and from the Army generally, that he would as far as humanly possible be given the best weapons and equipment for his task and that his living and working conditions would be made as good as they could be.

5. The Lessons of Burma Campaign

The Burma Campaign touches on all the fundamentals. However, the obvious lessons are highlighted thus:

5.1 Control

Control may be considered in terms of higher direction and those by Commanders in the field.

Higher Direction: The early Allied failures and retreat were in the main due to lack of objective. Commanders in the field were not told the intentions of the policy makers in Britain. No clear directives were given. The political and military objectives were not clear.

Command and Control in the Field: The initial Allied Command set up was not suitable for troops of different nationalities in Burma. All Allied Forces in Burma had to come under one command.²⁴

The Allied learnt, though not without initial failures the need for a clear and definite objective for the campaign in Burma. They learnt that the successful conduct of the campaign required a reorganization of the Allied Command set up which would eliminate clashes of personality.

5.2 Administration

Administration was at the expense of mobility. The Allies were used to static wars in Europe. They were carried away by conditions in Europe and Africa, where movement of vehicles and heavy equipment did not present much problem. Unfortunately, the vegetation and climate in Europe and the open desert in North Africa are different from the jungles of Burma. While the Japanese lived off the land, the

Allies relied on supplies. The Japanese travelled light and were highly mobile but, the Allies were bogged down by unnecessary administrative requirements.

5.3 Character of Forces on Both Sides

The Allied Commander's plans were flexible but the Japanese Commanders were rather rigid in their plans. The Japanese were ruthless and bold as long as their plans worked, but were always confused when such plans ran into difficulties. Their strength lay in the spirit of the individual Japanese soldier and not in the higher leadership. The Allied troops on the other hand were not used to jungle conditions in Burma, but had to learn by experience and training that success in Burma required aggressive spirit on the part of every soldier. The Allies also underrated the ability, boldness, determination and the extent of endurance of the Japanese.

5.4 Concepts

In Burma the concept was the use of small forces unlike Europe and North Africa. The Allies learnt that these small forces were highly mobile and could operate for days or weeks with no lines of communication except by air.

The concept of envelopment which denied the enemy (the Japanese) both his line of communication and reinforcements weakened the Japanese forces and caused confusion among them. Consequently, the Allies defeated them. Air supply therefore became a determining factor in the absence of land communication.

6. Summary and Conclusion

The decision to fight the Japanese on the Imphal plain was necessary because withdrawal from Imphal and Kohima would have been disastrous to the Allies. The importance of Air support in the operations is noteworthy. The Japanese hope of capturing Allied supplies was an administrative blunder. It is, however, pertinent to mention here that many other lessons such as the use of Special Forces for long range penetration, ability to rely entirely on Air Supply and Tactical freedom for subordinate commanders, are worth considering. This paper has only touched on the few Lessons that were unique in the Burma Campaign by drawing out lessons from the Leadership and Military qualities of Field Marshal Bill Slim.

When drawing lessons from any campaign it is important to review STRATEGY, TACTICS, ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER DIRECTION

which are the fundamentals. The strategy adopted in Burma was Deep Penetration by small size patrols supported by air and disruption of enemy lines of communication. Strategy is the form by which each belligerent fought the campaign. This embraces the plans and conduct. In TACTICS, the important aspect is the form of manoeuvre in the field. Admin of men and material should be considered. This will bring out admin problems and steps taken to overcome them.

When considering the HIGHER DIRECTION OF WAR, it is important to note the conflict of ideas between the political decision and the military decision. Hitler and very often Churchill disagreed with commanders in the field. Japanese War Lords also hardly agreed with the politicians. Lessons of the Campaign will normally bring out the achievements, successes to improve on and blunders to guide against, why mistakes were made and what should have been done to avoid such mistakes.

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Part Two

Social Psychology



Becoming like them: Sociological Analysis of Celebrity Dress-Style and Student Dressing Behaviour within Selected Universities in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Dressing has become a lifestyle especially among young adults, whose external influence cut an image from actors and celebrities who often act as idols to their behaviour. This study examines the relationship between celebrity dressing styles and students' clothing choices within the university environment. The Herbert Kelman Social influence theory was adopted for the study as it established the nexus between the interplay of normative lifestyle and imitation among students. Being an explanatory and a cross-sectional research design, the study triangulated a mixed method of data collection (qualitative and quantitative) using a semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview guide on a one-time survey method in 2 selected universities (namely: University of Benin and Benson Idahosa University). 240 respondents were systematically selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. It was discovered that most of the lifestyles of the students were tailored in line with their favourite celebrities and role models. Secondly, imitating friends' dressing styles has become a norm among students due to the confidence it creates and sometimes alters the student's lifestyle. The study therefore advocates that universities and related tertiary institutions should regulate the dressing behaviour of students to reflect the ideal standard behaviour after schooling.

Keywords: Behaviour; Celebrity; Dressing; lifestyle; Students

1. Introduction

Dressing, often used interchangeably with clothing, conveys cultural norms and behaviours within any community. As noted, clothing operates as a symbolic medium of expression, shaping first impressions and reflecting personal values (Uwakwe, 2010). Youth, in particular, are significantly influenced in their clothing

choices by popular fashion trends, especially those promoted by celebrities through various media platforms like magazines, television, and social media (Ibrahim, 2013). These platforms showcase designer-driven styles that young people often aspire to emulate. The influence of celebrity fashion on youth is profound, playing a central role in shaping not only individual identities but also the social landscape globally. The styles people choose to wear frequently serve as indicators of broader social values and trends (Anyakoha & Eluwa, 2008).

Thus, clothing can be understood as a reflection of individual and collective behaviour, shaped by external forces such as cultural icons or natural environments. Ojo (2024) describes dressing as an evolving form of behaviour, one that carries identity and is shaped by influential forces. She elaborates that dressing is both learned and adaptable, transmitted through interactions and communication, making external influences critical to its development. In this sense, celebrity fashion acts as a powerful force, continually reshaping youth identities through both direct influence and mediated exposure. As such, clothing choices are not merely personal but are also shaped by a broader, culturally influenced network of ideas and representations that celebrities and media perpetuate.

Celebrities, known for their wide recognition both locally and globally, are frequently admired and even idolized by fans who are mostly adolescents due to the media effect (Chia and Poo, 2009). As public figures, they have assumed the role of role models, especially influencing today's youth. Okere and Uwon (2012) note that young people often look up to celebrities for guidance in fashion, lifestyle, and personal values. Adolescence is a complex developmental phase characterized by intense change, self-discovery, and

often a need to feel accepted and connected within social groups. This desire for belonging has led many youths to turn to celebrities, viewed as trendsetters, for cues on how to dress and behave (Ojo, 2024). By emulating celebrity dress styles and behaviours, young people find a pathway to shape their identities and navigate social expectations.

The impact of celebrity culture on youth extends beyond fashion alone, as young people tend to integrate and mimic the choices of public figures in various aspects of life. This dynamic illustrates how celebrity-driven trends significantly shape the social behaviours and self-expression of today's youth, influencing their pursuit of acceptance and identity. According to Taylor and Stern, as well as Wess (2004) in Cyril De Run, Butt, and Yen Nee (2010), young adults are notably more susceptible to celebrity influence than older individuals, particularly in terms of imitating celebrities' clothing styles and behaviours. Teenagers, who are at a formative stage, often replicate the traits and dress styles of celebrities as a means of self-expression and social alignment. This propensity underscores how celebrity dress and behaviour patterns resonate strongly with youth, guiding their stylistic choices and shaping their social interactions and self-image.

The tertiary institution has been a breeding ground for young adults whose quest for academic knowledge and character learning is eminent and Omede (2011) opined that there is hardly any tertiary institution in this country that is not facing this sickening problem of poorly or indecent dressing. He stressed further that the way students on campuses particularly the females, dress seductively leaves much to be desired. It could be asserted that dressing is not just for clothing purposes but for adornments (Appiah and Schall, 2016). Hence the need to dress properly irrespective of sex as most male students dress poorly by sagging their trouser or pants as well as showing their underwear. It is therefore pertinent that this study seeks to examine the sociological analysis of celebrity dress style and student dressing behaviour within selected Universities in Edo state, Nigeria.

1.1 Objective of the Study

- To explore the social media influence of celebrity fashion trends among undergraduate students in selected Universities in Benin City.
- To investigate the celebrity influence on undergraduate clothing and socialization level in selected Universities in Benin City.

- To assess the potential implications of celebrity dressing styles on the self-image and confidence of students in selected Universities in Benin City.

1.2 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to one government university and one private university in Benin City. The government-based is the University of Benin and the Private based is Benson Idahosa University.

2. Brief Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Social media has reshaped how people connect, enabling influences to transcend geographical boundaries, especially among adolescents. Studies indicate that young people frequently draw their fashion inspiration from celebrities and public figures (Tsai & Chang, 2007; Danielson, 2013; Bairrada et al., 2019). This trend suggests that adolescents view celebrities as key figures for style inspiration, often looking to them as role models in developing their personal identity and self-expression. Beyond clothing, these public figures set benchmarks for appearance and behaviour that young people may try to emulate.

Empirical findings by Bian and Moutinho (2011) highlight the significant effect of celebrity endorsements on brand perception and purchase intentions. When a celebrity's image resonates with a brand, consumers often develop a stronger connection to both the brand and the celebrity. This effect is particularly pronounced among undergraduate students, who are navigating social dynamics that drive them to express individual identities while also desiring peer acceptance. For many young people, replicating the styles and behaviours of admired celebrities serves the dual purpose of fitting in socially and expressing their uniqueness. Therefore, the aspiration among adolescents to imitate their favourite celebrities underscores the strong influence that media and celebrity culture exert over their identity formation and consumer behaviour.

Leckie et al. (2016) emphasized that young consumers frequently seek inspiration from celebrities when making fashion choices, with students particularly influenced by celebrities who resonate with their personal aspirations. This indicates that style preferences serve a dual role, not only offering aesthetic appeal but also signalling membership within specific social groups or subcultures. According to Ojo (2024), well-known celebrities, including Tiwa

Savage, Wizkid, Davido, Rema, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Simone Biles, Jay-Z, Kanye West, and Asake, have had a notable impact on students' fashion sense and overall behaviour. For these students, adopting the style of a favoured celebrity can reflect both admiration and a desire to align with the celebrity's identity and lifestyle.

Furthermore, Ojo (2024) highlights that while many students credit celebrities like Kim Kardashian, Nicole Richie, Bobrisky, Naira Marley, James Brown, and Olakunle Churchill for influencing their lifestyle choices, peer influence, prevailing trends, and environmental factors also shape these attitudes and behaviours. This broader spectrum of influences suggests that while students may adopt certain fashion and lifestyle elements from admired celebrities, they are also swayed by their immediate social contexts. In this context, Hester and Hehman (2023) affirmed that dress create first impression and can be seen as either a virtue or a vice, often reflecting one's personality. Over time, dressing styles have evolved considerably due to advancements in technology, social shifts, and cultural exchanges. The interplay of celebrity influence, social dynamics, and individual personality demonstrates the complex factors shaping contemporary youth identity and fashion choices.

Research by Efremov, Kertakova, and Kuzmanovska, (2021) highlights that expressing personality through clothing, especially by celebrities and influencers, captures attention and evokes emotions, emphasizing its role in balancing expressiveness and conveying confidence. These emotional responses foster a stronger connection with the content, increasing the likelihood of adopting associated trends. Among undergraduate students, this influence is particularly noticeable, as they are often guided by aesthetics in their fashion choices. Exposure to celebrity fashion choices does not just shape students' style preferences but also plays a role in developing their self-image and confidence (Ojo, 2024). When students resonate with the styles promoted by celebrities and influencers,

they are more likely to integrate these trends into their personal wardrobe, enhancing their self-perception and boosting confidence. Thus, the visual appeal and aspirational nature of celebrity-driven fashion trends serve as powerful motivators, encouraging students to adopt styles that reflect their identity and promote a more positive self-image.

2.1 Theoretical Orientation

The social influence theory by Herbert Kelman in 1958 posited that the idea that people are heavily influenced by the thoughts and actions of others is a social reality. Kelman (1974) defined social influence as a behavioural change within social settings induced by one person or a group of people. The theory postulates that there are three models of social influence acceptance or varieties of social influence namely compliance, identification, and internalization.

Compliance is when people appear to agree with others while keeping their dissenting opinions private. Identification is when people are influenced by someone who is liked and respected, such as a celebrity.

Internalization is when people accept a belief or behaviour and agree both publicly and privately.

3. Study Methodology

The study adopts a cross-sectional and descriptive research design and makes use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments (Semi-structured questionnaire and an in-depth interview guide) for data collection on 232 respondents systematically selected from 2 selected Universities namely: the University of Benin and Benin Idahosa University. Using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and Thematic Content analysis for the qualitative data.

4. Findings

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=232)

Sex	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Male	56	24.1
	Female	176	75.9
Age	16-20 years	86	37.1
	21-25 years	120	51.7
	26 years +	26	11.2
Marital status	Single	228	98.3
	Married	04	01.7
Level	100	26	11.2
	200	58	25.0
	300	80	34.5
	400	28	12.1
	500	40	17.2

Fieldwork, 2024

The result from Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents were female, comprising 75.9% of the entire respondents. While the males constitute 24.1%. This indicates a significant gender disparity, with females dominating the sample population as regards the subject matter. On the age distribution, the result shows that the largest age group was 21–25 years (51.7%), accounting for over half of the respondents. This was followed by age 16-20 years with 37.1% and the least among the respondents are those above 26 years with 11.2%. The overwhelming majority of respondents claimed to be single (98.3%), with only a small minority (1.7%) being married. On the academic level, it shows that the highest representation came from the 300-level students (34.5%), followed by 200-level students (25%). Together, these two groups accounted for nearly 60% of the sample. The least represented were the 100-level students (11.2%) and 400-level students (12.1%). This distribution may suggest that the study captured a wide range of academic levels but leaned more toward middle-level students (200 and 300 levels).

Table 2: Social media influence of celebrity fashion trends among undergraduate students (N=232)			
How does social media model student fashion style in the university	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Create a descent dressing style	148	63.8
	Create new dressing habit	56	24.1
	Alter the rational upbringing of student	20	08.6
	Adopting a foreign fashion style	08	03.4
Celebrities influence my dressing style on campus	Strongly agree	22	09.5
	Agree	44	18.9
	Neutral	78	33.8
	Disagree	60	25.9
	Strongly disagree	28	12.1
What motivates you to follow celebrity fashion styles	Inspiration from their overall appearance	42	18.1
	Desire to fit in with peers	16	06.9
	Personal admiration for specific celebrities	88	37.9
	Trends and popularity on social media	28	12.1
	Others	16	06.9
How Social media's rise influences celebrity fashion on students' dressing behaviour	Regular updating of actors' clothing	46	19.8
	Current fashion trend	28	12.1
	Constant updating of designers' clothing	68	29.3
	Update of new fashion styles	64	27.6
	Others	26	11.2
The most utilized social media handle preferred by the student	Instagram	140	60.3
	TikTok	62	26.7
	Twitter (X)	20	08.6
	Others	10	04.3

Fieldwork, 2024

The data presented in Table 2 explores the influence of social media on the adoption of celebrity fashion trends and its impact on undergraduate students' dressing behaviours. It anchored on four key principles namely; the modelling of student fashion styles, the degree of celebrity influence, the mechanisms of influence, and the preferred social media platforms for fashion engagement. On social media's role in modelling student fashion styles, the result shows that Creating a decent dressing style was the most frequently noted response with 63.8%. Followed by Creating new dressing habits constituting 24.1%, this indicates a significant subset of students adopting novel styles inspired by social media. While altering the rational upbringing of students (8.6%) and adopting foreign fashion styles (3.4%) were less prominent among the responses. This data suggests that social media primarily encourages decency and experimentation in dressing, while the adoption of foreign styles and potential negative impacts (e.g., altering upbringing) are relatively minor concerns.

On celebrities' influence on students' dressing styles, while 28.5% of respondents (strongly agree and agree) recognize a direct impact of celebrities on their dressing style, a substantial proportion (33.6%) remained neutral, and 38% (disagree and strongly disagree) denied this influence. This division indicates that celebrity fashion impacts some students while leaving others unaffected, likely depending on personal preferences and cultural factors. Next is the motivations behind following celebrity fashion trends, personal admiration for specific celebrities constitutes 37.9% of the most frequent motivation, followed by inspiration from their overall appearance with 18.1%. This reflects the aesthetic appeal of celebrity fashion. Others include; trends and popularity on social media with 12.1%, and desire to fit in with peers constitute 6.9%, same as other motivation with 6.9%.

On the mechanisms of social media's influence on students' dressing behaviour, the result shows that constant updating of designers' clothing (29.3%) emerged as the most cited influence, and update of new fashion styles (27.6%) closely followed, emphasizing the role of social media in introducing innovative trends. Others include regular updating of actors' clothing (19.8%) and current fashion trends (12.1%). Other influences accounted for 11.2% of the entire respondent's response. Next is the preferred social media platforms for fashion engagement by the students, Instagram was the most utilized platform (60.3%), followed by TikTok ranked second, with 26.7% and Twitter (X) and other platforms were less favoured, with 8.6% and 4.3% respectively. Instagram's dominance underscores its position as the leading platform for fashion-related content, while TikTok's rise highlights the increasing role of dynamic, video-based media in shaping trends.

In complementing the above assertion, a participant explains further when she said:

“As someone who fancies celebrity fashion, I find myself scrolling through the social media pages of different celebrities to get style inspirations before shopping for clothes or picking out clothes.” (IDI- 400lvl female student -1/11/24).

From another dimension, another participant said:

I began to dress modestly after I followed posts and videos of the Gospel singer Mercy Chinwo. via various social media handle. And this has a great impact in my outing and confidence level” (IDI- 300lvl female student, -1/11/24)

From a desperate level of a student, she said:

I came across a dance video of Khloegram on Tiktok, it was a joggers and matching cropped hoodie, the color combination stood out to and I found the style appealing. I got the exact joggers and hoodie that weekend.” I am a desperate lover of celebrity clothing style. (IDI- 400lvl female student-1/11/24)

Table 3: Investigate the celebrity influence on undergraduate clothing and socialization level in selected Universities in Benin City (N=232)			
Celebrity endorsements influenced my clothing and accessory purchases	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	168	72.4
	No	64	27.6
Which of the celebrity greatly influenced you	Jay-Z	18	10.7
	Pastor Chris Oyakilome	22	13.1
	Beyonce	25	14.9
	Sinach	15	8.9
	Samsong	21	12.5
	Lady Gaga	14	8.3
	Rihanna	28	16.7
	Others	25	14.9
To what extent did it influence your clothing and accessory purchase	Extremely	42	18.1
	Very much	60	25.9
	Moderately	18	7.8
	A little	48	20.7
	Not at all	64	27.6
How has the influenced clothing and accessories shaped my identity expression.	Makes me stand out	42	18.1
	Makes me unique	38	16.4
	Boost my confidence level	22	9.5
	Gives me bold expression	47	20.3
	Nothing much as usual	19	8.2
Does your clothing boost confidence in associating with peers	Yes	161	69.4
	No	28	12.1
	To some extent	43	18.5

Fieldwork, 2024

Results from Table 3 reveal that 72.4% of the respondents acknowledged that celebrity endorsements influenced their clothing and accessory purchases, while 27.6% of the respondents reported no influence. On Celebrity-Specific Influence Analysis the result reveals that the most Influential Celebrity was Rihanna with 16.7% among other respondents, demonstrating her widespread appeal as a global icon known for her music, fashion brand (Fenty), and personal style. Next was Beyoncé (14.9%) and Others (14.9%). Some Religious Figures were also Influencers among whom were Pastor Chris Oyakhilome with (13.1%) and Samsong as he constitutes 12.5%. Their influence indicates the intersection of religion and lifestyle in the surveyed universities. The celebrities with lower response include Jay-Z (10.7%), Sinach (8.9%) and Lady Gaga (8.3%). Jay-Z's influence might reflect a more niche appeal, possibly resonating with fans of hip-hop culture while Sinach's influence as a gospel musician reflects her appeal to a specific

audience within the demographic. However, Lady Gaga, despite being a global pop icon, may have less localized appeal due to cultural or stylistic differences.

Among those influenced by celebrity endorsements, the distribution reveals that while a significant proportion experienced strong influence ("extremely" or "very much" categories, totaling 44%), a smaller segment reported moderate (7.8%) to minimal influence with 20.7%. The group that claimed no influence aligns with those who indicated no initial impact. On the impact of influenced clothing on identity expression, the data suggests that the dominant themes are individuality ("stand out," "unique") and self-assurance ("boost confidence," "bold expression"). Together, these categories account for 64.3% of responses, indicating that identity-related benefits are a key driver of such consumer choices. When asked if their clothing boosted confidence in associating with peers, majority of respondents agreed that their clothing enhances their confidence constituting 69.4%, further highlighting the social importance of attire. A smaller proportion (18.5%) acknowledged a partial effect, while only a minority (12.1%) denied any relationship.

In line with the above data a participant complemented the above narrative by saying:

As much as I want to emulate celebrities, I agree that whatever trend promoted by them is authentic, I will try my best to get if not the original but a near copy. My attitude is greatly influenced by great celebrities.” (IDI- 400lv1 female student-1/11/24)

Another participant said:

“I feel more confident when my clothing choice aligns with current fashion trends.it makes me stand out and gives me the boldness to be outspoken” (IDI- 400lv1 female student-5/11/24).

Table 4: Assess the potential implications of celebrity dressing styles on students behaviour in selected Universities in Benin City (N=232)			
Are there implication for imitating celebrity dressing style	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	200	86.2
	No	32	13.8
Are the implication positive or negative	Positive	84	42.0
	Negative	63	31.5
	Both	53	26.5
Possible implication of imitating celebrity dressing style	Sociable	42	21.0
	Feeling confident	32	16.0
	Feeling updated	38	19.0
	Acting worldly	41	20.5
	Feeling standout	47	23.5
Does your clothing boost confidence in associating with peers	Yes	143	61.6
	No	28	12.1
	To some extent	61	26.3

Fieldwork, 2024

From the table 4 above on the implications for imitating celebrity dressing styles a significant majority of respondents (86.2%,) acknowledge implications associated with imitating celebrity dressing styles. While only 13.8% do not perceive any implications. Next is on the nature of the implication, where a notable portion of students view the implications of imitating celebrity dressing styles as beneficial (Positive) with 42% and 31.5% of the respondents feel a negative implication. However, both positive and negative implication make up 26.5%. This group highlights the dual nature of the phenomenon, reflecting a nuanced understanding of its benefits and potential challenges. Consequently, on the specific implications of imitating celebrity dressing styles. Feeling Standout (23.5%) constitute the highest response rate, followed by sociability

(21%) and acting worldly (20.5%) reflecting students' perception that adopting celebrity styles helps them appear cosmopolitan and culturally aware. 19% of the respondents affirmed that they “feel updated” and 16% of the respondents agreed that they feel confident.

In establishing the nexus between clothing and confidence in peer interaction, 6.6% of the respondents affirm that their clothing positively impacts their confidence in associating with peers and 12.1% of the respondents do not perceive a link between clothing and confidence, suggesting variability in the influence of fashion on personal confidence. However, A moderate proportion (26.3%) indicates partial influence. Reflecting that clothing and confidence may be situational or context-dependent.

In buttressing the above data on the positive note, a participant gave a narrative that:

My imitation of a celebrity has made me recognizable not only in my class but in my faculty, I feel confident and it has boosted my level of acceptance among my peers. I cannot settle for less. (IDI- 400 level – Male student-5/11/2024).

On the negative dimension, a particular participant said:

“Adopting celebrity fashion trends has had no impact on my self-image and confidence.” (IDI- 300lvl female student-1/11/24)

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study reveals social media's significant role in shaping students' fashion behaviours, primarily through celebrity influence. Instagram leads as the preferred platform, with musical celebrity driving the trend. It was also revealed that Celebrity-inspired clothing boosts identity expression, though impacts vary based on personal and cultural factors. The Motivations include admiration and aesthetic appeal, fostering decency, individuality, and confidence in dressing especially within the university corridor which is a micro subset of a larger community. It is there on this basis of this that the study advocates that:

- Universities should integrate workshops, seminars, or courses on ethical and culturally inclusive fashion into their extracurricular programs.
- Families should engage in open discussions with their children about the influence of celebrities and social media on lifestyle choices, including fashion.
- Universities and societal organizations should partner with influencers to promote messages that blend fashion with decency, confidence, and cultural appreciation.
- Student organizations can create peer-led initiatives like fashion shows or contests that emphasize creativity, sustainability, and inclusivity.
- Universities should collaborate with sociologists and psychologists to study evolving fashion influences and educate students about the dual implications of celebrity trends. As these will bridge the gap between individual expression, societal influence, and cultural values, benefiting students, families, and the broader community

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Reality Therapy as an Intervention for Smoking Behaviour: Evidence From Middle-Aged Individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract. Smoking is a behaviour that afflicts many people, especially in this period of life when it poses greater health risks for middle-aged people. A lot of attempts have been made to quit smoking, yet many smokers continue to battle with it. Although addictions to behaviour such as smoking have found some efficacy with interventions like Reality Therapy, research has been scant on its efficacy in smoking cessation. This study seeks to determine the effects of Reality Therapy on reducing smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area. The study was experimental in design, which included a pre-test and post-test. A total of 22 participants, 12 of who were in the Reality Therapy group and 10 in the control group, were recruited for this study. The age range was from 40 to 60 years. Participants in the Reality Therapy received a structured intervention. No treatment was given to the control group. Data from the participants were analysed using t-tests to compare pre-test and post-test smoking behaviour scores. The Reality Therapy group revealed significant reduction in smoking behaviour (mean difference = 6.1, $t = 5.32$, $p = 0.000$; while control group showed only a marginal reduction (mean difference 0.2), which was not statistically significant ($t = 0.98$, $p = 0.330$). The findings indicate that Reality Therapy is effective in reducing smoking behaviour among middle-aged men and women. Based on the findings, it is recommended that Reality Therapy be integrated into public health initiatives targeting smoking cessation, especially in middle-aged populations. Policymakers should also consider financing and supporting therapy-based intervention which inspires personal responsibility and informed choice in health behaviours. Long-term effects of

Reality Therapy and its applicability across divides need to be examined.

Keywords: Reality Therapy, smoking behaviour, middle-aged individuals, behavioural intervention

1. Introduction

Smoking behaviour remains a significant public health concern worldwide, contributing to more than 8 million deaths each year, including 1.2 million due to the effects of passive smoking (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Such prevalence exists despite massive and intensive campaigns against smoking, this according to Shoyemi (2023) is because nicotine like other substances has addictive properties and smoking behavior is socially reinforced. Smoking has led to an increase in the incidence of lung cancer and cardiovascular diseases; hence, urgent intervention is needed to resolve the menace at a global health scale. Wasting resources is also very high, with globally estimated costs amounting to US\$ 1.4 trillion each year on health care and productivity losses. Public health efforts have really made a difference in tobacco smoking reduction in high-income countries, but the challenges still go on for low- and middle-income countries to wrangle against tobacco addiction. Current trends in public health have focused on developing individualized approaches to therapy that work along with the policy-level initiatives to reduce smoking behavior.

Tobacco smoking in Africa has become an area of great concern as much tobacco became available and as multinational tobacco companies aggressively

promoted their products. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (2020), smoking prevalence is increasing in Africa, especially among middle-aged people and younger generations. The increasing likelihood of smoking abuses also worsened with the convergence of some other risky conditions such as childhood trauma and peer influence towards addiction (Omopo, 2024; Omopo, Offor, & Ogunbowale, 2024). Such socio-economic distortions allow smoking to be perpetuated even among the most susceptible in urban and peri-urban settings. The number of smoking cessation programs available has increased geographically. However, even with this increase, most programs fail when it comes to depth in exploring behaviour-centric interventions in African socio-cultural contexts (Adisa & Yaya, 2021). Without intervention, the prevalence and burden of tobacco in terms of health and overall socio-economics is bound to shoot further high over the coming decades in Africa.

Yet, in sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is more serious; there, smoking behaviour relates to socioeconomic factors such as poverty and a weak educational system. Indeed, smoking cessation efforts are resisted because it is believed to have stress-relieving attributes value-added to social norms. Yet, subsidies for cheap, inferior quality, tobacco products are compounds of the problem in low-income communities. Studies show that accessible disaggregated interventions such as community-based health programmes show moderate success passively accessing upcoming change in smoking behaviours within the region. There is, however, need for innovative approaches targeting smoking psychological drivers such as cognitive reframing and solution-focused therapies for sustainable outcomes (Omopo & Odedokun, 2024a, 2024b). This calls for multi-sectoral collaboration and investment in culturally laden therapeutic intervention to address barriers.

Smoking is a major general public health menace in Nigeria, with tobacco use becoming increasingly popular across age ranges. Middle-aged individuals are particularly found to cite the influence of stress, peers, and socio-economic pressures, among others, as potential reasons for smoking. Indeed, there are communities in which smoking has become a cultural practice, thus making it very hard for that community to stop smoking altogether. Even though there have been national efforts toward implementing anti-smoking laws and policies, the compliance has been very weak, attributed to ineffective enforcement strategies and awareness campaigns. With the additional factors of peer pressure and low emotional

intelligence in the cessation process, particularly for vulnerable population categories, it becomes more complicated (Adegunju, Asiyambi, & Omopo, 2024). They have termed "one-size-fits-all cessation services" as such programs have proved generic in character and, therefore, incapable of considering the psychological and behavioral factors that are typical of Nigeria (Adekunle et al., 2019). Such cultural and structural realities must be addressed by any efforts to improve results for smoking cessation.

Smoking is a popular vice among the middle-aged in South-West Nigeria and Egbeda local government area owing to urbanization, poor economic fortunes, and stress. Community health assessment showed that the adoption of smoking behaviors had a lot of effects concerning household economic stability as well as cleanliness of environment. Most smoking-unable quitters in this region do not have access to specific cessation services designed for smokers. Environmental issues that arise such as wrong house wastes disposal and the health issues attached emphasize the need for interventions. Interventions should therefore cover behavioral as well as environmental aspects of tobacco use since they may significantly impact public health (Ogunleye et al., 2022). Another area is the new therapies that would tackle causes of smoking, among them being stress management and socio-economic issues.

The smoking behavior of middle-aged people in Egbeda LGA drastically impacts not just them but also the families and communities they live in and the environment. It is linked up with a financial burden on families attached to the purchase of tobacco and health risks considering exposure to second-hand smoking, which in most cases can also result from parental smoking, which has been linked to adverse childhood behavioral and educational outcomes, thus creating intergenerational cycles of vulnerability (Ibrahim, Awoyemi, & Omopo, 2024). Economic time loses to smoking-related illnesses are public costs. Environmental degradation from cigarette remains is serious. Smoking increases the risk of chronic illnesses thus increasing healthcare expenditure and reduced productivity in healthy life spans. Addressing smoking behavior in this age group is important for actual health and society in general.

Reality therapy, a cognitive-behavioural approach, has been recognized as a tremendous tool for helping change the smoking habit. It is based on Glasser's Choice Theory and speaks to helping people make better choices while emphasizing accountability and goal-directed action. Evidence shows its structured framework to be relevant to addressing habitual

behaviours such as smoking. Given that smoking is largely motivated by stress and low self-efficacy - factors often mentioned by smokers in the region - it has therapeutic benefits. Omopo and Odedokun (2024a, 2024b) have shown how much transformational power therapeutic interventions such as reality therapy could exert on tobacco dependence behaviours. Accordingly, this makes reality therapy thereby become the right option for this study. Again, considering reality therapy's adaptability to various or multi-cultural contexts, it strengthens its relevance as an intervention strategy for smoking cessation in South-West Nigeria.

This research intends to find out if reality therapy can be effective in reducing the smoking habit in middle-aged adults in Egbeda LGA of Ibadan. This study hopes to fill an existing gap in the extant literature on psychological therapies concerning smoking cessation in South-West Nigeria. This study would therefore derived possible practical solutions addressing the high prevalence of smoking behavior in this region through reality therapy contextualized to local socio-cultural contexts. Grounded within Glasser's Choice Theory, this research is an attempt at understanding how the intervention assists subjects in taking responsibility for their actions and making informed choices towards quitting tobacco smoking. By exploring the potential of reality therapy, it contributes to the development of effective and culturally relevant therapeutic strategies for the reduction of tobacco smoking behaviour.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan, with a focus on understanding its prevalence, motivations, and previous cessation efforts. Furthermore, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Reality Therapy as an intervention for reducing smoking behaviour within this population. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Determine the rate of smoking behavior in the middle-aged populace of Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan.
- Measure the effect of Reality Therapy on reducing smoking behavior among the target population.
- Ascertain the motivations for smoking behavior among middle-aged individuals at Egbeda Local Government Area.
- Appraise previous attempts at cessation and strategies to quit smoking employed by the participants.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

- What is the prevalence of smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan?
- What are the motivations for smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area?
- What cessation efforts and strategies have participants previously employed to quit smoking?

1.3 Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant reduction in smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area after undergoing Reality Therapy.

2. Methodology

A mixed-methods framework was applied for realism therapy intervention to reduce tobacco consumption behaviour among middle-aged residents of Egbeda Local Government in Ibadan. The quantitative component sought to validate the research hypothesis on the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in reducing smoking behaviour based on pre- and post-intervention assessments regarding smoking habits measured using the Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence (FTND). This statistical method analysed data to establish the significance of change in smoking behaviour of experimental and control groups. The qualitative component made use of content analysis to answer the research questions, mainly relating to the reasons for smoking behaviour and attempts at quitting. The rich qualitative data was then coded and classified to identify key themes and patterns in the answers of the participants by means of conducting in-depth interviews and asking open-ended questions.

Snowball sampling was done to determine the middle-aged males willing and eligible to participate in this study. Their motivation for the study is the willingness to reduce smoking behavior due to its negative effect on their current health status which includes tuberculosis, and cardiovascular issues. The age of participants was between 40 and 60 years. The said individuals were current smokers of at least a year and willing to sign documents about their consent. The experimental group comprised 12 participants,

individual middle-aged males, who underwent Reality Therapy or therapy to modify behaviour with personal accountability and developing other coping options to manage smoking behaviours. The control group had 10 individuals who underwent a nutrition intervention, which mainly focused on improving wellness without addressing issues related to smoking. Both groups were subjected to a pre-test on standardized assessments for baseline smoking habits followed by post-test assessments to determine intervention

effects. Qualitative data from interviews were subjected to analysis using content analysis for motivation underlying smoking as well as strategies participants have employed in the past to stop smoking. This kind of qualitative and quantitative data presents enrichment for a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of Reality Therapy in the reduction of smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals.

3. Results

Demographic Representation

Twenty-Two (22) participants from Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan, constituted the study. Demographics of the participants in terms of age, educational qualifications and sex are indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	40 - 45 years	5	22.73%
	46 - 50 years	7	31.82%
	51 - 55 years	5	22.73%
	56 - 60 years	5	22.73%
Gender	Male	22	100%
Educational Level	Primary Education	4	18.18%
	Secondary Education	11	50.00%
	Tertiary Education	7	31.82%
Total		22	100%

Participants (all males) were middle aged and evenly distributed across the four age groups between age 40-60. For the education level, the sample comprised those with primary education (18.18%), secondary (50.00%), and tertiary education (31.82%).

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area?

The findings stress the common pattern of smoking among middle-aged males within the Egbeda Local Government Area. Participant 1 explains how smoking is commonly practiced in his community. It is an apparently widespread habit but not a universal one. He states:

In our community, many men smoke. It's something that has been part of life for years. There is little stigma attached to it, and most people continue smoking, even when they know it's bad for their health. For some, it's just part of their daily routine. **(Participant 1, aged 47, Farmer)**

He affirms however, that not every individual in the community smokes. *"There are those who skip it for medical reasons, but the majority haven't deliberated: It's normal. There is no strong negative idea of smoking here."* He echoes that although common, this

isn't the activity which everyone participates in, particularly those who have been influenced by health campaigns or other personal health issues. Yet, the habit was commonplace and thus found in certain circles of culture.

Participant 2 elaborates on the social aspect of smoking, adding that in some circles, it is perceived as a sign of masculinity and maturity:

When we gather as friends, smoking is almost expected. It's seen as part of socialising, a way for men to bond. In these spaces, it's difficult to avoid it, and it becomes a part of the relaxation process. For a lot of people, it's hard to break that cycle. **(Participant 2, aged 42, Tailor)**

He furthered that many men in the community smoke to unwind, and peer pressure in social settings reinforces this behavior. *"It's just a natural part of it when we sit down to drink and talk; it becomes almost unthinkable to socialize without a cigarette; even when I try to avoid it, the habit pulls me back into it"*. This reflects that while smoking may not be found in all social contexts, it is often compared to a bonding ritual and equally common within certain social limits. He continues, saying, *"I see younger guys pick up the habit, just like we used to when we were their age. It's like it's being passed down."*

Participant 3 provides further insight into how smoking has become a generational habit, particularly in areas with fewer health awareness campaigns. He stated:

I started smoking when I was in my twenties, and I see a lot of younger men in the community doing the same. It's almost like a rite of passage. People in my age group see it as something that marks adulthood. It's difficult to stop when everyone around you is doing it.

(Participant 3, aged 43, Welder)

He indicates that smoking behavior is transmitted from one generation to the next, that in most cases, it is accepted as part of manhood: *"It is very normal to see men smoking during gatherings in the neighborhood, and many young people follow suit with them. I think that would go on. I know it's bad, but I can't stop."* Participant 3 also says how it is naturally learned, not easy to unlearn once in motion. *"It's almost like culture supports it here,"* he concludes, giving an idea that smoking is that much of a part of the fabric of community life.

Participant 4 describes smoking as a personal but socially endorsed choice, stating,

I used to smoke a lot when I was younger, and I see that same pattern in the community. Even now that I'm older, it hasn't really changed. People smoke at social events, while relaxing, or after a hard day's work. It's not something that gets questioned much.

(Participant 4, aged 45, Driver)

He further reflects why, in spite of greater awareness regarding the smoking-related evils, this behavior continues in communities because of the absence of immediate consequences for such behavior. *"There is actually no pressure to quit here. Most people have heard of the risks but that's not enough to quit. It just becomes a part of the routine. Everybody smokes differently: Some casually, some excessively, but all of it is quite accepted."* Participant 4, alluded to the normalization of smoking both on habitual use and cultural factors which have made it okay in his circle. He further states, *"Even when I see people trying to stop, that's hard to keep because even by your side, someone is smoking, the urge is just too much."*

Though smoking is undoubtedly common among middle-aged people in Egbeda Local Government Area, it is not universal. Participants' responses reveal a widespread yet socially acceptable habit which mostly thrives among a well-defined social circle. This activity is viewed as special bonding experience, particularly of men in the location, although the dangers associated with it are known it is considered typical social and personal life. The phenomena of inter-generational transmission of the smoking habit, peer influence, and community traditions serve to reinforce the habit. Nevertheless, some people within

the community avoid smoking deliberately, mostly for health reasons, thus implying a non-universal acceptance of the practice, though smoking nevertheless remains widespread at the main social gatherings.

Research Question 2: What are the motivations for smoking behaviour among middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area?

This research is concerned with assiduously understanding the different motivational factors for which middle-aged men and women in Egbeda Local Government Area have turned to smoking. Participant 5 describes smoking as a means of coping with frustrations dating back years and wanting personal space.

Smoking helps me think, you know? It's not just about the cigarette; it's about being able to sit down, take a moment to myself, and clear my mind. It's like a ritual that allows me to step away from everything and just focus on my thoughts. During those few minutes, I can gather my ideas and sort through my emotions before I get back to whatever I was doing. (Participant 5, aged 49, Mechanic)

He emphasized that smoking is like a detour away from life stressors. *"The work I do is tiring; stress from family life isn't much help. So when I smoke, it's like a moment of peace that allows me to gather myself."* It seems like for Participant 5, smoking has now become a ritual without which he cannot have much 'brain' time, as it almost creates a moment of separation from the surroundings that are usually busy so that he can think. *"It's not that the cigarette does but what it stands for. It gives me a moment to delve into things and figure out what to do next."*

Participant 6 speaks about how smoking has become an integral part of his social routine, particularly when interacting with others. He asserted:

In my community, it's a common practice. When we sit together, whether it's in the evening or after work, smoking is something we do. It's like a bonding ritual. We gather, share stories, and light up. It's a way for us to connect, unwind, and enjoy each other's company after a long day, almost like a silent agreement that we're all in this together. (Participant 6, aged 44, Shopkeeper)

In his words, smoking in his social group serves the double purpose, firstly, to relax, and secondly, in joining with the others. *"We don't just smoke for the pleasure, but it's how we relax and talk. There's a sense of camaraderie that comes with it."* To Participant 6, smoking is more than just the act; it is done collectively as an experience with people from his locality. *"It's something to unite people really."*

When you smoke with your friends, it feels like you're a part of something bigger." His words aptly shed light on how social reinforcement and communal norms could hugely impact the sustainability of smoking behaviour.

Participant 7 reveals how smoking has been an integral part of his routine, providing a sense of comfort in moments of uncertainty. In his word:

I started smoking at a very early age, and I never really considered quitting. It simply embedded itself in my life. Now, even under duress, anxiety or tension drives me to smoking. It's an automatic reaction to stress; sort of a thing with which I am familiar with escaping, even if just for a moment in time. I can't imagine life without it. (Participant 7, Aged 51, Farmer)

He submitted that he could use smoking as a constant way to deal with stress and uncertainty. *"Even if it's just temporary, it gives me a sense of control. Life can be so huge and overwhelming, and in the hand of that cigarette, it makes things feel manageable."* In Participant 7's case, smoking is, despite his admission about health risks, coping mechanism that has stood the test of time. *"I know it's bad for me, but when times get tough, it makes me feel like smoking helps me take a little bit of a step back and relax."*

Participant 8 discusses how smoking has been linked to moments of celebration and reward, particularly after work.

I reward myself with a cigarette after a tiring day. The cigarette is like a symbol I use to show myself that I've reached the end of the day. It's the end of stress and busyness and I can now unwind, sort of like a small important ritual to inform myself that it has 'earned' a very short moment of peace before slipping into the next part of the evening. (Participant 8, aged 46, Teacher)

The rest of his statement attested to how smoking becomes a sign of individual accomplishment or an end to hectic life. *"To sit down and relish a smoke means, 'I have accomplished it.' I have toiled, and now I can sit down and relax with a smoke."* Such connection made by the act of smoking and reward indicates that it could be ritually reinforced as a method to self-reward. *"It's almost like a personal celebration. I feel like I've earned it, even though I know I shouldn't be smoking."* This emphasizes the motivation of actual smoking as an emotional self-evidence, especially when people want to give themselves a break.

Different reasons abound for middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area when it comes to their smoking habits. While some use the practice for stress relief, others resort to it as a means of forming social bonds, become personal rituals, or reward the self. Individual smokers are also found to link smoking

in relation to varying aspects in their daily lives. A good number of participants also say they smoke to reduce their stress or clear their minds, meanwhile others say they consider it a social ritual or emotional reward. The difference in interests indicates that for these people smoking is not merely about addiction, but in fact, forms an essential part of the mechanism of coping, social interaction, and self-reward, thus rendering addiction even difficult to abandon.

Research Question 3: What cessation efforts and strategies have participants previously employed to quit smoking?

The emphasis of this exploration revolves around the various cessation efforts that middle-aged individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area have attempted in their quest to quit smoking. Participant 9 discusses how he tried to quit by reducing his cigarette intake gradually.

I have tried smoking fewer cigarettes every day, but that never succeeded in my case. I always started with full determination but surrender myself after a few days. I find that quite agonizing because I know I must quit, and yet it is so hard to stop that endless train. I keep myself busy with a thousand things, but there is always some trigger and suddenly I'm puffing at the end of it. It feels easier even though I know it's not best for me. (Participant 9, aged 47, Carpenter)

He revealed that his inconsistency made it impossible to follow through on a plan, while his cravings always overpowered will. *"The feeling was that the drive to smoke was much stronger, and after a couple of days cutting down, I would just end up smoking more-and-more. It became frustrating."* This explains how the struggle to control cravings and form new habits can interfere with attempts to give them up successfully. *"I guess I never really had the support or discipline to see it through."* Participant 10 highlights the role of support from family and friends in his efforts to quit smoking:

Their encouragement made me strong enough, but again, it is not easy if the temptation is so heavy. The moment I had a plan to discontinue, it was as if the pressure built up, and smoking became my emotional outlet. Although I knew that this was something I had to resist, it was so comfy to ignore, knowing the familiar comfort it gave me. (Participant 10; age: 44; Driver)

He mentioned that although emotional support is helpful, it is not sufficient to overcome addiction. *"It helped knowing that my family was behind me, but at the end of the day, it was just me and my cravings. No matter how hard I tried, I kept going back to smoking."* Participant 10 experience highlights the significance

of outside support but also tells how addiction can overshadow everything. *"It was like I really needed something more, something stronger than just the encouragement to quit."*

Participant 11 explains how he sought professional help by attending a local clinic for smoking cessation. I visited a health clinic where they gave me nicotine patches and suggested that I should use them to quit smoking. I used them for around a month but ultimately gave up. It was tough, and the results were not what I expected. The cravings never went away, and the whole process left me feeling defeated, so I decided to quit the patches. To me, it felt as though the nicotine were still pulling at me, and I couldn't maintain that. (Participant 11, aged 50, Teacher).

He explained that the patches helped to alleviate some of his bodily craving for nicotine. Yet, he continued having problems with the psychological cravings related to addiction. *"The patches reduced my cravings a little, but I still had the psychological urge to smoke, especially when I was stressed. It just didn't seem enough to stop me."* This points to the fact that narcotic therapeutic interventions, which may help in overcoming physical addiction to nicotine, are not sufficient for combating the psychological withdrawal symptoms associated with smoking. *"In the end, I stopped using the patches, and nothing really changed."*

Participant 12, who has tried quitting several times over the years, elaborates on his use of alternative coping mechanisms.

When I felt the urge to smoke, I would substitute cigarettes for chewing gum, or I would take a walk. I convinced myself that if I could distract myself long

enough, I would not be tempted to smoke. Initially, that seemed to work, but the cravings were so intense that it was hard to maintain those good intentions. I would have a little victory, but sooner or later, temptation would overwhelm me, and I would be smoking again. (Participant 12, age 45, Business Owner)

It truly reflects the partial success *"It worked for a while but when the stress of work or life got overwhelming I started reaching for a cigarette again. It felt like a temporary fix rather than a real solution."* This most eloquently reflects participant 12's experience in using healthy replacements in place of smoking. That may work for the time, but it is not literally a long-term resolution. *"I haven't completely given up yet. I still try different things, but it's really hard."*

This study stresses that the participants of Egbeda Local Government Area tried different methods of stopping smoking such as cutting down on cigarettes, seeking assistance from their families, use of nicotine patches, and developing other coping mechanisms. Although these tell and show that people are really trying to quit smoking, they show how difficult it is. Participants give a picture that it does not come easy-the quitting of smoking-and while some of those strategies may become avenues for temporary reduction of habit, others do not tend to go beyond a temporary success without an ongoing support system or a stronger intervention. These observations about participants' cessation efforts point to the complicated nature of smoking addiction and the need for more precise and longer-lasting to effect some kind of cessation.

Hypothesis

The result of the hypothesis comparing the Reality Therapy intervention group with the control is displayed in the Table 2.

Table 1: Comparison of Smoking Behaviour Reduction between Reality Therapy Group and Control Group

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Reality Therapy	15.3	9.2	6.1	2.3	5.32	0.000
Control Group	15.0	14.8	0.2	0.4	0.98	0.330

The results of the analysis revealed the following:

Reality Therapy Group: The Reality Therapy group produced a statistically significant reduction in smoking behaviour, from a pre-test mean of 15.3 to a post-test mean of 9.2, a mean difference of 6.1. An independent t-test indicated a significant result for this group ($t = 5.32$, $p = 0.000$), implying significant impact by Reality Therapy for reduction in smoking behaviour among participants in this group.

Control Group: The control group, however, displayed only a minor reduction in smoking behaviour: a pre-test mean of 15.0 and a post-test mean of 14.8. The mean difference is just 0.2 which is not significant ($t = 0.98$, $p = 0.330$), thus the control group did not meaningfully decrease smoking behaviour within the program.

This null hypothesis, which claims that Reality Therapy will have no significant effect on smoking behaviour in middle aged people in Egbeda Local

Government Area, is rejected. Evidence available indicates that Reality Therapy has a significant effect on reduction of smoking behaviour in experimental group subjects compared with control group subjects who show no difference at all.

The present investigation is congruent with the tenets of choice theory postulated by Glasser, which was adopted herein as the conceptual framework for explaining the participants' change behavior concerning their tobacco smoking behavior. This involves internal motivation, the responsibility of choice, and knowledge of the outcome of that choice—all of which must fulfill some basic psychological needs of people. The analyses in smoking cessation classified the members of the Reality Therapy group, which is rooted in Choice Theory, which showed remarkable reductions in smoking behaviour. This invoked or confirmed the premise that humans can change maladaptive behaviours like smoking through taking ownership of actions, recognizing the choices they make. The findings reflect the theory-inspired claimant—the lives of people must revolve around their making choices for meeting their needs—and, by showing the program participants how smoking meets their unfulfilled needs, healthier options are offered. Strong evidence would then be found in such results for the basic tenets of Choice Theory, namely—that personal accountability plus tools for informed choice can drastically affect the reduction of harmful behaviours like smoking.

4. Discussions

Prevalence of Smoking Behaviour among Middle-Aged Individuals in Egbeda Local Government Area

The study findings reveal that smoking behavior is rampant among middle-aged adults in Egbeda Local Government Area, particularly among male social networks. Though not all members of the society are active smokers, the act is morally adjudged as normal in most of the social dimensions such as gatherings and hangouts. Particularly, Participant 1 summarizes the situation by stating that smoking has gone so far into community roots that it lacks blowback from strong stigma. In fact, it is captured casually in the daily life of society, especially concerning those who meet after a hard day's work or just relaxing. Further highlighting the point is Participant 2, who states how smoking serves as a ritual among men in intensifying its prevalence among certain groups. Smoking goes without saying, even though there are health side effects. According to Participant 3, it is more like a generational transmission, handed down from one to

another, that has transformed the act into a representation of masculinity or manhood. Indeed, generational transmission is an important reason why smoking is entrenched in the given community and makes it very difficult for an individual to break the habit even when danger is recognized.

The results indicate that smoking is no less than an individual phenomenon but shaped by social and cultural factors. As participant 4 noted, even as awareness about hazards associated with smoking increases, the social environment still does not exert enough pressure to quit. This is in reference to the strong popular approval of smoking, as a natural aspect of both social events and relaxation. Such collective attitude toward smoking aligns with other works, which have shown that very instrumental in perpetuating the smoking behaviour are social norms themselves. Indeed, Levy et al. (2007) indicated that under the normalising and equiparas of certain social environments, people are more pushed into smoking act. Responses provided by the participants in this study clearly testify that smoking is much more than a choice made at an individual level; it is, indeed, a peer- and alcohol community heritage. This is not just the pervasiveness of health considerations that keeps this cultural acceptance of smoking alone and encourages it to keep up in community life. Although not showing a universal pattern, smoking is still quite prevalent in the lives of many middle-aged people living in Egbeda Local Government Area.

The motivations of middle-aged persons to smoke within the Egbeda area are multi-dimensional, suggesting that smoking behavior is deep-rooted in private routines, socialities, and coping mechanisms. One of the reasons why people still smoke is that it acts as a stress reliever and mental stimulant. Participants like Participant 5 were vocal about their nicotine habit as a ritual escape— a momentary respite that allows them to process their feelings and concerns, especially in the context of great stress from work and family life. This aligns with findings from recent studies which suggest that smoking is often used as a tool for stress relief; there is a moment of calmness amidst the madness of daily life (Zhao et al., 2019). Smoking may also be seen by some individuals as a form of detachment from their environment and a method of taking control over what seems "chaotic," however temporary. This reinforces the addictive habitual nature of smoking as a form of coping when relief is felt and only makes quitting feel more difficult even when awareness of harm is realized (Berg et al., 2017).

Besides this, smoking has been some important social bonding tool, especially to societies such as Egbeda, where it becomes part of social functions. With Participant 6's experiences, it becomes a ritual that builds a fellowship and seals ties. This is supported by literature, which suggests that social and peer influences are dominant in the initiation and continuation of smoking behaviors in a group setting (Bokhari et al., 2020). The viewing of smoking as a communal activity can give a sense of belonging, which makes it difficult for an individual to quit smoking even if they realize the health risk. To support this, the experience of Participant 8, who sees smoking as something self-rewarding after hours of work, adds to the argument that smoking is emotional self-rewarding. Self-reward for smoking, whereby it acts as the conclusion of stress, recognizing that an individual has performed some achievement, indicates how much it tends to be imbibed in daily behavior and emotional handling approaches of humans (Kim et al., 2020). These results show the complex nature of smoking, in which it is understood not merely as a behavior but more as a deeply entrenched habit intertwined with emotions and social needs.

The diverse strategies employed by participants in Egbeda Local Government Area to quit smoking exemplify the complexities surrounding the cessation of smoking addiction. Although relying on other methods such as reducing consumption gradually or undergoing platforms of external reinforcement, pharmacotherapeutic access, and alternative avenues of coping, cravings and psychological adherence have tended to prevail. Participant 9's gradually reduced experience clearly emphasizes and shows the difficulty associated with craving since most cravings stem from the brain pathways of psychological (West, 2017). Participant 10's being supported by immediate family members in the effort to quit tobacco smoking is also insufficient; hence, a combination of a strong strategy and other external means could be the most ideal (Curry, 2019).

Most pharmacological interventions, including nicotine patch, were less successful without a behavioral approach. Participant 11 reported using nicotine patches as a pharmacological aid while they highlighted that not address the behavioral and emotional triggers of smoking (Baskerville et al., 2018). Similarly, alternative means like chewing gum and walking were Participant 12's methods of coping, exuding temporary relief compared to inadequate solutions to deeper psychological dependence (Hughes et al., 2018). Thus, the experience of all the respondents pointed to the need for comprehensive, multipronged strategies that combine pharmacological

and psychological interventions with sustained involvement of family and health providers. Such an approach is crucial for overcoming the physical, psychological, and emotional aspects of smoking addiction (Berg et al., 2020).

Reality Therapy is said to work in reducing smoking behaviour as it is directed toward increasing personal responsibility as well as problem solving skills. From Reality Therapy, the individual takes up greater role on making choices as well as giving power in conduct, which is empowering especially for the addicted. Increased self-accountability might have helped participants to face the smoking reasons and develop better health coping mechanisms. This is empowering because addiction is not all just physical symptoms; it generally also means psychological and emotional factors that lead to certain behaviour. Through these, Reality Therapy encourages the present for the participants rather than focusing on the past. Therefore, they remain directed on goals and active attempts towards behaviour change, a major significant factor at its successes. On top of that, therapeutic approaches help patients locate needs, which the person may try to fulfil through smoking, thus giving room for more efficient and healthier substitutions and strategies.

Thus, this finding fits well to previous scientific studies that have reported the resultant efficacy of Reality Therapy when applied in behavioral treatment activity. Specifically, it has been documented that Reality Therapy attends to root causes of behavior, with practical solutions, hence well-suited for treating addictions to smoking. This has been the finding of Wubbolding (2011), where improvement happened in the outcome through Reality Therapy to such an extent that smoking occurred significantly less. Likewise, in a research done by Moen and Magnusson (2018), clients receiving Reality Therapy actually became better at self-efficacy and emotional regulation, which are paramount for an improving addictive state. Reality Therapy thereby creates a whole person approach in smoking cessation, a practical one aimed at action-taking, with the improvement of personal responsibility focusing on taking actionable steps, rather than just curbing cravings. This could be quite appreciated especially by middle-aged individuals who seem to have very entrenched habits but who do much better with both personal introspection and some action adaptation.

5. Conclusion

The habit of smoking is mostly influenced by the social norms, cultural practices, and personal reasons.

Smoking as a whole and often within male groups was attributed to masculinity and relieving stress, in addition, it is bonded through bonding and age generation transmission. While awareness of its health risks increased, attempts to quit smoking proved largely futile because of the engaging dynamics between psychological dependence and social influence. This suggests that multifaceted approaches to tobacco cessation should be adopted, combining pharmacologic and behavioral intervention methods. Specifically, the current study denotes Reality Therapy, which emphasizes an individual assumption of responsibility and a solution-oriented approach, as a potential way of reducing smoking behavior through the empowerment of the individual to confront addiction and change voluntarily into a positive behavior pattern. These insights contribute to better understanding the smoking behaviors and would also serve as a basis on which effective, culturally relevant smoking cessation programs can be developed appropriate to other similar communities.

5.1 Implication to Policy, Theory, and Practice

The study brings out the necessity of developing relevant public health policies that affect the smoking behaviour of individuals from a socio-cultural context with special focus on the mid-age group. Policymakers must consider community public smoking cessation programmes that also take into consideration social norms and peer influences that could strengthen smoking habits. The public health campaign will also benefit from changing the perception of smoking as a health-risk behaviour to that of a cultural meaning of masculinity and adulthood. Policy must also focus on an integrated system of support-combining pharmacotherapy and behavioural therapy-for smoking cessation.

Findings from this study will also assist in the theorisation of frameworks to explain smoking behaviour within personal and social motives by an understanding of the use of social norms. The study further indicates how smoking behaviour is induced and maintained by peer pressure and perceived social acceptance, both of which can best be understood in terms of social learning theory and theory of planned behaviour. Further, the effectiveness of Reality Therapy concerning smoking behaviour indicates that theories of personal responsibility and problem-solving, particularly choice theory, can apply very well in addiction treatment. These theoretical insights indicate toward a better-understood notion of smoking as being a personal choice, as well as a behaviour shaped by wider socio-cultural forces.

Intricately, it is argued through research that smoking cessation should use a multipronged approach, which includes behavioral and pharmacological interventions. Clinicians treating individuals who smoke must try to consider the complexities of emotions, societal influences, and psychological viewpoints of the behavior and customize interventions appropriately. Reality Therapy, especially, affords preparedness of making behavior responsible by compelling the individual to act responsibly and proactively in choice making rather than evader. Family and support networks should be involved in the quit activity, as their involvement can increase the efficacy of smoking cessation. These findings reiterate the need for individualized support to smokers in their quest to stop smoking, focusing on specific motivation and challenges of middle-aged individuals within culturally diverse communities.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the outcome of this research, the following recommendations are made to remediate smoking behavior of middle-aged individuals in Egbeda local government:

Initiate Community-Based Smoking Cessation Programs: Such smoking cessation programs must engage the important community forces while being sensitive both to cultural norms and social influences once detected in this study. Educational units change the perception about smoking as a masculine adult habit and regarding health risks associated with smoking. Enlist local leaders and influential figures to go ahead with advocacy work to challenge the set smoking beliefs.

Reality Therapy Integration in Smoking Cessation Intervention: The reality therapy use in this study has produced positive findings, thus further suggesting the incorporation of this therapy into smoking cessation interventions. Reality therapy empowers individuals by taking responsibility for their smoking behavior and finding other alternative healthier coping mechanisms. Training healthcare professionals on this therapeutic practice would have an impact on cessation activity.

Integrated Support Systems: It is not enough to incorporate pharmacological approaches in smoking cessation. There should also be psychological assistance care. Nicotine replacement therapies such as nicotine patch and gum use should not be venal about counseling and behavior therapies, but they should address both the physical cravings and the mental dependencies of smoking. Family encouragement and peer-coupled friends with

communities would build an environment conducive and sustainable for those who want to quit smoking.

Policy Advocacy for Smoking Prevention and Cessation: The creation of laws and regulations restricting smoking in public places must go hand in hand with increasing access to resources for smoking cessation. Public health campaigns would go beyond awareness of the hazards of smoking and promote healthy, smoke-free environments for social interactions, particularly in workplaces and other major public venues with a high prevalence of smoking.

Targeted interventions for middle-aged smokers: The study revealed that middle-aged adults have unique challenges concerning smoking cessation, for example, well-established habits and social pressures. So the intervention must suit this particular population: individualized counseling, stress-coping strategies, and peer pressure resistance should then be availed to enable quitting.

Incorporation of Social Support Networks: Such programs should engage relatives, friends, and social contacts as part of an emotional support system providing motivation during the process of quitting. Social networks provide accountability reinforcement and make individuals feel less isolated in their efforts to quit smoking.

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Relevance of Social Work Practice in Child Sexual Abuse in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a critical social issue with profound psychological and social consequences. Addressing this challenge requires effective social work interventions tailored to community-specific needs. This study evaluates the relevance of social work practice in addressing CSA in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria. The objectives were to explore the prevalence and underlying factors of CSA and assess the effectiveness of social work intervention practices. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 384 respondents, with a 95.6% response rate. Findings revealed significant awareness of CSA, with 66.8% acknowledging its prevalence, though 33.2% remained unaware, highlighting gaps in awareness efforts. The home was identified as the most common site of abuse (49.0%), followed by schools (25.8%) and religious institutions (12.8%). Poverty (44.4%) and lack of parental supervision (35.9%) emerged as primary contributing factors. Social work interventions practices were rated as effective, with 48.5% of respondents considering counseling services very effective and 62% acknowledging effective collaboration with law enforcement. However, gaps exist in resource adequacy and outreach initiatives. The study recommends enhanced counseling services, stronger collaboration with law enforcement, increased resource allocation, and expanded community education programs to effectively combat CSA.

Keywords: Child sexual abuse, social work practice, prevalence, intervention effectiveness, community awareness.

1. Introduction

Waking up to the haunting cry of a mother's anguish, echoing through the neighbourhood, signals that something is terribly wrong. Her uncontrollable wails pierce the morning air as she utters heart-

wrenching words: "who could have done this to you, my innocent child, before you have even had a chance to grow up?..... Who can I turn to for help, to ease this unbearable pain?" As the cock crows, signaling dawn's arrival, the mother's desperate cries hang in the air, a poignant plea for support and justice.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) represents a profound violation of a child's fundamental human rights and has severe physical, psychological, and social consequences. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), CSA encompasses situations where a child is "unable to give consent, under compulsion, fear or any other circumstances, not prepared physically, mentally or emotionally for sexual activities," and includes acts like child trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and other illegal activities that violate societal moral values (WHO, 2021). CSA is not a new phenomenon; it has been prevalent globally for centuries and continues to affect children within the supposed safety of their families and communities. In Nigeria, instances of child sexual abuse have been reported to involve close relatives and family members as perpetrators (Bello & Osunde, 2022). Unfortunately, due to fear, stigma, and the traumatic impact on the child's psyche, many instances of CSA remain unreported, further complicating efforts to address this pervasive issue (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2020). Globally, CSA prevalence rates range from 12.7% to 18% for girls and 7.8% for boys (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). In specific countries, the rates vary: 5% in the United States (Finkelhor et al., 2015), 1% to 64.3% for girls and up to 43.9% for boys in Japan (Tanaka et al., 2017), 1.5% to 32.5% in Iran (Danaeifar et al., 2022), 22.1% for girls and 9.2% for boys in Spain (Pineda et al., 2023), and 11% to 36% for girls and 3% to 23% for boys in Nordic countries (Kloppen et al., 2016).

The increasing rate of child sexual abuse across various societies has drawn significant concern from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies. Despite legal frameworks aimed at curbing these heinous acts, such as Nigeria's 2015 law imposing life imprisonment for those who commit rape against children under 11 years of age, the prevalence of CSA remains disturbingly high (Halim, 2016). This reflects the need for a more comprehensive approach that goes beyond legal sanctions to address the underlying social, cultural, and psychological factors that perpetuate these crimes. Sexual abuse not only leads to immediate physical harm but also results in long-term emotional and psychological trauma, often causing irreversible damage to a child's development, well-being, and overall personality (Jones et al., 2019).

The role of social work becomes critical in this context, especially in the domains of disclosure and reporting. Social workers are uniquely positioned to support victims and their families by providing safe spaces for children to disclose their experiences without fear of judgment or further harm. Their role extends to advocacy, awareness creation, and policy reform, aiming to break the silence that surrounds CSA. The silence is often maintained by cultural taboos, fear of stigma, and inadequate support systems that discourage children and their guardians from reporting such crimes (Finkelhor, 2018). Social workers can drive change by fostering environments where victims feel empowered to come forward and by collaborating with law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community organizations to ensure a holistic response to CSA.

The complexities surrounding child sexual abuse ranging from underreporting to societal attitudes that inadvertently protect perpetrators underscore the urgent need for social work interventions. By focusing on child welfare, social justice, and systemic change, social workers are crucial in advocating for the rights of children and developing robust support networks that prioritize the safety, recovery, and well-being of victims. In doing so, they help shift societal norms towards zero tolerance for CSA and create frameworks that promote accountability and justice (Paine & Hansen, 2021).

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a serious social issue that significantly affects vulnerable populations, particularly children in Nigeria. In Uselu Community, Edo State, the prevalence of CSA is alarming, yet the problem remains largely unreported and untreated due to social stigma, cultural taboos, and inadequate social services. Research indicates that CSA often occurs in places where children should feel safe, such as homes,

schools, and religious institutions (Bello & Osunde, 2022; Ojo & Osemeobo, 2021). Victims and their families frequently remain silent due to fear of ostracism, shame, and a lack of trust in the legal system, complicating the response to this serious crime.

In Edo State, multiple factors contribute to high rates of CSA, including poverty, inadequate parental supervision, and the erosion of traditional protective systems (Ezeh & Onyemere, 2020). The urban environment of Uselu community exacerbates these issues, marked by overcrowded living conditions and significant socioeconomic challenges. The absence of effective social work interventions has allowed CSA to persist, leaving victims traumatized with long-term consequences such as mental health disorders, poor academic performance, and difficulties in forming trusting relationships (Afolabi, 2019).

Despite laws like the Child Rights Act of 2003, enforcement remains weak due to insufficient resources allocated to child protection services (Nwoke, 2022). This highlights the critical role of social work in bridging the gap between victims and essential support services. Social workers can provide direct interventions such as counseling and advocacy, alongside community-based education and prevention programs aimed at addressing the societal silence surrounding CSA. Effective social work practice is essential for ensuring that CSA victims in Uselu Community receive the necessary care and justice.

This paper employs ecological systems theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner as its theoretical framework. This theory is particularly relevant, as it offers a holistic understanding of how various environmental systems interact to influence the occurrence and resolution of CSA (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It emphasizes that children's experiences, including those related to abuse, are shaped by their interactions with multiple systems.

Ecological Systems Theory posits that human behavior is influenced by interrelated systems: the microsystem (immediate environments like family and school), the mesosystem (connections between microsystems), the exosystem (indirect influences such as parental workplace policies), the macrosystem (societal and cultural influences), and the chronosystem (historical changes) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Each of these systems critically shapes the experiences of CSA victims, their families, and the broader community.

By exploring the prevalence and underlying factors of CSA, Ecological Systems Theory facilitates an examination of influences across multiple levels such as poverty and lack of supervision

(microsystem), community awareness (mesosystem), and socio-economic conditions (macrosystem) all contributing to CSA prevalence in Uselu Community (Ezeh & Onyemere, 2020). This theory is justified in this study as it reveals how vulnerabilities arise from the interactions among these systems, highlighting the need for comprehensive social work interventions in problems that arises in cases of child sexual abuse in the study area and in other regions in general. Social workers can strengthen the microsystem by supporting families, advocate for policy reforms in the exosystem, and promote community education to shift cultural attitudes in the macrosystem

1.2 Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the relevance of social work practice in child sexual abuse in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:
explore the prevalence and underlying factors of child sexual abuse in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria.
Assess the effectiveness of social work interventions in combating CSA in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria.

2. Conceptualization of Child Sexual Abuse

In Nigeria, child sexual abuse is a crime outlined in several sections of Chapter 21 of the criminal code, where the age of consent is set at 18 (Bello & Osunde, 2022). According to a 2015 report by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, one in four girls in Nigeria experiences sexual violence before turning 18. Additionally, a survey conducted by Positive Action for Treatment Access revealed that more than 31.4 percent of girls reported that their first sexual experience was rape or some form of forced sex. A hospital-based review in Abuja identified 131 cases of female defilement over three years, indicating that child defilement is a significant and potentially underreported issue in Nigeria (Bello & Osunde, 2022).

Child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child, usually in a position of power or control) where the child is used for sexual stimulation or satisfaction. CSA encompasses a wide range of actions, including non-contact activities (exposing a child to sexual acts, materials, or conversations) and direct physical contact, such as fondling, rape, or coercing a child to perform sexual acts (World Health Organization, 2022). The conceptualization of CSA is complex, evolving through cultural, legal, and academic discourses that define what constitutes

abuse and the role of societal norms in shaping our understanding of child protection.

From a legal perspective, CSA is defined by laws that prohibit sexual exploitation and violence against children. These laws differ across countries but generally agree that children are incapable of giving informed consent to sexual activities, making any sexual engagement with a minor inherently abusive (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2021). The age of consent, which determines the legal boundary for sexual activity, varies globally but serves as a fundamental benchmark for identifying CSA. International conventions like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) set guidelines for protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse (United Nations, 1989).

Psychological perspectives on CSA emphasize its profound impact on child development. Researchers highlight that children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to suffer from long-term emotional, psychological, and social consequences, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and difficulty forming healthy relationships in adulthood (Pereda et al., 2009). The psychological definition of CSA also considers the power imbalance between the abuser and the child, which contributes to the child's vulnerability and inability to resist or understand the implications of the abuse.

Societal attitudes toward CSA have evolved significantly over time. Historically, CSA was often downplayed or ignored, especially within families, due to cultural taboos surrounding discussions of sexuality and child protection. However, growing awareness of the pervasive nature of CSA has led to increased advocacy for child protection policies and more rigorous academic research into the prevalence, causes, and consequences of CSA (Finkelhor, 2019). Social work and child protection services play a crucial role in both preventing CSA and providing support to survivors through therapeutic interventions and legal advocacy.

3. Forms of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to any form of sexual activity involving a child and an adult or older individual, where the child cannot legally or emotionally consent. CSA has devastating psychological, emotional, and physical consequences on victims, and it occurs in various forms. One common form of child sexual abuse is contact abuse, which involves physical interactions between the abuser and the child. These may include inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing, or engaging in penetrative acts. Such abuse often

occurs in private settings, making it difficult for victims to seek immediate help (Greenbaum, 2020). Perpetrators may be individuals within the child's trusted circle, such as family members, teachers, or caregivers, which complicates disclosure and reporting (Mathews et al., 2019). Put differently, Bello and Osunde (2022), asserts that child sexual abuse often occurs in environments typically seen as safe, such as homes and schools, with perpetrators frequently being individuals known and trusted by the child or holding authority over them. He emphasized that female children are more likely to be sexually abused by familiar individuals, often an adult or older child who is a family member, family friend, or in a position of trust or authority. Furthermore, he pointed out that children living in low-income areas, regions affected by insecurity or armed conflict, or those separated from their families are especially vulnerable. Addressing sexual abuse, exploitation, and all forms of gender-based violence is deemed essential for economic and social progress (Bello & Osunde, 2022).

Another form of CSA is non-contact abuse, which does not involve physical interaction but is equally harmful. This may include exposing a child to pornography, engaging in indecent exposure, or using a child to produce sexual content, such as videos or photographs. With the rise of technology, online grooming has become a prevalent form of non-contact abuse. Offenders exploit digital platforms to build relationships with children, manipulating them into sharing explicit content or meeting in person for sexual purposes (Bourgouin, 2021).

Exploitation and child prostitution represent another grave form of CSA. This occurs when a child is forced or manipulated into sexual acts for money, goods, or other forms of benefit, often facilitated by a third party. Child trafficking for sexual exploitation is a major global concern, particularly in vulnerable communities where children are more susceptible to coercion due to poverty or lack of protection (Rafferty, 2018).

Additionally, child sexual abuse within institutions is a form that has garnered attention, particularly in religious, educational, and care institutions. Here, perpetrators may use their position of authority to abuse children, often over extended periods, as such environments can shield abusers from scrutiny (McAlinden, 2016). The abuse often goes unreported due to the power dynamics, fear, and shame experienced by victims.

4. Social Work's Role in Ameliorating Child Sexual Abuse

In Nigeria, close relatives and family members have been identified as perpetrators of child sexual abuse. The alarming prevalence of sexual violations, such as pedophilia, significantly affects the mental, physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of these girls, often making it difficult for them to develop a sense of self-love, let alone affection for their country. This situation is exacerbated when perpetrators go unpunished due to the "twisted" and lenient nature of the laws regarding the sexual abuse of female children (Bello & Osunde, 2022). Child sexual abuse (CSA) remains one of the most pressing and disturbing issues facing children worldwide. It affects the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of children and disrupts their development, often leading to long-term trauma. Social workers play a crucial role in addressing CSA through intervention, advocacy, and prevention. Their involvement is essential to ensure that victims receive appropriate care, protection, and justice, while also working to prevent the occurrence of abuse through community engagement and education.

One of the key roles of social workers in ameliorating child sexual abuse is through early intervention. Social workers are often the first professionals to identify signs of abuse, which may include behavioral changes, emotional withdrawal, or physical symptoms. By assessing the child's environment and conducting thorough investigations, they can determine if a child is at risk and take necessary steps to protect the child (Finkelhor, 2020). This may involve working with law enforcement, healthcare providers, and the judicial system to ensure the child's safety.

Counseling and therapeutic interventions form a significant part of social workers' role in assisting victims of CSA. Victims often suffer from long-term psychological effects, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and low self-esteem (Salter et al., 2021). Social workers provide trauma-informed counseling, helping children process their experiences in a safe and supportive environment. These therapeutic interventions are vital for the child's healing process and future well-being.

Furthermore, social workers advocate for child protection laws and policies that aim to prevent CSA and provide support to survivors. By collaborating with policymakers and community organizations, they push for stronger regulations, effective reporting systems, and more comprehensive support structures for victims (McElvaney, 2019). Social workers are also instrumental in promoting

education and awareness programs aimed at preventing child sexual abuse. These programs teach children about body autonomy, consent, and how to report inappropriate behavior, while also educating parents and guardians on recognizing potential signs of abuse (Lefevor et al., 2021). In addition to these direct interventions, social workers engage in multi-disciplinary collaboration to ensure a holistic approach to dealing with CSA. This often involves coordination with law enforcement, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and legal professionals to provide comprehensive care and protection for the victim.

5. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design, as it allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time. The study utilized quantitative data collection techniques, with the questionnaire serving as the sole instrument for data collection. The sample size for questionnaire administration was determined based on the population size of 142,934 persons for the Uselu settlement, as estimated by Magnus and Esegbe (2012) from the 2006 National Population Commission report. The 2006 census figure was projected to the year 2024 using the population projection formula, which is stated as follows:

$$\text{Population Projection} = P_0 e^{rt}$$

Where:

P_0 = Initial population at a given time (142,934 persons); e = 2.71828 (Euler's constant);

r = Population growth rate (3.31%); t = Time period of population growth (18 years)

Thus, the projected population for 2024 was calculated as:

$$142,934 \times 2.71828(3.31 \times 18) = 231,489 \text{ persons}$$

Using the projected population of 231,489 persons, a sample size of 384 persons was determined following the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for sample size determination. The purposive sampling technique was employed to target social workers in the Ministry of Social Welfare Development, located at the Egor Local Government Secretariat within the study area. Additionally, community leaders, parents, and other residents who had lived in the study area for at least one year and possessed adequate knowledge of child sexual abuse (CSA) were included in the study.

The questionnaire was content-validated by experts in the field of social sciences and contained only closed-ended questions. Data were collected through a one-time survey method, facilitated by three research assistants. The collected data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS (version 23.0), with the results presented in frequency counts, percentages, and tables.

6. Data Analysis, Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

Out of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 17 were incompletely filled; thus, only 367 questionnaires were utilized for this study. This resulted in a response rate of 95.6%, which is considered adequate for a study of this nature.

Socio-Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=367)	Percentage (%)
Age	18 - 35 years	206	56.3%
	36 - 50 years	101	27.4%
	51 years and above	60	16.3%
Ethnicity	Edo	228	62.1%
	Yoruba	67	18.4%
	Igbo	44	12.1%
	Other	28	7.4%
Marital Status	Married	200	54.5%
	Single	116	31.7%
	Divorced/Widowed	39	10.6%
	Separated	12	3.2%
Educational Qualification	Primary Education	53	14.5%
	Secondary Education	177	48.2%
	Tertiary Education	125	34.1%
	No Formal Education	12	3.2%
Total		367	100%

Source: Field work, 2025

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal diverse groups within the Uselu community. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (56.3%) were between 18 and 35 years old, followed by 27.4% in the 36 to 50 years range, and 16.3% were aged 51 years and above.

Ethnically, most respondents (62.1%) identified as Edo, followed by Yoruba (18.4%), Igbo (12.1%), and others (7.4%). This indicates a predominance of the Edo ethnic group, but with notable diversity, reflecting a blend of local and migrant populations.

In terms of marital status, a significant portion of respondents (54.5%) were married, while 31.7% were single. A smaller proportion (10.6%) were divorced or widowed, and 3.2% were separated. This suggests a community with strong family structures, but also some challenges related to marital breakdowns.

Educationally, 48.2% of respondents had secondary education, 34.1% had tertiary education, and 14.5% had primary education. A small percentage (3.2%) had no formal education. This suggests that a substantial proportion of the population has at least basic education, though there is still a need for further educational opportunities in the community.

Objective One: To explore the prevalence and underlying factors of child sexual abuse in Uselu Community, Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Distribution of responses on prevalence and factors of CSA

Question	Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Have you ever been aware of child sexual abuse cases in Uselu Community?	Yes	245	66.8%
	No	122	33.2%
What is the most common location for CSA in Uselu Community?	Home	180	49.0%
	School	95	25.8%
	Religious institutions	47	12.8%
	Other	45	12.4%
What are the main contributing factors to CSA in Uselu Community?	Poverty	163	44.4%
	Lack of parental supervision	132	35.9%
	Cultural taboos	49	13.3%
	Other	23	6.4%
Total		367	100%

Source: Field work, 2025

The data reveals that a majority of respondents (66.8%) were aware of child sexual abuse (CSA) cases in Uselu Community, indicating a considerable level of awareness within the community. However, the 33.2% who were unaware suggest that awareness efforts may not have reached all segments of the population, highlighting the need for targeted awareness campaigns and education (Ojo & Osemeobo, 2021). Regarding the locations where CSA most commonly occurs, the home was identified by 49.0% of respondents as the primary setting, emphasizing the importance of strengthening household-based preventive measures and parental vigilance. Schools (25.8%) and religious institutions (12.8%) were also reported as notable locations, indicating the necessity for enhanced child protection policies within these environments to mitigate risks (Afolabi, 2019).

The findings further indicate that poverty (44.4%) is the leading contributing factor to CSA in Uselu Community, followed by lack of parental supervision (35.9%). These results align with existing research suggesting that economic hardship and inadequate supervision increase children's vulnerability to abuse (Ezeh & Onyemere, 2020). Cultural taboos (13.3%) were also identified as a contributing factor, underscoring the influence of deeply rooted societal norms that may hinder open discussions and reporting of abuse cases.

Objective Two: To assess the effectiveness of social work interventions in addressing child sexual abuse in Uselu community, Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Effectiveness of social work interventions in addressing child sexual abuse

Question	Response Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How effective are social workers in providing counseling to CSA victims?	Very effective	178	48.5%
	Effective	104	28.3%
	Neutral	21	5.7%
	Ineffective	7	1.9%
	Very ineffective	0	0.0%
How effective are social workers/social welfare officers in raising awareness about CSA in the community?	Very effective	140	38.1%
	Effective	112	30.5%
	Neutral	40	10.9%
	Ineffective	18	4.9%
	Very ineffective	0	0.0%
How well do social workers/social welfare officers collaborate with other stakeholders in managing CSA cases?	Very Well	84	22.9%
	Well	110	30.0%
	Neutral	63	17.2%
	Poorly	46	12.5%
	Very poorly	7	1.9%
Total		367	100%

Source: Source: Field work, 2025

The data presented in Table 3 highlights the effectiveness of social work interventions in addressing child sexual abuse (CSA) in Uselu Community, Edo State. Regarding the effectiveness of social workers in providing counseling to CSA victims, 48.5% of respondents rated them as very effective, with an additional 28.3% considering them effective. This reflects a generally positive view of the counseling services provided, although 5.7% of respondents remained neutral, and 1.9% considered the services ineffective. In terms of raising awareness about CSA in the community, 38.1% of respondents found social workers to be very effective, while 30.5% deemed them effective. However, 10.9% remained neutral, and 4.9% felt the awareness-raising efforts were ineffective.

Finally, when evaluating the collaboration of social workers with other stakeholders in managing CSA cases, 22.9% of respondents rated the collaboration as very effective, and 30.0% considered it effective. While this indicates a positive level of collaboration, 17.2% of respondents remained neutral, and 12.5% felt the collaboration was poor.

7. Discussion of Findings

The following discussions were made based on the analysis which is presented in this study. Regarding CSA prevalence, 66.8% of respondents were aware of CSA cases, indicating significant awareness in the community. However, 33.2% were unaware, suggesting that efforts to raise awareness have not reached everyone. This highlights the need for targeted education and awareness campaigns. These findings align with Ojo and Osemeobo (2021)

assertion that community education is crucial in combating CSA.

The study also examined common locations for CSA, with the home identified by 49.0% of respondents as the primary site, followed by schools (25.8%) and religious institutions (12.8%). This emphasizes the need for stronger child protection measures at home, where CSA is most prevalent, as well as policies in schools and religious institutions. This supports Afolabi's (2019) assertion on the importance of safe environments for children both at home and in public spaces.

In exploring contributing factors, poverty (44.4%) was identified as the leading cause of CSA, followed by lack of parental supervision (35.9%). These findings are consistent with existing research showing that economic hardship and insufficient parental supervision increase children's vulnerability to abuse (Ezeh & Onyemere, 2020). Poverty often leads to neglect, making children more susceptible to CSA. The lack of parental supervision also underscores the need for greater parental involvement in child safety. Additionally, cultural taboos (13.3%) were cited as a contributing factor, highlighting the impact of societal norms that hinder discussions about CSA.

The findings on the effectiveness of social work interventions align with existing research that highlights the role of social workers in supporting CSA victims. In this study, 48.5% of respondents rated social workers as very effective in counseling victims, with 28.3% finding their services effective. This supports Wright et al. (2020), who noted that social workers are vital in offering counseling and

emotional support, aiding recovery. Similarly, Bailey et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of social workers in providing therapeutic services to CSA survivors.

Regarding CSA awareness, 38.1% of respondents rated social workers as very effective, and 30.5% as effective, reflecting their key role in raising awareness. This is consistent with Paton and Wilson (2018), who found social workers crucial in educating communities on CSA, contributing to prevention. However, 10.9% were neutral, and 4.9% felt the efforts were ineffective, indicating room for improvement, particularly in outreach strategies. Kershaw (2020) also suggested the need for more culturally sensitive awareness campaigns.

On collaboration, 22.9% rated social workers' collaboration as very effective, and 30.0% as effective. However, 17.2% were neutral, and 12.5% found collaboration poor, pointing to the need for improvement. This aligns with Jones and Carter (2021), who emphasized the importance of effective collaboration among social workers, law enforcement, and health professionals.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals that while there is significant awareness of child sexual abuse (CSA) in Uselu Community, there remain considerable gaps in public knowledge and reporting mechanisms. The findings highlight that CSA is highly prevalent within homes, emphasizing the critical need for targeted family-based interventions. Additionally, schools and religious institutions require strengthened child protection policies to safeguard children effectively. The study also identifies poverty and inadequate parental supervision as major risk factors contributing to CSA, underscoring the importance of economic empowerment programs and comprehensive parenting education to mitigate these challenges.

To enhance social work interventions in addressing CSA in Uselu Community, it is recommended that counseling services be improved to provide comprehensive support for survivors and their families. Strengthening collaboration between social workers and law enforcement agencies is crucial to ensure timely intervention and justice for victims. Additionally, there is a need for increased resource allocation to support prevention and response initiatives effectively. Expanding community education programs and engaging key stakeholders, including parents, educators, and religious leaders, will further reinforce efforts to combat CSA and create a safer environment for children.

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Prevalence of Social Isolation among Older Persons in Egor Local Government, Edo State: Implications for Social Work

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Abstract. The issue of social isolation among the elderly is a significant global health challenge, as it has been linked to negative outcomes such as higher mortality rates, mental health concerns, and declining cognitive abilities. The main aim of the study was to explore the prevalence of social isolation among older persons in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State: Implication for social work intervention. This study used a phenomenological qualitative approach, interviewing 8 elderly participants in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, to explore the effects of social isolation, employing the SIWOPI scale, thematic content analysis, and ethical protocols to ensure data validity and participant welfare. The first finding reveals that social isolation is prevalent among older adults in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, negatively impacting their mental and physical well-being, though not all individuals fully recognise its contribution to their loneliness. The second finding highlights the importance of family, community support, and educational engagement in reducing isolation, with strategies like transportation services and intergenerational activities being recommended to promote social participation. This research highlights the negative impact of social isolation on older adults in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, calling for community-based programmes, family involvement, improved transportation, public awareness campaigns, and enhanced social work services to promote social inclusion and improve their quality of life.

Keywords: Older persons, Prevalence, Social Isolation, social work interventions

1. Introduction

The issue of social isolation among the elderly is a significant global health challenge, as it has been linked to negative outcomes such as higher mortality rates, mental health concerns, and declining cognitive abilities (Vanderweele et al., 2019;

Domènech-Abella et al., 2024). In the context of developing nations, rapid changes such as urbanisation and modernisation are exacerbating isolation, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where traditional family systems are eroding (Omorogiuwa, 2020; Mavesa et al., 2020). In Nigeria, the elderly population faces increased isolation due to migration and shifting cultural norms, contributing to mental health struggles such as depression (Odu et al., 2021). Ensuring the overall well-being of older people, encompassing social, physical, economic, and emotional dimensions, is essential for a thriving society (World Health Organization, 2023; Okoye, 2024).

In Nigeria, older individuals are increasingly vulnerable to social isolation due to numerous factors that negatively impact their well-being (Omorogiuwa, 2020). Ebimbo et al. (2019) highlight how certain life experiences may isolate the elderly, especially in Nigeria, where social safety nets are limited. Additional challenges, such as age-related bias, poverty, and health concerns, worsen the hardships faced by older individuals (Okoye, 2004). In Benin Metropolis, isolation, emotional withdrawal, and socio-economic problems are common issues for the elderly (Omorogiuwa, 2016).

The absence of family support and the loss of loved ones can further intensify isolation, especially when caregiving is unavailable (Tanyi et al., 2018). Social isolation may lead to physical and mental health problems, such as depression and loneliness, particularly for older individuals with low incomes (Qualls, 2017; Omorogiuwa, 2016). While many studies examine the effects of social isolation on the elderly, there is a lack of research specifically targeting the Egor local government area of Edo State, which this study seeks to explore (Omorogiuwa, 2020).

Despite the growing phenomenon of older persons' isolation in various communities in Nigeria, much

effort has not been intensified and explored on the social work interventions to mitigate the prevalence of older persons' isolation in our society. Moreover, since there is a lack of reports on elderly isolation in our various communities, the professional intervention to wade into this trend remains unexplored, especially in areas where people are not adequately informed about the professional roles of Social Workers to enhance their well-being and overall quality of life of the older persons in such pathetic conditions.

1.1 Research Objectives

The specific objectives were to:

- explore the prevalence of social isolation on the social wellbeing of older persons in Egor local government area of Edo State.
- explore the social work interventions to address the impact of social isolation on the wellness of older persons in Egor local government area of Edo State.

2. Review of the Literature

The prevalence of social isolation is a critical issue that adversely affects the social well-being of the older persons. The link between social relationships and mental health indicates that increased loneliness and isolation are associated with a decline in psychological health within this age group Mishra et al., (2023). In particular, older individuals experiencing isolation often undergo life changes such as retirement or the loss of family members, which can lead to reduced mobility and deteriorating physical health. This reduction in social interaction can create a cycle, further affecting their mental well-being and limiting their autonomy and control over their environment (Mishra et al., 2023). Social isolation is often defined as a lack of social connections and shrinking networks, with some experts emphasising the involuntary nature of this condition (Nicholson, 2012; Biordi & Nicholson, 2013).

The concept of social well-being encompasses the ability to form meaningful connections, maintain robust support systems, and avoid social isolation (Davis, 2019). When family, friends, and significant others provide limited social support, it adversely affects the well-being of older individuals in Nigeria, extending beyond psycho-social challenges to include other factors (Omorogiuwa, 2016). A strong network of family, friends, and community members can significantly enhance the social well-being of older Nigerians (Alzua et al., 2023), as their inclusion in decision-making and being treated with respect fosters a sense of belonging and improves well-being (Egharevba, 2023). Additionally, factors

such as economic security, access to basic necessities, and a stable income are essential for ensuring the social well-being of older persons in Nigeria (Mishra et al., 2023).

Social workers play a vital role in addressing these issues, employing various approaches to minimise isolation and encourage social interaction within this at-risk group. Solutions must be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of older individuals, particularly those who are housebound or have limited access to essential services. Study emphasises the necessity of both governmental and community-based efforts aimed at empowering older people (Egharevba, 2023). Johnson et al. (2019) highlight that providing essential resources such as transport services, social venues, and educational initiatives can foster social engagement among elderly populations, particularly refugees and immigrants who may face additional challenges to social integration. These interventions should also facilitate support groups that enable older individuals to connect and share experiences, helping to alleviate feelings of loneliness.

Local organisations have also demonstrated that offering technology training can be beneficial. Jiménez and others discuss how tailored technological solutions can reduce isolation by promoting communication between housebound older adults and their loved ones (Jiménez et al., 2021). However, it is essential that these interactions are rewarding, to avoid exacerbating feelings of isolation. Social workers must ensure that such technologies are implemented effectively. Gardiner et al. (2016) suggest that solitary-focused activities can be a useful intervention, particularly for older adults who are less inclined to participate in traditional group settings

3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted George Vaillant's social support theory propounded in 1974. The theory emphasises the critical role of emotional, informational, and practical assistance in fostering well-being, particularly for those unable to access such help independently. This theory is especially relevant to elderly individuals experiencing isolation, a condition that can negatively impact their quality of life (López-Cerdá et al., 2019). Social support is multifaceted, offering emotional, informational, and practical aid from various sources, such as family, friends, professionals, and the wider community (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Effective support can lead to improvements in both physical and mental health, strengthen resilience, and enhance self-esteem and social connections. However, the impact of this support is influenced by its source and how well it

aligns with the person's individual needs (Lakey & Cohen, 2000).

Using a social support framework allows social workers to identify and address gaps within the social networks of elderly people. They can assist by linking older adults to community resources, promoting social interaction, and providing emotional and psychological support (Yeh & Liu, 2003; Kuhirunyaratn et al., 2007; Wang, 2016; López-Cerdá et al., 2019). The theory underscores its importance by demonstrating that emotional support can alleviate feelings of loneliness and anxiety, while practical support helps with everyday tasks the elderly may find challenging (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). This framework offers a comprehensive understanding of how social support mitigates the harmful effects of isolation on older adults' well-being.

4. Methodology

4.1 Area of study and Population

The study setting is Egor Local Government is one of the Local Government Areas in Edo State. The justification for chosen this area of study (Egor Local Government) was born out of the researcher's discretion and judgement regarding the characteristics of the research participants who would best provide the data needed to answer the study's research questions. According to the National Population Commission's projection, the total population of Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is estimated to be around 429,897 in 2024. The older persons (aged 65 and above) population in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is projected to be 12% of the total population, which is 51, 588 at 3.3% population growth. The categories of the older persons (aged 65 and above) that was interviewed were majorly older adults who are victims of social isolation either currently or in the recent past in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Equally, the older persons who come from diverse backgrounds, with varying levels of education, income, and cultural backgrounds, and may have different experiences and perspectives on phenomenon of older persons social isolation were interviewed.

4.2 Research Design, Sample Size and Technique

The research design adopted for this study is phenomenological resign design. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique because it allows the selection of desired elements. The purposive sampling was utilised to obtain data from the participants with in-depth knowledge and experiences about the trend under investigation. Equally, cluster sampling was used to select three wards from the study area. The rationale for adopting purposive sampling was that participants possess the criteria the researcher requires in the study. Purposive sampling also connected the researcher directly to the participants who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon under investigation. Twenty-one research participants from three wards of the study area was purposively selected and used for In-depth interviews (IDI).

Hence, the sample size for this study was 8. Crosswell et al. (2020) found that the sample size for phenomenological studies should be between 7 and 30 participants and should be in order to reach saturation. Thus, the researcher used 8 participants as a sample size, which implies that seven participants was purposively selected from three wards of the local government area of the study. Older adults in the area of study who were victims of social isolation either currently or in the recent past was included in the study. In the inclusion process of the category of the participants, the researcher ensured that such participants were those whom the phenomenon under investigation has adversely impacted their well-being before they could be included in this study. However, older people from intact families who have been adequately cared for by their family or caregivers were excluded from this study.

5. Results

5.1 Background Information of Interviewees

This study explores the personal characteristics of the participants, with a particular focus on their socio-demographic profiles. Factors such as gender, marital status, religion, and level of education were considered significant for achieving the goals of the study. The relevant information and figures are displayed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

Variables	Frequency (N = 8)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	3	37.5%
Female	5	62.5%
Marital status		

Married	2	25%
Single	1	12.5%
Widowed	5	62.5%
Level of education		
No Formal Education	2	25%
Tertiary	3	37.5%
SSCE	2	25%
Primary	1	12.5%
Religious Affiliation		
Christianity	5	62.5%
Islam	2	25%
ATR	1	12.5%

Researcher (2024)

The data on social isolation and the well-being of older adults in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, highlights key demographic factors affecting social isolation. Women, who make up 62.5% of the sample, may face more isolation due to cultural factors, while married individuals (25%) tend to have stronger support systems compared to singles (12.5%), who may be more vulnerable to isolation. Education also plays a role, with 37.5% holding tertiary qualifications and 25% having secondary education, which could foster social engagement, unlike the 25% lacking formal education. Religion is significant, with Christians (62.5%) possibly benefiting from stronger social networks, while smaller groups like Muslims (25%) and ATR practitioners (12.5%) may still receive community support.

5.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Research Questions

Prevalence of Social Isolation on the Social Wellbeing of Older Persons in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State

Social isolation among elderly individuals in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State is a significant issue affecting their overall social well-being. A notable number of participants mentioned feeling overlooked and disconnected from their families and communities, which has led to emotional struggles. One participant remarked, *I began to notice that I was being left out when my children stopped visiting regularly. At first, I thought they were just busy, but over time, I realised that I had become invisible to them. The loneliness started affecting my health, and I felt abandoned.* (MRS A, 69 years, female, 26/11/24).

This emphasises how the gradual reduction of social support can have negative effects on older people, making them feel isolated and emotionally distant. The emotional burden of being socially isolated is evident in the comments from individuals who have spent long periods living alone. Another respondent mentioned, *I realised I was isolated when I no longer received visits from my neighbours or friends. The few times*

I tried to reach out to them, they were always too busy. It became clear that I was on my own, and that isolation left me feeling worthless and depressed. (MR B, 69 years, male, 26/11/24).

The lack of social interaction and difficulty in maintaining meaningful connections is a major factor in feelings of neglect among older people, making them more prone to poor mental and physical health. Consequently, social isolation stands out as a critical issue that impacts the overall well-being of elderly residents in the community. When it comes to recognising their situation, several older individuals in Egor Local Government Area admitted to being unaware of how social isolation affects their social well-being. As one person remarked, *I don't really know much about social isolation, but I feel lonely sometimes when my children are not around.* (MRS C, 72 years, female, 26/11/24).

This demonstrates a limited understanding of the effects isolation can have on emotional and social health, which could discourage elderly people from seeking help or participating in community activities that offer support. One more participant added, *I've heard of social isolation, but I'm not sure how it connects to my own life.* (MRS C, 72 years, female, 26/11/24).

This highlights a divide between the general awareness of social isolation as a concept and the personal realisation of how it affects one's well-being. On the other hand, some elderly individuals have a more thorough understanding of their social isolation and its impact on their overall health. One participant mentioned, *I feel disconnected from the world around me, and it really affects how I feel every day.* (MRS D, 66 years, female, 26/11/24).

This shows that certain individuals are highly aware of their isolation, recognising it as a significant factor in their emotional and social well-being. Another participant mentioned, *It's hard to stay positive when there is no one to talk to, and I feel this is affecting my health.* (MRS A, 69 years, female, 26/11/24).

Such responses indicate that older individuals who are aware of their isolation may also recognise its detrimental effects, highlighting the need for enhanced support systems and awareness campaigns.

The Social Work Interventions to Address the Impact of Social Isolation on the Wellness of Older Persons in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State

Based on the data provided, it appears that the majority of older persons in Egor Local Government Area rely on family and community ties as their primary support systems. One participant shared, *I depend on my children and my wife. They make sure I am not left alone, and we spend time together. Sometimes we go to church, and that makes me feel less isolated.* (MR K, 75 years, male, 26/11/24).

This highlights the importance of family and religious activities in combating social isolation. The fact that 66.67% of respondents are married supports the idea that many older persons benefit from these close-knit support structures, which play a crucial role in their emotional and social well-being. However, a significant portion of the older population (33.33%) is single, and they may experience higher levels of social isolation. A 68-year-old female respondent commented,

I live alone since my husband passed away, and my children are far away. I mostly talk to my neighbors, but it doesn't feel like enough. I wish there were more activities for people like me to engage with. (MRS L, 68 years, female, 26/11/24).

This illustrates the challenges faced by older single persons in maintaining social connections, suggesting that more structured community activities might help alleviate these feelings of isolation. Programs focused on fostering friendships and offering social outlets could be beneficial for individuals who lack family members nearby. The educational background of respondents, with a significant proportion having tertiary education (33.33%), suggests that some older persons may have the resources to engage in activities outside their immediate family circles. One participant with a tertiary education remarked,

I have attended seminars on aging, and they were very helpful. It gave me a chance to meet other people and share experiences. It also encouraged me to be more involved in community events. (MRS M, 68 years, female, 26/11/24).

This statement underscores the potential for educational programs and community engagement initiatives to enhance the social well-being of older persons. Such interventions could promote not only intellectual stimulation but also the development of a broader social network that helps reduce feelings of isolation. To address the impact of social isolation, social work interventions could include promoting intergenerational programs, offering

transportation services for those unable to attend community activities, and creating safe spaces where older persons can engage in group discussions and hobbies. A participant shared,

I noticed that anytime I am among people around my age, I feel relaxed. Also, I always look forward to this types of gatherings. (MR I, 72 years, male, 26/11/24).

This points to a need for practical interventions such as transportation assistance and community outreach programs that facilitate greater mobility and access to social opportunities. Through such initiatives, social workers can help reduce isolation and improve the quality of life for older persons in the community.

6. Discussion of Findings

The first finding reveals that social isolation is a prevalent issue among older adults in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, with many participants expressing feelings of neglect, emotional strain, and a lack of social relationships, all of which adversely affect their overall well-being. Some individuals acknowledged the emotional burden of isolation, recognising its harmful impact on both their mental and physical health, while others did not perceive how it contributed to their sense of loneliness. These findings align with previous studies, such as Domènech-Abella et al. (2024), which emphasise the importance of social connections in reducing loneliness, and Cacioppo et al. (2009), which underscore the significance of social engagement in enhancing well-being. However, research by Crosswell & Waite (2009) suggests that the relationship between social isolation and loneliness is not always straightforward, as some older adults may not feel lonely even when isolated.

The second finding highlights the crucial role of family and community support systems in combatting social isolation among older adults, focusing on the benefits of close family ties and religious participation. Single older adults, however, experience more severe isolation, as demonstrated by the account of a 68-year-old female participant, reflecting findings in studies such as Domènech-Abella et al. (2023) which note that a strong social network reduces loneliness. Moreover, educational programmes and community engagement, as illustrated by a respondent with higher education, can foster social connections and intellectual involvement, helping to counter isolation, as Lakey & Cohen, (2000) also observed. Social work strategies, such as providing transportation services and promoting intergenerational activities, could help address mobility issues and increase social participation, as suggested by Nicholson (2012),

Berkman and Glass (2000), and Cacioppo et al. (2009).

7. Conclusion

In summary, this research highlights the significant impact of social isolation on the well-being of older adults in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. The findings reveal that social isolation negatively affects their mental, physical, and social health, contributing to feelings of loneliness, depression, and a lack of support. The study emphasises the need for targeted interventions, such as community-based activities and family involvement, to reduce isolation. It also underscores the crucial role of healthcare professionals and social workers in identifying and supporting individuals at risk. Ultimately, the research calls for both government and non-governmental action to promote social inclusion and enhance the quality of life for older adults.

8. Recommendations

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

Community-Based Support Programs: Establish local community centres or social clubs specifically for older persons, where they can engage in regular social, recreational, and educational activities. These programs can reduce feelings of loneliness and enhance emotional well-being by fostering a sense of belonging and social connection.

Family and Caregiver Training: Provide training for family members and caregivers on the importance of social inclusion and how to reduce the risk of social isolation among older persons. This can include advice on communication, emotional support, and involving older adults in family and community activities.

Improved Access to Transportation: Create initiatives to ensure older persons have better access to transportation, making it easier for them to attend social events, medical appointments, and other community activities. This will help combat the mobility issues that often contribute to isolation.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch campaigns to raise awareness of the negative effects of social isolation on older persons and the importance of maintaining social connections. The campaigns can educate the public on how to identify and address signs of social isolation among older adults.

Enhanced Social Work Services: Strengthen the role of social workers in the community by providing training on identifying and addressing

social isolation in older persons. Social workers can be key in connecting isolated older adults with appropriate support services and resources.

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Predicting Career Paths: An Exploration of the Determinants of Career Choice of Women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Nigeria Using Logistic Regression

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Abstract. Women are a significant sociological group whose behaviours, motivations and values are sometimes incomprehensible in many contexts including workplace setting. This study examines the factors influencing career choices among women in nursing, banking and teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research considers parental influence, financial benefits, job security, leisure time, and personal interest as key determinants of career choice. A descriptive research design was employed, with a sample size of 329 participants selected from a population of 2,310. Questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analysed using frequency tables, simple percentages, and logistic regression. The findings reveal that parents significantly influence their daughter's career paths through counseling, role modeling, and financial support. Financial benefits were a major consideration for women in banking, with most expressing satisfaction with their current financial incentives. Job security was found to be higher in teaching and nursing compared to banking. The study recommends that parents foster open discussion, encouraging daughters to pursue careers based on their personal aspirations rather than parental expectations. Employers in nursing and teaching professions should enhance financial benefits to prevent women from gravitating towards banking. Additionally, organizations should implement flexible working arrangements to support women's career advancement and work-life balance.

Keywords: Career Choice, Determinants, Women, Comparison, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The career choices of women have significant implications for their socio-economic

empowerment, family dynamics, and contributions to national development. In Nigeria, women's participation in the workforce is influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, educational background, and personal aspirations. Aina (2017) noted that societal norms and gender roles have significant impact on the career paths that women choose, often steering them towards professions such as nursing and teaching, which are perceived as more "nurturing" and aligned with traditional female roles. In recent years, however, women participations in profession such as banking and engineering have grown, challenging the narrative of being dominated by men.

Globally, researchers have investigated factors influencing women career choices in various fields of specialization. When compared with men, it is glaring that the decision women take concerning their career is not based on only personal drives or prestige but on a larger web of interconnected factors and issues which most times are usually intricate and multifaceted, shaped by a confluence of personal, societal, and professional factors. As women navigate the landscape of career options, considerations such as educational background, familial expectations, societal norms and personal aspirations play pivotal roles (Ryan & Bauman, 2020).

In most countries of the world, it has been observed that women in Nursing and Midwifery have a huge workforce of about eighty-nine per cent higher than women in other lucrative careers like Business Management, Engineering, Stock trading and Technological jobs. This has led one to think if Nursing is a gender role occupation. Equally, in the educational sector, specifically at the secondary educational level, countries like Armenia, Myanmar, India and Nigeria record a booming in the number of female teachers than the male

counterparts. In other countries state like United States, Egypt and Australia, teaching profession especially at the secondary school is female-dominated. However, despite the tedious workload accompanied by the meager salary which characterized the profession, the number of female teachers in secondary school has been found to be in the increase (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). This left one to ask, why do numerous numbers of women choose career in these professions? Are there intriguing factors that propel them into careers like Nursing, Teaching and Banking? Certainly, there are.

In Nigeria, women constitute the major segment of the population, and their career decision has been found to be adversely affected by work-family conflict because most women experienced feelings of guilt or selfishness if they put their career interests first against their family responsibilities (Heins et al., 1982). This was and still remains a challenging issue and has limited a huge number of aspiring women from exploring some higher variety of career options that would have fostered their wellbeing, enhanced their job satisfaction and increased their financial stability (Kunnen, 2013).

Contextually, in Akwa Ibom State, it is observed that the rate of female workers in the health sectors is enormously great. A visit to the University of Uyo teaching hospital revealed the vast numbers of female nurses in all sectors of the hospital. In fact, 98 percent of nurses in almost all hospitals in Uyo LGA are females. Considering the fact that nursing is a lucrative profession and should be sought for by men as well. In the educational sector, women have gained access into the labour force in greater numbers and have been staying employed longer over their life course. The increased educational attainment rates amongst women have contributed to greater employment rates especially in the secondary school level. It is glaring that women have also feminized primary and secondary school teaching jobs except for the tertiary institutions where the male lecturer's population dominates.

Also, there has been a remarkable increase in women's employment in the financial sector in the state in recent times. The increase is significantly prevalent in metropolitan cities, for example, almost all commercial banks in Uyo Local Government employ a vast number of female workers. Notably, employment opportunity for the women in the banking profession is still concentrated at the clerical level, marketing unit as well as the customer's relationship services. Therefore, Uyo LGA in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, presents a unique context for examining the career choices of women. As the capital of Akwa Ibom state, Uyo LGA is the hub of economic and social activity, a

growing population of women seeking to pursue careers in various fields.

Research on career choices has identified various factors that influence women's decisions, including self-efficacy, family support, and job satisfaction (Lent et al., 2000; Aina, 2017; Okon, 2015, Nwagbara, 2011). Some of these studies concentrate mainly on career aspirations of secondary school and university students and neglect out of school experiences that may influence their career decisions (Denga, 2004; Kniveton, 2004; Issa and Nwalo, 2008; Falaye, and Adams, 2008; Quinter and Edwards, 2011; Adekola, 2016; Oyaziwo, 2018). However, there is a paucity of research on the specific factors that influence women's career choices in Nigeria, particularly in the Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions which are supposedly, seen in the country as women dominated professions

This study aimed to investigate the determinants of career choices of women, in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions in Uyo LGA, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were to:

- Ascertain if parental influence determines career choice of women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.
- Assess if financial benefits determine career choice of women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.
- Examine if job security determines career choice of women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.
- Determine if time for leisure influence career choice of women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.
- Explore if personal interest influence career choice of women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

The following research questions guided the study:

- Does parental influence determine career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?
- Is financial benefit a factor that determines career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?
- Does job security determine career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?

Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?

- Does time for leisure influence career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?
- Does personal interest influence career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area?

1.1 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of parental factor on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of financial benefits on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₃: There is no significant influence of job security on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₄: Time for leisure does not have a significant influence of parental factor on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₅: There is no significant influence of personal interest on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Career Choice

Kohlberg (2009) simply defines a career as a way of making a living or profession. But, Brown and Rector, (2008) see as professions or occupations which require advanced education and specialised training. According to Brott (2004), career is considered as a person's course or progress through life (or a distinct portion of life). In this wise, career is understood to relate to a range of aspects of an individual's life, learning and work. Although, career, work, occupation and profession are often used interchangeably, there are marked differences between them. For instance, the term work and occupation can be used to refer to any economic activity one engages in, so as to earn a living as determined by the society. Whereas, career and profession are specialized occupations that require higher education and long-term training to enhance ones capacity to earned a living. In a broader perspective, Osipow (1999) noted that career includes social roles, leisure activities, learning and work. He sums it to entail the total of paid and

unpaid work, learning and life roles one undertakes throughout his life.

2.2 Parental Influence and Career Choice of Women

Study suggests that children are influenced in their career choice by socio-demographic factors such as sex, ability, physique, family, school, and peers influence (Kniveton 2004). Equally, children look up to their parents for advice and guidance on which career to follow (Gati *et al.*, 1996). Parents have a key role to play in the decision-making and the general career path. For instance, which school they go, the subjects they chose, the decision to go to university or college, and the course to choose etc. If these decisions are heavily swayed by parental preference, the child may end up following a vocation that, deep down, they are not interested in.

Parents have adopted beliefs about success, how to be successful and what constitutes a good job or life. For most parents, taking up professional courses in institutions of higher learning and being gainful employed in these professional areas is one of such beliefs. Therefore, ensuring that children are set up for a successful career, future financial security and a good quality of life is a pressing challenge for every parent. Nevertheless, without practical guidance and support when pursuing interest, poor choices can be made.

It is certain, that everyone has a unique set of skills and aptitudes. Each child or an individual in their own way, and so, many possess different skills and abilities to their parents. With this in mind, adopting a similar career role to either parent may not be the right course of action (Super, 1990; Vondracek & Schulenberg, 1986). Parents will often say things such as "as a woman, pick a course you think you will like," or "why don't you apply for this job". Though it may seem they are doing the right thing in terms of steering their female children in the right direction, but parents also need to understand that they all need space and time to discover what they truly want to pursue.

A study by Crockett and Bingham (2000) examined the influence of each parent on the career choice of their children and has found that mothers tend to have more influence on the career decisions/aspirations of their children than fathers. Muthukrishna and Sokoya (2008) study also found the mother as the most influential person adolescents talk to concerning their career choice. Mothers were cited as particularly influential because they provide the support that eases children's apprehensions about their careers. Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) reported equally that parents had a significant influence on career decisions of children, but

mothers were most influential. This implies that mothers play a major role in the career choice of their children.

Wendy and Mahon (2005) surmised therefore that, each child can achieve his or her ambition and whatever course of action is chosen. It is the role of parents therefore, to instill three core values to aid them in their careers: self-belief, resilience and discipline. With these three skills developed over time, women can rise to the top of any profession they choose.

2.3 Financial Benefits and Career Choice of Women

Women in any society are the engine of growth and development both to themselves and the larger society because, they provide the labour force for production of goods and services to take effect (Benería, 2016). Studies prove that women make up almost half of the world's working-age population of nearly 5 billion people domestic tasks, which can limit their opportunity to engage in paid work and constrain their options when they do (Reeves et al., 2019). However, a study by Azuh, Fayomi and Ajayi (2015), observed that women in Nigeria are increasingly attracted to banking professions due to the sector's relatively high pay compared to other professions, which provides them with better financial security. Moreover, the banking and nursing professions provides attractive career opportunities for women in view of their very nature and clientele; of which women readily serves that purpose.

2.4 Job Security and Career Choice of women

Women's occupational choice tends to be influenced by many factors (intrinsic, extrinsic, and interpersonal). Intrinsic factors relate to interests and personality factors. In a broader sense, most people would like to do interesting work. Interest is of course, very personal and two people may be interested in the same activity for different reasons. Temperament and personality factors were identified as most important in choosing a career among high school students (Borchert, 2002). Also, study by Annan (2006) revealed that personality type was the most influential factor that influenced career choice among senior secondary students. Career choices motivated by intrinsic factors tend to be intellectually stimulating. A choice is intrinsically motivated if one is free in making a career decision based on innate tendency rather than the environment or interpersonal factor.

Extrinsic factors including the availability of jobs and how well an occupation pays or brings benefits are motivators for career choice. They also include those essential features as a result of the individual's

associations. A study by Quinter and Edwards (2011) indicates that the availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are influential factors affecting career choices among students. While males reported learning experiences as the most influential factors; females, however, report the availability of advancement opportunities as the most influential factors. People go in for jobs they feel may offer them further opportunities for education or training. Education or training enables the worker to acquire skills, knowledge, attitudes, and abilities that help him to do his present work effectively, while, interpersonal factors in career choice include, the influence of parents and a significant others.

Taylor and Buku (2006), and Merchant, (2006) noted that women consider three factors when choosing a profession, Viz:

- Compete for full-time and well-paid jobs at the core of the employment structure
- Increase the security and remuneration of work under part-time and untypical contracts
- Ascertain equal treatment, protection and access to resources in a deregulated small business sector, including self-employment and entrepreneurship.

They stated that, although, these are all issues relevant to the general labour market, they are more relevant to women than men because of the existing employment pattern. When it comes to women, working and building careers in both developed and developing countries. Benería and Lourdes, (2016) suggested actions that will assist in the achievement of improving women's employment options, security and equal status to include:

- (a) Setting employment conditions on an equal footing and discouraging inequality of treatment for those in untypical work contracts.
- (b) Encouraging mobility between non-standard and standard employment
- (c) Supporting part-time employment as a woman's choice not as her only job opportunity.
- (d) Improving representation and advocacy networks for workers under untypical work contracts in collective agreement.

2.5 Leisure and Career Choice of Women

The most important reason for why a woman must go for work is leisure and self-dependence. Quality-of-life studies have investigated the extent to which leisure can promote a feeling of well-being and a general feeling of satisfaction towards life. These studies of life quality found that satisfaction with "how much fun you are having" was the strongest contributor to a general sense of well-being, among

twelve selected predictors. The focus here is on which leisure dimension will be more important to consumers, as a function of their gender role attitudes. Certain relationships are of particular interest to the study of leisure at a time when men and women are looking for a better balance between work, family, and when self-fulfillment ranks high on their priorities for the future (Hall, 1976).

The adoption of female roles implies that family and spouse duties are to be given priority, and personal leisure is not viewed as a viable option if it represents putting family and spouse in second place. The adoption of feminine roles may also result in the accumulation of work inside the home as well as outside the home, resulting in less opportunity to choose freely time, place, or leisure companions. Therefore, the freedom dimension is not expected to be closely associated with leisure perceptions for feminine individuals. Here, leisure is not expected to be experienced, free from social obligation or responsibility. Women prefer professions that will give them the opportunity to express their feminine nature. This explains their cluster around teaching and nursing careers that are tied to care-giving.

The adoption of gender roles decreases the degree of men's responsibility towards housework and child care, for instance, but increases that of women. Conversely, it decreases the degree of independence women can enjoy. For instance, men have relative freedom to choose leisure locations, companions, and activities; leisure may be experienced independently from the needs and demands of the family but this is different from the women who must consider first the husband and children in making leisure choices. Hence, women will gravitate mostly to professions that will afford them time for family commitment and pleasure.

2.6 Personal Interest and Career Choice of women

Personal interest refers to the women's' personal interest in their chosen professions. According to Holland (1966) individuals choose career environments that best fit their personality and interest. Personal interests are learned from parents, in school, from friends, and through life experiences. Interest plays very important role in motivating people to do the right things that they like. A very strong and motivating interest in anything will boost to do it whole heartedly. Studies done in many countries and in different cultures came up with different results; for example, personality types and interest is a factor that impacts career choices made by the students in Kenya (Ahmed et al., 2017). In a study earlier stated, Quinter and Edwards (2011) noted that the

availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are influential factors affecting career choices among secondary school students. While males reported learning experiences as the most influential factor; females, however, report the availability of advancement opportunities as the most influential factor. Therefore, women choose careers they consider will best fit their personal interests, because they would do better in the field that interests them; and women who choose careers which match their personal interests are usually successful. They tend to enjoy greater satisfaction and happiness when working in the field of interest.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Two theories provide explanatory framework for the study. They include: John Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory.

2.7.1 Holland's Theory of Career Choice

John Holland's Theory of Career Choice maintains that in choosing a career, people prefer jobs where they can be around others who are like them. In other words, careers are determined by an interaction between personality and the social environment (1966).

Seven assumptions underlie the Holland's theory, namely:

Most people possess one of the six modal personality types: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), or Conventional (C).

Six modal occupational environments correspond to the six modal personality types (*RIASEC*). Each environment is dominated by a given type of personality and is typified by physical settings posing special circumstances.

People search for environments that allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and assume agreeable circumstances and roles.

A person's behaviour is determined by an interaction between his or her personality and the characteristics of the environment. Based on an individual's personality pattern and the pattern of the environment, some outcomes of such a pairing can, in principle, be forecast using knowledge of personality types and environmental models. Such outcomes include choice of vocation, job changes, vocational achievement, personal competence, and educational and social behaviour.

The degree of congruence (or agreement) between a person and an occupation (environment) can be estimated by a hexagonal model. The shorter the distance between the personality type and the occupational type, the closer the relationship.

The degree of consistency within a person or an environment is also defined using the hexagonal model. Adjacent types on the hexagon are most consistent, or have compatible interest, personal dispositions, or job duties. Opposite types on the hexagon are most consistent, or combine personal characteristics or job functions that are usually unrelated.

The degree of differentiation of a person or an environment modifies predictions made from a person's typology, from an occupational code, or from the interaction of both. Some persons or environments are more closely defined than others; for instance, a person may closely resemble a single type and show little resemblance to other types, or an environment may be dominated largely by a single type. In contrast, a person who resembles many types or an environment characterized by about equal numbers of workers in each of the six types would be labeled undifferentiated or poorly defined.

Career choice Counselors who use Holland's theory of vocational choice typically assess individual's interest profiles from three primary perspectives: Coherence, Consistency, and Differentiation. Holland maintained that these factors correlate with the clarity and focus of individuals' vocational personalities. Coherence relates to the degree to which the Holland codes associated with an individual's vocational aspirations or occupational daydreams conform to the Holland occupational theme (i.e. Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). The consistency concept involves analyzing the proximity of the individual's two dominant Holland types with respect to the hexagonal scheme. Adjacent types on the hexagon (example, Social and Enterprising) reflect high interest consistency; opposite types (e.g., Artistic and Conventional) reflect low consistency. People search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values, while taking on enjoyable problems and roles. Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment. Choosing a college major, training programme, or a career that fit your Holland personality is a vital step toward success, good grades, graduating on time, and job satisfaction.

Applications of Holland's theory of vocational choice involve assessing individuals in terms of two or three prominent personality types and then matching the respective types with the

environmental aspects of potential careers. The theory predicts that the higher the degree of congruence between individual and occupational characteristics, the better the potential for positive career-related outcomes, including satisfaction, persistence, and achievement.

2.7.2 Social Learning Theory

Another theory that provides insight on the determinant of career choice of women is the Social Learning Theory of Albert Bandura. The theory found a relationship between social environment and behavioural change. He claimed that Social Learning Theory shows a direct correlation between a person's perceived self-efficacy and behavioral change. Self-efficacy comes from four sources: Performance, Accomplishments, Vicarious experience, Verbal persuasion, and Physiological states (Bandura, 2011). The theory states that when people observe a "model" performing behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviours (Bandura, 2011). Most women consider close persons within their immediate environments as models and would want to be like them; including choosing same career like them (models). This explains why would like to take to professions like their parents, significant others or people in contact, and models serve as factor for women career choice. Therefore, the environmental context in career choice determination of women underscores the importance of imitation and observation in behaviour change.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design/ Research Area

The study employed descriptive research design. The study was conducted in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Uyo is the Capital City of Akwa Ibom State. It became the Capital on September 23, 1987 when Akwa Ibom was created from the former Cross River State (aksgov.ng, 2009). Uyo Local Government Area has a projected population of 427,872 (National Population Census, 2006). As the Capital City, the Uyo Local Government Area is structured with diverse institutions that are aimed at servicing her citizens.

3.2 Population of the Study

The total population of the study was 2,310 female workers in the three (3) professions of Banking, Teaching, and Nursing in the study area. The population of the study consisted of all female bankers in commercial banks (716), all female nurses in public secondary (890) and tertiary

hospitals as well as all (704) female teachers working in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (Detailed in Appendix II).

3.3 Sample Size / Sample Technique

The sample size of 369 was derived using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) (See Appendix I). Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used for this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select Five (5) banks out of eighteen (18) existing commercial banks in Uyo. The selected banks were: Access Bank, First Bank, Heritage Bank, Fidelity Bank and Zenith Bank. Purposively, branches with the highest number of female staff of each of the five (5) selected banks were selected (Access Bank Banking Layout, First Bank Oron Road, Heritage Bank Aka Road, Fidelity Bank, Abak Road and Zenith Bank Oron Road). Sample revealed a total of ninety-nine (97) female bankers in the five selected bank branches. Equally, five (5) public secondary schools were selected from fourteen (14) public secondary schools in Uyo using simple random sampling technique. The schools were: Ikono-Ibom Comprehensive Secondary School Ikot Ayan-Ikono, Community Secondary Commercial School Ikot Okubo Offot, Community Secondary School Mbak Etoi, Special Education Centre Mbiabong Etoi, and Community Secondary School Ikot Nsung-Ikono. Sample also revealed a total of one hundred and eighty (178) female teachers in the five selected public secondary schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select University of Uyo Teaching Hospital out of the three public hospitals in the study area. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital was selected purposively because it had the highest number of female nurses. A total number of fifty (54) female nurses were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. Details of the sample design for the study can be seen in Table 1.

3.4 Source of Data/ Procedure for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire contained an introductory note and subdivided into four sections: A, B, C and D. Section A consisted of seven (7) questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, Sections B, C and D consisted of five (5) questions, constructed to measure the substantive issues under study. Three hundred and twenty-nine (329) questionnaires were administered to 54 female nurses, 178 female secondary school teachers and 97 female bankers. The researchers distributed and retrieved the questionnaires from the female nurses and secondary school female teachers, while, Bank

Managers assisted in the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires from female bankers in each of the selected banks. 329 questionnaires were administered to the respondents and 261 questionnaires were retrieved and found useful for data analysis. This yielded a response rate of 66 per cent.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument it was subjected to scrutiny by experts in test and measurement at the Faculty of Education University of Uyo before they were administered on the respondents. Since all corrections noted were effected and all errors eliminated, it was satisfactorily believed the instrument was valid. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was employed to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents (10 from each professional group: Nursing, Teaching and Banking). The questionnaire was divided into subscales based on key variables; Personal Factors (personal interest and time for leisure), Social Influences (parental influence and societal norms) and Economic Considerations (financial benefits and job security). A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable. The results were as follows: Personal Factors: $\alpha = 0.85$, Social Influences: $\alpha = 0.79$, Economic Considerations $\alpha = 0.82$. The high Cronbach's Alpha values indicated that the instrument has good internal consistency.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Simple percentage and frequency distribution were used to analyse the socio-demographic data of respondents while Logistic Regression was used to test the formulated hypotheses. It was also useful in predicting the influence (odds) of the dependent variable on several dependent (input) variables.

The logistic regression formula is given as: $p = 1 / 1 + e^{(-Z)}$

Where P: is the probability of the dependent variable being in particular category.

e: is the base of the natural logarithm (approximately 2.718)

Z: is the linear combination of the independent variables, represented by the equation: $z = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n$

3.7 Ethical Consideration

To address ethical concerns regarding this study the researchers developed a consent agreement form which stated the aims of the research and respondents' consent for participation were sought and respondents were given the freewill to accept or

decline involvement. The respondents were also assured that the information they provided were taken as confidential and not to be shared to any third party. To ensure that the identities of the

respondents were protected, information requiring their names or considered sensitive were removed from the questionnaire

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their personal characteristics (N = 261)

Variable	No. of Women	Percentage (%)
Marital Status		
Single	88	33.72
Married	133	50.96
Divorced/Separated	25	9.58
Widowed	15	5.75
Total	261	100
Religion		
Christianity	250	95.79
Islam	11	4.21
Others	0	0
Total	261	100
Education Qualification		
NCE	22	8.46
OND	30	11.49
HND	31	11.88
B.SC/B.Ed.	140	53.54
Others	38	14.56
Total	261	100
Name of Organization		
Hospital: UUTH	52	19.92
Bank: First Bank	22	8.43
Fidelity Bank	15	3.83
Heritage Bank	14	4.98
Zenith Bank	20	7.66
Access Bank	21	5.75
School: Ikono Ibom Com. Sec. School	21	8.05
Community Sec. Comm. School Ikot Okubo	31	11.88
Community Secondary School Mbak Etoi	24	9.20
Special Education Centre Mbiabong Etoi	18	6.89
Community Secondary School Ikot Nsung Ikono	23	8.81
Total	261	100
Rank/Positions		
Hospital: Staff Nurses	38	14.56
Chief Nursing Officer	8	3.06
Matron	6	2.29
Bank: Manager	2	0.77
Marketer	25	9.58
Customer Service Representative	15	5.75
Cashier	18	6.90
Teller Representative	19	7.28
Auditor	9	3.45
Loan Officer	6	2.30
School:		
Vice Principal	2	0.77
Departmental Head	10	3.83
Class Teacher	107	41.0
Total	261	100
Department:		
Hospital: Laboratory Unit	13	4.98
General Ward	9	3.45
Accident and Emergency Unit	15	7.75
Maternity Unit	11	4.21
Bank: Manager	2	0.77
Account department	7	2.68
Customer Care Unit	29	11.11
Marketing Unit	18	6.90
Monitoring Unit	4	1.53
Cashier Unit	9	3.45
Sales/Auditing Unit	25	9.58
School: Science Department	49	18.77
Art Department	44	16.86
Commercial Department	26	9.96
Total	261	100

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 1 shows personal characteristics of the respondents. Respondents within the age brackets of 20-25 were 24 (9.19%), 26-30 age brackets were 33(12.64%) respondents, 31-35 age brackets were 40 (15.33%) respondents. Also, respondents within the age brackets of 36-40 were 51(19.54%), 41-45 age brackets had 70 (26.82%), while 46 and above age brackets were 43(16.48%) respondents. The data indicates that majority of the respondents were those of 41- 45 age brackets. With regards to marital status, the study had 88(33.72%) respondents who were single, 133(50.96%) were married respondents, 25(9.58%) respondents were divorced/separated and 15(5.75%) respondents were widowed. This indicates that majority of the respondents who participated in the study were married (50.96%). The table shows that 250 (95.79%) respondents were Christians while 11(4.21%) respondents were Muslims and none from other religion. This implies that majority of the respondents in the study were Christians (95.79%). The table further shows that 22 (8.46%) respondents had NCE, OND 30 (11.49%), HND 31 (11.88%), while B.Sc. / B.Edu. 140 (53.64 %) and respondents with other qualifications were 38(14.56%). This therefore indicates that most of the respondents had B. Sc /B.Edu (53.64%). 48 (9.20%) respondents were from UUTH, 24 (8.81%) respondents were from First Bank, Fidelity Bank had 15(3.83%) respondents, Heritage Bank had 14 (4.98%), while Zenith and Access Banks had 20 (7.66%) and 15(5.75%) respondents respectively. Moreover, 21(8.05%) respondents were from Ikono-Ibom Comprehensive Secondary School, 31(11.88%) respondents from Community Secondary School, Ikot Okubo, 26 (9.96%) respondents were from Community Secondary School, Mbak-Etoi, 18(6.89%) respondents were from Special Education Centre, Uyo and 23 (8.81%) respondents were from Community Secondary School, Ikot Nsung-Ikono. The study has 38 (14.56%) staff nurses representing (13.03%), 8 chief nursing officers representing (3.06%) while matrons were 6 representing (2.29%). Furthermore, 2 (0.77%) were bank managers, 25(9.58%) marketers, 15(5.75%) customer service representatives, and 18 (6.90%) teller representatives, 19 (7.28%) cashiers, 9(3.45%) auditors and 6(2.30%) loan officers. Also, 2(0.77%) vice principals, 10 (3.83%) departmental heads and 107(41.0%) class room teachers constitute from schools. Equally, 13 (4.98%) respondents were in laboratory unit, 9 (3.45%) were in general ward, 2(0.77%) were in accident and emergency unit, as well, and maternity unit had 11 (4.21%) respondents. Furthermore, 2 (0.77%) respondents were managers, 7 (2.68%) respondents were in account department of the selected banks, 29 (11.11%) respondents were in customer care unit, marketing unit had 18 (6.90%) respondents, 4 (1.53%) respondents were in monitoring unit and cashier unit had 9 (3.45%) respondents, Sale and Auditing unit had 25 (9.58%) respondents. Science department in selected secondary schools had 49 (18.77%) respondents, 44 (16.86%) and 26 (9.96%) respondents were in arts and commercial/business departments respectively.

4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of parental factor on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 2: Summary results of logistic regression showing the influence of parental factor on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession

	Nursing		Teaching		Banking	
Parental factor	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value
Are you in the same career with parents and if Yes, did they inspire you to follow a similar path						
Yes/No	2.778 (.898-8.591)	.075	.281 (.140-.566)	0.000**	2.369 (1.205-4.658)	.012*

OR- Odd ratio. *Significant at 5% (p<.05), **Significant at 1% (p<.01).

Table 2 presents results of the logistic regression for the influence of parental factor on career choice for women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Professions. This result shows Odds ratio of 2.778 with p-value of .075. The Odds ratio is greater than 1 which implies that parental factor has a positive influence on career choice of women in Nursing but for the fact that the p-value is greater than 0.05(p>.05), it therefore suggests that there is no significant influence of parental factor on career choice of women in Nursing profession. For teachers and bankers, the p-value of 0.000 and 0.012 were obtained respectively which are less than 0.05 which indicates that parental factor has a significant influence on career choice of women in Teaching and Banking professions. Result also reveals that the odd ratio for those in the teaching profession (Odd = .281, C.I= .140-.566, p =0.000, p<.05) was less than 1 while that of bankers were above 1 (Odd = 2.369, C.I. = 1.205-4.658, p=.012, p<.05). This result implies that parental factor has a significant negative influence on career choice of women in teaching profession

and significant positive influence on career choice of women in the Banking profession. Therefore, there is a significant influence of parental factor on career choice of women in Teaching and Banking professions but not significant among nurses.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: there is no significant influence of financial benefits on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 3: Summary results of the logistic regression for the influence of financial benefits on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching Professions

OR- Odd ratio. *Significant at 5% ($p < .05$), **Significant at 1% ($p < .01$).

Factor	Nursing		Teaching		Banking	
Financial benefits	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR(95% C.I.)	P-value
Did you consider salary and other financial incentives when choosing your career?						
Yes/No	.543 (.275-1.072)	.078	.453 (.273-.752)	0.002**	3.48 (2.017-6.013)	.000**

Results presented in Table 3 show the influence of financial benefits on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Professions. Result shows p-values of .078 for Nurses, .0002 for teachers and 0.000 for those in the banking profession. The p-values obtained for both women in Teaching and Banking professions were less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) while that of those in the Nursing profession was greater than 0.05 ($p > .05$). This indicates that there is a significant influence of financial benefits on career choice of women in Banking and Teaching Professions but for Nursing profession, the influence of financial benefits was found to be insignificant ($p > .05$). Result also shows that the Odds ratio for Nursing (Odd = .543, C.I. = .275-1.072) and teaching professions (Odd = .453, C.I. = .273-.753) were both less than 1 while that of banking profession (Odd = 3.48, C.I. = 2.017-6.013, $p = .000$, $p < .05$) which implies that financial benefits had no significant influence on the career choice of women in the Nursing profession but has significant positive influence on women in the banking profession. For those in the teaching profession, the influence was significantly negative indicating that consideration for financial benefits is a major determinant of their choice of going into the Teaching profession and Banking profession.

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: There is no significant influence of job security on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 4: Summary results of the logistic regression showing the influence of job security on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession

Factor	Nursing		Teaching		Banking	
Job security	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR (95% C.I.)	P-value	OR(95% C.I.)	P-value
Is there job security in your career choice						
Yes/No	7.05 (2.426-20.462)	.000**	8.53 (4.547-15.992)	0.000**	.037 (.019-.075)	.000**

OR- Odd ratio. *Significant at 5% ($p < .05$), **Significant at 1% ($p < .01$).

Table 4 presents results of the influence of job security on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Professions. Result shows p-values obtained for the three professions were less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) meaning that job security has a significant influence on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions. The odds ratio obtained for women in Nursing profession (OR = 7.05, C.I. = 2.426-20.462, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) and Teaching profession (OR = 8.53, C.I. = 4.547-15.992, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) were greater than 1 while that obtained for women in the banking sector was less than 1 (OR = .037, C.I. = .019-.075, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$). This means that there is a significant positive influence of job security on the career choice of women in Nursing and Teaching professions. For those in the Banking profession, the influence was significantly negative indicating that

there is no job security in the banking sectors. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected and hence there is a significant influence of job security on the career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions.

Hypothesis Four

Ho₄: Time for leisure does not have a significant influence on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 5: Summary results of the logistic regression showing the influence of leisure time on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching professions

Factor	Nursing		Teaching		Banking	
Time for leisure	OR (95% C.I)	P-value	OR (95% C.I)	P-value	OR(95% C.I)	P-value
Is there job security in your career choice						
Yes/No	0.042 (.010-.177)	0.000**	189.00 (70.478-506.837)	0.000**	0.031 (0.013-0.076)	0.000**

OR- Odd ratio. *Significant at 5% ($p < .05$), **Significant at 1% ($p < .01$).

Results in Table 5 present the influence of availability of time for leisure on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Professions. Result shows p-values obtained for the three professions were less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) which implies that there is a significant influence of time for leisure on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of availability of time for leisure on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Profession. The odds ratio obtained for women in both Nursing (OR = .042, C.I. = .010-.177, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) and Banking professions (OR = 0.031, C.I. = 0.013-0.013, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) were less than 1 while that of Teaching profession was greater than 1 (OR = 189.00, C.I. = 70.478-506.837, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$). This means that availability of time for leisure has a significant positive influence on career choice of women in the Teaching Profession suggesting that they have time for leisure. For those in Nursing and Banking Professions, consideration for the availability of leisure time reduces their likelihood of choosing a career in either Nursing or Banking sector. This result also suggests that women in the Teaching profession have more time for leisure than those in either Nursing or Banking.

Hypothesis Five

Ho₅: there is no significant influence of personal interest on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession in Uyo Local Government Area.

Table 6: Summary results of the logistic regression showing the influence of personal interest on career choice for women in Nursing, Banking and Teaching profession

Factor	Nursing		Teaching		Banking	
Personal interest	OR (95% C.I)	P-value	OR (95% C.I)	P-value	OR(95% C.I)	P-value
Do you consider travelling abroad for greener pasture a reason for your choice of career?						
Yes/No	2.282 (1.066-4.887)	0.034*	4.67 (2.641-8.143)	0.000**	.125 (.070-.224)	0.000**

*Significant at 5% ($p < .05$), **Significant at 1% ($p < .01$).

Results presented in Table 6 show the influence of personal interest on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Professions. Result shows p-values obtained for the three professions

were less than 0.05 ($p < .05$) which implies that there is a significant influence of personal interest on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions. The null hypothesis is

therefore rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of personal interest on career choice of women in Nursing, Teaching and Banking Profession. The odds ratio obtained for women in both Nursing professions (OR = 2.282, C.I. = 1.066-4.887, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) and teaching professions (OR = 4.67, C.I. = 2.641-8.143, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$) were greater than 1 while that of banking profession was less than 1 (OR = .125, C.I. = .070 -.224, $p = 0.000$, $p < .05$). This means that personal interest has a significant positive influence on career choice of women in Nursing and Teaching Professions. But in banking profession, consideration for personal interest and their likelihood of choosing a career in banking sector was not significant.

5. Findings / Discussion of Findings

Findings showed that parents influenced the career path of their female children majorly through career counseling, role modeling, and financial support. This finding is supported by the work of McQuid and Bond (2003) who posited that the choice of a career should not be made by accident or by sheer force of circumstances but it should be made by foresight and common sense, hence young women are not competent enough to make such a choice; thus, it should be made by their parents. Similarly, Muthukrishna and Sokoya (2008) in a study on the influences of each parent on the career of their children stated that mothers tend to have more influence on the career of their female adolescents than fathers. Also, Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) reported that parents had a significant influence on the career decisions, but mothers are more influential. Additionally, Salami (2006) found that family involvement is the most significant predictor of career choice in gender dominated professions. It thus explains that family provides information and guidance directly or indirectly and influences young female's career choice.

Furthermore, findings revealed that women in Banking and Teaching professions considered financial benefits/incentives when choosing their career as well as satisfied with the financial benefits associated with their career. This finding is in tandem with the study of Merchant (2006) who noted that women participate in the commercial sector, and local enterprise to generate income to meet the needs of their families. Similarly, this finding agreed with the position of Abama et al., (1993) who found that women even in pre-colonial Nigeria were diligent and productive to maintain and provide for their families, thus they engaged in economic enterprises. Again, this finding is in line with the study of Azuh et al., (2015) which postulated that women in Nigeria are increasingly attracted to banking due to the sector's relatively

high pay compared to other professions, which provides them with better financial security.

Moreover, findings indicated that job security is higher in the teaching and nursing professions compared to banking profession, meaning that, job security has a significant positive influence on career choice of women in Teaching and Nursing professions. In agreement with this finding, Okafor and Amayo (2006) highlighted that the perception of job security is one of the most important factors that influence women career choice in Nursing and Teaching, alongside factors like work- life balance and income stability. Similarly, a report from the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2018) noted that women tend to be more drawn to jobs that offer clear contracts, benefits, and legal protections, which provide a sense of security in their professional lives. Also, this finding corresponds with the study made by Ugochukwu and Ijeoma (2013) which submitted that in Nigeria, despite the modest salary, women often choose teaching for its long- term financial benefits like job security and pension plans.

Moreso, findings further indicated that Nurses and Bankers did not have time for leisure, unlike teachers who identified that time for leisure was the reason they took up the profession. This finding therefore agreed with the study by Akyeampong and Stephens (2002), that women in Ghana, for instance, were drawn to teaching partly because of the flexibility it offers in terms of work hours and time off, allowing them to attend to family duties more easily than in other professions. Also, research conducted in Nigeria by Aina (2017) found that the teaching profession's structured holidays and predictable work schedule were significant factors, in women's career decisions, has these aspects provided more leisure time and improved work-life balance.

Also, findings further revealed that personal interest has no significant positive influence on career choice of women in Nursing and Teaching Profession. For those in Banking profession there is consideration for personal interest and their likelihood of choosing a career in banking sector. This finding therefore is in tandem with a study by Nwagbara (2011), which highlighted that woman in Nigeria were motivated to pursue careers in banking due to personal interest in the financial sector and the professional opportunities it offers for career growth and development. Another study by Okon (2015), confirmed that women were attracted to banking due to their personal interest, field complex, cultural values and intellectual stimulating nature. The study also noted that personal passion for business and financial independence plays a

significant role in women's career choices in the banking profession.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated factors influencing women's career choices in Nursing, Teaching and Banking professions in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. The findings revealed that a combination of parental influence, financial benefits and incentives, job security, time for leisure, personal interest, and prospect of traveling abroad for greener pasture significantly shape the professional interests of women in these fields. In nursing profession, job security, financial benefits and traveling abroad for greener pasture emerged the primary drivers for women. Passion for the job, parental influence, having time for leisure was key motivators for women in teaching profession. Personal interest in finance, the potential for financial growth and opportunities for career advancement was primary factors influencing women career choice in banking profession. However, while personal interest appears to be the central driver of career aspiration across the three professions, the importance of financial security and job stability cannot be downplayed, particularly in teaching and nursing professions. Interestingly, the study revealed also that women also tend to prefer professions that provide them ample opportunity to balance work and family responsibilities. Hence, the study has revealed a nuanced understanding of the interplay of socio-economic and demographic variables in shaping women's career trajectories in the study area.

7. Recommendations

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

Since there is a strong relationship between parental influence and career decision of their female children, parents should also promote open family discussions that allow female children to express their career interest freely, fostering an environment where career decisions are made based on personal aspirations rather than parental expectations. More so, parents should encourage their female children to take to male dominated careers which are equally prestigious and financially beneficial.

Financial benefits have been found to promote women career choice in Banking, therefore, employers in Nursing and Teaching professions should also ensure enhanced financial benefits/incentives to prevent women from gravitating mostly towards banking profession thereby causing imbalance in other professions.

Organisations should implement flexible working hours or remote work options to allow women to balance their professional and family life.

Since women prefer banking profession in view of its benefits, government should regulate bank organizations from contract employments to ensure their job security.

Schools at all levels should provide career counseling services to sensitize women on how to explore other professions beyond banking, teaching and nursing which are also lucrative and less saturated by them.

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Appendix I:

Sample Size Determination

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{e^2 (N-P) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where: n = Sample Size

N = Population Size

e = Acceptable error

X² = Chi-square

df = 1 and reliability level 95% (X² = 3.841)

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Therefore: } n &= \frac{3.841 \times 2,310 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)}{0.05^2 (2,310 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)} \\ &= \frac{2,218.1775}{0.05^2 (2,309 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)} \\ &= \frac{2,218.1775}{5.77725 + 0.9602} \\ &= \frac{2,218.178}{6.733} \\ &= 329 \end{aligned}$$

Appendix II

Sample Distribution for the Study

S/N	Banks	Selected Branches	Selected Branches	No. of Female Staff	Total No. of Sample
1	Access Bank	i. Access Bank, Aka Rd ii. Access Bank, Gibbs Str. iii. Access Bank, W/Bassey Way iv. Access Bank, Banking Layout v. Access Bank, Abak Rd	Access Bank, Banking Layout	20	20
2	FIRST Bank	i. First Bank Abak Rd ii. First Bank Oron Rd iii. First Bank Aka Rd iv. First Bank, Banking Layout	First Bank, Oron Road	24	24
3	Heritage Bank	Heritage Bank, Aka Road	Heritage Bank, Aka Road	16	16
4	Fidelity Bank	Fidelity Bank, Abak Road	Fidelity Bank, Abak Road	17	17
5	Zenith Bank	i. Zenith Bank, Aka Rd ii. Zenith Bank Abak Rd iii. Zenith Bank, Oron Rd iv. Zenith Bank Banking Layout v. Zenith Bank, UNIUYO	Zenith Bank, Oron Rd	20	20
6	Schools	Selected schools	Location		
	i. Ikono Ibom Comprehensive Secondary School.	i. Ikono Ibom Comprehensive Secondary School.	Ikot Ayan Ikono	39	178
	ii. Community Secondary Commercial School.	ii. Community Secondary Commercial School.	Ikot Okubo Offot	35	
	iii. Community Secondary School.	iii. Community Secondary School.	Mbak Etoi	37	
	iv. Special Education Centre, Uyo.	iv. Special Education Centre, Uyo.	Mbiabong Etoi	24	
	v. Community Secondary School.	v. Community Secondary School.	Ikot Nsung Ikono	36	
7	Hospitals	Selected Hospital	Location		
	i. University of Uyo Teaching Hospital ii. St. Lukes Hospital iii. Specialists Hospital	University of Uyo Teaching Hospital	Abak road	492	54
	Total			329	329

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.



Suicidal Ideation among undergraduates of University of Lagos Nigeria: Can Personal and Psychological Factors Predict the Relationship?

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Abstract. This study investigated the association between personal factors (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being,) and psychological factors (locus of control, academic resilience) in predicting suicidal ideation among undergraduates of university of Lagos, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Three hundred and sixty-one undergraduates were randomly drawn from the undergraduates of the university (male =35.2%; female= 64.8%). Five scales were used for data collection, namely: Interpersonal relationship, ($\alpha=0.94$), Locus of Control, ($\alpha =.34$), Academic Resilience, ($\alpha = 0.90$), Subjective well-being ($\alpha=0.9$) and suicidal ideation ($\alpha = 0.93$). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression were used to analyse the data at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that though suicidal ideation was low (43%), respondents reported thinking about dying and death a couple of times a month, with mean scores of 4.63 and 4.64, respectively. Majority (5.95%) of the respondents had experienced thoughts related to suicide (planning methods, writing suicide notes and wishing they were dead). No significant difference in suicidal ideation between male and female was found. There was significant joint contribution of the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience) to the prediction of suicidal ideation ($F_{(4, 355)} = 5.406$, $p < 0.05$). The outcome suggests that 16.5% of the total variance observed in suicidal ideation could be accounted for by both personal and psychological factors. Of the factors considered, academic resilience was seen to be most potent ($\beta = -0.349$; $t = 3.209$, $p < 0.05$) in predicting suicidal ideation among this cohort. The outcome behoves behavioural scientists to incorporate these identified factors in mitigating suicidal ideation among undergraduates in Nigeria universities.

Keywords: Suicidal ideation among youths, interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, academics resilience

1. Introduction

The word "suicide" suggests a wide range of negative emotions and thoughts due to its association with self-destructive behaviour. Recognized as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, suicide has been identified as a significant global public health issue by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019). Its occurrence is worrisome as more than usual instances of individuals taking their lives have increased sporadically. With a worldwide mortality rate of 16 per 100,000, suicide translates to one death every 40 seconds and results in the death of almost one million people every year (Olusegun & Gbore, 2023). According to the WHO (2019), more than 700,000 people die due to suicide every year. The figures represent only a partial glimpse into the global suicide issue due to inadequate data availability. It is documented that out of individuals who attempted suicide, approximately 76.8%, were below 30 years. Globally, suicide ranks as the fourth leading cause of death among young people aged 15-29-, while in Africa, it ranks second within the same age group. Notably, Nigeria holds the 13th highest suicide mortality rate in Africa, standing at 9.5 per 100,000, exceeding the regional average of 7.4 % (WHO, 2018). There is evidence that suicide rate among in-school and out-of youths are on the rise. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five high school students seriously considered attempting suicide in 2023. Students from low-income countries including Nigeria have a higher prevalence rate of suicidal ideation and self-harm as compared to their counterparts from high income countries (Oppong et al. 2017). A study reported a prevalence rate of 20%

for suicide ideation and 12% of self-harm among undergraduates (Kukoyi, et al. 2023). Further, Oladeji et al. (2021) revealed that the 12-month prevalence of suicide ideation and attempts among youths in Nigeria was between 6.1%, 22.9%, 3.0%, and 12.5% for the lifetime rates of suicidal ideation, plan, and attempt respectively which is higher (3.2%, 1.0%, and 0.7%,) for the adult population in Nigeria. A recent study by Iweama et al. (2024) using undergraduates from northeast Nigeria revealed that out of 616 students with a mean age of 21.41 ± 4.72 years who participated in their study, 34.9% had suicidal behaviour. Similarly, a survey conducted among undergraduates in Lagos State University and Lagos State Polytechnic reported the prevalence of depression and suicidal ideation to be 22.5% and 21.6% respectively (Ladi-Akinyemi, et al. 2023). Moreover, gender difference in suicidal ideation was reported by Carretta, et al. (2023). Female undergraduates were reported to have more likelihood than males to experience suicidal ideation, while males complete suicide more than females (Carretta et al. 2023).

Suicidal behaviour comprises suicide ideation, plan, attempt, and actual suicide (Iweama, et al. 2024). Suicide ideation has been recognized as the strongest predictor of suicidal behaviours and attempts (Choi et al. 2020). Little wonder why Sobanski, et al (2022) define suicide as the complete process of a continuum that began with suicide ideation, followed by an attempt at suicide, and finally completed suicide. This means that every suicide attempt or completed suicide often starts with suicidal thoughts, and this is captured in the concept of suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation is thus an expression of suffering associated with internal conflicts or depression and anxiety caused by intense physical, mental and social restructuring. Thus, the individual thinks “my family would be better off without me”, or “life is worthless”, showing thoughts of death, pain and hopelessness through artistic expression, but has not yet formulated a specific plan. People in this stage are vulnerable to suicide. At the beginning, suicidal ideas usually appear intermittently, and intensify later to become permanent and invasive. These ideas lead to the establishment of a suicidal plan, accomplishment of that process which is the eventual death (Harmer, et al. 2024).

The progression of suicidal ideation to suicidal behaviour can be conceptualized within the framework of ideation-to-action framework which focuses on understanding how individuals progress from contemplating suicide to attempting it. The critical factor in this transition from ideation to action is an individual's capability for suicide, encompassing various elements that enable a person to make a

suicide attempt. Further interpersonal theory of suicide sees suicide as 'acquired capability' that is a critical factor in the progression from suicidal ideation to suicide attempts. This capability is marked by a decreased fear of death and a heightened tolerance for physical pain resulting from repeated exposure to painful or distressing events, such as childhood trauma or war. According to this theory, an individual with an elevated level of acquired capability is more prone to transition from suicide ideation to suicide attempts. As a result of the forgoing, understanding suicidal ideation is essential because it provides an early warning for subsequent suicidal acts and also offers valuable insights into individual's level of suffering and their specific needs and the offers windows for intervention.

Studies have identified risk factors for suicidal ideation among youths. For example, Nock et al (2008) identified demographic, psychiatric, psychological, biological and stressful life events as some risk factors for suicidal behaviours. Similarly, WHO (2014) identified access to lethal firearms and high doses of illicit substances or drugs as risk factors for suicidal ideation. Research evidence suggests that the predominant risk factors for suicidal behaviours among Nigerian youths include demographic or personal, psychiatric or mental disorders (depression and anxiety), stressful life events (academic stress), family conflict, financial or economic factors (unemployment), history of childhood adversities, and substance abuse (Uwakwe, et al. 2011). Research on suicidal behaviour in Nigeria identifies various methods, including chemical ingestion, self-cutting, burning, hanging, and the ingestion of lethal doses of rat poison or pesticides. These methods are often chosen impulsively by individuals experiencing emotional instability or psychosocial stressors (Jidong, et al. 2024). It is documented that suicidal ideation is linked with other health risk behaviours such as tobacco smoking, aggressive behaviours, illicit drug use, alcohol use, and experience of sexual intercourse, anger, shock, and depression (Harmer et al. 2024).

As stated earlier, suicidal ideation results from intricate psychological, biological, environmental, and cultural interactions. One personal factor examined in this study is interpersonal relationship. Gender as a personal factor relating with suicidal ideation was examined in this study. Official statistics and research studies have found that there are a number of gender differences in suicide (Zhang et al. 2019) with an overrepresentation of females reporting suicidal ideation and exhibiting nonfatal suicidal behaviour and a preponderance of males completing suicide,

which is known as the “gender paradox of suicidal behaviour” (Schrijvers, 2012). In developed countries, the risk of suicide is two (Western Europe) to 4-fold (USA) greater for males than females (Sher, et al. 2022). Worldwide, more than twice as many males than females aged 15 to 19 years commit suicide (4.1 per 100 000 for females and 10.5 per 100 000 for males) (McLoughlin, et al, 2015). There are some observations and studies of gender differences in suicidal ideation and behaviour. However, gender differences in suicidal ideation remain relatively unstudied. Understanding differences in suicidality in men and women is very important because it may lead to the development of effective, gender-specific suicide prevention interventions.

Further, Interpersonal relationship plays a crucial role in determining an individual's psychological well-being. However, it has equally been shown that interpersonal relationship can either make a man or ruin him. Eseohe and Ugo (2019) opine that interpersonal interactions between undergraduates, their parents, siblings, friends, peers, teachers, etc. can be a significant source of suicide ideation or behaviour, and can also be a significant source of stress, particularly if there is disagreement in these relationships. Stressful or negative life situations, particularly those that involve humiliation, loss, defeat, or threat, frequently precede suicidal conduct. A high rate of loneliness, a lack of strong social connections, and a lack of a close confidant relationship is reported in those who make significant suicide attempts (Harmer, et al. 2024). Major occurrences in life that raise the likelihood of suicide are interpersonal losses and conflicts (substantial family disputes, unemployment, moving, and financial difficulties). The family offers emotional support to the entire community both within the confines of the family and outside of it. However, contextual stressors such as parental divorce, parent loss, sibling rivalry, interpersonal tension, pre-existing psychiatric problems in the family, and suicidal conduct in the setting of the family can heighten feelings of insecurity and raise the risk of suicide behaviour. This idea was supported by Eseohe and Ugo (2019) who observed that the likelihood of a high rate of loneliness, lack of strong social connections, lack of a close and confidant relationship are present in those who make significant suicide attempts. The relationship between interpersonal relationship and suicidal ideation is yet to be fully understood.

Another factor examined in this study is the correlation between subjective well-being and suicidal ideation. Existing literature suggests that subjective well-being may play a role in influencing suicidal

ideation. Subjective well-being, often denoted as "self-reported well-being," encompasses individuals' perceptions and evaluations of various aspects of their lives. It serves as a potent predictor of overall health, wellness, and longevity, and is frequently utilised as a metric to assess mental health and happiness (Das, et al. 2020). Subjective well-being is influenced by internal and external factors, including personality and environment. It is influenced by inborn temperament and outlook, but circumstances also impact subjective well-being. There is preliminary evidence to suggest that individuals with high subjective well-being are likely going to be free from suicidal thoughts because they are always positive about the future and always see opportunity in every difficulty. Sequel to this, they are less stressed out and seldom run into depression. Whereas, individuals with low subjective well-being are said to be easily swayed into depression and when depression sets in the accommodation of suicidal thoughts and possible actualisation of such thoughts becomes inevitable (Bryan et al. 2023). The relationship between subjective well-being is yet to be fully explored.

Sefa, Musharavati, Kushneel and Russell (2020), suggest that the role of locus of control as psychological factor cannot be underplayed in suicidal behaviour. It is documented that cognitive factors constitute an important risk factor to the development of suicidal thoughts and behaviours (STBs). Engaging in depressive and anger rumination are uniquely associated with elevated vulnerabilities to STBs. Variations in attentional focus and control may further modify the impacts of rumination. For one, grit resembles the inflexible thinking patterns inherent in rumination, potentially contributing to one's capability of persisting in carrying out suicidal behaviours despite fears of pain or death. In the context of rumination, locus of control may alter the perspectives to which individuals attribute negative experiences (Yu-Chin Lin et al. 2023). According to other studies, as people age, their locus of control shifts further inward. Experts have discovered that individuals with an internal center of control typically live happier lives. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that internal locus of control does not necessarily equate to “good” and that external locus of control does not always equate to “bad.” Having an external locus of control can be advantageous in some situations, especially when a person’s self-esteem is at risk or when the situation is actually beyond their control (Andrew & Colin, 2016).

Academic resilience is the second psychological factor examined in this study in relation to suicide ideation. Academic resilience is the ability to keep going and

achieve academic goals despite challenges. It's a complex concept that involves dealing with stress, pressure, and setbacks in an academic setting (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021). According to Okechukwu, et al. (2022) stresses associated with completing university education, as well as concerns about unemployment, poverty, destitution, economic crises, feelings of insecurity, marginalization (including biases) and economic disempowerment (Nweze et al. 1993) are as prevalent among Nigerian undergraduates. Failure to adequately cope greatly increases the chances of severing youths from the traditional values and moral regulations that seemed to have earlier provided moral foundation and guide, leading to thoughts of suicide. This could account for Glenn et al. (2020) assertion that suicidal thoughts are more common among undergraduates. There is paucity of studies on the relationship between academic resilience and suicidal ideations. Preliminary evidence suggests a positive correlation between academic resilience and psychological well-being. They concluded that students with academic resilience and psychological well-being were less likely to have suicidal ideation (Abbas, et al. 2024).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The broad purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which personal factors (gender, interpersonal relationships, subjective well-being) and psychological factors (locus of control, and academic resilience) predicted suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Access the prevalence level of suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria.
- Investigate if there is a significant difference in suicidal ideation based on gender among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria.
- Determine the joint contribution of the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience) to the prediction of the dependent variable (suicidal ideation) among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria.
- Investigate the relative contribution of the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience) to the prediction of the dependent variable (suicidal ideation) among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in University of Lagos, Nigeria?
- Is there gender a significant difference in suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria based on gender?
- To what extent do the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control and academic resilience) jointly predict the dependent variable (suicidal ideation) among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria?
- What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control and academic resilience) to the prediction of the dependent variable (suicidal ideation) among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria?

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Design

Descriptive survey research design was used to systematically describe the population characteristics without manipulation of variables. Moreover, with this design answers to what, where, when and how about the variables were proffered but responses to the "why" questions were beyond the scope of the study.

2.2 Instrumentations

Five instruments were serialised into one and labelled A through F: Each section corresponds to each of the variables of the research scope. Section A was designed to gather demographic information from the participants.

2.2.1 Section A: Socio-Demographical Data

The socio-demographic information collected from respondents includes a range of factors that provide insight into their backgrounds and characteristics. These factors include age, sex, marital status, religion, academic level, family type, and parents' marital status.

2.2.2 Section B: Academic Resilience Scale (ARS)

The Academic Resilience Scale- developed by Cassidy (2016) was used to measure the respondents' academic resilience. The ARS-30 explored process as opposed to outcome aspects of resilience, providing a measure of academic resilience based on students' specific adaptive cognitive-affective and behavioural responses to academic adversity. Responses to the 30 scale items were made by participants along a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5), once they had read a short vignette. Example: *I would use the situation to motivate myself? I would not change my long-term goals and ambitions?* Item analysis presented convincing evidence for the internal consistency reliability of the scale, with the reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 exceeding levels normally considered acceptable.

2.2.3 Section C: Interpersonal relationship scale FIAT-Q Short form

The FIAT-Q short form scale is an interpersonal relationship scale that was developed by Callaghan in 2014. The scale was originally developed by Callaghan and published in 2006 by the American Psychological Association with five main areas (called classes) of interpersonal functioning but was later modified to a short form with 6-point Likert in 2016. FIAT Q-short has 6-point Likert scale range from 1(strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) but the Likert scale was modified to a 5-point Likert scale range from 1(strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Example: *do not want to share things about myself with others? When friends ask me about how I am doing, I choose not to tell them?* The undergraduates rated using the Likert format. A validity and reliability test were carried out with a reliability coefficient is ($r = .94$).

2.2.4 Section D: Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

The Multidimensional Locus of Control IPC Scale by Kourmoussi et al. (2015) was utilised to measure participants' locus of control. The original Multidimensional Locus of Control IPC Scale consists of 24 items. All items were scored on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from -3 (Strongly Disagree) to +3 (Strongly agree). The scale yields three distinct factors. The Internality subscale consists of eight items (items 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, 23), measuring the degree of a person's faith in his/her own abilities and capacity to control the outcome of his/her life's events (e.g., "Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability."). The Powerful Others subscale also contains eight items (items 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24) which assess the extent to which a person feels that

his/her course of life is steered by people of power who usually control the fate of the weak (e.g., "I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people."). The Chance subscale consists of eight items (items 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22), estimating the perceptions according to which luck and fate determine a person's life, thus leaving him/her with limited if any control in various life situations (e.g., "To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings."). Each subscale produces a unique score by adding up the eight responses on it and adding to the sum a constant of +24 to eliminate negative sums. Therefore, each respondent receives three scores (each one ranging from 0 to 48) indicative of his/her relative view on each of the three dimensions. An individual could score high or low on all three dimensions. The Internal consistency reliability was satisfactory with a Cronbach's alpha above 0.70 for all LOC dimensions. CFA confirmed that the items composing the three subscales of the IPC LOC Scale measure the same construct (Kourmoussi, et al. 2015).

2.2.5 Section E: BBC Subjective Well-being scale (BBC-SWB)

BBC Well-being Scale developed by Kinderman et al. (2011) was used to measure subjective well-being of the respondents. It was a 24-item self-report questionnaire based on several existing established measures of well-being (Ryff, 1989) to measure the wide breadth of domains commonly included in the definition of well-being (McGillivray et al. 2007) and supplemented by additional questions commonly used in mental health settings. Items were chosen to reflect the four domains (physical health, psychological health, social relationships and environment) of the WHOQOL-BREF (Group WHOQOL 1998) and the six domains (self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations with others and personal growth) of the Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire Group (WHOQOL, 1998). The participants reported how they feel described their experience using a Likert scale of not at all (5), a little (4) moderately (3) very much (2) extremely (1). Typical items include; "*do you feel depressed or anxious*" "*Do you feel you have a purpose in life*". Psychological Well-being subscale scale – items 4 (reversed score), 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, Physical health and well-being subscale scale – items 1, 2, 3, 21, 22, 23, 24, and relationships subscale scale – items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Total well-being score is each sub-scale added up. The higher the score indicates better levels of well-being in each domain and for the total subjective well-being. The reliability index obtained during pilot study was $\alpha=0.9$

2.2.6 Section F: Suicidal ideation Questionnaire SIQ-JR

The Suicidal ideation Questionnaire SIQ-JR was adapted to assess the frequency the respondents had suicidal thoughts. The SIQ-JR consists of 15 items from which they were asked to select from a number of sentences that best describes their thoughts in the past month. Typical items in the questionnaire include: *"I thought it would be better if I was not alive"*. *"I thought that killing myself would solve my problems"*. The response pattern was in Likert format of: almost every day (5), couple of times a week (4), about once a week (3) couple of times a month (2) about once a month (1) and I had this thought before but not in the past month I never had this thought (0). The authors reported a reliability coefficient of .93 to .94. For the purpose of this study, the instrument was pilot tested with undergraduates from the University of Ibadan. The stability index obtained was $\alpha = 0.93$.

2.3 Study Location

The study was conducted at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. The school is popularly known as UNILAG. The school is a public research university located in Lagos, Nigeria and was founded in 1962. UNILAG is one of the first generation universities in Nigeria and is ranked among the top universities in Africa in major education publications. The university presently has three campuses in the mainland of Lagos. Two of its campuses are located at Yaba (the main campus in Akoka and the recently created campus at the former school of radiography). The college of medicine is located at Idi-Araba, Surulere. Its main campus is largely surrounded by the Lagos Lagoon and has 802 acres of land. As at 2024, the University of Lagos admits around 8,500 undergraduates' students annually and enrolls over 57,000 students. University of Lagos was purposively selected due to the high prevalence of suicidal ideation in a recent study conducted among undergraduates in Lagos State University and Lagos State Polytechnic (Ladi-Akinyemi, et al. 2023).

2.4 Procedure for Data Collection

Three hundred and sixty-one undergraduates at University of Lagos were drawn from approximately 5,320 undergraduates. In the first phase, University of Lagos was purposively selected because it is the only federal university in Lagos, Nigeria. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to draw 4 faculties (Education, Science, Art and Law) from 12 faculties in the University. In the third stage, seven hundred and five undergraduates who

volunteered to participate in the study were recruited and briefed. In the last phase sixty one (361) undergraduates who met the inclusion criteria were recruited. The inclusion criteria for this study were: (1); the person must be undergraduate of University of Lagos (2); he/she must be willing to respond to the questionnaire (3) he/she must not have known mental health issues. The questionnaires were administered in the four faculties with the support of two research assistants

2.5 Sample size determination

Sample size was determined using the formula below:

$$N = \frac{Z^2 P (1-P)}{d^2}$$

where n= minimum sample size

Z= constant

P = estimated prevalence (50%)

d = Precision which is 95% confidence, interval is 5%

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

n= 361 respondents

10% of the calculated sample size was added.

The minimum sample size for the study was 450 respondents.

2.6 Ethical Clearance

In addition to the approval obtained from the deans of the four faculties which participated in the study, the researcher obtained informed consent from all participants after explaining the purpose of the study. They were informed that the research does not involve any risks to their lives. To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents, all the questionnaires were coded and there was no information on name, department or faculty. They were informed that they have the right to *opt out* from the study if they no were no longer interested.

2.7 Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency count and percentages) was used to analyse the demographic information of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research question 1. T-test was used to find the gender differences in suicidal ideation in research question 2, while the inferential statistics were Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship between the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, academic resilience) and the dependent variable (suicidal ideation). Multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the joint and relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of suicidal ideation in research question 3-5. Level of significance

adopted was 0.05 alpha level. The results are displayed on Tables.

3. Results

In order to obtain the respondents' demographic profile, descriptive statistic was used. The result is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of participants

Variables	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Males	127	35.2
	Females	234	64.8
Age range	18-20 years	45	12.5
	21-23 years	92	25.5
	24-26 years	124	34.3
	27-29 years	68	18.8
	30 years and above	32	8.9
Religion	Christian	278	77.0
	Islam	83	23.0
	Others	-	-
Marital status	Single	243	67.3
	Married	78	21.6
	Divorced	25	6.9
	Widowed	15	4.2
Levels	100 Level	85	23.4
	200 Level	113	31.3
	300 Level	97	26.9
	400 Level	66	18.3
Departments	Art	46	12.7
	Law	61	16.9
	Micro-biology	11	3.0
	Guidance and Counselling	158	43.7
	Philosophy	85	23.5
Grand Total		361	100.0

Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic distribution of respondents categorised by gender. Among the 361 respondents surveyed, 127 were male, representing 35.2% of the total sample. In contrast, there were 234 female respondents (64.8%) of the total sample. This suggests a notable disparity in gender representation, with a higher proportion of female respondents compared to male respondents in the study cohort. Among the 361 respondents surveyed, 45 fell within the age range of 18-20 years, comprising 12.5% of the total sample. The largest proportion of respondents, 92 (25.5%) were in the age range of 21-23 years. Additionally, 124 respondents (34.3%) were aged between 24-26 years, while 68 (18.8%) fell within the age range of 27-29 years. Furthermore, 32 respondents (8.9%) were aged 30 years and above. The demographic distribution based on religion reveals that the majority (278) representing 77.0% of the respondents identified themselves as Christians. Moreover, 83 respondents (23.0%) indicated that they were of the Islamic faith. It's worth noting that there were no specific details provided for respondents who identified with other religious affiliations. The distribution of respondents according to their marital status was as follows: 243 participants (67.3%) reported being single, while 78 respondents (21.6%) indicated that

they were married. Additionally, 25 individuals (6.9%) reported being divorced, and 15 respondents (4.2%) stated that they were widowed. The Table also revealed the distribution of respondents across their academic levels. Among the undergraduates' students surveyed, 23.4% were in their 100 Level, 31.3% were in their 200 Level, 26.9% were in their 300 Level, and 18.3% were in their 400 Level. This breakdown illustrates that the largest proportion of respondents were enrolled in their 200 Level, while the smallest proportion was in their 400 Level. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their respective departments. Among the 361 participants, 46 (12.7%) were from the Art department, while 61 respondents (16.9%) belonged to the Law Department. Additionally, 11 participants (3.0%) were enrolled in Microbiology, while the majority, comprising 158 individuals (43.7%), were from the Guidance and Counselling department. Finally, 85 respondents (23.5%) were students of the Philosophy department.

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation on the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria

S/N	Prevalence of suicidal ideation	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	I thought it would be better if I was not alive	5.94	1.83	5**
2	I thought about killing myself	5.95	1.82	5**
3	I thought about how I would kill myself	6.18	1.71	6**
4	I thought about when I would kill myself	6.23	1.65	6**
5	I thought about people dying	4.63	2.23	4*
6	I thought about death	4.64	2.25	4*
7	I thought about what to write in a suicide note	6.15	1.66	6**
8	I thought about writing a will	6.41	1.38	6**
9	I thought about telling people I plan to kill myself	6.65	.930	6**
10	I thought about how people would feel if I killed myself	5.75	2.02	5**
11	I wished I were dead	6.42	1.38	6**
12	I thought that killing myself would solve my problems	6.13	1.70	6**
13	I thought that others would be happier if I was dead	6.31	1.56	6**
14	I wished that I had never been born	6.06	1.72	6**
15	I thought that no one cared if I lived or died	5.92	1.89	5**
Average Mean Score		5.95	1.71	5**

Keys: *The frequency of experiencing suicidal ideation was assessed using a scale consisting of seven levels in this study. Each level was assigned a numerical value for clarity and analysis. "Almost every day (7)" indicated the highest frequency, followed by "Couple of times in a week (6)," "Almost once a week (5)," and "Couple of times a month (4)." A slightly lower frequency was represented by "About once a month (3)," while "I had this thought before but not in this past month (2)" indicated a further decrease in frequency. Lastly, "I never had this thought (1)" denoted the absence of suicidal ideation. Levels 1 to 4 were categorised as indicating a high frequency, while levels 5 to 7 were interpreted as indicating a low frequency of suicidal ideation.*

The findings presented in Table 2 highlight the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in University of Lagos State. The results indicate that respondents reported thinking about dying and death a couple of times a month, with mean scores of 4.63 and 4.64, respectively. Additionally, thoughts such as wishing they were not alive, considering suicide, and contemplating how others would feel if they were to commit suicide were reported about once a month, with mean scores ranging from 5.75 to 5.95. Furthermore, respondents indicated that they had previously entertained thoughts related to suicide, such as planning methods, writing suicide notes, and wishing they were dead. These thoughts were reported to occur less frequently, with mean scores ranging from 6.13 to 6.65. However, the average mean score across all items was 5.95, suggesting a relatively low prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduate students at University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: Is there gender a significant gender difference in suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean differences on suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos based on gender

S/N	Prevalence of suicidal ideation	Male respondents = 127			Female respondents = 234		
		Mean	SD	Remarks	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	I thought it would be better if I was not alive	6.16	1.57	6**	5.82	1.95	5**
2	I thought about killing myself	6.20	1.71	6**	5.82	1.88	5**
3	I thought about how I would kill myself	6.30	1.60	6**	6.12	1.78	6**
4	I thought about when I would kill myself	6.43	1.40	6**	6.13	1.77	6**
5	I thought about people dying	4.30	2.08	4*	4.81	2.30	4*
6	I thought about death	4.43	2.25	4*	4.75	2.26	4*
7	I thought about what to write in a suicide note	6.53	1.30	6**	5.96	1.80	5**
8	I thought about writing a will	6.29	1.48	6**	6.47	1.34	6**
9	I thought about telling people I plan to kill myself	6.67	1.13	6**	6.63	.80	6**
10	I thought about how people would feel if I killed myself	5.90	1.88	5**	5.67	2.11	5**
11	I wished I were dead	6.50	1.40	6**	6.38	1.37	6**
12	I thought that killing myself would solve my problems	6.48	1.50	6**	5.94	1.79	5**
13	I thought that others would be happier if I was dead	6.80	.60	6**	6.05	1.84	6**
14	I wished that I had never been born	6.35	1.56	6**	5.91	1.80	5**
15	I thought that no one cared if I lived or died	5.74	2.32	5**	6.01	1.64	6**
Average Mean Score		6.07	1.58	6**	5.89	1.76	5**
Mean Difference		0.18					

Keys: *The frequency of experiencing suicidal ideation was assessed using a scale consisting of seven levels in this study. Each level was assigned a numerical value for clarity and analysis. "Almost every day (7)" indicated the highest frequency, followed by "Couple of times in a week (6)," "Almost once a week (5)," and "Couple of times a month (4)." A slightly lower frequency was represented by "About once a month (3)," while "I had this thought before but not in this past month (2)" indicated a further decrease in frequency. Lastly, "I never had this thought (1)" denoted the absence of suicidal ideation. Levels 1 to 4 were categorized as indicating a high frequency, while levels 5 to 7 were interpreted as indicating a low frequency of suicidal ideation.*

The results depicted in Table 3 illustrate variations in suicidal ideation based on gender among respondents. Among male participants, the data revealed that they reported experiencing thoughts about people dying and death a couple of times a month, with mean scores of 4.30 and 4.43, respectively. Additionally, male respondents indicated thoughts about how people would feel if they killed themselves and whether anyone cared if they lived or died, rating these aspects about once a month with mean scores of 5.90 and 5.74, respectively. Furthermore, they reported previous thoughts about various aspects of suicide, such as wishing they were dead or contemplating methods of ending their lives, with mean scores ranging from 6.16 to 6.80.

In contrast, female respondents rated similar aspects of suicidal ideation slightly higher, reporting thoughts about people dying and death a couple of times a month with mean scores of 4.81 and 4.75, respectively. Similarly, they reported previous thoughts about suicide-related behaviours with mean scores ranging from 6.01 to 6.63. The average mean scores for male and female respondents were 6.07 and 5.89, respectively, indicating a mean score difference of 0.18 and suggesting a difference in suicidal ideation based on gender.

Table 4: t-test showing the difference of suicidal ideation between male and female

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Cal.	t-Crit.	Decision
Male	127	6.07	1.58	359	.660	±1.96	NS
Female	234	5.89	1.76				

Table 4 presents a summary of the t-test conducted to compare suicidal ideation between male and female respondents. The showed that there was no significant gender difference in suicidal ideation ($t=.660$, $df=359$, $p>0.05$). This outcome indicates that the null hypothesis, which posited no significant difference in suicidal ideation between males and females, was upheld. Therefore, based on the statistical analysis, there was no evidence to suggest that there was a significant disparity in suicidal ideation between male and female respondents in the study population.

Research Question 3: What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control and academic resilience) to the prediction of the dependent variable (suicidal ideation) among undergraduate of University of Lagos, Nigeria? This research question was analysed and result presented in table 4,

Table 4: summary of the regression analysis conducted to assess the collective contribution of the independent variables to suicidal ideation

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.450	.203	.165	8.12955

Predictors: (Constant), interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, academic resilience

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6157.370	4	1539.343	5.406	.001
	Residual	24204.452	355	284.758		
	Total	30361.822	359			

a. Dependent variable: Suicidal ideation

b. Predictors: (Constant), interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, academic resilience

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the regression analysis conducted to assess the collective impact of interpersonal relationships, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience on suicidal ideation. The results indicate a significant combined effect of these independent variables on the prediction of suicidal ideation ($F(4, 355) = 5.406, p < 0.05$). The rejection of the research question suggests that these factors collectively contribute to the likelihood of experiencing suicidal thoughts. Furthermore, the analysis yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions (R) of 0.450, multiple R-squared (R^2) of 0.203, and an adjusted R-squared of 0.165. This indicates that approximately 16.5% of the total variance observed in suicidal ideation can be explained by variations in interpersonal relationships, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience. These findings underscore the importance of considering multiple factors in understanding and addressing suicidal ideation among undergraduates

Research Questions 5: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of suicidal ideation among undergraduates at University of Lagos, Nigeria? This was analysed and presented in table

Table 5: Summary of Regression of relative contribution of the independent variables to suicidal ideation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	65.488	16.726			3.915	.000
Interpersonal Relationships	-.320	.130	-.274		-2.463	.016
Subjective Well-being	.973	.441	.222		2.209	.030
Locus of Control	-.209	.311	-.067		-.674	.502
Academic Resilience	.456	.142	.349		3.209	.002

Table 5 presents the findings related to question five, focusing on the relative contributions of interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience to suicidal ideation. The results indicate that all four factors significantly contribute to predicting suicidal ideation. Specifically, interpersonal relationship ($\beta = -0.274; t = -2.463, p < 0.05$), subjective well-being ($\beta = 0.222; t = 2.209, p < 0.05$), locus of control ($\beta = -0.067; t = -0.674, p < 0.05$), and academic resilience ($\beta = 0.349; t = 3.209, p < 0.05$) each exhibited a significant relationship with suicidal ideation. Notably, by subjective well-being, locus of control, and interpersonal relationship, which academic resilience emerged as the most influential

predictor, followed had the least predictive power in this context.

4. Discussion of findings

This study investigated the relationship between four predictor variables interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience on suicidal ideation. The results show that there was positive relationship between interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, and academic resilience on suicidal ideation. The result revealed that the prevalence of suicidal ideation among undergraduates in University of Lagos, Nigeria was low with an average mean score of 5.95. The low

prevalence of suicidal ideation among youths in University of Lagos may be attributed to several factors. This finding agrees with the findings of Okello, Orach, Enyimu, and Okello (2023) whose study found a 13.7% lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation among Ugandan university students, with academic stress, financial difficulties, and loneliness being significant predictors. Melese, Yimer, Abebe, and Tulu, (2022) whose study reported a 17.4% lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation and 8.7% prevalence of suicide attempts among Ethiopian university students. Academic stress, family conflict, and hopelessness were significant risk factors. Ohadugha, Okpechi, Ogbonnaya, and Emenike, (2021) who found a 15.4% prevalence of suicidal ideation and 3.4% prevalence of suicide attempts among Nigerian university students. Academic stress, financial problems, and emotional problems were significantly associated with both ideation and attempts.

Mnguni, Onyolo, and Matshitshana, (2020) whose study reported a 12.1% prevalence of suicidal ideation among South African university students. Depression, academic stress, financial difficulties, and loneliness were significant risk factors. The result also revealed that there is a positive relationship between interpersonal relationship and suicidal ideation among youths in tertiary institution in University of Lagos, Nigeria with r-value of .179 and a percentage of 3.2. The positive relationship suggests that as interpersonal relationships improve, the likelihood of suicidal ideation among youths decreases. Poor interpersonal relationships may lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and lack of social support, which are known risk factors for suicidal ideation. Strengthening social connections through peer support programs, group activities, and community-building initiatives can be crucial in reducing the vulnerability of students to suicidal thoughts.

This finding supports what was reported by Shelef, Fruchter, Mann, and Yacobi, (2014) who found that suicidal ideation is strongly correlated with components of interpersonal and cognitive difficulties. The finding also supports Chang, (2017) who found that an association between social relationships and late-life suicidal ideation were moderated by country income levels, social-cultural context, study types, and various measurements of social relationships. The finding further supports Ajibola, and Agunbiade, (2022) whose findings from the qualitative component also considered undergraduates that have academic challenges, engage in substance abuse, and have parents with marital problems to be prone to suicidal ideation. Suicidal ideation among these young people

is embedded in their network of relationships, which can be mitigated when the quality of support systems is responsive and adequately accessed.

This outcome also corroborates Ademola, Ijeoma, and Felicity, (2023) whose findings revealed that there are significant influence of family supports, acquaintances and distant relatives on mental health and suicide among learners in Nigeria. The result revealed that there is a positive relationship between subjective well-being and suicidal ideation among youths in tertiary institution in University of Lagos, Nigeria with r-value of .298 and a percentage of 8.9. The positive correlation indicates that higher levels of subjective well-being are associated with lower rates of suicidal ideation. This highlights the importance of addressing factors that contribute to students' overall life satisfaction and happiness. Interventions promoting positive coping strategies, mindfulness practices, and well-being enhancement programs can be implemented to improve the mental and emotional state of students.

This outcome concurs with the findings of Li, Wang, Luo, and Chen (2022) who discovered a significant association between subjective well-being and suicidal ideation among university students in China. Higher levels of subjective well-being were associated with lower odds of suicidal ideation. Chen, and Hoy (2021) whose study established a complex relationship, with lower levels of subjective well-being associated with higher odds of suicidal ideation, but also with some evidence of a non-linear relationship, where very high levels of subjective well-being were also associated with increased odds of suicidal ideation. Fazel, Runyan, and Smith (2020) whose finding showed that higher levels of subjective well-being at baseline were associated with lower odds of suicidal ideation at follow-up, suggesting a protective effect.

Kim, and Han (2019) whose findings suggested that social support moderated the relationship between subjective well-being and suicidal ideation, such that higher levels of social support strengthened the protective effect of subjective well-being against suicidal ideation. The research result also revealed that there is a positive relationship between locus of control and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in University of Lagos, Nigeria with r-value of .052 and a percentage of 0.3. While the relationship is positive, the low r-value and percentage suggest a weak association between locus of control and suicidal ideation. Locus of control refers to one's belief in their ability to control life events. The weak association may indicate that other factors, such as social support and mental health resources, play a more substantial

role in influencing suicidal ideation among youths in the university.

The outcome is in agreement with Adu-Gyamfi, Ayim, Agyapong, and Otoo (2023) who found a positive association between greater external locus of control and suicidal ideation among university students. Brant, and O'Connor, (2022) who discovered a positive link between external locus of control and suicidal ideation, along with increased depressive symptoms, among young adults. Kuo, Chang, Huang, Wang, and Yeh (2020) who established a relationship between locus of control and suicidal ideation might be mediated by internalizing symptoms like depression and anxiety. Lee, Han, Noh, and Lee (2021) found a moderating effect of resilience, where higher levels of internal locus of control buffer the negative impact of stressors on suicidal ideation among young adults. Ofole (2022) who established that locus of control and interpersonal relationship among youth and parents considered contribute to the prediction of quality of life.

There was also a positive relationship between academic resilience and suicidal ideation among youths in tertiary institution in University of Lagos, Nigeria with r-value of .242 and a percentage of 5.8. The positive correlation suggests that higher levels of academic resilience are associated with lower rates of suicidal ideation. Academic resilience involves the ability to adapt to challenges and setbacks in the academic environment. Interventions focusing on building resilience skills, study habits, and stress management techniques can contribute to reducing the risk of suicidal thoughts among students facing academic pressures.

This finding corresponds with the findings of Liu, Li, and Jiang (2023) found that academic resilience significantly predicted lower levels of suicidal ideation, even after accounting for factors like depression and anxiety. Wang, Xu, Zhang, and Yang (2022) who identified academic resilience as a key factor mitigating the risk of suicidal ideation and behaviours among university students. Liu, Zhang, Wang, and Wang, (2021) who revealed that academic resilience moderated the relationship between academic stress and suicidal ideation, indicating that higher resilience reduces the negative impact of stress on suicidal thoughts. Park, Lee, and Bae (2020) who demonstrated that academic resilience had a buffering effect against suicidal ideation and behaviours, particularly among students experiencing high levels of academic stress. In response to question two which states that does gender play a significant role in influencing suicidal ideation among students at

University of Lagos, Nigeria? The result revealed that there is a difference in suicidal ideation based on gender with mean of 0.18. The gender difference in suicidal ideation may stem from various societal and cultural factors. Men and women may experience different stressors, coping mechanisms, and societal expectations. Understanding and addressing these gender-specific factors are crucial in developing targeted interventions. For example, mental health programs may need to address masculinity norms, stigma, or specific stressors that disproportionately affect one gender over the other. This finding is in line with the findings of Agyemang, Otoo, Appiah-Agyekum, and Asiamah, (2023) who found that academic stress, financial problems, and loneliness were significantly associated with suicidal ideation, with gender being a non-significant factor.

Adeyemo, and Adebayo (2022) who identified academic stress, relationship problems, and substance abuse as significant predictors of suicidal ideation, with gender showing complex interactions with these factors. Matseke, Chikunga, and Makoane, (2021) who found that academic stress, financial difficulties, and family conflict were significantly associated with suicidal ideation, while gender interacted with academic stress to increase risk for females. Nyamweya, Njagi, and Muriithi, (2020) who identified academic stress, financial problems, and lack of social support as significant predictors of suicidal ideation, with gender showing inconsistent associations across different universities.

Furthermore, the research also shows that there is a positive relationship among interpersonal relationship, subjective well-being, locus of control, academic resilience and suicidal ideation among undergraduates in University of Lagos, Nigeria with r-value of .450 and a percentage of 20.3. This result could have been fostered by a supportive and inclusive campus environment. Effective interpersonal connections, both among peers and with staff, may contribute to a sense of belonging and social support, positively influencing subjective well-being. A locus of control that empowers students to perceive their academic success as within their control can enhance academic resilience. Additionally, a resilient academic mindset may act as a protective factor against suicidal ideation. Implementing mental health programs, counseling services, and awareness campaigns would likely contribute to creating a holistic approach to well-being, fostering positive relationships, and reducing the risk of suicidal thoughts among university students in the region.

This finding supports the findings of Allen and Murrell (2023) who discovered the importance of strong social connections for mental health during the transition to adulthood, including reduced risk of depression and anxiety. Also, Jackson and Funder (2022) whose study demonstrates that higher levels of subjective well-being are associated with better mental health outcomes and increased resilience to stress and challenges, including those faced in academic settings. Additionally, Rooksby, Sarchiapone, Heron, and Boath, (2022) who in their study identified strong social support, positive self-esteem, and academic success as protective factors against suicidal ideation and attempts in young adults. Furthermore, Ansell and Crocker (2021) who discovered that an internal locus of control, where individuals believe they have control over their lives, is associated with better mental health outcomes, including reduced risk of depression and anxiety. Likewise, Wright, O'Toole, and Espelage, (2020) whose study revealed higher levels of resilience are associated with reduced risk of mental health problems and suicidal ideation among university students. Also, this is seen the Ofole (2017), who pointed out the need of parent-children relationship in academics, in other to develop an internal Locus of control that will help in academic resilience and also to build self confidence in an adolescent.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study conducted at University of Lagos, Nigeria, reveals that the prevalence of suicidal ideation among youths in University of Lagos is low. The findings suggest that interpersonal relationships, subjective well-being, academic resilience, and locus of control all have positive relationships with suicidal ideation among these youths, with varying degrees of correlation. Specifically, interpersonal relationships, subjective well-being, and academic resilience show relatively stronger positive associations, as indicated by their r-values and percentages. Additionally, the study highlights a notable gender difference in suicidal ideation, with a mean of 0.18, emphasizing the importance of considering gender-specific factors in understanding and addressing mental health issues among undergraduates. Overall, these findings contribute valuable insights into the factors influencing suicidal ideation and emphasize the need for targeted interventions to enhance mental health and well-being among university students in Delta State, Nigeria.

6. Recommendations

Arising from the findings, the following recommendations were made:

Given the low prevalence of suicidal ideation, there is an opportunity to build on this positive trend by implementing mental health awareness programs within the university. These programs can educate students on coping mechanisms, stress management, and the importance of seeking professional help when needed.

Recognizing the positive relationship between interpersonal relationship and suicidal ideation, there should be initiatives to strengthen social support systems within the university community. Creating platforms for students to connect, engage in social activities, and access counselling services can contribute to a healthier and more supportive campus environment.

Since subjective well-being correlates positively with suicidal ideation, the university should focus on enhancing programs that promote overall well-being. This could involve workshops, seminars, or courses that teach resilience, positive thinking, and strategies for maintaining emotional health.

Recognizing the gender difference in suicidal ideation, it is crucial to implement gender-specific mental health initiatives. Tailoring support services to address the unique challenges faced by male and female students can ensure a more inclusive and effective approach to mental health promotion.

Implementing a regular monitoring system for mental health indicators and providing accessible counselling services within the university can help identify and address emerging issues promptly. This proactive approach can contribute to a healthier and more resilient student population.

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University Quasi Justice System and Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment in Selected Universities in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Sexual harassment of female student in Universities has become an agonizing contemporary issue in all Universities of the world Particular in Nigeria, as it is evidenced by the incessant cases of female sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities. It is against this background, that this study sought to examine the justice system and underreporting of female sexual harassment in selected Universities in Edo State. The deterrence theory was used to explain the topic under investigation. The explanatory research design was used with the aid of the qualitative technique to gather data for the study. 15 key informant interviews and 30 in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data from the study area which comprised; University of Benin, Benin city, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, and Igbinedion University, Okada. The data gathered were contently analysed. The study revealed that although, there are social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment in these Universities, but their effectiveness leaves much to be desired as the quasi justice system actors within these Universities more often than not pay lip services to enforcement. The study recommends a thorough overhauling of the University quasi Justice system and its social control mechanisms for addressing the harassment of female students sexually and the encouragement of victims to speak out.

Keywords: Quasi Justice System, Sexual Harassment, Underreporting, University, Victims

1. Introduction

In recent times, there has been a growing awareness over concerns with issues relating to female sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities. A plethora of these cases have hit national and international headlines with some of the cases already in the domain of the criminal justice system. The Sexual Harassment

in Tertiary Education Prohibition Bill (2016) was proposed in response to the outcry from concerned parents and other stakeholders against the on-going harassment of female students sexually in Nigerian University campuses. This Bill when passed into law will outlaw the crime of sexually harassing female students of tertiary institutions, but curiously the Bill is yet to be signed into law and female sexual harassment in Universities appears to be on the increase.

Sexual harassment in higher institutions of learning began in the early 80s, and research has shown that several complaints have risen over time (Bello, 2020; Joseph, 2015; Olaigbe & Fagbenro, 2021). Until recently, sexual harassment in the education sector has been largely downplayed by policy makers, law enforcement agencies and security officers in Universities; and where it has been addressed the focus was on peer-on-peer sexual harassment only (Leach, 2013).

Although female sexual harassment has received considerable attention recently in researches (Enaifoghe *et al.*, (2021); Makhene, 2022), it is still one of the least understood, least documented, grossly underreported by victims and focused on kind of violence in Nigerian Universities (Okafor *et al.*, 2023). Sexual harassment is a criminal offence in every culture and society around the world (Nigeria inclusive); and the functions of the criminal justice system is same globally (Akinseye-George, 2019). The main aim of the criminal justice system in every society is to protect the society from disorder and anti-social behaviour while ensuring that offenders who break the law are detected, tried and dealt with according to well defined legal principles (Osunde & Obarisiagbon, 2022). Ideally, every University in Nigeria (like elsewhere in the world) is expected to have a quasi-justice system which is embedded in the

school constitution to enable them maintain law and order (Obarisiagbon, 2016). This justice system is an extension of the criminal justice system of the country. Thus, social control mechanisms of a University are the ways in which individual's thoughts, feelings, appearance, and behaviour are regulated by the University justice actors – security units, disciplinary committees and the university council- who are responsible for administering and enforcing the laws within the University (Amadi *et al.*, 2023). The principal aim of this quasi-justice system is to protect individuals (both staff and students) in the University community, maintain peace, law and order, while ensuring that justice equity and fairness is served to every member of the University community (Amadi *et al.*, 2023). Hence the University quasi justice system and by extension the criminal justice system is expected to prevent, investigate all sexual harassment complaints and sanction offenders in order to ensure justice for victims and deterrence to would be offenders.

Sexual harassment is generally regarded as a misconduct and criminal offence in every University (Nigerians' inclusive); thus prompt, appropriate and effective response to all issues of sexual harassment is expected from the University quasi justice system in order to prevent, correct and where necessary, discipline such behaviour while justice is served to victims and sanctions and deterrence melted out to perpetrators and would be perpetrators respectively (Abudu, 2017). Section 34 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigerian 1999 guarantees every citizen (females inclusive) rights to human dignity. Additionally, Section 224 of the Criminal Code Act (2004), and Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (2015) frowns at the sexual harassment of females. In fact, due to the upsurge in sexual harassment, there is a proposed bill - Sexual Harassment in tertiary education prohibition Bill (2016) which when passed into law will outlaw sexual harassment in Nigeria Universities. These laws are expected to be localized and embedded in the rules and regulations of Universities in Nigeria. Sadly, this seem not to be the case as many Universities in Nigeria have either scanty or no policy documents on sexual harassment, and female students in Nigerian Universities are still subjected to the violation of their right to human dignity by the continuing sexual harassment on them (Kabir, 2020). The question is why? What roles do the University justice actors (disciplinary committee, the security department and the University council) play in stemming this ugly social menace? This is a gap in literature that this study sought to bridge.

Media reports on incidents of sexual misbehaviour imply that the issue is still rapidly growing in Nigerian Universities and yet grossly under reported by victims (Kabir, 2020). In 2018, a lecturer named Richard Akindele was sacked by the authority of Obafemi Awolowo University for demanding sex from one Monica Osagie to upgrade her mark. Similarly, in 2019, British Broadcasting Service (BBC) did an exclusive report on sex for grade which exposed Dr Boniface of University of Lagos demanding sex from a female student of the University in exchange for grade, while Covenant University also sacked in 2022, a member of staff accused of sexually assaulting a female student (Odunsi, 2022), even as Nigerians await the outcome of the most recent case of sexual harassment involving Prof. Cyril Ndifor of the University of Calabar. The question is why has the existing extant laws such as, Sections 351 - 361 of the Criminal Code (2004), Violence Against persons (Prohibition) Act (2015), Section 34 of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999, Sections 281, 282 and 285 of the Penal Code (2004) as well as the code of conduct/University regulations not been able to deter this inhumane behaviour against female University students? Against this background, this study sort to examine how the University quasi justice system affects the reporting of female sexual harassment in the selected Universities in Edo State.

2. Quasi Justice System in Nigeria Universities

Universities which are homes to millions of young people in Nigeria, is a major public space where students particularly females, encounter various forms of sexual harassment (Olaigbe & Fagbenro, 2021; Omorogiuwa, 2018). In the backdrop of the wave of complaints and accusations, and in order to ensure a secure and healthy learning environment, a bill on sexual harassment in tertiary institution has been presented at the floor of national assembly to be passed into law criminalising sexual misconduct and prescribing a five years jail term for offenders (Omonijo *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, Universities across the country are encouraged to create internal policy measures to help combat the menace of sexual harassment (Aina-Pelemo & Wellington, 2022; Erinosh, Femi-Oyewo, & Oduwale, (2018). as the growing abuse of female students seems orchestrated by lack of consistent and clear policy by Universities, governing councils and school authorities concerning sexual harassment (Omonijo *et al.*, 2013). Thus, it became necessary for these rules to be domesticated by Universities in Nigeria as its code of conduct for staff and students alike.

In Nigeria, the University council carry out a quasi-judicial function which is consistent with the transitional provisions of the institutions. Ideally, when the act of a staff is at variance with the rules and regulations of the University and the case is determined based on the report of the staff disciplinary committee/adhoc committee of inquiring, the offending staff may be given verbal or written warning, suspension, demotion in rank or termination of service, depending on the severity of the case.

Sadly, this seems not to be so as the study conducted by Premium Times in 2020, revealed that most Universities lack internal policies on sexual harassment behaviour. Premium Times correspondent who spoke with students and staff from 25 (federal, state and private) Universities across Nigeria said the stories were all the same (Kabir, 2020). According to Kabir (2020), most Universities in Nigerian have no internal policies against sexual harassment, especially on how victims can report in their student handbook. He further noted that the several pages handbook for students only talked about student's conducts and discipline, but silent on sexual harassment. Obarisiagbon (2016) noted that there is a plethora of statutory provisions that are against sexual harassment in Nigeria. He pointed out that section 34 and 42 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees its citizens the fundamental human right of self-dignity and freedom from discrimination. He went further to noted that regrettably these laws are not known by most University students.

3. Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment and University Social Control Mechanisms

A study by Kebirungi (2021) of two Universities established that there is a culture of silence among female students and the University managements. The study found that most students lack confidence in their institutions as only 5.6% and 3% of students who had experienced sexual assault respectively reported it formally to their respective universities. According to him, this is a decline from 2016, when the corresponding reporting rates were still alarmingly low at 6% and 13%, respectively. Only 29.7% of individuals who reported sexual assault in 2021 felt the university's process was satisfactory. This increased to 41.3% for those who reported sexual harassment. These figures indicate that thousands of students are not seeking out or receiving the support they need following distressing incidents of sexual harassment (Clery, 2015; Henry, 2022).

Sexual harassment is generally regarded as misconduct in all institutions of higher learning; thus, prompt, appropriate and effective responses to all reports of sexual harassment are expected in order to prevent, correct and where necessary, discipline such behaviour (Abudu, 2017; Kabir, 2020). The magnitude and estimated cases of female harassment worldwide has not been easy to document because it is one of the most underreported crimes worldwide, including Nigeria as very few instances of sexual harassment are reported to the appropriate authorities (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Due to underreporting of occurrences, data on the prevalence of sexual harassment on campuses have remained limited. Rather than reporting, victims would maintain silence or avoid the harasser out of fear of reprisal or embarrassment (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). According to Dziech and Weiner (in the book Lecherous Professor cited in Smit & Plessis, 2011): *sexual harassment by university professors of their female students is a fact of campus life and that the silencing thereof is part of the reason for the historical invisibility of the problem: silence, promoted by the fear that somehow they (the victims) are responsible for the sexual harassment in one way or the other, and/or the fact that students know they are subordinate to faculty staff and administrators*

University students, staff members, and parents all too frequently consider sexual harassment to be a normal part of life (Otekunrin *et al.*, (2017). Thus, they have all employed denial, dismissal, and minimizing to obscure the menacing reality (Otekunrin *et al.*, 2017). Sexual harassment more often than not goes unreported, while perpetrators often get away with it (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the unregulated recurrence of the behavioural deficiency may be caused by this. Under-reporting of sexual harassment within University campuses has remained a major challenge as many victims of sexual harassment do not access support services (Makhene, 2022). In many societies, violence against the girl child have not been regarded as serious offences and remain unreported and unaddressed by the justice system (Bello & Osunde, 2022; Enaifoghe *et al.*, 2021), despite their detrimental and long-lasting consequences for the well-being, health and safety of female students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Bello & Osunde, 2022; Erinoshio *et al.*, 2018)

Despite the fact that sexual harassment is viewed as a violent crime against people and human society, it is surprising to note that its occurrence is largely underreported (Geidam *et al.*, (2010). Shedding more light on the foregoing, Menon *et al.*, (2014) noted that, there is a lack of information regarding the state of female safety and exclusion as it is experienced in the

public domain, particularly on University campuses. Makhene, (2022) argued that the prevalence of sexual harassment tends to be dramatically underestimated and incorrectly identified by school authorities, despite several engagements with pertinent parties on the subject. Additionally, the majority of these events on campuses are not typically documented.

Findings by Ajibola, (2020); Kabir,(2020), on how unclear policies contribute to sexual harassment in Nigerian Universities established that in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria there were no clear policies on sexual harassment and for those who had, there were lots of loopholes as regards to the institution's policy in the students' handbook provided yearly for newly admitted students, which most of the students (participants) admitted was quite frustrating as the lack of clarity in the students' handbook makes it difficult for victims to report cases of sexual harassment (Ajibola, 2020; Kabir, 2020). It was also noted that the student handbook did not specifically mention how victims should report sexual assault events; as the handbook only states: "Anyone found guilty of sexual misconduct may face disciplinary measures all the way up to and including expulsion" Thus, while the handbook assures victims of support – the handbook did not explain how victims can derive this desired support (Kabir, 2020).

In a study by Gordon and Collins (2013), it was revealed that a culture of fear exists among female students of tertiary institutions which is promoted by the unwillingness of authorities to respond adequately to sexual harassment issues. Thus, perpetrators have come to believe that they can operate with impunity, and that their acts are neither deeply antisocial nor criminal, but rather only mildly transgressed matters of individual preference that will not result in any serious repercussions (Gordon & Collins (2013) cited in Makhene, (2022). In a similar study by Omonijo, *et al.*, (2013), they observed that the silencing of sexual harassment of female students (victims) by male members of the University is a reality of campus life, and this to them contributes to the problem's historical invisibility.

On their part, Edosomwan *et al.*, (2018) said that although sex for grade has to some extent reduced in some universities with the introduction of computer based test (CBT) and the Vice Chancellors setting up disciplinary committees which ideally should disciplined erring male lecturers, they however noted that not all students have the courage to report lecturers who harass them sexually, as the female victims are more often than not the object of blame while the male offenders are usually not sanctioned, an

accusation that is usually based on the female victims indecent dressing by way of sensuous bodily parts (such as the navel, breasts and buttocks) being exposed by conspicuously tight or translucent clothing popularly referred to as "Sexual Flashpoints" (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018).

Similarly, UNODC (2021) also noted that the few female students who mustered the courage in the face intimidation and report the abuse of their lecturers to the University authority are frequently questioned inanely, such as: what were you doing in his office/house? Why did you go there alone? Were you outfitted appropriately? They are blamed for the violent treatment that had been meted out on them inside the school that was supposed to protect them, rather than listening and offering them assistance. Abused female students are never treated seriously by our justice system (Kabir, 2020; UNODC, 2021). According to UNODC (2021), the university quasi justice system automatically presumed that female students had behaved in ways that called for the treatment they got from their abusers, instead of prosecuting the offenders to serve as a deterrent to potential offenders.

In the same vein, Ogunrotimi (2022) noted that the spate of this menace in Nigerian Universities has been attributed mainly to lack of a comprehensive anti-sexual harassment policy, lack of confidentiality-driven reporting channels and poor institutional response. Other reports have implicated lack of security, a decline in society norms exacerbated by violent tendencies among some members of the University community manifested in cult activities, and a lackadaisical attitude on the part of the University administration against those responsible for these offensive behaviours (UNODC (2022). Additionally, some parents of victims who are bold enough to report most times mounts pressures on the school authorities to quell cases to prevent the added burden of stigmatization in the future on their wards (Edosomwan *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, Kabir, (2020) reiterated that although few cases had gained public reaction and sanctions in the last two years, many are still being swept under the carpet due to lack of clear policy against sexual harassment within the Universities. This according to some victims of sexual harassment is quite frustrating as their student handbook only speaks on sexual misconduct under code of conduct rules and regulations for students but not on how this misconduct can be reported to the school authority (Kabir, 2020).

Sexual abuse is still a widespread issue and demanding sexual favours in return for good grades in Nigerian

Universities is still common practice. The girl child is targeted for harassment in the society for social, religious, and criminal reasons (Okolo & Okolo, 2018; Bello & Osunde, 2022). This is a result of Nigeria's criminal justice system failing to respect women's rights (Ogunrotimi, 2022; Okolo & Okolo, 2018). Ogunrotimi (2022), for example, claims that many women experience abuse but do not report it to the police because they cannot afford to pay the police to fully investigate the situation. According to Okolo & Okolo, (2018), during the political unrest that erupted in Benue State's Logo Local Government Area, some women who stayed behind were allegedly subjected to molestation by unnamed criminals who prowl the streets at night robbing and raping women. The article also stated that most women who sought to report were discouraged from doing so because the authorities requested that she provide evidence that she was raped (Okolo & Okolo, 2018).

Ogunrotimi, (2022) opined that sometimes the police may not arrive promptly allowing the offender to assault the victim and flee the scene of the crime before the officers arrives. Furthermore, because police don't arrive quickly, the offender has more power over the victim, and she begins to feel genuinely helpless and alone. Then again, the law makes rape a crime and imposes sentences ranging from 14 years to life in jail on those found guilty, but due to social pressure and the stigma attached to being a rape victim, less rape cases are reported and less severe sentences are given upon conviction (Ogunrotimi, 2022).

4. Theoretical Framework

The deterrence theory was adopted for this study with focus on the University quasi justice system and underreporting of female sexual harassment viz a viz its implication for the continued harassment of female students sexually in Universities

4.1 Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory is based on Hobbes, Beccaria and Bentham's idea that if punishment is severe, certain and swift, a rational individual will weigh potential gains and losses before engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. If the loss is higher than the gain, individuals will be deterred from disobeying the law. Deterrence theory went further to illustrate the notion that would-be perpetrators of female sexual harassment will be greatly deterred if Universities have in place a social control mechanism where sanctions are certain, swift and severe. With regard to the subject under investigation, it is contended that if punishment is swift, certain and proportionate to the crime, it will discourage people from breaking the law. It is further contended that the laws on sexual harassment though clearly written, but regrettable the corresponding punishment is not well known to the public as vast majority of the people do not know the consequences of their behaviour viz a viz sexual harassment.

5. Methodology

The study employed the qualitative method of data collection, and data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The study was conducted in University of Benin, Benin city, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, and Igbinedion University Okada. The purposive and convenience sampling methods were adopted in selecting the study participants for key informants' interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) respectively. The choice of these two techniques stems from the study desire to access key informants with in-depth knowledge relevant to the study and informants who are ready and willing to talk. Thus, forty-five (45) participants (consisted of 30 IDIs and 15 KIIs) were purposively and conveniently selected as the sample size for the study. Also the study got additional information from secondary sources.

6. Results and Discussion of findings

Please note that none of the names mentioned in the presentation of the qualitative data are real and don't relate to the actual respondents.

Table 4: Social Demographic Characteristic of Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Sex (Staff and students)	Male	25	55.6
	Female	20	44.4
Total		45	100
Religion (Staff and students)	Christianity	40	88.9
	Islam	3	6.7
	A.T. R	2	4.4
Total		45	100
Age (years) of students	16-18	6	40
	19-21	4	26.7
	22-24	3	20.0
	25 and above	2	13.3
Total		15	100
Age (years) of staff	30-35	4	13.3
	36-40	9	30.0
	41-45	7	23.3
	46-50	8	26.7
	51 and above	2	6.7
Total		30	100
Academic staff	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100
Non-academic staff	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100
Staff Academic Qualification	BSc.	8	26.7
	MSc.	10	33.3
	Ph.D	12	40.0
	Others	-	-
Total		30	100
Students	University of Benin, Benin City	5	33.3
	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	5	33.3
	Igbinedion University, Okada	5	33.3
Total		15	100

Source: Field Work, 2023

The study reveals that 55.6% of participants were male, 44.4% were female, and 88.9% were Christians. The majority were Christians. The age range of participants was 16-25 years and above, with 40% aged 16-18, 26.7% aged 19-21, 20% aged 20-24, and 13.3% aged 25 and older. Also, the study reveals that 13.3% of staff members are between 30-35 years old, with the majority aged between 46-50. The study also reveals that 33.3% of participants are from the University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University, and Igbinedion University, with 26.7% holding HND/BSc, 33.3% holding MSc, and 40% holding Ph.D. degrees. Additionally, 33.3% of the participants participated in the interview from the three selected Universities.

6.1 Underreporting of Female Sexual Harassment

Information gathered from the field established that quite a number of cases of female students' sexual harassment by male lecturers in Nigerian Universities are under reported. Quite a number of themes emerged under the underreporting of female sexual harassment. Most of the participants appeared to have the mind-set that some of the victims see it as a normal part of life and so do not report incidence of sexual harassment. This was expressed by one of the informants thus: Somehow, some female students even when being harassed just see it as a normal part of university life and don't make fuss about it (Miss Doris/Student/Uniben/ 25years/Christian)

Similarly this position was strengthened by another participant:

A number of our girls on campus here are bad and when they are sexually harassed, it appears to them to be a case of birds of the same feather flocking together (Mrs Enoma /PhD/Staff/ A.A.U./56years/Muslim)

The view of one of the participants further illuminated this theme:

In some cases the naivety and innocence of these young female students sometimes make them passive about this social malaise (Mr Benson/Staff/MSc/Igbinedion University/55years/Christian)

It was also gathered from the field that there is a strong link between the fear of reprisal attack and the underreporting of female student's sexual harassment by male lectures. Most participants believed that reporting a randy, harassing offending male lecturer to the university authority is like courting trouble for oneself.

I have heard of several stories of female sexual harassment and what usually befalls a student who refuses and or reports (Mr Eugene/Student/ A.A.U. /23years/Christian)

Another informant aptly captured this thus:

My friend told me her experience which was quite unfortunate that because she not only refused the advances of one of the male lecturers in her department, she also reported her to the head of department. The lecturer openly told her she will see, and truly, she saw. She failed 3 courses taught by the lecturer's close friends

(Miss Osahenrumwen/Student/ Uniben/22years/Christian)

Again, the data from this study further revealed that most female students are unwilling to report incidences of sexual assault by male lecturers to the appropriate authority because of the fear of blame. This view was expressed by one of the informants thus:

Some students will deliberately refuse to report a case of sexual harassment against a lecturer. This is because they would be blamed by their parents for going to his office or for causing it upon themselves. This to me is why a student will not report when sexually harassed (Miss Agnes /Student/Uniben/22years/Christian)

Another informant who corroborated the above stated that:

Most parents usually advice their daughters to be careful and avoid men, but how can you avoid men

when men are your lecturers? And as my friend's mother said in my presence, what did you go to do in his office? Shameless child! I can tell you of a certainty that my friend will never tell her mother again even if 20 lecturers harass her. (Miss Halima/ Student/ A.A.U./21years/Muslim)

The above view was further strengthened by another interviewee who argued that:

In Nigeria, present government blames past government and people generally blame people for the occurrence they had no control over. At the police station and even the security unit of some Universities, I have heard of the police blaming and mocking victims of rape for being the cause of their predicament. Who does that? This is why people are reluctant to go to the police station or school security unit to incident sexual harassment cases (Mrs Idahosa/Staff/PhD/Igbinedion University/45years/ Christian)

The information gathered from the field clearly indicate that because of the fear of stigmatization and labelling, most female victims of sexual harassment by male lecturers are unlikely or reluctant to report the incidence to the appropriate authority in the University. Quite a number of participants disclosed that it is shameful for people to know that they have been sexually molested or that a lecturer had sex with them even when it was not consensual. This act even if it was a one off thing will stick and remain throughout their stay in the University and even beyond. One of the informants describes this situation thus:

Our society can stigmatize people and it is worse on campus. Ordinary fall that my friend fell the other day, she became nicknamed the 'faller' do you think such a student will report to the security department that she has been raped by a male lecturer? No way! (Miss. Georgina /Student/Uniben/22years/Christian)

Another informant simply stated that:

People remember others for good or bad things and relate with them like that. They say it is labelling. Till tomorrow the student that was failed five times by a lecturer in Engineering and took laws into her hands is still remembered and called a particular name. Seeing this kind of stigmatization, students will be reluctant to report a lecturer who will sexually harass them (Mr Famous/Staff/ PhD/A.A.U. 52years/Christian)

The opinion of an interviewee from Igbinedion University further strengthened this:

For me, God forbids a thing like this happens to me, I will not tell anybody! Is it me they will now start

calling names? (Miss. Sarah /Student/ Igbinedion University/ 21years/Christian)

Based on the analysis of data gathered, It was found in the study that:

The poor system of redress for victims of sexual harassment is a major underlying cause of the continued existence of female sexual harassment in Universities in Nigeria. The results from the study further showed that this situation is not helped by the fact that there are many hiccups in the journey for justice as many of the offending lecturers would do anything to pervert the course of justice. The invariably means that while the offending lecturers are bold in this social vice, the offended students chicken out when sexually harassed

Also, it was gathered from the study findings that those victims of sexual harassment don't just take the victim's position in silence, but are not forth coming when most needed at the disciplinary committee/ad-hoc committee of inquiring meetings. In the absence of the complainant, eyewitness, documentary or electronic evidence, most of the culprits are left off the hook for lack of evidence. Just like in the larger society, where cases are swept under the carpet at the police station, and celebrated cases already in court are later unheard of, the same scenario also play out in Universities.

Again, the results from the study also revealed that although social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment exist in these Universities, their effectiveness leaves much to be desired as the quasi-justice system actors within these Universities more often than not pay lip services to enforcement. It must be pointed out here that this was not corroborated by the study findings from Igbinedion University Okada, which is a privately owned University as participants from the institutions all affirmed that the school has well established and enforced social control mechanisms for addressing female sexual harassment and such mechanisms have been very effective to the extent that sexual harassment is near non-existence in their campuses.

The study findings also revealed that most outcomes of female sexual harassment investigations and final decision by the school governing council are more often not publicized which could have acted as a deterrent to potential offenders.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Although there are relevant laws and institutional responses to sexual harassment, the phenomenon has

remained unabated owing to the fact that there is no compliance to the institutional rules and regulation. Also, the fact that more often the University's justice actors pay lip services to the enforcement of these rules and thus, rendering them ineffective. Based on the above, the following are recommended:

There should be reorientation and sensitization of students to the dangers inherent in not reporting harassment cases, and a total overhaul of the University quasi justice system

There is the need for the appropriate authority to develop clear policy on sexual harassment and sexual misconduct by laying bare specific penalties/punitive measures for perpetrators in the policy. Also, there should be an official reporting and monitoring procedure, which will help in classifying sexual harassment (and other sexual misconduct) as an offence of institutional concern. Outcomes and sanctions meted out to perpetrators of female sexual harassment in Universities should be widely publicized in order to convey to the entire University community that engaging in immoral sexual behaviour will have consequences as this will serve as deterrence to would be perpetrators and encourage victims to speak.

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The Challenges of Social Justice and Ethnic Crises in Nigerian Society in the Light of Amartya Sen's Theory of Justice

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Abstract. The question of peaceful coexistence between Nigeria's various ethnic groups has been debated since the country's inception. Nigeria has experienced a number of political, economic, and ethnic crises that have caused ethnic divisions and disparities among its citizens, which have fueled rivalries because of the unequal distribution of the country's resources, which is the result of elite group manipulation of power. The article takes an analytical approach and applies the critical analysis tool to analyze political instability and ethnic crises in modern-day Nigeria. Viewed in the context of the numerous instances of injustice and unjust treatment experienced by the marginalized, disadvantaged, and vulnerable ethnic groups in Nigerian society by the governing class, the ethnic crises become more compelling. The results showed that one of the problems affecting Nigeria's stability as a country is ethnic conflicts. This research is founded on this idea. Following Amartya Sen's concept of justice will put an end to ethnic tensions. Through the realization process, human reason is able to distinguish between justice and injustice through Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya. The article came to the result that economic loss and rivalry between different ethnic groups have resulted from ethnic crises. Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya may be used by modern Nigeria to stop ethnic

tensions, and public reasoning can abolish injustice among the country's many ethnic groups.

Keywords: Ethnic crises, injustice, ethnic, Amartya Sen.

1. Introduction

There have been several conflicts between communities, ethnic groupings, and religious groups in many African nations, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, and many more. Nigeria is not an exception. Ethnicity has been implicated in crises that have caused significant property and human damage in numerous parts of the nation. Over 250 ethnic groups and 120 different languages are spoken in Nigeria, a nation on the African continent. Christianity and Islam are the two main religions practiced in Nigeria, along with a variety of ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has viewed itself as an adversary vying for control of economic resources and decision-making authority. The common sense of being that characterizes ethnicity is the most important aspect in defining the group's boundaries and is crucial to comprehending ethnicity at any given period (Nnoli, 1980). Additionally, ethnicity frequently has a hidden class component that is used by society's elite to

maintain their privileges. According to Nnoli (1980), ethnicity is a social phenomenon linked to interactions between people from various ethnic backgrounds. According to Nnoli, ethnic groupings are social formations that are identified by the communal nature of their borders. He pointed out that these kinds of groupings could have different languages, cultures, or both. Nnoli asserts that the primary differentiating element in Africa and Nigeria specifically, has unquestionably been language. Because of the diverse ethnic groups, religions, languages, cultures, and institutional setups, Nigeria is regarded as a plural society. Over 250 ethnic groups have been recognized in this diverse culture, and they compete with one another for money and power. Ethnic conflicts are the outcome of this (Salawu & Hassan, 2011).

Ethnic conflicts in Nigeria have existed since the colonial and post-colonial eras. According to Ojo (2014), Nigeria's patriotic movement was thwarted by the colonial tripartite split of the country, which used physical borders to further divide ethnic groupings and turned ethnicity into a means of achieving political power. Due to the notable disparities in development within each area, this structure and other administrative choices placed a strong emphasis on ethnic nationalism and regional politics. The colonial division of Nigeria, which strengthened ethnic groups, the emergence of ethno-political consciousness, and the growth of ethnic/regional political parties, all showed that the British government purposefully hindered the growth and success of Nigerian nationalism, instead encouraging it as a strategy for gaining political power (Ebegbulem, 2011). The union of the distinct protectorates of Southern Nigeria and Cameroon with the protectorate of Northern Nigeria is said to have been the consequence of Lord Frederick Lugard's 1914–18 constitutional exercises, which were conducted without the express approval of Nigerians.

Owing to this move, Okoye (2005) believed that the creation of provinces and other divisions was based on the convenience and wisdom of imperial British authorities. This affected Nigerians' ethnic awareness. The British authorities used the two main rivers, the Niger and the Benue, to split the nation into three geographical parts, the North, East, and West. This division is also responsible for the ethnic conflicts in the country. According to Ojo (2014), the divide added to the nation's racial issues, which sums up the division's unfairness.

The Northern region was larger than the Eastern and Western regions combined, indicating that the regions were not equal. Second, the minority groups that are

prevalent in the three zones were not given enough attention when they were formed. According to a philosophical and historical study of Nigeria's ethnic issues, there has been a string of political unrest and shifting constitutional approaches throughout addressing the issue of ethnic diversity. Ethnic groups in Nigeria are currently at odds with one another on matters like the formula for resource sharing and power. To no effect, successive governments have looked for a long-term solution to the aforementioned issues of marginalization, inequality, and ethnic conflict.

2. Nigerian Ethnic Crises Dating Back to the Civil War's Eve

Nigeria is a contemporary and intricate heterogeneity of groups and cultures that evolved throughout the years of various historical experiences in various geographical places. A "simple geographical expression" has united these nations with disparate languages and philosophies. (Awolowo 1947). Despite over 60 years of formal independence and more than a century of marginalization, the country continues to face difficulties in maintaining its unity. Ediagbonya, Duyile, Nwachukwu, and Pelumi (2020). In the developing world, Nigeria is without a doubt a nation with enormous political and economic potential. The nation is home to several ethnic groups with a wide range of cultural traditions. The Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Ibibio, Kanuri, Tiv, Edo, Nupe, and Ijaw are Nigeria's largest ethnic groupings in terms of population and geographic distribution. (Duyile, Buhari, & Ediagbonya, 2020). With Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as president and Sir Tafawa Balewa as prime minister, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960. In 1963, Nigeria became a Republic. From 1967 until 1970, the nation was embroiled in a civil war. The British intended to develop infrastructure in the land space known as Nigeria in order to exploit the mineral resources in the soil and transport the agricultural produce for onward seafight to Europe. The process of reconstruction and rehabilitation was partially successful after the war ended. Nigeria can be seen in terms of its internal and external waters, which are the rivers and lakes bodies within its territorial land space and the seas and oceans within its border environs. The basic infrastructure in Nigeria is in a semi-comatose state which can be traced to the events during colonial times. As noted by Malam Abubakar Imam, "We despise each other, we call each other ignorant. The South is proud of its Western knowledge and culture – we are proud of our Eastern culture." (Alegbeleye, 2014) For instance, Nigerian Navy Commander Akinfemi Duyile (hydrography department) stated that "even though the Bakassi and the fishing settlements

historically belong to the Obong of Calabar" (Duyile, 2015), Nigeria does not even have a territory it created, and ethnicity is associated with land and kindred."

This accurately describes the situation in the early years of the country. Crises are not new to human societies; they are a part of human existence and as old as human history because they have existed in all areas of human endeavor. However, coexistence in Nigeria has not always been free from stress, tension, violence, and crisis. Nigeria has a long history of ethnic crises; since the country's recent democratic transition in 1999, there have been numerous violent clashes, which have resulted in a substantial loss of life and the destruction of property valued at billions of naira. These violent interethnic crises occurred from 1999 to 2013. Onodugo, Amujiri, and Nwuba (2015) noted that due of its destructive character, the ethno-religious crises and its multifaceted effects have impeded Nigeria's socio-economic growth overall as well as political stability, economic prosperity, and advancement. (Onodugo and others, 2015). In a political system where language and culture are the most important characteristics, ethnicity is a social phenomenon that shows up in interactions between members of various ethnic groups. In practically any society where there are multiple ethnic groups, ethnicity is normal. According to Alegbeleye (2014), ethnicity is the state in which members of a certain ethnic group believe they or others perceive them to have characteristics that set them apart from other social groupings.

A concept that is hard to define and even harder to understand is ethnic crisis.

The phenomenon of ethnic crises has existed for a very long time and is not unique to Nigeria. The term "ethnic crisis," also known as "ethnic war" or "ethnic violence," has been criticized by a number of academics. It is broadly defined as a political or social crisis that involves one or more groups that are distinguished by some ethnic identity marker. Researchers have attempted to conceptualize conflict in a variety of ways, and one of the most frequently cited traditional definitions of crisis views it as "... a struggle over value and claims to scarce, status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (Onodugo, Amujiri, & Nwuba, 2015).

3. Reasons behind Nigeria's Ethnic Crises

A number of scholars, including Ojo (2014), Nnoli (1980), Egwu (2001), and Ebegbulem (2011), to mention a few, have proposed that competition for limited resources is a key contributing cause to

Nigeria's ethnic conflicts. In a nation like Nigeria, whose ethnic groups are different, rivalry for the limited resources of the country exists. Here, governments operate in a way that favors one ethnic group over another, and practices like nepotism, tribalism, and preferential treatment exacerbate ethnic conflicts. Numerous elements, each with its own dimensions, can be linked to it. The following are some of the contributing factors: colonial legacy, boundary disputes, power and resource struggles, the inability of the traditional model to resolve crises, poverty, the perception of the government's lack of sincerity and fair play, manipulation of the social elites, and intolerance towards certain ethnic and religious groups (Ojo, 2014).

The following are ten main causes of ethnic crises:

1. Conflicted Geographical Demands: Conflicts over the use or exploitation of land and water resources have arisen throughout Nigeria between farmers and pastoralists, fishermen and pond owners, and others. A significant conflict between communities and ethnic groups has been the question of land resources as a contributing cause to ethnic crises. Nigeria's ethnic issue is fueled by the fact that every piece of land is owned by one or more ethnic groups.
2. The requirements of occupations that are culturally bound: Members of particular ethnic groups have learnt to survive in particular jobs in which they have also accomplished some preservation, according to several experts who have examined the interactions between a group's heritage, ecology, technology, population migrations, and physical environmental resources. In the northeastern and northwest regions of the nation, for instance, farmers and cattle rearers have been involved in violent conflicts over the restricted and precious pastures for their animals, as well as the crops and farms that the animals have damaged. These violent ethnic clashes have resulted in property damage and fatalities.
3. Lack of Resources: In a country with a population of over 10 million, there is fierce competition on both the political and economic fronts, as well as inter- and intra-ethnic crises in the race for political office.
4. Cultural diversity and Strategic Use of Symbols: Symbols are closely linked to the culture of the people, and ethnic symbols are protected as a shared heritage of the community or ethnic group. Therefore, any perceived disrespect or humiliation of any ethnic group's culture has resulted in a crisis; the Hausa and Yorubas in Sagamu in 1999 is a prime example.
5. Spirituality and The ethnic background Problems: Ethnicity crises rarely occur in a vacuum or in isolation; instead, they converge with other factors like

religion and class. In Northern Nigeria, however, the two ideas are so intertwined that conflicts between groups in the region are often quickly interpreted as ethnic or religious crises. Historical experiences have demonstrated that the majority of violent conflicts stem from the interaction of ethnic, religious, political, socioeconomic, and cultural differences. For instance, in volatile crisis areas in northern Nigeria, such as Kaduna or Kano, an Igbo or Yoruba Muslim may not be considered a Muslim by their Hausa neighbor, but rather as belonging to a different ethnic group.

6. Ethnicity Conflict, Ethnic diversity, classification: In Nigeria, ethnic consciousness is pervasive. When a person's identification decision affects substantial concerns for them or their community, national class interests become irrelevant. In Nigeria, it is well known that the middle and upper classes have exploited ethnic colors to incite ethnic conflict and rally support for politicians. Some academics have, for lack of a better term, characterized this tendency to blur the lines between ethnic, religious, cultural, or political issues—particularly during times of crisis and violence—as a "ethno-religious crisis" or identity crisis.

7. The Structural Foundation of Ethnic Conflict: A country's plurality leaves it vulnerable to crisis. Limited access to finite political, economic, and other resources is the cause of the crises. Therefore, in multiethnic nations like Nigeria, ethnic upheavals are not unavoidable.

8. Internally colonization: The population and political power of the various ethnic groups are not equal.

9. Inadvertent Repercussions of Political Evolution

10. External Factors

Based on the considerations indicated, the reasons of crises in the country may be explained from many perspectives. Scholars have proposed numerous theories for the current ethnic crisis in Nigeria.

4. Amartya Sen's View on Justice

Even though social justice has long been a topic of discussion, Sen claims that the political landscape in Europe and America changed as a result of the social and economic changes brought about by the European Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the idea was strongly backed by these developments. As a result, there are two distinct schools of thought and two distinct approaches to justice among the major philosophers. Among these, the first is the justice approach, which was first popularized by Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century and later adopted by prominent thinkers of various schools, including Rousseau, Locke, Kant, and Rawls.

The 'social contract' idea is a prevalent approach in contemporary political philosophy that emphasizes social justice mechanisms. This method is also referred to by Sen as the transcendental institutionalism method. A different perspective on justice is the impact of various institutions that were supported by Smith, Condorcet, Wollstonecraft, Bentham, Mill, and Marx. The comparative theory of justice contends that by contrasting various lifestyles under it, justice can be achieved (Sen, 2009:6-7). Instead of comparing justice and injustice in real societies, Sen argues that the transcendental institutionalism approach aims to diagnose what perfect justice is and define what the just are, without directly addressing real societies. Emphasizing that the approach to transcendental institutionalism is arrangement-focused, Sen, writes that "the results of this approach lead to the development of theories of justice that focus on the transcendent identity of ideal institutions" (Sen, 2009:6). Sen evaluates this aspect of this approach, which focuses on the fair organization of institutions rather than people and actual societies, as a contractual mode of thinking and states that a hypothetical social contract situation is assumed in this thinking mode. The obvious relevance of this social contract is to offer an ideal alternative to chaos/confusion.

Pointing out that the other approach to justice, the comparative justice approach, is a realization-focused approach, Sen points out that comparative theorists try to correct it by clearly showing the injustice in the world and that social realization (actual institutions, behaviors and other effects on human life) states that they focus on the results). "These theorists, instead of limiting their studies to the transcendent investigation of a perfectly just society, have conducted studies involving the comparison of existing or probable societies, and have directed all their attention to the abolition of injustice in the world" (Sen, 2009:7).

The realization-oriented approach, or comparative justice approach, is a key distinction between the arrangement-focused and realization-focused approaches to justice. It emphasizes people's real behavior rather than their compliance with ideal behavior. The realization-oriented approach asks "How can justice be developed?" instead of "How is a competent just institution?" as does the regulation-oriented approach (transcendental institutionalism approach). Instead of taking a transcendent path, the realization-oriented approach concentrates on comparison and comparison, focusing on the actual realization of justice in societies as well as on institutions and regulations (Sen, 2009:7-9). Sen contends that the dominant perspective on justice in

contemporary political philosophy is that of transcendental institutionalism, and he cites John Rawls as the representative of this perspective. According to Sen, the principles of justice can be clearly seen in Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, where the norms of right behavior in the moral and political context are illuminating and our relationship with perfectly just institutions is fully defined / determined. Sen also identifies two issues with the transcendental institutionalism approach.

First, there can be an irrational consensus on what constitutes a just society, even in the face of rigorous standards of impartiality and open-minded examination (as in Rawls' initial view, for instance). Sen, claims that this is a transcending solution that has been agreed upon and that the viability of the result reached is the issue. The selection of the extremely unlikely ideal scenario from among potential options and the real selection requirements for a comparison framework of justice in the application of practical reason are two more of these issues. The repetition problem of research in terms of a transcendent answer is what Sen refers to as this (Sen, 2009:9). Sen's approach to justice attempts to demonstrate that Rawls' description of these principles of justice is incorrect. Rawls' theory of justice assumes that there is a hypothetical state of equality (the original position) at the beginning and that people who are ignorant of themselves will unanimously choose one thing when choosing the two principles of justice. Rawls does not explain why different alternative views on justice were not chosen.

The fulcrum of Rawls' theory of justice is blocked, according to Sen, who claims that other alternative approaches can easily dismiss Rawls's argument, which he developed to draw attention to objectivity, because it is not a useful and credible argument. Sen claims that it is impossible to reach a perfect consensus on what a just world is because justice can have multiple competing causes, all of which claim to be impartial. Sen is interested in how to reduce injustice even though we have different perspectives on an ideal system with a rational consensus. In this context, Sen views "the diversity of systems and lifestyles not as an error or mistake, but as things that signify human freedom" (Sen, 2009:12). The need for accuracy arises when negotiating within an imaginary original situation to determine the principles of justice in impartiality, as Sen (2009:16) contends that "there is more than one value and criterion system to think about justice." Sen (2009:54) asserts that the concept of truth is the fundamental idea of Rawls' theory of justice, stating that "The principles of justice in Rawls' formulation determine the basic social institutions that regulate society." "Justice as truth has been central to

political thought from the very beginning as a right" (Sen, 2009:55).

Sen compares Rawls to Kant at this point, stating that "Those who defend a universal law, as Kant did, accept that the characteristics such as not being emotional and being objective are shared by most people" (Sen, 2009:57). Rawls claims that the structural goal of righteousness practice is to identify appropriate principles that determine the unanimous selection of just institutions needed for the basic structure of a society. At this point, Sen discusses the variety of conflicting objective principles and attempts to clarify this by using the example of three kids with a flute (Sen, 2009:16): There is a flute, and three kids named Anne, Bob, and Carla will each get one of them. Anne claims she deserves the flute because she is a good flute player; Bob wants it because he doesn't have any toys, and Carla says. Sen emphasizes that each child in the example above has different reasons for owning the flute, and in this case, the decision about whom to give the flute to will be very difficult. According to Sen, different theorists such as utilitarians, economic egalitarians, and liberals will think differently about who should be given the flute. For example, economic egalitarians will support Bob because he is the poorest; liberals will want the flute to be given to Carla since Carla is the one who produced the flute; utilitarians will support giving the flute to Anne since only Anne knows how to play the flute and in this case she will get the greatest pleasure while playing the flute. According to Sen, for Rawls and his followers, only one of these children will be right and the decision will be made accordingly. The transcendental institutionalism approach, in which Rawls is also included, attributes to justice a necessity and universality that can be applied at all times and everywhere. Sen, who argues that this is not possible, emphasizes that in Rawls' model of justice, there is only one type of just society, which is defined by reference to principles. That is, plausible, reasonable answers to the pluralism existing in the modern world cannot be seen within this ideal form of Rawls and all other alternatives fail.

Sen contends that, in the case of the three children, giving a playing instrument to one of them always leads to a contradiction of at least one justice principle: denying Anne the instrument would result in human performance to end poverty; denying Bob the instrument would be incompatible with Carla's right to enjoy the fruits of one's own labor. Instead of talking about ideal solutions that might not work, the emphasis should be on selecting from among plausible options. "If we try to choose between Picasso and Dali, we should not do it by referring to the diagnosis that

Mona Lisa is the most ideal painting in the world," Sen (2009:16) tries to justify this decision. Sen claims that each of the three children's justifications in the "three children with an instrument" example demonstrates non-arbitrary justifications and various forms of impartiality. Sen contends that social negotiation, not any social organization, is the only way to resolve such a problem amicably. Sen emphasizes that this is possible by eliminating criteria that do not come from common sense to measure justice (Sen, 2009:14-15). Sen claims that the instrument example reflects various fundamental ideas about the nature of a just society that are defended impartially and considered separately, making it impossible to identify the institutions required for the fundamental structure of society and to establish the principles of justice altogether.

Since Rawls argues in his book *Theory of Justice* that people who come together in the initial situation will not choose other alternative ideas about justice and that the establishment of principles of justice will emerge in a single way, Sen claims that "it is very difficult to use the whole procedure of justice as the correctness developed by Rawls in his theory" (Sen, 2009:57).

According to Sen, Rawls' approach is an attempt to achieve a transcendent ideal. According to Sen, Rawls acknowledged later that it was difficult to get to a unanimous agreement on the one set of justice principles in the original stance. However, the theory of justice as truth has suffered greatly as a result of this unsolvable issue.

5. Ethnic Issues and Elite Theory in Modern-Day Nigeria

In order for the privileged members of society to maintain their privileges, ethnicity frequently has a hidden class component. The ruling elite in modern-day Nigeria is largely responsible for ethnic crises; they take control of the country and use its political and economic resources to further their own agenda, which leads to inequality and rivalry between Nigeria's many ethnic groups. Ethnic crises result from the oppressed masses' use of violence to make their voices heard after being silenced and dominated. Some of the propounders of this Elite theory are Jonathan Parry, Robert Michaels, Pareto and Mosca as well as St. Simon (Mazi Mbah, 2006:285). "Elite theorists emphasize the degree to which interlocking corporate and foundation directorates, old-school ties, and frequent social interaction tend to link together and facilitate coordination between the top leaders in business, government, civic organizations, educational and cultural establishments, and the mass

media," Johnson (2005) warns. He emphasizes further that this "power elite" has the ability to effectively dictate the main objectives, if not always the practical means and details, for all significant government policy-making. They can also control the economic resources of the nation's major business and financial organizations, as well as the activities of the major mass media and educational/cultural organizations.

Their economic resources, particularly their positions in the top management of large corporations, are thought to be the primary source of their power. This is in contrast to their ability to win over large numbers of people by attempting to "represent" the interests of larger social groups; in most cases, this Elitist group may not be the majority group, but their goal is to seize power, accumulate wealth, and exert control over the resources that are available. Elitism is discriminatory, pre-emptive, preventive, and saviours of a divine right to say what politics ought to be. assert their political position while ignoring and snobing the general consensus and expertise (Mazi Mbah, 2006:284). Johnson (2005) states that while elitist theorists vary somewhat in how much agreement or disagreement there is within their ranks and how much genuine concern for the public welfare influences their choices of public policy goals, they all generally agree that a small number of elite groups, primarily from minority groups, control the nation and set the fundamental course of public policy. These groups are "movers and shakers" of the nation's political and economic resources, not the manipulated and helpless masses of ordinary voters who choose between candidates at election time.

In his definition of the elite, Mazi Mbah (2006:283) states that "In its general sense the elite denotes a group of persons who in any society hold positions of eminence in politics; it denotes specifically those who exercise preponderant political influence." He stressed further that they are political entrepreneurs, the establishment, and the governing minority. This ethnic group dominates and controls the power and resources for the betterment and enrichment of themselves, depriving some ethnic groups of access to power and available resources, causing disparities and unrest among the populace, resulting in division and crises among themselves. High levels of elite awareness or organization are characteristics of the ruling class. In addition to holding positions of power, they could be members of a caste, ruling class, aristocracy, or any other conscious affiliation. They may be referred as in Nigeria as the kingmakers, heavyweights, leaders of thought, the V.I.P., men of timber and calibre, or others who generally seem prominent in social and political issues. From the elite's perspective, politics is

about a select few controlling the whole society and making the major, crucial choices.

The elite approach to politics arises when there is a deliberate attempt and practice to exercise exclusive decision-making as a prerogative of social position or class. The ruling elite in Nigeria's political system are members of the various ethnic groups, and they control the political, economic, and resource aspects of the state in order to enrich themselves. They control the important sectors of the state by designating their royalists to lead those sectors as ministers, such as the power sector. The elite maintain their power through perpetuation until circumstances force them to step down. "They are either born to rule or made to rule" (Mazi Mbah, 2006:285). They see democracy as an easy political nomenclature because it gives the elite the option to form a caste. Since the masses are often thought to be disorganized, the interests of the small elite will be accepted by society. They typically control recruitment into their ranks, meaning that they believe that political power, like other social values, is distributed unequally, meaning that they can place people according to their share of any good wealth, skill, or political power (Mazi Mbah, 2006:287). Because they control economic resources and power, they choose who should hold public office, and they are frequently referred to as the Cabal.

Crises in contemporary Nigeria are traceable to the role and impact of the elite in contemporary political dispensation. Critical Analysis of Ethnic Crises in Nigeria has witnessed a number of ethnic crises that have resulted in the loss of life and the destruction of property. They do this by using their influence to turn the ethnic groups against themselves in order to cover up their selfish motive. Most of this elite group engages in nepotism and tribalism, and they introduce immunity clauses to protect themselves from the law. To a certain extent, the emergence of ethnic politics can be understood in the context of colonialism and some colonial practices and policies put in place by the British Government during colonialism. The various ethnic crises in the country have many facets, including resource exploitation, corrupt elites, and colonization, all of which contribute to the conflicts. The larger context of the violence described above must be located in the way that minority and majority relations have been conducted recently, as well as the way that various ethnic groups perceive the past while being blinded by the ethnic tensions of the present.

Although the British introduced a highly divisive and parochial system of limited representation based on political preference, ethnicity, and economic status from the very beginning of colonialism, this system has persisted to this day in many ways and is the

precursor to the current ethnic crises. The increasing likelihood of prolonged ethnic crises is potentially destructive to the extent that, if nothing is done, it could jeopardize the country's corporate existence. To date, there appears to be no single phenomenon in Nigerian history that demonstrates the incapacity of the various identities to coexist peacefully and pursue the goal of development. The nation's diversity has continued to threaten its progress and even its existence because of our orientation of non-commitment to the nation's ideal but rather to our various ethnic identities. The aftermath of these violent crises bears destruction, physical and mental devastation, death, maiming of people, destruction of property, and economic stagnation. The country is experiencing a recurring spate of violence that is deeply rooted in mutual suspicion and hatred among the various ethnic groups in the country.

This is apparent in the regular recurrence of ethnic and other crises that have beset the country since independence and particularly in the past two decades. These events endanger the country's fragile democratic institutions and limit its socio-economic progress by diverting much needed funding from development efforts to military and counter insurgency actions as well as to re-building devastated infra-structure. Ethnicity and religion, as well as caste, are socio-cultural indicators that frequently play an important and even strategic part in the nation's political landscape. A multitude of variables have played a role in Nigeria's ongoing ethnic crises.

Therefore, based on the various crises that were previously discussed, there are numerous ways to explain the causes of the nation's crises. Scholars have identified a number of factors, including competition for economic and political space, traditional authority, conflicting values and ways of life, religion and ethnicity, and religious manipulations. Unemployment and poverty, Northern Nigeria's history of implementing Jihadist Islam is a result of the government's security intelligence and law enforcement services' inability to hold those responsible accountable. Sharia law has been imposed in several northern regions of the nation, ignorance of the teachings of Islam and the Indigene and Settler Controversy (Egwu, 2001).

6. Conclusion

In Nigeria, tensions between different ethnic groups and economic losses are the results of the ethnic crises. Additional state and local government unit divisions were created in response to the examination of the "federal character" plan in order to better reflect ethnic

representation and recognition. Along with the rotation of state posts across ethnic areas, it also included an agreement on the proportionate representation of political parties, which was thought to reflect ethno-regional interest in the executive cabinet. These programs seemed to have been undermined, despite the fact that they were supposed to offer a sustainable solution to the ethnic issue and inequality. Nigeria's ethnic crisis can be resolved by implementing Amartya Sen's Niti and Nyaya principle, which he outlined in his book *Idea of Justice*.

This will eliminate ethnic divides and promote equality, harmony, and peace. A philosophical and historical analysis of Nigeria's ethnic crisis reveals a history of political instability and shifting constitutional approaches to resolving ethnic diversity. The ethnic groups in Nigeria are currently at odds with one another over issues like the allocation of resources and power. Successive governments have attempted, without success, to find a lasting solution to the problems of marginalization, inequality, and ethnic crises. The government has attempted, but failed, to prevent Nigeria's current ethnic crises. Maintaining political stability, peaceful coexistence, and social cohesion are all impacted by the problem of finding a common ground for social justice and fair treatment. How can we preserve unity, peaceful coexistence, and political stability in a society where different ethnic groups are sometimes at odds with one another, especially in light of Nigeria's current ethnic crises and instability? The Niti is a concept of a just society, a means of codification, and a procedural sense of justice; the Nyaya is a comprehensive conception of justice that has been achieved; it emphasizes attention to the finer points of the outcome and stands for a practical and comprehensive concept of justice. Sen's *Idea of Justice* addresses the concepts of social injustice and ethnic crises by laying out a workable formula for the equitable distribution of individual liberties, rights, and socioeconomic benefits, which include income, health, education, and other political rights. Sen's theory of Niti and Nyaya can end ethnic conflicts.

The main goal of Nyaya is to prevent the injustice of "big fish eating small fish," or *matsanyaya*. Justice's main purpose is to stop this from happening, and "justice in the fish world" shouldn't be allowed to infiltrate the human world. Sen, central acceptance is about societies reaching their own conclusions and achieving justice with Nyaya consciousness rather than criticizing institutions and laws. He calls for the differentiation of justice and injustice through a process of realization, emphasizing public reason through human reason, and highlights the necessity of

replicating genuine democratic opportunities and dialogue spaces in order to achieve this, which will abolish social injustice and bring about a system of equality and fairness that will eliminate ethnic division in the country.

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Part Three

Business / Entrepreneurship Education



Effect of Entrepreneurial Education On Career Success Believes Among Undergraduate Learners of Distance Learning Institute, University of Lagos.

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Abstract. Entrepreneurship education has firmly established itself in Nigeria, with numerous higher education institutions now having entrepreneurship centers where students acquire entrepreneurial skills to achieve self-sufficiency amidst rising unemployment. This research investigates the effect of entrepreneurship education on the beliefs surrounding career success (Career Efficacy, Career Decision Belief, and Career Problem-Solving Conviction) among undergraduate learners of distance learning institute, University of Lagos. Two research instruments, namely the Entrepreneurship Assessment Scale and Career Success Belief Scale, were utilized to gather data from 381 distance learners in their third to fifth year, selected randomly through a descriptive survey design. The collected data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis. The results indicated significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables, implying that entrepreneurship education is instrumental in enhancing career efficacy, Career decision beliefs, and problem-solving abilities among distance learners. Findings were discussed and recommendations made.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Career Success, Career Efficacy, Career Decision Belief, Distance learners.

1. Introduction

The escalating rate of poverty globally has sparked concerns over the years, particularly in developing countries, with Nigeria being a major contributor where young individuals are disproportionately impacted by poverty. In response to this situation, various government bodies and non-profit organizations have initiated multiple social intervention programs aimed at addressing this issue by supporting other entities in creating and implementing policies that inspire hope in the youth of

Nigeria. To address unemployment and poverty, the Nigerian government has created several organizations, such as the Raw Materials and Resources Development Council (RMRD), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), the National Technology Acquisition and Support Agency (NOTAP), among others (Ibitoye, Atoyebi & Sufian, 2015; Emmanuel, 2012; Akhuemonkhan, Sofoluwe & Raimi, 2013).

To promote self-employment among students in higher education as a part of their studies and practical training, the Nigerian government, via the Federal Government of Nigeria, has recently announced an additional initiative. As noted by Aja-Okorie and Adali (2013), the National Commission for Higher Education (NUC, 2004) has been directed to incorporate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of Nigerian universities, with the primary goal of reducing the unemployment rate among recent graduates in the country. Although entrepreneurship education and training have been implemented as a means to decrease unemployment among youth in Nigeria (Dike, 2009), it is unfortunate that the unemployment rate among Nigerian youths continues to increase, recently according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) the unemployment among Nigerian youths increased from 7.2% in 2023 to 8.4% recently. This reality places greater demands on higher education institutions in Nigeria to prepare graduates who can secure employment both individually and on a national and global scale (Teichler, 2007). Considering this, graduates need to possess a mix of traits that will help them succeed after graduation, as this equips them to be flexible and proactive in their selected career (Bezuidenhout, 2011).

The 2011 report by the Haase and Lautenschlager Group emphasizes the crucial role of entrepreneurship

education in fostering undergraduates' entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge, and skills. (Ifedili & Ofoegbu, 2011). Torre (2015) argued that entrepreneurship involves individuals' ability to take risks to produce goods and services, alongside the elements of production. In other words, it refers to an individual's willingness and ability to seek investment opportunities in their environment and to establish and manage a successful business. However, research indicates that students generally hold a favorable view of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011; Bassey & Olu, 2008). Furthermore, Wilson, Kickul, and Marlin (2007) contended that entrepreneurship education can encourage students' inclination towards pursuing entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial skills acquired through training are recognized as a crucial element for both organizations and economies (Dickson, Solomano & Waever 2008). These abilities significantly contribute to the creation of jobs, generation of wealth, reduction of poverty, and improvement of income for individuals and governments. Recognizing the essential role of entrepreneurship in contemporary economies underscores the necessity for strategic investment and support in this field. Additionally, education is seen as a fundamental requirement for fostering entrepreneurship, especially in environments where the entrepreneurial spirit and culture are lacking. This is viewed as a key factor influencing the choice to engage in entrepreneurship, establish new enterprises, and attain overall success in entrepreneurial ventures (Dickso et al, 2008). There is also an assumption that there exists a positive link between education and an individual's choice to pursue business and the outcomes of their entrepreneurial efforts. Strategies for alleviating poverty should not be regarded in isolation; various methods and approaches should be employed. To realize true economic growth and development, the national education system must be recognized as an essential and irreplaceable component. Education is broadly acknowledged as a foundational aspect of significant advancement, irrespective of the context.

Career effectiveness, commonly known as career self-efficacy, is a crucial idea in the realm of career development and success. It pertains to the confidence an individual has in their ability to carry out tasks and make choices concerning their career. This belief framework can influence the extent of effort individuals dedicate to their careers, their ability to handle difficulties, and their resilience when facing challenges. Self-efficacy is significant in shaping how people tackle goals, tasks, and obstacles. Those with a robust sense of career self-efficacy are likely to perceive challenging situations as just another

assignment to complete, foster a deeper interest in their profession, cultivate a heightened commitment to their career, and bounce back more swiftly from setbacks and failures (Okunola 2024).

Various elements contribute to achieving career success. This encompasses a comprehension of oneself and one's skills. It entails self-assessment, acquiring professional knowledge, establishing attainable goals, strategizing, and resolving issues. A robust sense of career purpose empowers individuals to manage their career growth, investigate various avenues, and adhere to career decisions that align with their personal and professional aspirations. Thus, career decision beliefs refer to the thoughts and convictions a person has regarding their career trajectory, skills, and the job market, which can greatly impact their decisions and behaviours while career problem solving conviction refers to one's personal belief in tackling career-related challenges through a systematic method, beginning with understanding the issue, gathering relevant information for resolution, and assessing the solution's effectiveness (Williams, 2013). To address a problem, one must combine appropriate actions and put them into practice to reach a solution.

Career Success can be enhanced through various interventions; career guidance and coaching represent common approaches in which professionals assist individuals in recognizing their strengths, establishing achievable goals, and devising plans to navigate challenges. Additionally, training programs that offer individuals the chance to gain new skills and knowledge can boost their career self-worth. Furthermore, fostering a supportive atmosphere that promotes risk-taking and learning from mistakes can instill a sense of purpose, institutionally instituted entrepreneurial centers cater to foster this ability in learners. Ultimately, career success can be cultivated and reinforced over time, influencing both career satisfaction and overall well-being. A nation like Nigeria, among those in the developing world, cannot afford to overlook the significance of entrepreneurship education if it aims to optimally develop its citizens and progress technologically, hence the need for this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It has already been acknowledged that the education provided by many tertiary institutions results in graduates who are ill-prepared for the job market. Graduates are trained primarily for wage-paying roles in the formal sector. The high unemployment rate among graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions has

become a significant national issue. The gap between graduation and employment continues to be lengthy, leading to frustration among graduates. Given these circumstances, it is evident that the most feasible solution is for universities to sporadically prepare their students for self-employment. Recently, many universities have initiated entrepreneurship education programs, aiming to equip their students with the skills necessary to launch their own ventures and become job creators rather than job seekers upon graduation. This initiative aligns with the directives from the Federal Government of Nigeria, which has instructed all tertiary institutions to provide courses in entrepreneurship to enhance the development of self-employment skills among graduates. The following research hypothesis and questions guided the study.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

Three research hypotheses were formulated and shall be tested at 0.05 significant level:

- H₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and student career efficacy.
H₂: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and career decision belief of the undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos.
H₃: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and career decision problem solving conviction of the undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos.

1.3 Research Questions

- To what extent will entrepreneurship education influence career efficacy of the undergraduates?

- To what extent will entrepreneurship education influence career decision belief of the students?
- To what extent will entrepreneurship education influence career decision problem solving conviction of the undergraduates?

1.4 Methodology

This research utilized a descriptive survey approach. The population for the study included 9,317 registered students in year 3 to year 5 (4,145 males and 5,172 females) during the academic year 2023-2024 across three departments of the Institute. To choose the participants and ensure that the sample adequately represented the population, the Taro Yamane sample size formula was applied to calculate the necessary sample size. A total of 381 participants were deemed to be a suitable representation of the population. Two standardized research instruments were employed; the Entrepreneurship Assessment Scale was adapted for this research, consisting of 20 items, while structured career confidence scales were created and validated. The career confidence scale encompasses three components: measuring career effectiveness, belief in career decision-making, and belief in problem-solving. The internal consistency of the instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha method, resulting in a confidence coefficient of 0.88, which is regarded as adequate for establishing the reliability of the questionnaires for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to students via Google Forms, and a total of 381 students completed it. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed employing the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression techniques.

2. Results

Hypothesis I: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and career efficacy of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos.

R= .693 R ² = .480 Adj R ² = .479 Std Error = .29721							
ANOVA							
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	P	Remark
Regression	30.412	1	30.412	344.290	.000 ^b	<.05	Sig
Residual	32.948	373	.088				
Total	63.360	374					

Table 1 above shows that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) and the dependent variable (career efficacy) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of

Ibadan, $R = .693$, $P < .05$ therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the table revealed that only 48% ($R^2 = .480$) variance in career efficacy of open distance learners of university of Lagos was due to the prediction of the independent variable. The result of the ANOVA also attests to a causal relationship of the independent variable with career efficacy, $F(1, 373) = 344.290$, $P < .05$.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and career decision belief of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos.

$R = .707^a$ $R^2 = .500$ Adj $R^2 = .498$ Std Error = .30804								
ANOVA								
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	P	Remark	
Regression	34.584	1	34.584	364.467	.000 ^b	<.05	Sig	
Residual	34.635	365	.095					
Total	69.220	366						

Table 2 above shows that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) and the dependent variable (career decision belief) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of Ibadan, $R = .707$, $P < .05$ therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the table revealed that only 49.8% ($R^2 = .498$) variance in career efficacy of open distance learners of university of Lagos was due to the prediction of the independent variable. The result of the ANOVA also attests to a causal relationship of the independent variable with career efficacy, $F(1, 365) = 364.467$, $P < .05$.

Hypothesis III: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial education and career decision problem solving conviction of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos.

$R = .646^a$ $R^2 = .418$ Adj $R^2 = .416$ Std Error = .37176								
ANOVA								
Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	P	Remark	
Regression	36.775	1	36.775	266.091	.000 ^b	<.05	Sig	
Residual	51.274	371	.138					
Total	88.049	372						

Table 3 above shows that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) and the dependent variable (career decision problem solving conviction) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of Ibadan, $R = .646$, $P < .05$ therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the table revealed that only 41.8% ($R^2 = .418$) variance in career efficacy of open distance learners of university of Lagos was due to the prediction of the independent variable. The result of the ANOVA also attests to a causal relationship of the independent variable with career efficacy, $F(1, 371) = 266.091$, $P < .05$.

Research Question I: To what extent will entrepreneurial education influence career efficacy of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos?

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.696	.151		4.625	.000
	ENTREDUC	.825	.044	.693	18.555	.000

Table 4 above shows the exact contribution of the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) on the dependent variable (career efficacy) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos. The result shows that entrepreneurial education ($\beta = .693$, $t = 18.555$, $P < .05$) contributed to the prediction of career efficacy by 69.3%, this is relatively high.

Research Question II: To what extent will entrepreneurial education influence career decision belief of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos?

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.487	.158		3.085	.002
	ENTREDUC	.891	.047	.707	19.091	.000

Table 5 above shows the exact contribution of the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) on the dependent variable (career decision belief) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos. The result shows that entrepreneurial education ($\beta = .707$, $t = 19.091$, $P < .05$) contributed to the prediction of career efficacy by 70.7%, this is very high.

Research Question III: To what extent will entrepreneurial education influence career decision problem solving conviction of undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos?

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.242	.189		1.279	.202
	ENTREDUC	.913	.056	.646	16.312	.000

Table 6 above shows the exact contribution of the independent variable (entrepreneurial education) on the dependent variable (career decision belief) among undergraduate open distance learners of university of Lagos. The result shows that entrepreneurial education ($\beta = .646$, $t = 16.312$, $P < .05$) contributed to the prediction of career decision problem solving conviction efficacy by 64.6%, this is also relatively high.

3. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect entrepreneurial education on career confidence of open distance learners in University of Lagos. The result of the correlation indicated that the independent variables correlated with dependent variables, this means there is a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The result of the regression analysis shows that the independent variables contributed to the prediction of the dependent variables.

Hypothesis I which stated that there is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and career efficacy among undergraduate open distance learners at the University of Lagos was rejected as the result revealed a significant relationship ($R = .693$, $p < .05$), indicating that entrepreneurship education substantially influences the career efficacy of these learners. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .480$) suggests that 48% of the variance in career efficacy is

explained by entrepreneurship education. This finding aligns with the work of Walmsley and Nabi (2024) that underscores the importance of entrepreneurship education in enhancing students' confidence in their career-related abilities, the researcher suggested that entrepreneurship education equips students with essential skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovation, which are critical for career success. Therefore, the rejection of the null hypothesis supports the argument that entrepreneurship education plays a pivotal role in boosting career efficacy among students. In a similar context, hypothesis II, which proposed that there is no notable correlation between entrepreneurship education and career decision belief among undergraduate open distance learners at the University of Lagos, was also dismissed. The results revealed a strong positive correlation ($R = .707$, $p < .05$), with 49.8% of the variance in career decision belief accounted for by entrepreneurship education. This outcome implies that entrepreneurship education greatly improves students' confidence in their capability to make well-informed career decisions. Cultivating such self-confidence is vital for students as they navigate the intricacies of today's job market. Entrepreneurship education likely promotes a sense of agency and empowerment, allowing students to make assured and informed career choices. These results align with earlier research that emphasized the importance of entrepreneurial skills in enhancing career decision-making among students, as noted by Douglas (2015).

Hypothesis III also examined whether there exists a notable correlation between entrepreneurship education and career decision-making confidence among undergraduate distance learners at the University of Lagos. The findings indicated a significant relationship ($R = .646$, $p < .05$), with entrepreneurship education accounting for 41.8 percent of the variation in confidence regarding problem-solving. This outcome underscores the influence of entrepreneurship education on students' self-assurance in their problem-solving abilities when making career decisions. Typically, entrepreneurship education incorporates practical, experiential learning opportunities that urge students to engage in critical thinking and address real-world challenges. Consequently, students cultivate a solid confidence in their problem-solving skills, which is vital for making informed career choices. The rejection of the null hypothesis in this context further highlights the essential role of entrepreneurship education in equipping students to face future career challenges.

Furthermore, to know the exact contribution of the independent variable to the prediction of dependent variables, 3 research questions were postulated. The research question revealed the following; Research question I The result shows that ($\beta = .693$, $= 18.555$, $P < .05$) This means entrepreneurial education contributed to the prediction of career efficacy by 69.3%, this is relatively high, Research question II result also shows ($\beta = .707$, $= 19.091$, $P < .05$) This implies that that entrepreneurial education contributed to the prediction of career efficacy by 70.7%, this is very high too. The final research question of this study shows that entrepreneurial education ($\beta = .646$, $= 16.312$, $P < .05$) contributed to the prediction of career decision problem solving conviction by 64.6%, this is also relatively high.

All of these results align with those of other researchers, including Lackes (2015) and Nabi et al. (2017), indicating that entrepreneurship education positively influences the employability of undergraduate students, equipping them for success in their careers. Additionally, Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2011) also contend that entrepreneurial education bolsters career decision-making by improving individuals' self-perception and confidence in their decision-making abilities. Gibb (2008) further supports the notion that entrepreneurship fosters problem-solving skills by promoting innovative thinking and a strategic approach to addressing challenges. The analysis demonstrates that students who receive entrepreneurship education are more likely to contribute to reducing the unemployment rate and poverty levels among graduates in Nigeria.

4. Conclusion

All of the findings suggests that students who engage in entrepreneurial activities or coursework feel more confident and capable in managing their career paths. Entrepreneurial education positively impacts students' beliefs regarding their career decisions. The results implies that students who participate in entrepreneurial education programs are more likely to have stronger beliefs in their ability to make sound career decisions. The influence of entrepreneurial education on career decision problem-solving conviction is notably high. The analysis demonstrates that students with exposure to entrepreneurial education exhibit greater confidence in their problem-solving abilities related to career decisions.

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Innovations in Electricity Infrastructure and Small Enterprises Sustainability in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract. In Lagos State, Nigeria, Small enterprises faced challenges such as frequent power outages, elevated electricity costs, reliance on generators, and inadequate government support. This study investigated the effects of innovations in electricity infrastructure on the sustainability of small enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, it evaluated the impacts of backup power systems, smart grid integration, and renewable energy solutions on small enterprise sustainability. A survey design was adopted, utilizing both primary and secondary data. The population comprised 42,067 small enterprises, with a sample size of 331 determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula. Data were collected through a researcher-structured questionnaire and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested with a pilot study conducted in Abuja involving 33 participants, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.84, indicating high reliability. Validity was ensured through expert review by two supervisors and a university lecturer. Data collection was carried out through face-to-face administration. The study employed analytical methods, including mean scores, standard deviations, and regression analysis, with hypotheses tested using Pearson's correlation. The findings revealed positive and significant relationships between electricity infrastructure dimensions and the sustainability of small enterprises. Results showed that backup power systems ($\beta = 0.433$, $p < 0.05$), smart grid integration ($\beta = 0.503$, $p < 0.05$), and renewable energy solutions ($\beta = 0.508$, $p < 0.05$) significantly contributed to the sustainability of small enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria. The overall model (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.946$; $F(7,280) = 956.225$, $p < 0.05$) indicated that these variables accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in small enterprise sustainability. The study

concluded that electricity infrastructure played a critical role in sustaining small enterprises in Lagos State, Nigeria. Recommendations included adopting smart grid technologies to improve reliability and efficiency and conducting further research to explore the role of energy storage systems in stabilizing electricity supply and supporting the integration of renewables into Nigeria's energy portfolio.

Keywords: Innovations, Electricity Infrastructure, Small Enterprises Sustainability

1. Introduction

The global energy landscape is experiencing a significant transformation fueled by technological advancements and the pressing need to address climate change. Central to this shift is innovation in electricity infrastructure, which aims to improve the efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of power generation, transmission, and distribution (Tushar et al., 2017). A key breakthrough is the integration of smart grids—intelligent energy distribution systems that leverage digital technology to monitor and manage electricity flow from generation to end-users. Equipped with advanced sensors, communication networks, and data analytics, these grids optimize power delivery, reduce energy waste, and enhance grid resilience (Pal et al., 2011). They also facilitate better integration of renewable energy sources, improve energy efficiency, and ensure more reliable service delivery.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government has implemented an Advanced Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to bolster the efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of the national power grid. This system supports real-time monitoring and control, enabling operators to identify faults, manage

loads effectively, and respond promptly to outages (Okoh & Amadi, 2021). Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are transforming energy infrastructure by enabling predictive maintenance, demand forecasting, and renewable energy integration. AI-powered predictive maintenance has reduced unexpected downtime by 40%, while AI-based demand forecasting achieves 90% accuracy, allowing utilities to balance supply and demand effectively. Moreover, AI plays a critical role in improving energy storage and distribution, as demonstrated in countries like Denmark and the United States (Yang et al., 2019).

The integration of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, is a primary focus of electricity infrastructure advancements. High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) technology has been widely adopted to transmit electricity over long distances with minimal transmission losses and greater grid stability. HVDC is particularly advantageous for connecting remote renewable energy sources to urban centers and linking separate power grids, thereby enhancing electricity supply security (Zhao et al., 2018). Energy storage systems, including advanced batteries, are critical for addressing the intermittent nature of renewable energy. These systems store surplus energy generated during low-demand periods and release it during high-demand periods, stabilizing the grid and ensuring a reliable power supply (Liu et al., 2020).

The Internet of Things (IoT) has revolutionized energy infrastructure by enabling real-time monitoring and control of energy assets. IoT applications enhance efficiency, reliability, and sustainability by providing data-driven insights for informed decision-making. Sensors collect data from power plants and grid systems, while connectivity facilitates seamless communication between devices and central systems. Data analytics processes this information to extract actionable insights that optimize operations (Wang et al., 2021).

Despite these advancements, challenges persist, including the need for substantial investments, cybersecurity risks, and the integration of diverse energy sources. A balanced approach is essential, combining off-grid solutions to meet immediate energy needs with on-grid expansions to support long-term industrial demand. Continued research and development, supportive policies, and strategic investments are vital for unlocking the full potential of these innovations in electricity infrastructure (Khosravi et al., 2020).

As electricity infrastructure evolves, emerging technologies like blockchain, decentralized energy

systems, and microgrids are gaining momentum. Blockchain offers a secure, transparent platform for energy transactions, enabling peer-to-peer trading that reduces transaction costs and empowers consumers to engage in energy markets. While still in its infancy, blockchain applications in energy systems are poised for significant growth (Peh, 2021). Microgrids represent another promising development, particularly in regions with unreliable or non-existent access to centralized electricity grids. These localized, self-sufficient systems generate, store, and distribute energy—often from renewable sources such as solar or wind. Microgrids can function independently or in conjunction with the main grid, providing flexibility and resilience during power outages (Gencer, 2019).

A robust policy and regulatory framework is crucial for the successful implementation of these innovations. Governments worldwide are adopting supportive policies to drive the development and integration of modern electricity infrastructure. For example, the EU has established ambitious targets for renewable energy adoption and carbon emission reductions, fostering clean technology advancements and grid modernization (European Commission, 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, the government is encouraging public-private partnerships to boost investments in smart grid and renewable energy technologies, thereby improving the national electricity supply (National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy, 2015).

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of innovations in electricity infrastructure on the sustainability of small enterprises in Lagos State Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To ascertain the effect of backup power systems on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.
- To establish the effect of smart grid integration on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.
- To investigate the effect of renewable energy solution on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

In what way does the backup power systems affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

How does the effect of smart grid integration affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

In what way does renewable energy solution affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H03: There is no significant relationship between backup power systems and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

H05: There is no significant relationship between smart grid integration and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

H06: There is no significant relationship between renewable energy solution and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The inadequacies in Nigeria's electricity sector have been widely documented. Eberhard et al. (2016) highlight that the country's electricity supply is characterized by inefficiency, poor distribution networks, and insufficient generation capacity. The authors note that despite efforts to reform the sector, challenges such as underfunding and corruption persist. Similarly, Oyedepo et al. (2021) argue that the reliance on an aging grid system and inadequate investment in renewable energy sources exacerbate the energy crisis, directly affecting businesses dependent on consistent power. Recent studies have emphasized the potential of alternative energy

solutions in mitigating electricity challenges for small enterprises. Ohiare (2015) highlights the growing adoption of solar energy as a cost-effective and sustainable alternative for small businesses in Nigeria. Additionally, Bala et al. (2020) suggest that mini-grids and energy-efficient technologies could offer reliable power solutions, particularly in urban hubs like Lagos. However, the high initial investment costs and limited government incentives remain significant barriers to widespread adoption (Abdullahi & Sadiq, 2021).

2.1 Electricity Infrastructure

Electricity infrastructure refers to the physical components and systems that generate, transmit, distribute, and control electrical power. It encompasses a wide range of elements, including power plants, transformers, transmission lines, substations, distribution networks, and various control and monitoring devices that work together to ensure a reliable supply of electricity to homes, businesses, and industries in a specific region or country IEA (2020).

2.1.1 Dimensions of Electricity Infrastructure

This study was focused on three dimensions of electricity infrastructure namely:

- Backup Power Systems
- Smart Grid Integration
- Renewable Energy Solution

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represents the relationships between the variables and it is presented in the way that will be clear and easy to understand. It may be in form of a simple flowchart or a diagram with boxes and arrows as shown below.

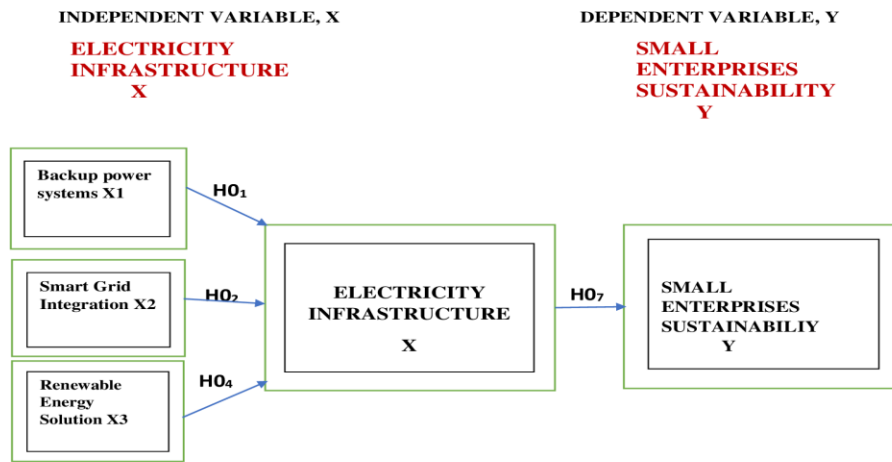


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship Between Independent and Dependent Variables

Source: Author's Design (2024)

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study explores the impact of electricity infrastructure on the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos, Nigeria, using the Resource-Based View (RBV), Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA), and Systems Theory. The RBV framework, introduced by Jay Barney in 1991, emphasizes that a firm's competitive advantage stems from unique resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources drive performance by creating operational efficiency, innovation, and sustainability.

In the Lagos context, reliable electricity is a critical resource. However, inconsistent electricity supply in the state positions stable power as a rare and valuable asset. SMEs that secure alternative energy sources or enhance energy efficiency gain a competitive edge. This study leverages RBV to assess how electricity challenges influence SMEs and their strategies to overcome such barriers, such as investing in renewable energy or energy-efficient systems. Policy implications drawn from the RBV perspective include public-private partnerships (PPPs) to improve infrastructure, government incentives for renewable energy adoption, and grid maintenance to enhance reliability. Effective electricity infrastructure promotes economic, environmental, and social sustainability by reducing costs, supporting innovation, and contributing to community development. The RBV framework provides insights into bridging infrastructure gaps, ensuring SMEs in Lagos achieve long-term growth and competitiveness.

2.4 Empirical Review

Adamu et al. (2022) evaluated the economic impact of electricity transmission and distribution losses in Nigeria. Using secondary data from NERC and ICIR, they found transmission and distribution losses at 53.83%, translating to significant economic losses, with Yola DisCo recording the highest industrial monetary loss of N50 billion in 2020. Identified challenges included overloading, vandalism, and poor maintenance.

Adewuyi et al. (2020) examined Nigeria's sustainable energy transition, identifying socio-technical and political barriers. Lessons from other countries emphasized the need for efficient infrastructure and policies to achieve sustainable development. Akinbola et al. (2020) studied the power sector's impact on industrialization. Using Johansen Co-Integration and VECM, they found poor electricity supply, due to systemic inefficiencies, negatively affects industrial output. They recommended prioritizing electricity for productive sectors and addressing systemic issues. Ekwe et al. (2019) analyzed the impact of electricity supply on economic growth in Nigeria. Findings showed that a 1% increase in electricity supply grows the economy by 3.94%. Diversifying electricity sources beyond thermal and hydro energy was recommended.

Ukwandu (2018) highlighted poor electricity supply as a barrier to inclusive growth. Nigeria ranked 136th out of 137 countries in electricity availability, with inconsistent supply identified as a key constraint to development. Recommendations included improved public-private partnerships and addressing infrastructural decay.

Existing literature highlights the impact of electricity infrastructure on economic growth and the challenges of unreliable power for small enterprises, but it rarely connects innovative electricity solutions—such as renewable energy, hybrid systems, and micro-grids—to the sustainability of small businesses, particularly in urban hubs like Lagos State. Studies often focus on national-level issues or rural electrification, neglecting the unique energy demands, operational costs, and resilience of small enterprises in Lagos. Additionally, the sustainability dimension—encompassing environmental, economic, and social impacts—is underexplored, alongside limited data on enterprise-level experiences with energy innovations. This study fills these gaps by examining how innovative electricity infrastructure fosters small enterprise sustainability in Lagos State.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. This research method was considered appropriate for the study as a result of the large population which the researcher might not be able to access in entirety. The population of this study is Forty-Two Thousand and Sixty-Seven (42,067) small enterprises; been the officially registered small enterprises in Lagos State Nigeria (SMEDAN, 2021). Lagos State is selected based on the fact that it is the business hub of Nigeria and its distinct socio-economic characteristics and the prevalence of electricity infrastructure challenges. The study aims to understand the impact of these challenges on the sustainability of small and medium-scale enterprises in Nigeria with emphasis in Lagos State.

In this study, Stratified Sampling is adopted where the population is divided into subgroups or strata, and a random sample is taken from each stratum in proportion to its size in the population.

Table 2: Population and Sample Table for Small Enterprises in Lagos State Nigeria

State	Population of Small Enterprises	Percent	Sample for Small Enterprises
Lagos	42,067	100	331
Total	42,067	100	331

The study sample size was therefore three hundred and thirty-one (331) Small Enterprises across Lagos State Nigeria.

Method of Data Collection: The sources of our data are both primary and secondary. Primary data according to Kumar (2019), is defined as those data that originated from the researcher for the purpose of investigation at hand. Primary data are information a researcher collected first hand. Secondary data according to the same author are statistics generated from the immediate study at hand but for other purposes. The secondary data were generated from already published materials such as books, articles and the internet.

The method of data collection includes surveys, interviews, and document analysis to gather comprehensive and diverse data. The combination of survey, questionnaire, interviews, and document analyses ensure a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to data collection. Quantitative data from surveys will provide numerical information and statistical analysis, while qualitative data from interviews will offer rich, detailed insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of participants. Document analysis will supplement and validate the primary data, providing a broader context for the study.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, pilot test was carried out in FCT Abuja and a total of thirty-three copies of questionnaire which was 10% of the sample size were distributed for the survey and data obtained were tested using Cronbach Alpha and thereafter Pearson's Correlation to establish the reliability of the instrument and relationship of the variables. The results showed that the questionnaire has a reliability coefficient of 0.84 which shows that it is within Pearson Correlation Coefficient acceptable range of values from +1 to -1 and therefore reliable and valid.

3.1 Data Analysis and Results

Data collected was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Demographic data as well as the responses of the respondents were presented using tables. Descriptive data analysis used percentages, means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was applied for the analysis of the data related to other constructs in the study. Pearson correlation tool was used to test for relationship between each element of electricity infrastructure and Small Enterprises Sustainability, while multiple regression tool was used to test for the contribution of electricity infrastructure elements on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State, Nigeria using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25 was used to analyze all data generated.

On a five-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the listed items explaining the variables using Strongly Agreed=SA (5), Agreed=A (4), Neutral=N (3), Disagreed=D (2), and Strongly Disagreed=SD (1).

Research Question One: In what way does the backup power systems affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

Table 3: Effect of backup power systems on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

S/N	Item	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	$\bar{X}$	StD	Decision
9.	Small enterprises implement backup power solutions to manage disruptions.	91	104	52	50	34	3.33	0.64	Agreed
10.	Business sustainability and growth prospects are hindered due to high cost of backup system.	114	106	57	39	15	3.42	0.71	Agreed
11.	Small enterprises are more likely to invest in innovative technologies to counter effects of electricity infrastructure issues.	90	109	81	12	39	3.00	0.61	Agreed
12.	Most small enterprises integrate into backup power system mix.	109	120	71	11	20	3.12	0.56	Agreed
	$\bar{X}/StD$						3.22	0.63	Agreed

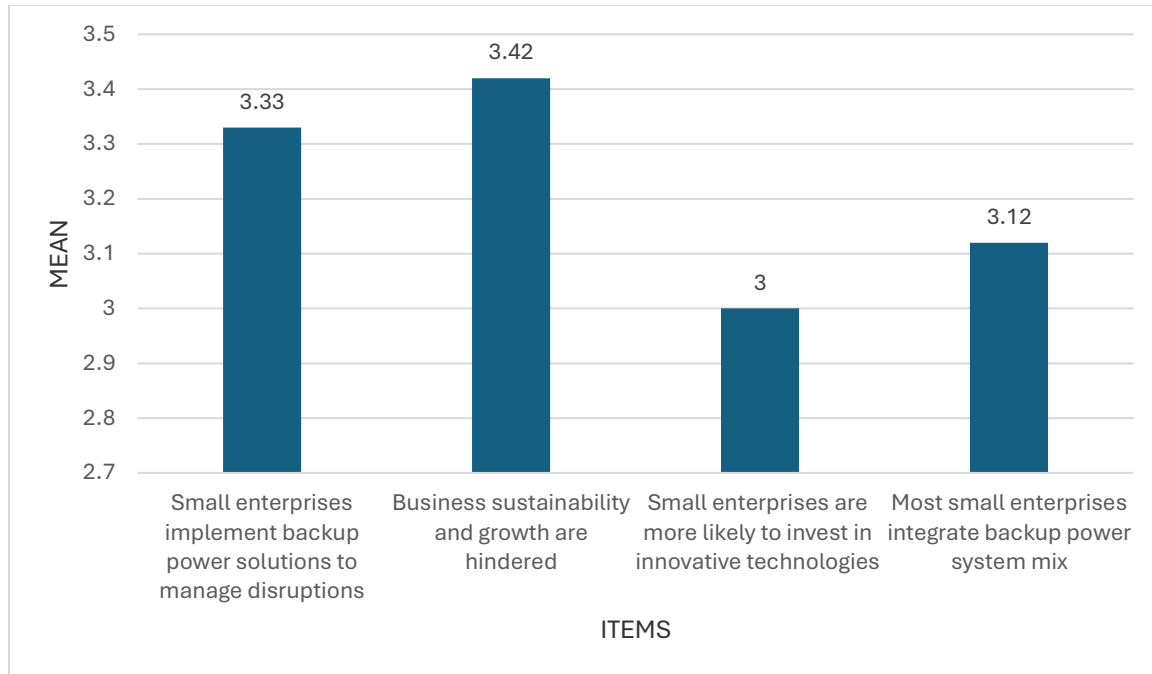


Figure 10: Effect of backup power systems on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

Research Question Two: How does the effect of smart grid integration affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

Table 4: Effect of smart grid integration on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

S/N	Item	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	$\bar{X}$	StD	Decision
17.	Alternative energy sources are used to mitigate the high operational cost.	99	110	64	36	22	3.42	0.66	Agreed
18.	There is a significant increase in return on investment as result of smart grid integration.	71	73	63	56	68	3.10	0.60	Agreed
19.	There is improvement in operational efficiency due to smart grid integration.	92	68	71	57	43	2.89	0.73	Agreed
20.	There are changes in energy consumption patterns since smart grid integration.	94	137	64	23	13	3.15	0.62	Agreed
	$\bar{X}/\text{StD}$						3.14	0.65	Agreed

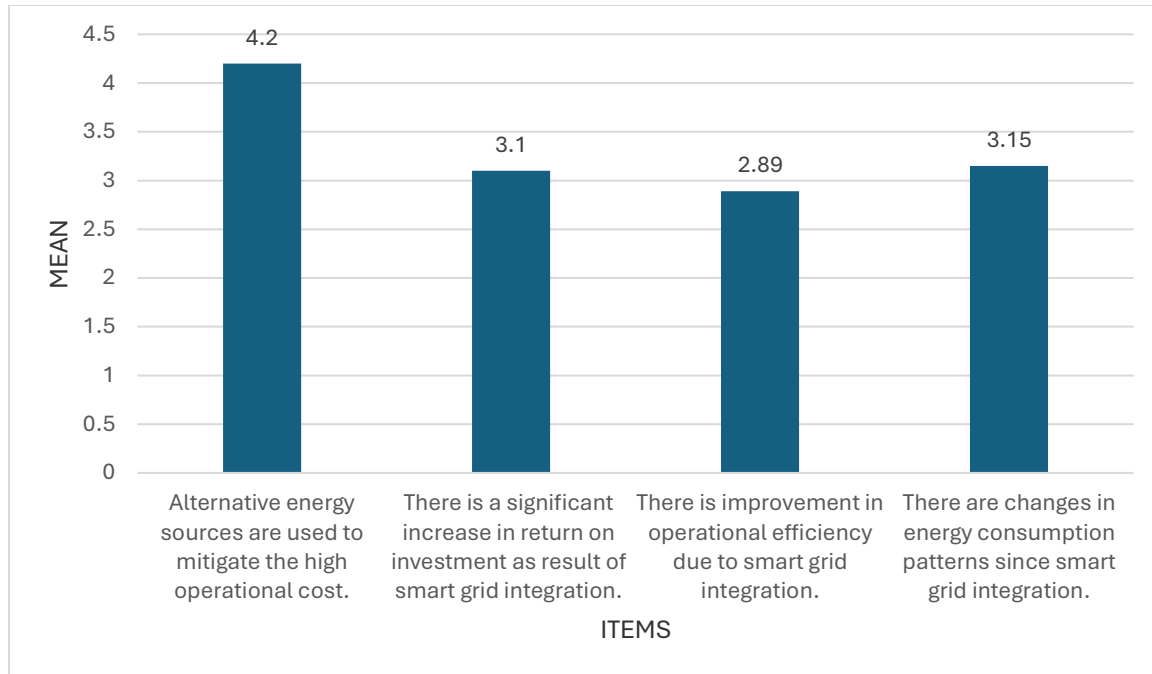


Figure 12: Effect of smart grid integration on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

Research Question Three: In what way does renewable energy solution affect small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

Table 5: Effect of renewable energy solution on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

S/N	Item	SA 5	A 4	N 3	D 2	SD 1	$\bar{X}$	StD	Decision
21.	The adoption of renewable energy solution by small enterprises increased operational efficiency.	100	110	63	37	21	3.64	0.84	Agreed
22.	Adoption of renewable energy solutions by small enterprises lowers operational costs and increased productivity.	72	73	62	57	67	2.84	0.91	Agreed
23.	There are awareness programs and campaigns that encourage small enterprises to adopt renewable energy solutions.	93	68	72	56	42	3.23	0.80	Agreed
24.	There is government and private initiatives that support renewable energy adoption for small enterprises in Lagos.	95	137	63	22	14	3.25	0.82	Agreed
	$\bar{X}/\text{StD}$						3.24	0.84	Agreed

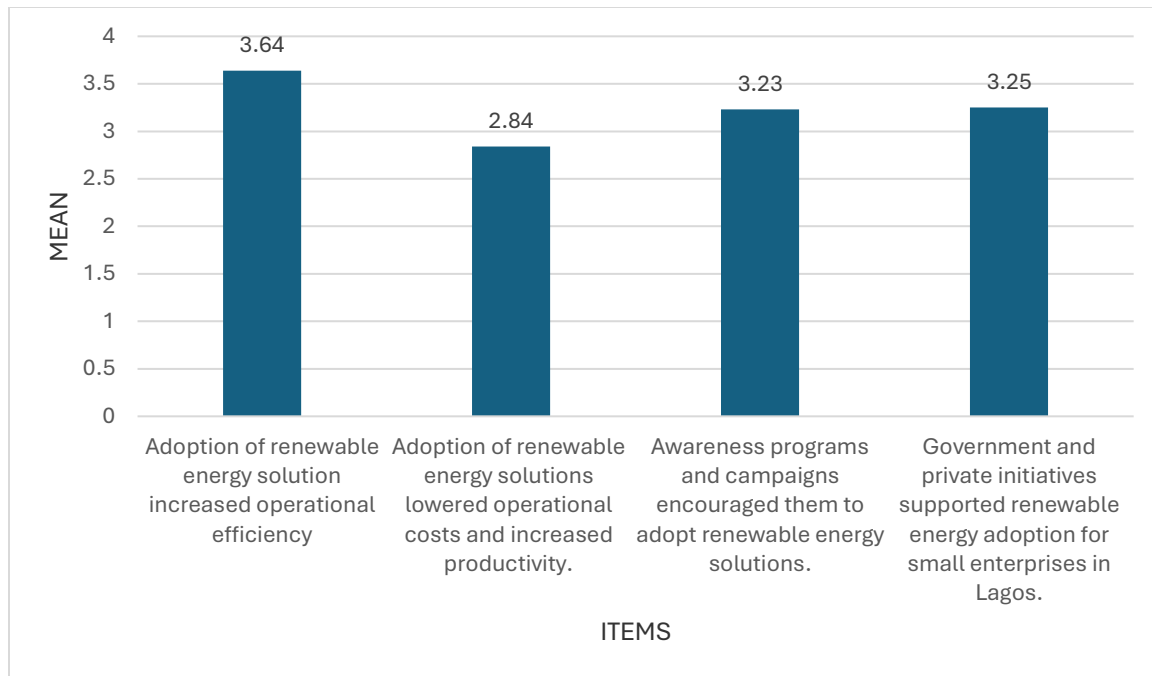


Figure 13: Effect of renewable energy solution on small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Testing of Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant relationship between backup power systems and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

Table 6: Summary of simple regression analysis for the relationship between backup power systems and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria.

N	Model	β	Sig.	t	ANOVA (Sig.)	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F (df)
331	(Constant)	2.155	0.000	12.558	0.000 ^b	.206	.203	85.270 (330)
	Backup power systems	.433	0.000	9.234				
Predictors: (Constant), Backup power systems								
Dependent Variable: Small enterprises sustainability								

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Interpretation

The results indicated that between backup power systems ($\beta = 0.433$, $t = 9.234$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), has a positive and significant effect on the small enterprises sustainability. The simple regression model used to explain the variation in the small enterprises sustainability due to the effect of backup power systems can be stated as follows:

$$Y = f(x_1) \quad Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + e$$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{BPS} + e \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

$$\text{SES} = 2.155\beta_0 + .433\beta_1 x_1 + e \quad \text{eqn 1}$$

Where:

SES = Small Enterprises Sustainability

BPS = Backup Power System

e = is an error term

The result from the simple regression showed that when backup power system is improved by one unit, the small enterprises sustainability would be positively affected with an increase of 0.433. The result shows an overall statistical

significance with $p < 0.05$ which implies that the backup power system is an important determinant of the small enterprises sustainability. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected due to the statistically significant of the t and p values of the relationship between the backup power systems and the small enterprises sustainability.

Akintoye, (2021), In a Study “Rechargeable Batteries: Ensuring Efficient Power Back-Up In Nigeria” Nigeria, like many other countries, faces significant challenges in its power sector, including frequent power outages and unreliable electricity supply. These issues have a direct impact on various sectors of the economy, including households, businesses, industries, and public services. Efficient power backup systems, including the use of rechargeable batteries, are crucial in mitigating the adverse effects of power interruptions and ensuring a continuous and reliable power supply. Efficient power backup systems, such as those utilizing rechargeable batteries, not only provide a seamless transition during power outages but also contribute to improved productivity, reduced losses, and enhanced quality of life. Rechargeable batteries offer a reliable and sustainable energy storage solution, allowing for the efficient utilization of backup power. They can be charged during periods of electricity availability and provide power when the grid fails, ensuring uninterrupted operations and activities. Rechargeable batteries are particularly valuable in off-grid scenarios or areas with limited access to the power grid. They serve as an independent and self-sustaining power source, allowing individuals, households, and businesses to meet their energy needs even in the absence of reliable grid connections. The use of rechargeable batteries as a backup power solution not only reduces dependence on the grid but also promotes energy independence, sustainability, and resilience in the face of power challenges. This comprehensive guide aims to explore the importance of efficient power backup, with a particular focus on the use of rechargeable batteries, in Nigeria. The content will delve into various aspects, including different types of power backup systems, factors to consider when choosing a backup system with rechargeable batteries, best practices for efficient power backup using rechargeable batteries, and the latest advancements in battery technology.

By providing a comprehensive overview of power backup solutions with a specific emphasis on rechargeable batteries, this content seeks to educate and empower individuals, businesses, and organizations in Nigeria to make informed decisions when it comes to ensuring a reliable and efficient power supply. It will address the specific challenges faced in the Nigerian context and provide practical recommendations for selecting and utilizing rechargeable batteries effectively. The relevance of this content lies in its potential to enhance productivity, improve quality of life, and contribute to the overall development and progress of Nigeria's economy. By promoting the use of rechargeable batteries as an efficient power backup solution, this guide aims to foster energy independence, reduce reliance on the grid, and encourage sustainable and resilient energy practices.

Testing of Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant relationship between smart grid integration and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

Table 7: Summary of simple regression analysis for the relationship between smart grid integration and the small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State

N	Model	β	Sig.	t	ANOVA (Sig.)	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F (df)
331	(Constant)	2.073	0.000	12.310	0.000 ^b	0.230	0.228	98.299 (330)
	Smart grid integration	.503	0.000	9.915				
Predictors: (Constant), Smart grid integration								
Dependent Variable: Small enterprises sustainability								

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Interpretation

The results indicated that smart grid integration ($\beta = .503$, $t = 9.915$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), have a positive and significant effect on small enterprises sustainability.

The simple regression model used to explain the variation in the small enterprise's sustainability due to the effect of Smart grid integration can be stated as follows:

$$Y = f(x_2) \quad Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 x_2 + e \\ = \beta_0 + \beta_2 \text{SGI} + e \quad \text{Equation 2}$$

$$\text{SES} = 2.073\beta_0 + .503\beta_2 x_2 + e \quad \text{Eqn 2}$$

Where:

SES = Small Enterprises Sustainability

Sgi = Smart Grid Integration

Y= is the predicted value of smart grid integration.

β_0 = is the Y intercept, that is the value of Y, when X is 0.

e = is an error term

The result from the simple regression depicted that when smart grid integration is improved by one unit, the small enterprises sustainability would be positively affected with an increase of .503. The result shows an overall statistical significance with $p < 0.05$ which implies that the smart grid integration is an important factor of the cost reduction of small and medium-scale enterprises. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected due to the statistically significant of the t and p values of the relationship between the smart grid integration and small enterprises sustainability.

According to IEEE innovation Hub (2022), it notes that Smart grid technology is enabling the effective management and distribution of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydrogen. The smart grid connects a variety of distributed energy resource assets to the power grid. By leveraging the Internet of Things (IoT) to collect data on the smart grid, utilities are able to quickly detect and resolve service issues through continuous self-assessments. Because utilities no longer have to depend on customers to report outages, this self-healing capability is vital component of the smart grid.

Smart Grid Management of Renewable Energy.

The relationship between the smart grid and renewable energy revolves around gathering data. For example, wind farms use mechanical gears that require each link to support multiple sensors. Each sensor is able to note current climate and environmental conditions. This information is then quickly sent through the grid to alert the utility of any issues, which improves both the quality of service and safety.

“You’ve got this story of this invisible, dangerous commodity that travels at the speed of light that we call electricity and for the last hundred-plus years most people could interact with it in only the most rudimentary ways,” says Mark Feasel, vice president of smart grid for Schneider Electric. Companies are now deploying much more advanced sensing devices. According to Feasel, some devices can continually capture information on electricity up to 60,000 times per second.

Semiconductor materials, such as silicon, are supporting the creation of green energy with smart grid technology. Due to their ability to hold millions of minuscule transistors, these materials have enabled IoT advancement. In turn, this advancement has allowed the smart grid to link up devices throughout the system, which ensures that the supply of energy is equal to the demand. It also keeps the current evenly distributed.

Smart grids equipped with parts made from semiconductor material reduce the usage of electricity. For example, electric vehicles can charge at night—a time when offices and homes are not typically using much electricity. Lights switches and furnaces can also automatically power on and off. In this way, energy usage becomes “smart” by not using more than what is needed.

Testing of Hypothesis Three

H03: There is no significant relationship between renewable energy solution and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria?

Table 8: Summary of simple regression analysis for the relationship between renewable energy solutions and the small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State

N	Model	β	Sig.	t	ANOVA (Sig.)	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F (df)
331	(Constant)	2.011	0.000	12.314	0.000 ^b	0.280	0.278	99.264 (330)
	Renewable energy solution	.508	0.000	8.915				
Predictors: (Constant), renewable energy solution								
Dependent Variable: Small enterprises sustainability								

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results indicated that renewable energy solution ($\beta = .508$, $t = 8.915$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), have a positive and significant effect on small enterprises sustainability.

The simple regression model used to explain the variation in the small enterprise's sustainability due to the effect of renewable energy solution can be stated as follows:

$$Y = f(x_3) \quad Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 x_3 + e$$

$$= \beta_0 + \beta_3 \text{ RES} + e$$

Equation 3

$$\text{SES} = 2.011\beta_0 + .508\beta_3 x_3 + e$$

eqn 3

Where:

SES = Small Enterprises Sustainability

RES = Renewable Energy Solution

Y= is the predicted value of smart grid integration.

β_0 = is the Y intercept, that is the value of Y, when X is 0.

e = is an error term

The result from the simple regression depicted that when renewable energy solution was improved by one unit, the small enterprises sustainability was positively affected with an increase of .508. The result shows an overall statistical significance with $p < 0.05$ which implies that the renewable energy solution was an important factor of the cost reduction of small enterprises. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected due to the statistically significant of the t and p values of the relationship between the renewable energy solution and small enterprises sustainability. Renewable energy solutions refer to practical and innovative applications of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, and biomass, to meet energy demands sustainably. These solutions are essential for addressing global energy challenges, including climate change, energy security, and resource depletion (IRENA, 2021; Mohammed et al., 2020).

Solar energy solutions, such as photovoltaic systems and solar water heaters, are widely used in urban and rural areas to provide electricity and heating. Wind turbines are deployed in wind farms to generate electricity on a large scale, while smaller turbines serve off-grid applications (Akinyele et al., 2018; Okonkwo et al., 2020). Hydropower remains a major renewable solution, with both large dams and small-scale hydroelectric systems contributing to energy generation (Oladipo & Olayemi, 2021).

Emerging technologies, such as hybrid energy systems and smart grids, further enhance the efficiency of renewable energy solutions by integrating multiple sources and ensuring consistent energy supply (IEEE

Innovation Hub, 2022). Additionally, bioenergy from organic waste provides a sustainable alternative for heat and electricity, particularly in agricultural and industrial sectors (Adesina & Taiwo, 2019). These solutions not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also improve energy access in underserved regions, foster economic growth, and create jobs. By addressing technical and financial challenges through policy support, public-private partnerships, and technological innovation, renewable energy solutions can significantly contribute to a sustainable and resilient energy future (Abdulrahman et al., 2019; Adedeji et al., 2021).

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Summary

The study presented the following findings based on the data analysis conducted:

The result of the study revealed that small enterprises sustainability in the Lagos State, Nigeria was significantly influenced by power generation capacity. In addition, most small enterprises struggle to meet up with daily operational schedules due to low power generation capacity.

It was established that transmission and distribution networks in the Lagos State, Nigeria influenced the sustainability of small enterprises significantly. In addition, it was revealed that there was poor product and service delivery due to weak transmission and distribution networks.

It was revealed that small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State, Nigeria was influenced by backup power systems. Also, small enterprises implement backup power solutions to manage disruptions caused by power supply components failures.

4.2 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of summary from the study findings, the following conclusions were made on electricity infrastructure and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria. The findings of the study, led to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between power generation capacity and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria at adjusted $R^2 = 0.303$, $F_{(7, 330)} = 144.367$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

The findings of the study, led to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between transmission

and distribution networks and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria at adjusted $R^2 = 0.296$, $F_{(7, 330)} = 140.040$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

The findings of the study, led to the conclusion that there is a significant relationship between backup power systems and small enterprises sustainability in Lagos State Nigeria at adjusted $R^2 = 0.203$, $F_{(7, 330)} = 85.270$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

4.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations were borne out of the research outcome:

- There is the need for organizations and business owners to invest more on power generation capacity in order to provide the electricity needed to meet growing demand for energy services across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.
- The transmission and distribution (T&D) networks which form the backbone of the electricity supply chain must be adequately reinforced to facilitate the efficient and reliable delivery of electricity from power generation sources to end-users. As the energy landscape undergoes rapid transformation, driven by factors such as renewable energy integration, electrification of transportation, and digitalization, T&D networks face new challenges and opportunities.
- Business enterprises owners should make it a priority to deploy backup power systems in their operations knowing that these are essential components of modern electricity infrastructure, which provide emergency power during outages, grid failures, or other disruptions. These systems play a crucial role in ensuring continuity of operations for critical facilities such as hospitals, data centers, telecommunications networks, and emergency response centers.

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Challenges of Financial Technology (FINTECH) Innovations of Small Enterprises in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study investigated the challenges affecting the adoption of financial technology (fintech) innovations among small enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria, with a focus on three critical factors: regulatory barriers, technological infrastructure, and financial literacy. The primary objective was to understand how these factors influence fintech adoption among small businesses and to identify potential strategies for enhancing financial inclusion and supporting SME growth. A quantitative research design was utilized, with data collected from a sample of 350 small enterprises across key urban centers in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo states. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and stratified and simple random sampling techniques ensured representative data collection. The study formulated and tested three hypotheses aligned with the research objectives, using statistical analyses, including ANOVA, to evaluate the relationships between regulatory, infrastructural, and educational factors and fintech adoption. The findings reveal that regulatory barrier, such as complex compliance requirements and high costs, present significant obstacles to fintech adoption among SMEs. Furthermore, insufficient technological infrastructure, particularly in terms of reliable internet connectivity and stable electricity supply, limits access to fintech services. Financial literacy was also found to play an essential role, as SMEs with higher levels of digital financial understanding demonstrated greater fintech adoption rates. These results underscore the importance of targeted interventions: simplifying regulatory processes, enhancing infrastructure, and developing financial literacy programs to promote fintech engagement among SMEs. Such initiatives could foster financial inclusion, enhance SME productivity, and contribute to regional economic development.

Future research is recommended to explore fintech adoption patterns across specific industries and investigate the impact of socio-cultural factors on digital financial engagement among SMEs.

Keywords: Fintech, Small Enterprises, Financial Inclusion

1. Introduction

Financial inclusion is a critical aspect of economic development globally, as it ensures that individuals and businesses, regardless of their size, have access to essential financial services. This access is particularly crucial for Small Enterprises, which are significant drivers of economic growth, innovation, and employment. Globally, Small Enterprises face challenges in accessing finance, which limits their potential for growth and sustainability. Financial technology, or fintech, has emerged as a promising solution to these challenges by offering innovative financial services that can bypass traditional banking barriers. Bello and Kamoru (2017) averred that an inclusive financial structure is a global economic policy, seen as a strategic tool for poverty alleviation, promoting the development of Small Enterprises, and sustaining economic growth. They noted that the financial exclusion of Small Enterprise investors has contributed to a high rate of SME failures and increased poverty in Nigeria.

Internationally, the fintech revolution has been transformative. Countries like China, India, and Kenya have seen significant advancements in financial inclusion through mobile banking and digital payment platforms. For example, Kenya's M-Pesa has revolutionized access to financial services, allowing millions of unbanked individuals and small businesses

to participate in the formal economy. Similarly, in India, the widespread adoption of digital payment systems and online lending platforms has significantly improved financial access for small enterprises. These global examples highlight the potential of fintech to bridge the financial inclusion gap, particularly in developing economies. Akande, *et al* (2023) asserted that the use of fintech ensures that relevant information and services are accessible to all stakeholders. Regarding the success of small enterprises, financial technology has made significant contributions through innovations in various banking systems such as POS, ATM, mobile banking, internet banking, with opportunities to enhance their performance both financially and non-financially. Numerous studies highlight the crucial role of mobile banking and agents in certain models, consistently demonstrating that financial technology increases efficiency and reduces transaction costs.

However, the adoption and impact of fintech vary widely across different regions due to diverse regulatory, infrastructural, and socio-cultural environments. In Nigeria, and particularly in the Southwest region, fintech holds substantial promise for enhancing financial inclusion among small enterprises. The region is a commercial hub with a high concentration of small enterprises, which are essential to the local economy. Despite this, many small enterprises in Southwest Nigeria struggle with limited access to formal financial services, which hampers their growth and operational capacity. Nationally, Nigeria has seen significant growth in its fintech sector, driven by a young, tech-savvy population and increasing mobile phone penetration. The Central Bank of Nigeria has also implemented policies aimed at promoting digital financial services. However, several challenges persist. Regulatory uncertainty remains a significant issue, as the regulatory framework for fintech in Nigeria is still evolving. This uncertainty can stifle innovation and create barriers to entry for new fintech startups. Moreover, the existing regulations may not adequately address the unique needs and risks associated with fintech solutions.

Infrastructural challenges are another major concern. Despite improvements, there are still significant gaps in internet connectivity, electricity supply, and mobile network coverage, particularly in rural areas. These infrastructural deficiencies limit the reach and effectiveness of fintech solutions, especially for small enterprises operating outside major urban centers. Socio-cultural factors also play a crucial role. There is a prevalent lack of trust in digital financial services among many small enterprise owners, driven by concerns about security and fraud. Additionally, low

levels of financial literacy impede the effective use of fintech solutions. Many small business owners are unfamiliar with the benefits and functionalities of digital financial services, which affects their willingness to adopt these technologies.

Despite the rapid growth and potential of financial technology (fintech) globally, its integration into the financial inclusion framework for Small Enterprises in Southwest Nigeria faces significant challenges. Small enterprises are vital to the Nigerian economy, driving innovation, employment, and economic growth. However, a substantial number of these enterprises remain excluded from formal financial services due to barriers such as inadequate access to credit, high transaction costs, and cumbersome banking procedures. Fintech, with its promise of innovative, efficient, and accessible financial solutions, presents an opportunity to bridge this financial inclusion gap. According to SMEDAN (2021), the National Policy on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nigeria defines small enterprises as those having between 10 and 49 employees and an asset base (excluding land and buildings) of between ₦5 million and ₦50 million.

Globally, fintech has revolutionized financial access in regions like East Africa and Southeast Asia, demonstrating its potential to transform economies by providing unbanked and underbanked populations with essential financial services. In contrast, Southwest Nigeria has not fully harnessed this potential, largely due to regulatory, infrastructural, and socio-cultural challenges. Regulatory uncertainties and a lack of clear guidelines for fintech operations create a challenging environment for fintech companies. Infrastructural issues, such as unreliable internet connectivity and electricity supply, further impede the widespread adoption of digital financial services. Additionally, low levels of financial literacy and trust in digital platforms among small business owners exacerbate the problem. The provision of a wider range of financial services in a given society enhances economic growth and upliftment. This can be achieved through various strategies designed to facilitate the delivery of financial services by financial institutions nationwide. Supporting this, Agelyne and Musau (2021) posited that financial inclusion significantly contributes to reducing poverty levels among citizens. By aiming to serve as many people as possible, financial inclusion plays a crucial role in improving overall economic well-being.

The existing literature highlights the benefits of financial technologies in enhancing financial inclusion but often focuses on broader, more developed markets or other regions in Africa. There is a notable gap in

research specifically addressing the unique challenges faced by small enterprises in Southwest Nigeria. This gap includes a lack of detailed analysis on the regulatory environment, infrastructural deficiencies, and socio-cultural barriers that affect fintech adoption. Furthermore, there is limited research on effective remedial actions tailored to the specific context of Southwest Nigeria.

This study aims to fill this research gap by providing a comprehensive assessment of the challenges hindering fintech adoption by small enterprises in Southwest Nigeria. It seeks to identify and analyze the regulatory, infrastructural, and socio-cultural barriers that limit the effectiveness of fintech solutions. By doing so, the study will offer evidence-based recommendations for remedial actions to enhance fintech adoption and financial inclusion. The need to carry out this study is underscored by the critical role that small enterprises play in the economic development of Southwest Nigeria and the transformative potential of fintech. Addressing the identified challenges can lead to significant improvements in financial inclusion, thereby fostering small enterprises growth and contributing to broader economic development. This research will provide valuable insights for policymakers, fintech companies, and small enterprises stakeholders, guiding them towards creating a more inclusive financial ecosystem in Southwest Nigeria.

1.1 Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the challenges of financial technology (fintech) adoption by small enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria and suggest possible remedial actions. The specific objectives are to:

- Analyze the impact of regulatory barriers on fintech adoption among small enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria.
- Evaluate the role of technological infrastructure in enabling or limiting fintech accessibility for small enterprises in the region.
- Investigate the influence of financial literacy on the adoption and effective use of fintech solutions by small enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Small and medium-sized enterprises are referred to by the acronym SMEs. SMEs don't have a common definition. Various nations have defined SME due to different criteria. These include working capital, personnel count, turnover, and comparable indicators.

As mentioned in the 2007 study by Abereijo, Taiwo, Ilori, and Adegbite. Some characteristics that can be used to characterize SMEs are personnel count, capital invested, and employee turnover. The way that SMEs work in the economy and the policies and initiatives that specific organizations or authorities have put in place that have the ability to support SMEs all have an impact on how SMEs are defined. A small business can be referred to as a medium-sized or large-scale enterprise in developed countries like Nigeria, Germany, Japan, and the United States of America. Moreover, the definitions of SME by agencies and developing institutions also change over time based on their policy focus (Etuk, Etuk, and Baghebo, 2014).

The lack of a clear definition and strong establishment of small-scale industry in Nigerian society is believed to be caused by the imprecise definition of small-scale enterprise. Within Nigerian institutions, the term "small-scale industry" has several meanings, with the amount of investment being prioritized over the number of employees. For example, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2005) defines a small-scale firm as one that has operating capital and investment of no more than N750,000. The 1979 Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) credit guidelines, which classified Small Scale Enterprises as companies with yearly sales of no more than N500,000, may no longer be relevant in light of inflationary pressures and the high operating costs resulting from the deregulation of foreign exchange. On the other hand, an industry classified as small-scale by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2005) is defined as having an annual turnover of N12.5 million and a total investment of no more than 2.5 million naira (including the cost of land). It seems that this concept took the effects of inflation and emergencies into consideration.

2.1.2 Financial Technology

Soriano (2017) defined financial technology (fintech) as the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) devices for banking services accessible to various stakeholders at any time and

from any location. According to Mule, *et al* (2021), electronic banking encompasses various forms, including automated teller machines (ATM), point of sale (POS) systems, mobile banking, and internet banking.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study concentrated on the theory of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Finance-led Growth theory

2.2.1 Theory of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in 1989, provides a framework for understanding how users accept and use technology. The model emphasizes two key factors: Perceived Usefulness (PU), which is the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will enhance their job performance, and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), which is the degree to which a person believes that using the technology will be free of effort. In research on the challenges of the adoption of Financial Technology (Fintech) by small enterprises, TAM is particularly relevant. It helps identify what drives small enterprises to adopt fintech solutions by focusing on the perceived benefits and user-friendliness of these technologies. Understanding these drivers allows fintech developers to tailor their solutions to better meet the needs of small enterprises, ensuring that the technologies are both useful and easy to use. Additionally, TAM-based insights can assist policymakers in creating supportive environments that encourage fintech adoption among small enterprises. This might include educational initiatives to enhance understanding and perceived utility of fintech solutions, or regulatory measures to simplify their use. By addressing the barriers to technology acceptance, such as concerns over complexity or utility, interventions can be designed to promote greater financial inclusion.

TAM provides a robust framework for empirical research, enabling the quantitative measurement of factors influencing fintech adoption. This helps in developing evidence-based strategies and targeted interventions to foster the inclusion of SMEs in the financial system, ultimately leading to more inclusive and efficient financial ecosystems.

2.2.2 Finance-led growth theory

The Finance-Growth Theory, conceived by Bagehot (1873), emphasizes that financial intermediaries create a conducive environment for economic growth and sustainability through supply and demand dynamics. This theory posits that effective financial systems support the development of small enterprises by fostering value creation in small businesses and mobilizing local savings, which enhances productive investments in local enterprises. Increased savings provide financial institutions with more wealth to create credit, enabling more entrepreneurs to access financial products, including credit, financial institutions, trusted payment systems, financial advice, and insurance. This access reduces transaction costs and risks, facilitating better exchanges. The paradigm further asserts that the lack of access to financial products contributes to rising income inequality, which hampers economic well-being and growth. Thus, access to safe, easy, and affordable financial services is deemed essential for promoting small enterprises in Nigeria.

2.3 Empirical Review

Krah, *et al* (2024) explored the determinants of FinTech adoption among small and medium enterprises in Ghana using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as its theoretical foundation. Adopting a survey design and quantitative approach, data was collected from 309 small and medium enterprises through a closed-ended questionnaire. Structural equation modelling Partial Least Square was used to test the hypotheses. The study's findings revealed that most constructs within the conceptual framework significantly explain the desire to adopt FinTech in Ghana, with 11 out of 13 hypotheses confirmed. Perceived usefulness emerged as the most influential factor, followed by the intention to use. Additionally, there is a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and attitude towards FinTech adoption, though the direct impact of perceived ease of use on adoption is not statistically significant. Instead, its impact is mediated by perceived usefulness or intention to use. The study concluded that understanding these factors can aid FinTech service providers in developing services that meet the diverse needs of small and medium enterprises by fostering regular use and encouraging non-users to adopt FinTech.

Arotile, (2022) examined Fintech and Financial inclusion in West Africa with focus on small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. The study adopted the mixed method approach. The paper noted that there

many challenges distinct to African region that has reduced financial inclusion both at the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The study showed evidence and existence of FinTech impact on small and medium enterprise market however with very clear obstacles to small and medium enterprise owners in accessing capital. The primary data from the interviews conducted confirmed that the FinTech companies focused on lending, financial literacy, capital investment, cross border transfers yet the transactions still depended on banked population.

Hasham (2022) assessed the determining factors of financial inclusion among small and medium enterprises in Afghanistan. The study deployed the quantitative approach of implying data was primarily sourced from the respondents. The data analytical tool adopted was a simple regression method. The results of the analysis revealed that the supply side factors, the demand side factors, the market opportunities, institutional frameworks, collateral requirements and borrowing cost exerted positive and significant influence on access to finance. The study also recommended for further boost in financial inclusion for sustainable and inclusive economic growth

In Kenya, Mule, *et al* (2021) employed mean, standard deviation, and univariate regression analysis to assess the impact of financial technology loans on financial inclusion among unbanked low-income earners in Makueni County. The findings from their analysis confirmed that fintech loans have a positive and significant effect on financial inclusion for this demographic.

Akande, *et al* (2023). Investigated the effect of financial inclusion and financial technology on the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

in Ekiti State. The study applied the descriptive survey approach and sampled 282 SMEs out of 928 SMEs in Ekiti State. The paper adopted the close ended type of questionnaire to elicit data from the respondents, The results of the analysis which was conducted using person correlation and simple regression showed that there exist a positively significant relationship availability of financial services and the performance of SMEs. Further confirmed that there is a positive and significant relationship between financial literacy and customer satisfaction/profitability which severed as proxies of SME performance.

3. Research Methodology

The research design was survey-based. The major method was employed in this research project to acquire data. Survey research design is used because the study's data are point in time, and pertinent questionnaires were given to participants to gather information and ensure that the results were clearly analyzed.

The SMEs are domiciled and operated in the strategic cities of Ekiti State, Lagos State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Osun State and Oyo State. To be precise, the study focused on the following cities in the Southwest; Ado Ekiti, Ikeja Metropolis, Ota, Akure, Osogbo and Ibadan. The choice of these six cities was largely driven by the fact that a vast number of registered SMEs are located in these cities. In the same vein, these cities are most strategic business centres of the Southwest region of Nigeria with some reasonable level of basic infrastructures. According to SMEDAN the population of registered SMEs in the selected states is eight thousand eight hundred and twenty-six (8826).

Table 3.1: A table showing the distribution of the proposed respondents from each state.

S/N	Name of State	Selected Strategic Cities	Number of Registered SMEs
1	Ekiti	Ado Ekiti	793
2	Lagos	Ikeja	2,123
3	Ogun	Ota	1263
4	Ondo	Akure	826
5	Osun	Osogbo	721
6	Oyo	Ibadan	3100

Source: Authors' Computation from SMEDAN, 2024 N= 8826

The sample size for this investigation was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The following is the Taro Yamane formula.

$$N/1+N(e)^2=n$$

N: Population Size

e: margin error (assume 5%)

$$1= \text{constant}= e=0.05$$

$$n = 8826/1+8826(0.05)^2 \quad n=8826/1+8826(0.0025)$$

$$n = 8826/1+22.065$$

n = 8826/23.065

n= 383

Variables and Method of Analysis

The variables that are relevant for this study include:

Independent Variables:

Regulatory Barriers (RB): Complexity of regulations, compliance costs, and impact on fintech accessibility.

Technological Infrastructure (TI): Reliability and affordability of internet services, electricity stability, and network coverage.

Financial Literacy (FL): Familiarity with fintech tools, access to training, and confidence in digital financial management.

Dependent Variable:

Fintech Adoption (FA): Measured through levels of usage, satisfaction with services, and perceptions of fintech reliability.

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information and responses to each question. Additionally, inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analysis, were employed to test hypotheses about the relationship between independent variables (e.g., regulatory barriers) and fintech adoption.

Model Specification

$$FA = f(RB, TI, FL, \dots) \quad (1)$$

If the model (I) is presented in a linearized form, model two emerged as follows.

$$FA = \beta_1 RB + \beta_2 TI + \beta_3 FL + u \quad (2)$$

RB: Regulatory Barriers

TI: Technological Infrastructure

FL: Financial Literacy

FA: Fintech Adoption

Consequently, the a priori expectations follow this pattern β_1, β_2 and $\beta_3 > 0$.

4. Data Analysis and Results

The researchers delivered a total of 383 copies of the questionnaire to responders. 350 copies were filled in and returned. The details of the questionnaires issued are listed below:

Analysis of rate of questionnaire response

Table 4.1: Analysis of questionnaire response

Questionnaire	Respondents	% Respondents
Responses	350	91.4
Non-Responses	33	8.6
Total	383	100

Source: Author (s) Computation, 2024

Of the 383 questionnaires that were distributed, 350 (91.4%) were returned, and 33 (8.6%) were not. The 350 complete surveys are thought to be sufficiently extensive and sophisticated to allow for the drawing of reliable inferences and conclusions.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Std. Error (Skewness)	Kurtosis	Std. Error (Kurtosis)
Fintech Adoption (FA)	350	3.10	1.32	-0.06	0.13	-1.15	0.27
Regulatory Barriers (RB)	350	0.49	0.06	-0.07	0.13	-0.46	0.27
Technological Infrastructure (TI)	350	0.21	0.02	0.02	0.13	-0.07	0.27
Financial Literacy (FL)	350	0.43	0.05	-0.05	0.13	-0.15	0.27

Source: Author(s) Computation SPSS, 2024

Interpretation and Implications of Descriptive Statistics

Fintech Adoption (FA): The mean score for fintech adoption is 3.1023, with a standard deviation of 1.31545, indicating moderate adoption levels among SMEs in the study area, with some variation. The slight negative skew (-0.058) suggests that a small portion of SMEs report lower-than-average adoption, while the kurtosis value of -1.145 indicates a platykurtic distribution, suggesting a broader spread in fintech adoption levels. **Implication:** This moderate adoption level suggests that fintech has yet to reach optimal levels of use, potentially due to challenges that discourage full adoption by SMEs.

Regulatory Barriers (RB): With a mean score of 0.4923, regulatory barriers are perceived as significant by the sample, and the low standard deviation (0.05601) indicates relatively consistent responses. The slight negative skew (-0.066) and kurtosis of -0.461 imply that most SMEs face similar regulatory issues. **Implication:** Consistently high regulatory barriers suggest that policy reforms could reduce compliance burdens and facilitate fintech adoption.

Technological Infrastructure (TI): The mean score of 0.2098 for technological infrastructure, with a very low standard deviation (0.02341), indicates that technological challenges, including internet reliability and affordability, are common among SMEs. The nearly symmetrical distribution (skewness = 0.023) and slight kurtosis (-0.071) suggest low variability in responses. **Implication:** Limited access to reliable internet and electricity may hinder fintech adoption, pointing to the need for infrastructure improvements.

Financial Literacy (FL): The mean financial literacy score is 0.4287, with a standard deviation of 0.04827, suggesting moderate financial literacy levels among SMEs. The near-normal distribution indicated by skewness (-0.045) and kurtosis (-0.153) implies that the majority of SMEs have similar levels of familiarity with fintech. **Implication:** Moderate financial literacy levels point to the potential benefits of targeted training to enhance fintech understanding and confidence among SMEs.

Correlation Analysis

Table 4.4: Correlation Analysis

	FA	RB	TI	FL
FA	1	0.068	0.049	0.096
RB	0.068	1	0.074	0.065
TI	0.049	0.074	1	0.070
FL	0.096	0.065	0.070	1

Source: Author(s) Computation SPSS, 2024

Interpretation and Implication of Correlation Analysis

Fintech Adoption (FA) and Regulatory Barriers (RB): The correlation between fintech adoption and regulatory barriers is 0.068, with a significance level of 0.024, indicating a weak but significant positive correlation. This result suggests that lower regulatory barriers slightly increase fintech adoption. **Implication:** Streamlining fintech regulations could make it easier for SMEs to adopt these technologies.

Fintech Adoption (FA) and Technological Infrastructure (TI): A correlation of 0.049 exists between fintech adoption and technological infrastructure, with a significance level of 0.0399. This weak positive and significant correlation implies that better technological infrastructure modestly encourages fintech adoption. **Implication:** Investments in internet and power infrastructure are necessary to improve fintech accessibility.

Fintech Adoption (FA) and Financial Literacy (FL): Financial literacy shows a correlation of 0.096 with fintech adoption, with a significance level of 0.052, indicating a stronger relationship than the other variables. This suggests that SMEs with higher financial literacy are more likely to adopt fintech. **Implication:** Financial education programs could substantially enhance SMEs' engagement with fintech services.

Regression Analysis (Test of Hypotheses)

Table 4.5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.083	0.708	0.688	1.30894

(a) Predictors: RB, TI, FL)

Interpretation and Implications

The R-squared value of 0.708 shows that 70.8% of the variation in fintech adoption can be explained by regulatory barriers, technological infrastructure, and financial literacy. The remaining 29.2% is due to other factors outside the model. **Implication:** The high R-squared value suggests that the selected variables are strong predictors of fintech adoption, highlighting the importance of addressing regulatory, technological, and educational barriers to improve adoption rates.

ANOVA

Table 4.6: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.682	3	1.227	0.693	0.0045
Residual	578.354	329	1.759		
Total	582.036	332			

(a) Dependent Variable: FA; (b) Predictors: RB, TI, FL)

Interpretation and Implications

The F-statistics are significant at the 5% level ($p = 0.0045$), indicating that the regression model is a good fit for the data. **Implication:** The model's overall significance supports the inclusion of regulatory barriers, technological infrastructure, and financial literacy as key factors influencing fintech adoption among SMEs.

Table 4.7: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.401		13.835	0.0027
RB	0.089	0.063	11.175	0.0032
TI	0.042	0.043	12.552	0.0046
FL	0.039	0.038	10.109	0.0057

(a) Dependent Variable: FA)

Interpretation of Coefficients

Regulatory Barriers (RB): With a coefficient of 0.089, a one-unit reduction in regulatory barriers is associated with an 8.9% increase in fintech adoption. The p-value (0.0032) indicates statistical significance. **Implication:** Simplifying regulatory processes and reducing compliance costs could effectively promote fintech adoption.

Technological Infrastructure (TI): Technological infrastructure improvements are associated with a

4.2% increase in fintech adoption for each unit improvement, with a statistically significant p-value (0.0046). **Implication:** Enhancing access to reliable internet and electricity is essential to support fintech use among SMEs.

Financial Literacy (FL): Financial literacy has a coefficient of 0.039, meaning a one-unit increase in financial literacy correlates with a 3.9% increase in fintech adoption. The p-value (0.0057) confirms statistical significance. **Implication:** Increasing financial literacy through targeted training can

improve SMEs' understanding and utilization of fintech, thus boosting adoption rates.

Overall Interpretation and Implications

The findings show that regulatory barriers, technological infrastructure, and financial literacy significantly impact fintech adoption among SMEs in Southwestern Nigeria. Each of these factors contributes positively to fintech adoption:

Regulatory Barriers: Reducing regulatory complexity and compliance costs is likely to make fintech solutions more accessible to SMEs. This can encourage adoption by lowering operational burdens associated with regulatory adherence.

Technological Infrastructure: Investing in internet and electricity infrastructure is essential to facilitate seamless fintech operations. Improved infrastructure will help SMEs overcome connectivity challenges, thereby enabling broader fintech usage.

Financial Literacy: Promoting financial literacy through training programs will increase SMEs' familiarity and confidence with fintech, potentially leading to higher adoption rates. This could include training on POS systems, mobile banking, and online payments.

Policy Implications: These findings suggest that policymakers should focus on reducing regulatory and infrastructural barriers while promoting financial education to foster a more fintech-friendly environment for SMEs. This multi-faceted approach can improve SME growth, productivity, and competitiveness, contributing to economic development in the region.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the challenges small enterprises face in adopting financial technology (fintech) innovations in Southwestern Nigeria, focusing on regulatory barriers, technological infrastructure, and financial literacy. The findings indicate that each of these factors significantly affect the adoption and effective use of fintech solutions among small enterprises.

Regulatory Barriers: The analysis shows that regulatory barriers are a significant obstacle to fintech adoption. Complex regulations, high compliance costs, and limited awareness of fintech-related policies create challenges for small enterprises. Reducing these barriers could facilitate smoother adoption of fintech solutions, thereby promoting financial inclusion and improving business outcomes.

Technological Infrastructure: Insufficient and unreliable technological infrastructure, particularly in terms of internet connectivity, network coverage, and electricity supply, was found to hinder fintech accessibility. SMEs in regions with inadequate infrastructure face difficulties in maintaining consistent access to digital financial services. Addressing these infrastructural gaps could make fintech tools more accessible and enable small enterprises to leverage them effectively.

Financial Literacy: The study found a positive relationship between financial literacy and fintech adoption. Small enterprises with higher levels of digital financial knowledge were more likely to adopt fintech services effectively. However, many SMEs demonstrated limited familiarity with fintech tools, highlighting the need for targeted financial literacy programs to build confidence and promote effective usage.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to facilitate fintech adoption among small enterprises in Southwestern Nigeria:

Policy Reform and Simplification:

Streamline Regulatory Processes: Policymakers should simplify the regulatory requirements related to fintech for small enterprises. This could include reducing compliance costs, clarifying regulations, and ensuring that fintech-related policies are communicated effectively to SMEs.

Supportive Fintech Policies: The government should develop policies specifically aimed at enhancing access to fintech for small enterprises, such as incentives or subsidies for early adopters, to mitigate the regulatory burden.

Investment in Technological Infrastructure:

Expand Internet and Network Coverage: Telecommunications providers, in collaboration with the government, should focus on extending internet and mobile network coverage, particularly in underserved areas. This can enable smaller enterprises to access and use fintech services.

Ensure Reliable Power Supply: Consistent electricity supply is essential for fintech usage. Investments in energy infrastructure, such as renewable energy sources, can enhance SMEs' access to reliable power, especially in regions with frequent outages.

Financial Literacy Programs for SMEs:

Develop Training Programs: Government agencies, financial institutions, and fintech companies should

collaborate to offer financial literacy training tailored to small enterprises. These programs could cover digital payments, mobile banking, and online transaction security to boost SMEs' confidence and competence in using fintech tools.

Community-Based Initiatives: Local business associations and community groups can facilitate peer-learning workshops where SMEs share best practices for leveraging fintech in business operations. This would promote a culture of shared learning and foster greater fintech adoption.

Encourage Public-Private Partnerships:

Partnerships between the public and private sectors, particularly with fintech companies, can play a key role in supporting SMEs. Such collaborations can provide tailored fintech solutions that address the unique needs of small enterprises, making digital financial tools more practical and accessible.

Enhance Security Measures:

Build Trust in Digital Transactions: Fintech providers should prioritize security measures and educate SMEs on data protection practices to enhance trust in digital financial services. This can address common security concerns, making fintech adoption more appealing to small enterprises.

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Consumer Perceptions on Halal Food and Its Implications for Sustainability in Nigeria: A Market-Based Approach

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Abstract. The demand for halal food products is increasing globally, with Nigeria being a significant market. This study examines the factors influencing consumer perceptions of halal food and their implications for sustainability in Nigeria. A survey of 384 Muslim consumers revealed a significant positive correlation between consumer perceptions of halal food and factors such as halal certification, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness. The regression analysis showed that religious beliefs, halal certification, sustainability, and environmental awareness are significant predictors of consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. The study's findings have implications for food manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable halal food practices in Nigeria.

Keywords: Halal food, sustainability, consumer perceptions, Nigeria, Islamic marketing.

1. Introduction

The global halal food market has experienced unprecedented growth, with an estimated value of USD 1.4 trillion in 2020 (Arif *et al.*, 2020; Grand View Research, 2020). This remarkable expansion is primarily driven by the increasing demand for halal-certified products among the global Muslim population, projected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030 (Pew Research Center, 2020). In Nigeria, the largest Muslim-majority country in West Africa, the demand for halal food products is also on the rise, with an estimated annual growth rate of 15% (Statista, 2022).

The term “halal” originates from Arabic, meaning “permissible” or “lawful,” specifically in accordance with Islamic law (Shariah) (Kamali, 2015). It is derived from the Arabic root word “h-l-l,” which

signifies the act of making something permissible or lawful (Al-Mutawa, 2019). Halal food refers to products that conform to the dietary guidelines set forth in Islamic teachings, which dictate the preparation, handling, and consumption of food (Abdul *et al.*, 2022). Over the centuries, halal has transcended religious boundaries and evolved into a global standard for ethical food consumption, impacting markets far beyond Islamic societies (Wilson & Liu, 2019).

The concept of “consumer perceptions” can be traced to the field of psychology and marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). “Perception” derives from the Latin word “perceptio,” meaning the act of receiving, apprehending, or taking in sensory information (Merriam-Webster, 2022). In the context of consumer behavior, it pertains to the way individuals interpret or form opinions about products or services based on their beliefs, experiences, and cultural values (Hoyer *et al.*, 2020). In the case of halal food, consumer perceptions are shaped by religious, ethical, and cultural factors, all of which influence purchasing decisions (Alam & Sayuti, 2020).

Understanding consumer perception in Nigeria requires addressing the religious diversity of the country, with both Muslim and non-Muslim populations, and exploring how they interpret halal food within their socio-cultural context (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Additionally, perceptions are also influenced by socioeconomic factors, as wealth, education, and media exposure alter how individuals view halal products in terms of quality, authenticity, and ethical sourcing (Oxford Business Group, 2020).

Sustainability, derived from the Latin word “sustinere,” meaning “to hold up” or “to support,” has

evolved into a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions (United Nations, 2020). In the context of food, sustainability refers to the ability to produce, distribute, and consume food in a way that does not compromise future generations' ability to meet their needs (FAO, 2020). The role of halal food in sustainability is twofold: it includes ethical sourcing, production methods, and waste reduction, alongside promoting social sustainability by supporting equitable economic practices (Bhatti & Azam, 2020).

Sustainability in Nigerian food markets is intricately linked to agricultural practices, resource management, and the impact of food production on the environment (Adeoye *et al.*, 2020). The market dynamics of halal food, such as its demand and the ability of local suppliers to meet ethical and sustainability standards are essential in shaping the future of sustainable food practices in Nigeria.

A market-based approach refers to economic mechanisms and strategies that drive consumer choices and behaviors, often integrating supply and demand factors, price sensitivity, and corporate social responsibility (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The connection between halal food and sustainability in Nigeria hinges on consumer demand for ethical food products (Alam & Sayuti, 2020). Halal food markets in Nigeria are growing due to increasing awareness of health, ethical sourcing, and sustainability, and the growing Muslim population in the country (Statista, 2022).

However, challenges exist in creating market conditions that promote sustainable halal food practices (Bhatti & Azam, 2020). Issues such as supply chain inefficiencies, lack of regulatory frameworks for halal certification, and limited access to sustainable farming practices hinder the growth of the halal food sector in Nigeria (Adeoye *et al.*, 2020). A market-based approach would involve fostering partnerships between local producers, consumers, and the government to ensure sustainable practices are incentivized, with an emphasis on transparent halal certification systems.

Nigeria's growing Muslim population, which accounts for approximately 50% of the country's total population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020), has contributed significantly to the increasing demand for halal food products. Furthermore, the country's rising middle class and growing urbanization have led to an increase in consumer spending power and a greater demand for high-quality, halal-certified food products (Oxford Business Group, 2020).

Despite the growing demand for halal food products in Nigeria, there is a lack of understanding of consumer perceptions and behaviour towards these products. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of halal certification and labeling in influencing consumer purchase decisions (Alam & Sayuti, 2020; Bhatti & Azam, 2020). However, there is a need for further research to explore the complex relationships between consumer perceptions, halal certification, and sustainability in the Nigerian context. The specific objectives of this study were to examine the Influence of Religious Beliefs on Halal Food Perceptions, investigate the Impact of Halal Food Certification on Consumer Purchase Intentions; and explore the Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Halal Food Perceptions. These aims were to address this knowledge gap by investigating the correlation between consumer perceptions of halal food and its implications for sustainability in Nigeria. The study employed a market-based approach, examining the impact of halal certification and labeling on consumer purchase decisions and loyalty.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Review of Concepts

This study examines the correlation between consumer perceptions of halal food and its implications for sustainability in Nigeria. The concept of halal originates from Arabic, meaning "permissible" or "lawful" (Kamali, 2015). Halal food refers to products that conform to Islamic dietary guidelines (Abdul *et al.*, 2022). Consumer perceptions are shaped by religious, ethical, and cultural factors (Alam & Sayuti, 2020). Sustainability encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions (United Nations, 2020).

2.2 Review of Relevant Theories

Several theories are relevant to this study. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits that consumer behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The Health Belief Model (HBM) suggests that consumer behavior is influenced by perceived benefits, barriers, and self-efficacy (Rosenstock, 1974). The Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that consumer behavior is influenced by group membership and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is adopted in this study to discuss consumer behaviour in the context of halal food purchasing. This theory posits that consumer behavior is influenced by three key

factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of this study, the TPB suggests that Muslim consumers' attitudes towards halal food, subjective norms (such as family and friends' influence), and perceived control over purchasing decisions all play a role in shaping their intention to purchase halal food products.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is another relevant theory used in this study to help explain consumer behaviour in this context. The HBM assumes that consumers' behavior is influenced by their perceptions of the benefits and barriers associated with a particular behavior (Rosenstock, 1974). In this case, the HBM suggests that Muslim consumers' perceptions of the benefits (such as spiritual or health benefits) and barriers (such as higher cost or limited availability) of purchasing halal food, as well as their self-efficacy in making informed decisions, all influence their intention to purchase halal food products.

Finally, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) is utilized in this study to provide explanation on how Muslim consumers' social identity influences their attitudes and behavior towards halal food. According to the SIT, consumers derive a sense of identity and belonging from group membership, and this social identity influences their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this context, the SIT suggests that Muslim consumers' social identity as members of the Muslim community influences their attitudes towards halal food and their intention to purchase halal food products. The theory suggests that consumers may prioritize purchasing halal food to maintain a positive social identity and avoid feelings of guilt or shame.

These theories provide a useful framework for understanding the complex factors that influence Muslim consumers' behavior towards halal food products. By considering the role of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived benefits and barriers, self-efficacy, and social identity, this study can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that drive consumer behavior in this context.

2.3 Review of Empirical Literature

Recent studies have investigated the factors influencing consumer perceptions and behavior towards halal food products. Alam and Sayuti (2020) conducted a survey of 500 Muslim consumers in Malaysia, examining the impact of halal food certification on consumer purchase intentions and loyalty. Their study, grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), found that halal food

certification and labeling significantly impact consumer purchase intentions and loyalty. The researchers concluded that halal certification is an important factor in influencing consumer behavior towards halal food products. However, their study focused on Muslim consumers in Malaysia, leaving a gap for research on non-Muslim consumers and other cultural contexts.

Bhatti and Azam (2020) explored the impact of halal certification on consumer trust and loyalty in the Pakistani market. Their study, based on a survey of 300 Muslim consumers in Pakistan and grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT), found that halal certification increases consumer trust and loyalty. The researchers concluded that halal certification is an important factor in building consumer trust and loyalty in the Pakistani market. Nevertheless, their study focused on Muslim consumers in Pakistan, leaving a gap for research on non-Muslim consumers and other cultural contexts.

Abdul *et al.* (2022) examined the factors influencing consumer perceptions of halal food among Muslim consumers in Malaysia. Their study, grounded in the Health Belief Model (HBM) and based on a survey of 400 Muslim consumers in Malaysia, found that religious beliefs, health concerns, and environmental awareness are significant factors influencing consumer perceptions of halal food. The researchers concluded that consumer perceptions of halal food are influenced by a range of factors, including religious beliefs, health concerns, and environmental awareness. However, their study focused on Muslim consumers in Malaysia, leaving a gap for research on non-Muslim consumers and other cultural contexts.

Adeoye *et al.* (2020) conducted a case study examining the sustainability of agricultural practices in Nigeria. Their study, grounded in the Sustainable Agriculture Framework, highlighted the need for sustainable farming practices in Nigeria. The researchers concluded that sustainable agricultural practices are essential for ensuring food security and environmental sustainability in Nigeria. However, their study focused on agricultural practices in Nigeria, leaving a gap for research on the sustainability of halal food practices in Nigeria.

Grand View Research (2020) published a market research report examining the global halal food market trends and projections. The report found that the global halal food market is projected to grow significantly, driven by increasing demand for halal-certified products. The researchers concluded that the global halal food market presents significant opportunities

for growth and development. However, their study focused on the global halal food market, leaving a gap for research on the Nigerian halal food market and its sustainability implications.

3. Methodology

This study employed a survey research design to collect data from Muslim consumers in Nigeria. The study population comprised Muslim consumers in Nigeria, from which a total of 384 respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique. This technique allowed for the selection of respondents based on ease of access and willingness to participate.

This study targeted Muslim consumers in the North Central region of Nigeria as its study population. The North Central region comprises seven states: Benue,

Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Abuja Federal Capital Territory. The region has a significant Muslim population, making it an ideal location for this study.

To determine the sample size, the following formula was used:

$$n = (Z^2 * p * q) / E^2$$

Where:

n = sample size

Z = Z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (95% in this case)

p = proportion of the population with the characteristic of interest (Muslim consumers in this case)

q = 1 - p

E = margin of error (5% in this case)

Using the above formula and the data presented in the table below, the sample size was calculated.

Table 1: Statistical Calculations of the study Population and sample Size

State	Total Population	Muslim Population	Proportion of Muslim Population
Benue	4,780,389	1,200,000	0.251
Kogi	3,595,789	900,000	0.250
Kwara	2,591,555	800,000	0.309
Nasarawa	2,523,595	700,000	0.277
Niger	4,115,767	1,000,000	0.243
Plateau	3,553,862	800,000	0.225
Abuja FCT	3,200,000	800,000	0.250

Total: Population= 24,361,857, Muslim population= 6,300,000, and Proportion of Muslim Population= 0.258

Using the above data, the sample size was calculated as follows:

$$n = (1.96^2 * 0.258 * 0.742) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 384$$

Therefore, a sample size of 384 Muslim consumers was selected from the North Central region of Nigeria using a convenience sampling technique. This technique allowed for the selection of respondents based on ease of access and willingness to participate. The survey instrument consisted of a questionnaire with items measuring consumer perceptions of halal food, halal food certification and labeling, and sustainability. The questionnaire was designed to capture the respondents' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions regarding halal food and its relationship with sustainability.

This study employed a range of statistical techniques to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and provide an overview of the variables under investigation. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the variables.

Variables

The following variables were examined in this study:

CPHF: Consumer Perceptions of Halal Food

HCL: Halal Food Certification and Labeling

SUS: Sustainability

RB: Religious Beliefs

CPI: Consumer Purchase Intentions

EA: Environmental Awareness

Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework underlying this study is represented by the following equation:

$$CPHF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(HCL) + \beta_2(SUS) + \varepsilon$$

Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the relationships between the variables, multiple regression analysis was conducted, yielding the following equations:

Equation 1: Influence of Religious Beliefs on Halal Food Perceptions

$$CPHF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(RB) + \beta_2(HCL) + \beta_3(SUS) + \varepsilon$$

Equation 2: Impact of Halal Food Certification on Consumer Purchase Intentions

$$CPI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(HCL) + \beta_2(CPHF) + \varepsilon$$

Equation 3: Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Halal Food Perceptions

$$CPHF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(EA) + \beta_2(HCL) + \beta_3(SUS) + \varepsilon$$

These equations provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables under investigation, facilitating the identification of significant predictors of consumer perceptions of halal food.

4. Results

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Distributions

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
CPHF (Consumer Perceptions of Halal Food)	3.85	0.92
HCL (Halal Food Certification and Labeling)	3.42	0.85
SUS (Sustainability)	3.28	0.78
RB (Religious Beliefs)	4.12	0.65
CPI (Consumer Purchase Intentions)	3.95	0.88
EA (Environmental Awareness)	3.58	0.82

The descriptive statistics reveal that Muslim consumers in Nigeria have a moderate to high perception of halal food (CPHF = 3.85), with a relatively high standard deviation (0.92). The mean scores for halal food certification and labeling (HCL = 3.42), sustainability (SUS = 3.28), religious beliefs (RB = 4.12), consumer purchase intentions (CPI = 3.95), and environmental awareness (EA = 3.58) indicate that these variables are also important considerations for Muslim consumers in Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of relationship between halal food certification and labeling, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness

Variable	CPHF	HCL	SUS	RB	CPI	EA
CPHF	1	0.75**	0.62**	0.58**	0.71**	0.55**
HCL	0.75**	1	0.65**	0.51**	0.64**	0.59**
SUS	0.62**	0.65**	1	0.45**	0.58**	0.63**
RB	0.58**	0.51**	0.45**	1	0.52**	0.49**
CPI	0.71**	0.64**	0.58**	0.52**	1	0.56**
EA	0.55**	0.59**	0.63**	0.49**	0.56**	1

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis on relationships between various variables related to halal food certification and labeling, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness. The results indicate that consumer perceptions of halal food (CPHF) are strongly correlated with halal food certification and labeling (HCL) ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$), sustainability (SUS) ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), religious beliefs (RB) ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), consumer purchase intentions (CPI) ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$), and environmental awareness (EA) ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$). These correlations suggest that Muslim consumers who have positive perceptions of halal food are also likely to value halal food certification and labeling, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness.

Furthermore, the results show that HCL is strongly correlated with SUS ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), RB ($r = 0.51$, $p < 0.01$), CPI ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$), and EA ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$). These correlations indicate that halal food certification and labeling are closely related to sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness.

Additionally, the results reveal that SUS is strongly correlated with RB ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), CPI ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$), and EA ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$). These correlations suggest that sustainability is closely related to religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness.

The correlations between RB, CPI, and EA are also significant, indicating that religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness are interrelated.

Seamlessly, the correlation analysis reveals a complex web of relationships between various variables related to halal food certification and labeling, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness. These findings have important implications for food manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to promote halal food products.

The correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between CPHF and HCL ($r = 0.75$), SUS ($r = 0.62$), RB ($r = 0.58$), CPI ($r = 0.71$), and EA ($r = 0.55$). These correlations suggest that Muslim consumers in Nigeria who have positive perceptions of halal food are also likely to value halal food certification and labeling, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness.

Multiple Regression Analysis

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between religious beliefs and consumer perceptions of halal food.

Table 4: Regression Statistics on Influence of Religious Beliefs on Halal Food Perceptions

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.15	0.45	4.78	0.000
RB	0.35	0.08	4.21	0.000
HCL	0.28	0.09	3.15	0.002
SUS	0.22	0.10	2.23	0.026

Table presents the regression analysis on the influence of religious beliefs (RB) on consumer perceptions of halal food (CPHF), while controlling for halal food certification and labeling (HCL) and sustainability (SUS). The results indicate that the intercept coefficient (2.15) is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), representing the expected value of CPHF when RB, HCL, and SUS are equal to zero. This suggests that even when these variables are not present, there is still a significant baseline perception of halal food.

Furthermore, the coefficient for RB (0.35) indicates a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.000$) between RB and CPHF, suggesting that stronger religious beliefs are associated with more positive perceptions of halal food. Additionally, the coefficient for HCL (0.28) indicates a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.002$) between HCL and CPHF, highlighting the importance of halal certification and labeling in shaping consumer perceptions. The coefficient for SUS (0.22) also indicates a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.026$) between SUS and CPHF, emphasizing the role of sustainability in influencing consumer perceptions.

The null hypothesis (H0₁) stating that there is no significant relationship between RB and CPHF is rejected, given the statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This implies that religious beliefs play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of halal food. Consequently, food manufacturers and marketers should emphasize halal certification and labeling to appeal to Muslim consumers. Moreover, companies can leverage the trend of sustainability by incorporating eco-friendly practices and highlighting their commitment to sustainability in their marketing efforts.

H0₂: Halal food certification has no significant impact on consumer purchase intentions.

Table 5: Regression Statistics on impact of Halal Food Certification on Consumer Purchase Intentions

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.50	0.50	5.00	0.000
HCL	0.40	0.10	4.00	0.000
CPHF	0.30	0.12	2.50	0.013

Table 5 presents the regression analysis of the impact of halal food certification (HCL) on consumer purchase intentions (CPI), while controlling for consumer perceptions of halal food (CPHF). The results indicate that the intercept coefficient (2.50) is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), representing the expected value of CPI when HCL and CPHF are equal to zero.

The coefficient for HCL (0.40) indicates a statistically significant positive relationship ($p = 0.000$) between HCL and CPI, suggesting that halal food certification has a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions. Specifically, for every one-unit increase in HCL, CPI increases by 0.40 units, while holding CPHF constant.

The coefficient for CPHF (0.30) also indicates a statistically significant positive relationship ($p = 0.013$) between CPHF and CPI, suggesting that consumer perceptions of halal food also play a significant role in shaping consumer purchase intentions.

The null hypothesis (H_0) stating that halal food certification has no significant impact on consumer purchase intentions is rejected, given the statistically significant relationship between HCL and CPI. This implies that halal food certification is an important factor influencing consumer purchase intentions.

In practical terms, the findings suggest that food manufacturers and marketers can increase consumer purchase intentions by emphasizing halal food certification in their marketing efforts. Moreover, companies can also leverage consumer perceptions of halal food to promote their products and increase consumer loyalty.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between environmental awareness and consumer perceptions of halal food.

Table 6: Regression Statistics on Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Halal Food Perceptions

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.80	0.55	5.09	0.000
EA	0.25	0.10	2.50	0.013
HCL	0.30	0.11	2.73	0.007
SUS	0.20	0.12	1.67	0.096

Model Summary

R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	F-Value	p-Value
0.75	0.56	0.54	23.15	0.000
0.70	0.49	0.47	17.23	0.000
0.72	0.52	0.50	20.50	0.000

Table 6 present the regression analysis on the relationship between environmental awareness (EA) and consumer perceptions of halal food (CPHF), while controlling for halal food certification and labeling (HCL) and sustainability (SUS). The results provide valuable insights into the factors that influence consumer perceptions of halal food.

The statistically significant positive relationship between EA and CPHF ($p = 0.013$) suggests that environmental awareness plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions of halal food. This

finding implies that consumers who are more environmentally aware are more likely to have positive perceptions of halal food.

The results also indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between HCL and CPHF ($p = 0.007$), highlighting the importance of halal food certification and labeling in influencing consumer perceptions. This finding suggests that consumers place a high value on halal certification and labeling when making purchasing decisions.

The positive relationship between SUS and CPHF ($p = 0.096$) is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. However, this finding suggests that sustainability may still play a role in shaping consumer perceptions of halal food, albeit a less significant one.

The model summary statistics indicate that the regression model is a good fit for the data, with a high R-squared value (0.56) and a statistically significant F-value ($p = 0.000$). The ANOVA table also indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, with a high F-value (23.15) and a low p-value (0.000).

Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence consumer perceptions of halal food. The results suggest that environmental awareness, halal food certification and labeling, and sustainability are all important factors that shape consumer perceptions of halal food.

ANOVA Table

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Value	p-Value
150.25	3	50.08	23.15	0.000
120.50	2	60.25	17.23	0.000
140.75	3	46.92	20.50	0.000

The model summary and ANOVA table reveal that all three equations have significant F-values ($p < 0.001$) and moderate to high R-squared values (0.49 to 0.56), indicating that the models are a good fit for the data. This is an indication that that consumer perceptions of halal food are significantly influenced by religious beliefs and environmental awareness, halal food certification and labeling significantly impact consumer purchase intentions and loyalty.

5. Summary of Findings

The summary of result obtained from the study are as follows:

- A significant positive correlation exists between consumer perceptions of halal food and factors such as halal certification, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness.
- Religious beliefs, halal certification, sustainability, and environmental awareness are significant predictors of consumer perceptions of halal food and purchase intentions.
- Halal certification, sustainability, and environmental awareness in marketing efforts increases consumer purchase

intentions and loyalty in the halal food industry.

6. Discussion of Findings

Result obtained from objective one dealt with the factors influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions of halal food. It was revealed that a significant positive correlation was found between consumer perceptions of halal food and factors such as halal certification, sustainability, religious beliefs, consumer purchase intentions, and environmental awareness. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Alam and Sayuti (2020); Bhatti and Azam (2020); Abdul *et al.*, (2022), which highlighted the importance of halal certification, sustainability, religious beliefs, and environmental awareness in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards halal food products.

Objective two examined the relationship between religious beliefs, halal certification, sustainability, and environmental awareness on consumer perceptions of halal food and purchase intentions. Findings revealed that religious beliefs, halal certification, sustainability, and environmental awareness are significant predictors of consumer perceptions of halal food and purchase intentions. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of halal certification (Bhatti & Azam, 2020), sustainability (Alam & Sayuti, 2020), and religious beliefs (Abdul *et al.*, 2022) in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards halal food products.

Objective three findings emphasized that halal certification, sustainability and environmental awareness in marketing efforts increases consumer purchase intentions and loyalty in the halal food industry. This result gives credence to the study by the International Trade Centre (2022), who highlighted the growing demand for halal products and the importance of halal certification in meeting this demand. Similarly, a report by Grand View Research (2020) noted that the global halal market is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, driven by increasing demand for halal products and growing awareness of the importance of halal certification.

7. Conclusion

This study dealt with consumer perceptions and behavior towards halal food products in Nigeria. In conclusion, halal certification, sustainability, religious beliefs, and environmental awareness are essential factors that influence consumer perceptions of halal food and purchase intentions. In addition,

sustainability and environmental awareness are significant predictors of consumer perceptions and purchase intentions of halal food. Religious beliefs also play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions of halal food. Therefore, food manufacturers and marketers should consider the religious beliefs and values of their target audience when promoting halal food products. Finally, to effectively promote halal food products, food manufacturers and marketers should develop targeted marketing strategies that take into account the unique needs and preferences of Muslim consumers in Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

As drawn from the study findings, the following were the recommendations:

Food manufacturers and marketers should emphasize halal certification and sustainability in their marketing efforts to increase consumer trust and loyalty. This can be achieved by highlighting the halal certification process, using eco-friendly packaging, and promoting sustainable sourcing practices.

Companies should consider the religious beliefs and values of their target audience when promoting halal food products. Additionally, they should leverage environmental awareness by highlighting their commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices. This can be achieved through targeted marketing campaigns and social media outreach.

Food manufacturers and marketers should develop targeted marketing strategies that take into account the unique needs and preferences of Muslim consumers. This can be achieved by conducting market research, gathering consumer feedback, and tailoring marketing messages to resonate with the target audience.

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Students' Satisfaction with Academic Support Services at the University of Benin

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Abstract. The study investigated students' satisfaction with academic support services at the University of Benin. It precisely aimed at ascertaining the level of students' satisfaction with teaching/educational services; evaluate the level of students' satisfaction with library services; verify the level of students' satisfaction with security services; determine students' contentment with administrative/and registration services; evaluate the level of students' satisfaction with medical services; ascertain students' satisfaction with hostel accommodation and examine students' satisfaction with information and communication technology (ICT). The study sample comprises of three hundred and eighty-five (395) respondents drawn from undergraduate students of University of Benin with the help of Google Form. Structured questionnaire was utilised to gather the needed information and the investigative techniques employed include simple percentages, means, correlation and multiple regression. All tests were performed at the 0.05 level of statistical significance. The result showed that teaching/educational services were positive and significantly related to students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. Security services had a positive and significant relationship with students' satisfaction in the University; administrative and registration services was positive and significantly related to students' satisfaction. Medical services provided by health workers significantly affect students' satisfaction in the University. Information and communication technology (ICT) had a positive and significant relationship with students' satisfaction. However, library and hostel accommodation services had no significant relationship with students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. The study therefore recommends that regular satisfaction surveys should be conducted to specifically address library and accommodation services to better understand student expectations and experiences.

Keywords: Expectations, Satisfaction, Service Delivery, Service Quality, Students

1. Introduction

In the realm of academia, universities are continually adapting to meet the ever-evolving needs and expectations of their students (Qomariah, Budiastuti, Sanosra, Susbiani, & Budisatoto, 2020). Student satisfaction is a critical factor that influences not only the reputation of educational institutions but also impacts student retention and word-of-mouth referrals, playing a significant role in the long-term success and sustainability of these institutions (YuSheng & Ibrahim, 2019). As such, it is essential for universities to consistently enhance their service delivery to align with the changing needs and preferences of their customers.

Student satisfaction in the context of university is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of the educational experience. It is the students' perception of how well their university meets or exceeds their expectations (Gaftandzhieva, Doneva, Zhekova & Pashev, 2023). The degree of satisfaction students derive from these services significantly impacts their academic performance, overall wellbeing, and loyalty to the institution (Akpoyomare, Adeosun, & Ganiyu, 2016). Therefore, understanding and improving student satisfaction is pivotal for universities aiming to provide an enriching and supportive environment conducive to learning and personal development (Acheampong, Siiba, Okyere & Tuffour, 2020).

Student satisfaction is a pivotal measure of the effectiveness of a university's service delivery. It reflects the extent to which students' expectations and needs are met by the university (Elliott & Shin, 2022). Research indicates that higher levels of student satisfaction contribute to better academic

performance, increased retention rates, and positive word-of-mouth referrals, which are crucial for the reputation and success of educational institutions (Etuk, Anyadighibe, James & Mbaka, 2020; Akpoyomare, Adeosun & Ganiyu, 2016). Therefore, this study takes a novel approach by exploring students' satisfaction with service delivery in the University of Benin. The specific objectives of the study are to: assess the level of student's satisfaction with educational services; evaluate the level of student's satisfaction with library services; verify the level of student's satisfaction with security services; determine students' contentment with administrative and registration services; evaluate the level of student's satisfaction with medical services; ascertain students' satisfaction with hostel accommodation and examine students' satisfaction with information and communication technology (ICT).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction in higher education, particularly at the University of Benin in Nigeria, is a multifaceted concept that has been extensively examined in recent academic literature. The term 'student satisfaction' varies across different academic contexts, yet it generally refers to the extent to which students feel their expectations and needs are being met by their university experience. Elliot and Healy (2016) describe it as a short-term attitude resulting from an evaluation of a student's educational experience, services, and facilities. According to Douglas, Douglas, and Barnes (2016), it is the perceived quality of an educational experience as assessed by the learner. Bignoux and Sund (2018) emphasize the affective state resulting from the appraisal of all aspects of a student's university experience. Additionally, Weerasinghe and Fernando (2017) define it as the difference between the perceived value and expectations of educational service quality. Douglas (2015) further explicates it as a response to the educational service experience, which involves an assessment of the educational process. These definitions collectively underscore the multidimensional nature of student satisfaction, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and experiential aspects.

The elements and components of student satisfaction are diverse and encompass various aspects of the educational experience. The academic environment, including the quality of teaching and curriculum, is a

critical component, as highlighted by Pham, Williamson, and Berry (2018). Physical and infrastructural facilities, such as libraries and technological resources, are also significant, as noted by Ladhari, Ladhari and Morales (2011). Furthermore, administrative services and support systems play an essential role, as discussed by Kahu and Nelson (2018). The social environment, encompassing peer interactions and extracurricular activities, is another vital element outlined by Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker, and Grøgaard (2018). A comprehensive understanding of student satisfaction involves considering these diverse yet interrelated components.

2.1.2 Service Quality

Service quality, a concept of immense significance in higher education, particularly in the context of student satisfaction, has been defined diversely by scholars. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), in their seminal work, describe it as the discrepancy between customer expectations and service performance. This definition was further refined by Brady and Cronin (2021), who emphasized the multidimensional nature of service quality, integrating aspects such as interaction quality, physical environment quality, and outcome quality. Grönroos (2014) introduced a dualistic model, differentiating between technical quality (what is delivered) and functional quality (how it is delivered). Meanwhile, Wang, Tan and Wahid (2020) presented a more comprehensive view, considering service quality as a holistic evaluation of the overall excellence of services. However, it was Anderson and Fornell (2019) who specifically connected service quality to customer satisfaction, positing that the perceived quality of service is a predictor of customer satisfaction. These definitions collectively underscore the multidimensionality and subjective nature of service quality, emphasizing its role as a determinant of customer satisfaction, particularly relevant in the educational sector.

Delving into the elements and components of service quality, it is evident that this concept encompasses various dimensions. The SERVQUAL model, introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), identifies five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions have been widely accepted and applied in various service sectors, including higher education. Quek, Tan, Sim, Ignacio, Harder, Lamb and Liaw (2023) extended this by highlighting the importance of personalization in service delivery, particularly in a university setting. Meanwhile, Douglas, Douglas and Barnes (2016) emphasized the role of learning resources and faculty expertise as

critical components of service quality in higher education. The importance of administrative support and campus facilities was further highlighted by Hill, du Preez, (2021), showcasing the holistic nature of service quality in an academic environment.

3. Theory Underpinning the Study

The Service Quality (SERVQUAL) Model, introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the 1980s, serves as a pivotal framework in assessing service quality across various sectors, including higher education (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). This model identifies five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which are instrumental in evaluating consumers' perception of service quality (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Despite its broad application, the SERVQUAL model has been subject to extensive academic debate, particularly regarding its validity and reliability in different contexts (Buttle, 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

Critically reviewing the SERVQUAL model, several authors have contributed to its evolution and assessment. Cronin and Taylor (1992) questioned its dimensional structure, proposing the SERVPERF model as a performance-based alternative. Meanwhile, Buttle (1996) and Asubonteng, McCleary, and Swan (1996) highlighted concerns regarding its generic nature, suggesting modifications to fit specific industry contexts. Empirical studies by Wang, Tan, and Wahid (2020) and Brady and Cronin (2001) further scrutinized its applicability in diverse service settings, revealing variations in its effectiveness. However, scholars like Ladhari, Ladhari and Morales (2011) and Weerasinghe and Fernando (2017) have reaffirmed its relevance, particularly in the service sector, emphasizing its comprehensive approach to measuring service quality. Thus, the SERVQUAL model, despite its critiques, remains a significant tool for academic inquiry into service quality (Ladhari, Ladhari and Morales, 2011).

The relevance and dynamics of the SERVQUAL model in the context of higher education, particularly in evaluating students' satisfaction, are significant. The model's dimensions provide a structured approach to assess the quality of educational services, aligning with students' expectations and perceptions (Douglas, Douglas, & Barnes, 2006; Oldfield & Baron, 2000). The importance of this model in the academic sector is underscored by recent studies, which have adapted the SERVQUAL dimensions to explore service quality in universities (Sultan & Wong, 2010). These adaptations reflect the changing

dynamics of higher education, where student satisfaction has become a crucial metric for institutional performance and reputation (Douglas & Barnes, 2006).

In the specific case of this study, the application of the SERVQUAL model to assess students' satisfaction with service delivery presents a unique context. The adaptability of the SERVQUAL model allows it to be tailored to the cultural and institutional specifics of Nigerian higher education (Adeyemo, 2010; Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996). Studies such as those by Agha, Alrubaiie, and Jamhour (2012) and Marzo-Navarro, Pedraja-Iglesias, & Rivera-Torres (2005) demonstrate how service quality dimensions can be modified to fit the expectations and experiences of students in diverse educational environments, including those in African universities. The application of this model in this study could, therefore, offer insightful perspectives on student satisfaction, aiding in the improvement of service delivery and overall educational quality.

4. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The rationalization for using this research design is adjudged based on the fact that it involves studying the current state of a unit or group at a particular point in time (Agbonifoh & Yomere, 1999). The study population consists of the total number of undergraduate students of the University of Benin which was 34,756 in the 2021/2022 academic session (Uniben ICT Unit, 2023). The sample size was determined using the Yamane's formula, which is the application of normal approximation with a 95% confidence level and 5% error tolerance. The formula is given as:

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

Where: n = sample size; N= population= 34,756; e = level of significance = 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{34,756}{1 + 34,756(0.05^2)} = 395$$

The formula shows that the sample size is three hundred and ninety five (395).

Therefore, the sample size of this study is 395. The study adopted the convenience sampling technique. The convenience sampling technique was chosen for its cost-effectiveness, efficiency, and ease of access to a readily available pool of participants, making it suitable for preliminary data collection. The nature of the study necessitated the use of primary data generation.

The instrument that was used for data collection in this study is a structured questionnaire. A Likert-Scale type questionnaire was developed for the respondents

sampled for this study. The dependent and independent variables were measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5), agree (4) neutral (3), disagree (2) to strongly disagree (1). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and means. The

relationship between the dependent and independent variables were measures using correlation and multiple regression. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) was used for all the analyses. All tests were carried out at the 5% level of statistical significance.

5. Analysis of Data on Relevant Variables

This section describes responses of the independents and dependent variables.

Student Satisfaction

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Student Satisfaction

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
6	I would recommend this university to prospective students based on my experience.	31 (7.8)	161 (40.8)	128 (32.4)	26 (6.6)	49 (12.4)	3.25
7	The university's services meet my academic needs effectively.	27 (6.8)	196 (49.6)	71 (18.0)	54 (13.7)	47 (11.9)	3.26
8	The responsiveness of staff and faculty to student inquiries and concerns is satisfactory.	6 (6.6)	185 (46.8)	86 (21.8)	61 (15.4)	37 (9.4)	3.26
9	My overall experience at this university aligns with my expectations prior to enrollment.	44 (11.1)	187 (47.3)	49 (12.4)	66 (16.7)	49 (12.4)	3.28
	Average	27 (6.8)	182 (46.1)	84 (21.1)	52 (13.1)	46 (11.5)	3.26

Field Survey (2024)

Table1 shows that 52.9% of the total students agree that they are satisfied with service delivery in the University of Benin out of which 6.8% strongly agreed while 46.1% agreed. On the other hand, 24.6 % disagreed that they are satisfied with service delivery in the University of Benin while 21.1% were unsure or neutral. In addition, the weighted mean value of 3.26 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are fairly satisfied with service delivery in the University of Benin.

Educational Services

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Teaching Quality

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
10	The quality of academic resources provided (e.g., textbooks, online databases) meets my expectations.	25 (6.3)	226 (57.2)	51 (12.9)	53 (13.4)	40 (10.1)	3.36
11	The effectiveness of faculty in delivering course content enhances my learning experience.	57 (14.4)	187 (47.3)	61 (15.4)	61 (15.4)	29 (7.3)	3.46
12	The availability of tutoring and academic support services positively impacts my academic performance.	45 (11.4)	216 (54.7)	49 (12.4)	55 (13.9)	30 (7.6)	3.48
13	The accessibility of technology and learning tools facilitates my educational goals.	71 (18.0)	184 (46.8)	50 (12.7)	54 (13.7)	36 (9.1)	3.51
	Average	50 (12.5)	203 (51.5)	53 (13.4)	56 (14.1)	34 (8.5)	3.45

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 2 shows that 64% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with the teaching quality in the University of Benin out of which 12.5% strongly agreed while 51.5% agreed. On the other hand, 22.6% disagreed that they are satisfied with the teaching quality in the University of Benin while 13.4% were unsure or neutral. In addition, the weighted mean value of 3.45 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are satisfied with the teaching quality in the University of Benin.

Library Services

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of **Library Services**

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
14	The availability of a wide range of academic resources contributes significantly to my satisfaction with the university experience.	38 (9.6)	227 (57.5)	56 (14.2)	44 (11.1)	30 (7.6)	3.50
15	The responsiveness of library staff to inquiries and assistance requests positively impacts my overall satisfaction with the university.	66 (16.7)	192 (48.6)	67 (17.0)	46 (11.6)	24 (6.1)	3.58
16	The modernity and functionality of library facilities influence my satisfaction with the resources and services offered by the university.	48 (12.2)	225 (57.0)	51 (12.9)	47 (11.9)	24 (6.1)	3.57
17	The variety of study spaces and environments within the library contributes to my overall satisfaction with the university experience.	71 (18.0)	210 (53.2)	57 (14.4)	32 (8.1)	25 (6.3)	3.68
	Average	56 (14.1)	213.5 (54.1)	57.8 (14.6)	42.3 (10.7)	25.8 (6.5)	3.59

Field Survey (2024)

Table 3 displays that 68.2% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with the library services in the University of Benin out of which 14.1% strongly agreed while 54.1% agreed. On the other hand, 17.2% disagreed that they are satisfied with library services in the University of Benin while 16.6% were unsure or neutral. In addition, the weighted mean value of 3.59 out of a total of 5 is a clear demonstration that students are satisfied with the library services in the University of Benin.

Security Services

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of **Security Services**

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
18	The presence of security personnel on campus makes me feel safe and secure.	53 (13.4)	177 (44.8)	40 (10.1)	62 (15.7)	63 (15.9)	3.24
19	I feel confident in the security measures implemented by the university to protect students and their belongings.	41 (10.4)	175 (44.3)	48 (12.2)	53 (13.4)	78 (19.7)	3.12
20	The campus lighting at night contributes to my sense of safety.	48 (14.2)	231 (58.5)	32 (8.1)	33 (8.4)	51 (12.9)	3.49
21	I am satisfied with the accessibility of emergency services on campus in case of a security threat.	63 (15.9)	163 (41.3)	41 (10.4)	64 (16.2)	64 (16.2)	3.25
	Average	51.3 (13.0)	186.5 (47.2)	40.3 (10.2)	53 (13.4)	64 (16.2)	3.27

Field Survey (2024)

Table 4 shows that 60.2% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with the security services in the University of Benin out of which 13.0% strongly agreed while 47.2% agreed. On the other hand, 29.6% disagreed that they are satisfied with security services in the University of Benin while 10.2% were unsure or neutral. In addition, the weighted mean value of 3.27 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are fairly satisfied with the security services in the University of Benin.

Administrative/Registration Services

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Administrative/Registration Services

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
22	The efficiency of the administrative processes in handling student registrations is satisfactory.	47 (11.9)	203 (51.4)	50 (12.7)	52 (13.2)	43 (10.9)	3.40
23	The clarity of instructions provided during the registration process enhances overall satisfaction.	54 (13.7)	202 (51.1)	60 (15.2)	46 (11.6)	33 (8.4)	3.50
24	The availability of online registration options contributes to a smoother administrative experience.	67 (7.0)	235 (59.5)	38 (9.6)	30 (7.6)	25 (6.3)	3.73
25	The responsiveness of administrative staff to inquiries or concerns during registration is adequate.	55 (13.9)	200 (50.6)	62 (15.7)	46 (11.6)	32 (3.1)	3.51
	Average	55.8 (14.1)	210 (53.2)	52.5 (13.3)	43.5 (11.0)	33.3 (8.4)	3.54

Field Survey (2024)

Table 5 indicates that 67.3% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with the administrative/registration process services in the University of Benin out of which 14.1% strongly agreed while 53.2.2% agreed. In addition, 19.4% disagreed that they are satisfied with administrative/registration process in the University of Benin while 13.3% were unsure or neutral. In addition, the weighted mean value of 3.54 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are satisfied with the administrative/registration in the University of Benin.

Medical Services

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Medical Services

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
26	The availability of healthcare professionals on campus positively impacts my overall satisfaction with the university.	42 (10.6)	229 (58.0)	50 (12.7)	37 (9.4)	37 (9.4)	3.51
27	Access to medical resources and facilities contributes significantly to my sense of well-being as a student.	73 (18.5)	196 (49.6)	45 (11.4)	44 (11.1)	37 (9.4)	3.57
28	The quality of health services provided by the university plays a crucial role in my overall experience as a student.	52 (13.2)	205 (51.9)	55 (13.9)	44 (11.1)	39 (9.9)	3.47
29	Timely access to medical assistance enhances my confidence in the university's ability to support student health and wellness.	57 (14.4)	206 (52.2)	45 (11.4)	44 (11.1)	43 (10.9)	3.48
	Average	56 (14.2)	209 (52.9)	48.8 (12.3)	42.3 (10.7)	39 (9.9)	3.51

Field Survey (2024)

Table 6 shows that 67.1% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with the medical services in the University of Benin out of which 14.2% strongly agreed while 52.9% agreed. In addition, 20.6% disagreed that they are satisfied with medical services in the University of Benin while 12.3% were unsure or neutral. Furthermore, the weighted mean value of 3.51 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are very satisfied with medical services in the University of Benin.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Hostel and Accommodation

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
30	The availability of affordable living arrangements close to campus significantly impacts my overall satisfaction with university services.	51 (12.9)	234 (59.2)	36 (9.1)	42 (10.6)	32 (8.1)	3.58
31	The cleanliness and maintenance of residential facilities contribute to my perception of the university's commitment to student well-being.	57 (14.4)	174 (44.1)	46 (11.6)	59 (14.9)	59 (14.9)	3.28
32	Adequate security measures in residential areas contribute to a sense of safety and comfort among students, positively affecting their satisfaction with university services.	38 (9.6)	207 (52.4)	57 (14.4)	55 (13.9)	38 (9.6)	3.38
33	Access to amenities such as laundry facilities, communal spaces, and study areas in residential areas enhances the quality of student life and satisfaction with university services.	49 (12.4)	183 (46.3)	55 (13.9)	59 (14.9)	49 (12.4)	3.31
	Average	48.8 (12.3)	199.5 (50.5)	48.5 (12.3)	53.8 (13.6)	44.5 (11.3)	3.39

Field Survey (2024)

Table 7 shows that 62.8% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with hostel and accommodation in the University of Benin out of which 12.3% strongly agreed while 50.5% agreed. In addition, 24.9% are dissatisfied with hostel and accommodation in the University of Benin while 12.3% were unsure or neutral. Furthermore, the weighted mean value of 3.39 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are fairly satisfied with hostel and accommodation in the University of Benin.

ICT Services

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of ICT Services

S/N	Statements	SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
30	The availability of online resources (e.g., databases, e-books) enhances my learning experience.	38 (9.6)	222 (56.2)	55 (13.9)	44 (11.1)	36 (9.1)	3.46
31	Access to reliable internet connection positively impacts my academic performance.	58 (14.7)	191 (48.4)	53 (13.4)	53 (13.4)	40 (10.1)	3.44
32	The ease of navigating university websites and online platforms contributes to my satisfaction as a student.	38 (9.5)	220 (55.7)	55 (13.9)	54 (13.7)	28 (7.1)	3.47
33	Timely responses to technical support requests improve my perception of the university's ICT services.	51 (12.9)	196 (49.6)	62 (15.7)	56 (14.2)	30 (7.6)	3.46
	Average	46.3 (11.7)	207.3 (52.5)	56.3 (14.2)	51.8 (13.1)	33.5 (8.5)	3.46

Field Survey (2024)

Table 8 shows that 64.2% of the total students agreed that they are satisfied with ICT services in the University of Benin out of which 11.7% strongly agreed while 52.5% agreed. In addition, 21.6% are dissatisfied with ICT services in the University of Benin while 14.2% were unsure or neutral. Furthermore, the weighted mean value of 3.46 out of a total of 5 is a clear indication that students are satisfied ICT services in the University of Benin.

Correlation Analysis of Research Variables

Table 9: Correlation Analysis of Research Variables

		SS	EDUS	LIBS	SECS	ADRS	MEDS	HOSA	ICTS
Student Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)								
	N	395							
Educational Services (EDUS)	Pearson Correlation	.682**	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000							
	N	395	395						
Library Services (LIBS)	Pearson Correlation	.606**	.639**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000						
	N	395	395	395					
Security Services (SECS)	Pearson Correlation	.549**	.486**	.585**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000					
	N	395	395	395	395				
Administrative/Registration Services (ADRS)	Pearson Correlation	.612**	.592**	.593**	.589**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000				
	N	395	395	395	395	395			
Medical Services (MEDS)	Pearson Correlation	.554**	.475**	.600**	.621**	.653**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			
	N	395	395	395	395	395	395		
Hostel Accommodation Services (HOSA)	Pearson Correlation	.519**	.533**	.550**	.624**	.657**	.613**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	
Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS)	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.583**	.585**	.533**	.544**	.538**	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	395	395	395	395	395	395	395	395

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

Pearson correlation coefficients were conducted on the data for the dependent and independent variables in the study. The result is presented in Table 9. The Table shows that student satisfaction is positively and significantly related to educational services ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$), library services ($r = 0.606$, $p < 0.05$), security services ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.05$), administrative and registration services ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$), Medical Services ($r = 0.554$, $p < 0.05$), hostel accommodation ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.05$) and information and communication technology ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.05$) Bryman and Cramer (1997) stipulated that Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) should not be more than 0.80; otherwise, the independent variables that show a relationship of more than 0.80 may be suspected of multi-Collinearity. The results in Table 8 show that none of the correlation coefficients is up to 0.80. This, therefore, means that there is no form of multi-Collinearity in the model.

Estimation of Regression Model

Table 10: Estimation of Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.175	.144		1.219	.224		
Educational Services	.377	.047	.379	7.966	.000	.484	2.067
Library Services	.103	.053	.098	1.961	.051	.433	2.307
Security Services	.100	.040	.121	2.518	.012	.477	2.097
Administrative/Registration Services	.170	.052	.169	3.274	.001	.410	2.442
Medical Services	.097	.044	.109	2.184	.030	.441	2.268
Hostel Accommodation	-.057	.049	-.060	-1.147	.252	.401	2.492
ICT Services	.099	.045	.107	2.223	.027	.470	2.128

$R^2 = 0.577$; Adj $R^2 = 0.569$; F-Statistic = 75.434; F-Statistic (Prob) = 0.000;

Durbin-Watson = 1.774; Number of Observation = 395

a. Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2024)

The value of R^2 0.577 indicates that the independent variables (educational services, library services, security services, administrative/registration services, medical services, hostel accommodation and information and communication technology services) together explain only 56.9 % of the systematic variation in the dependent variable (student satisfaction). Other factors or elements not included in this regression model, but taken care of by the error terms accounted for 43.1%. The Durbin-Watson score is 1.774 which by implication show that there is an absence of first-order serial correlation in the model. The F statistic of 0.000 is significant at 0.05. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable (student satisfaction) and the independent variables (educational services, library services, security services, administrative/registration services, medical services, hostel accommodation services and information and communication technology services). The regression results in Table 10 show that educational services ($t=7.966$; $p=0.000 < 0.05$), security services ($t=2.518$; $p=0.012 < 0.05$), administrative/registration services ($t=3.274$; $p=0.001 < 0.05$), medical services ($t=2.184$; $p=0.030 < 0.05$), hostel accommodation services ($t=-1.147$; $p=0.252 > 0.05$) and ICT Services ($t=2.223$; $p=0.027 < 0.05$) have a significant and positive relationship with students satisfaction. However, library services ($t=1.961$; $p=0.051 > 0.05$) and hostel accommodation services ($t=-1.147$; $p=0.252 > 0.05$) had no significant relationship with students' satisfaction.

To conclude that there is no multi-Collinearity in any set of data, the value of tolerance must be considered being over 0.10 while the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) should be below 5. The results in Table 9 show that the value of tolerance ranged from 0.401 to 0.484, evidence of substantial scores above the minimum threshold. Besides, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which ranged from 2.097 to 2.492, was way below the maximum limit of acceptability.

Test of Hypotheses

The result in Table 10 was used to test the formulated hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis One: The impact of educational service on students' satisfaction is not statistically significant. The result shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between educational services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is affirmed by the t-Statistics of 7.966 at a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of

0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant relationship between educational service and the students' satisfaction in the University

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between library services and students' satisfaction.

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between library services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of 1.961 at a p-value of 0.051 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant relationship between library services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between security services and students' satisfaction.

The result shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between security services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of 2.518 at a p-value of 0.012 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant relationship between security services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between administrative/registration services and students' satisfaction

The result shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between administrative/registration services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of 3.274 at a p-value of 0.001 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there is a significant relationship between administrative/registration services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant relationship between medical services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between medical services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of 2.184 at a p-value of 0.030 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there is a

significant relationship between medical services and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Six: Hostel accommodation does not significantly affect students' satisfaction.

The result displays that hostel accommodation does not significantly affect students' satisfaction. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of -1.147 at a p-value of 0.252 which is more than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant relationship between hostel accommodation and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Seven: Hostel accommodation does not significantly affect students' satisfaction.

The result displays that hostel accommodation does not significantly affect students' satisfaction. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of -1.147 at a p-value of 0.252 which is more than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can therefore be concluded that there is no significant relationship between hostel accommodation and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Eight: There is no significant relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) and students' satisfaction.

The result shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin. This is confirmed by the t-Statistics of 2.223 at a p-value of 0.027 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Based on the result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be concluded that there is a significant relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) and students' satisfaction in the University of Benin.

6. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine students' satisfaction with service delivery at the University of Benin. Firstly, it was discovered that the effect of teaching quality on students' satisfaction is statistically significant. Afolabi *et al.* (2019) corroborated the significant impact of teaching quality on student satisfaction in Nigerian universities, highlighting the role of effective teaching and administrative support as key determinants.

Conversely, Nchekwubemchukwu, Blessing and Tsakuwa (2020) present a more nuanced perspective, suggesting that while teaching quality significantly affects student satisfaction, infrastructural deficiencies and resource constraints substantially moderate these effects, thereby reducing the perceived quality of teaching education in some public universities.

Also, it was revealed that the role of library services in determining students' satisfaction is not statistically significant. Okiki and Asiru (2011) affirm the insignificance of library services on student satisfaction, aligning with the recent findings, by highlighting inadequacies in resources and service quality as potential dampeners of student perceptions. Contrastingly, Aina (2004) reports a significant positive correlation between library services and student satisfaction, attributing this to the role of libraries in enhancing learning outcomes through adequate provision of information resources.

Furthermore, it was found that there is a significant relationship between security services and students' satisfaction. Akinola (2021) supports the notion that enhanced security measures significantly increase student satisfaction in Nigerian universities, noting particularly that feelings of safety correlate strongly with overall student happiness and academic performance. Conversely, Emeka and Ogbonna (2020) present a diverging perspective, indicating that while security is a factor, it is overshadowed by academic and facility resources in determining student satisfaction, suggesting that the influence of security is comparatively less significant.

Similarly, it was discovered that the influence of administrative and registration services on students' satisfaction is significant. This has been echoed by Onuka (2013), who identified that efficient service delivery in these areas substantially boosts student contentment. Similarly, Aghenta (2017) reaffirmed that streamlined administrative processes are crucial for enhancing the academic experience of students. However, diverging from these findings, Okebukola (2015) observed that while administrative efficiency is valued, its impact on student satisfaction is often overshadowed by academic-related factors such as the quality of teaching and curriculum relevance.

Also, it was revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between medical services and students' satisfaction. This is akin to the findings by Ajayi (2022), who determined a significant positive relationship between healthcare quality in universities and student contentment, Oladele *et al.* (2022) also

confirmed that enhanced medical services substantially raise students' satisfaction levels.

However, it was discovered that hostel accommodation does not significantly affect students' satisfaction. Oluwole *et al.* (2021) align with this finding of non-significant impact, revealing that other factors like academic facilities and social environment hold more sway in influencing student satisfaction. Conversely, Adebayo and Udegbe (2022) reported a significant positive effect of hostel accommodation quality on student satisfaction, emphasizing the role of living conditions in academic outcomes.

Finally, it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between information and communication technology (ICT) and students' satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of Adelakun and Ajala (2015) who also observed that ICT integration in teaching significantly boosts students' contentment by fostering a more interactive and engaging learning environment. In contrast, Olakanmi (2019) reported that excessive reliance on ICT tools without adequate training and infrastructure could lead to frustration and decreased satisfaction among students, suggesting that the benefits of ICT in education are not universally guaranteed and depend heavily on the context of implementation.

7. Conclusion

This study effectively illuminated various aspects of student satisfaction related to service delivery in the University of Benin. Employing regression and descriptive analysis to explore the opinions of 395 students across different departments and faculties, the research provides a comprehensive view of how certain services impact student satisfaction. Key findings indicate that teaching quality, security, administrative/registration, medical, and information and communication technology services significantly enhance student satisfaction. These elements appear crucial in fostering a supportive academic environment. Conversely, the study noted that library services and hostel accommodations do not significantly influence overall student satisfaction. This dichotomy highlights areas where the university excels and aspects where there might be room for improvement. Overall, the results suggest a strong correlation between the quality of specific institutional services and the level of student satisfaction, offering a valuable roadmap for targeted enhancements.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

Improve administrative and registration services:

The significant role of administrative and registration services in influencing student satisfaction underscores the need to streamlined and student-friendly processes. Implementing more automated systems that reduce bureaucratic hurdles and wait times can greatly enhance student experiences. Transparency in administrative procedures and regular updates on service improvements can also help maintain student trust and satisfaction.

Address hostel accommodation problems: Despite hostel accommodation not showing a significant effect on student satisfaction in this study, it remains a critical aspect of student life, especially for those living on campus. Efforts to renovate existing facilities, ensure cleanliness, and provide reliable maintenance services are essential. Regular satisfaction surveys should be conducted specifically addressing accommodation services to better understand student expectations and experiences.

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Business Communication Practices and Employee Productivity: A Study of Selected Companies in the Nigerian Food and Beverages Industry

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Abstract. The study investigated the effects of business communication practices on employee productivity in selected food and beverage companies in Benin City, Nigeria. It specifically focused on the relationships among lateral, downward, upward, and external communication practices and employee productivity. Utilizing a cross-sectional research design, the study surveyed the entire staff of the selected companies, distributing 365 questionnaires, all of which were deemed usable. Stratified random sampling was employed to select respondents. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) technique via SPSS Version 24. Findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between lateral, downward, and upward communication practices and employee productivity. However, external communication practice did not show a positive correlation with productivity. The study recommends, amongst others, that companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry enhance lateral communication, strengthen downward practices, foster upward communication, and improve external communication with clients, suppliers, and stakeholders.

Keywords: Business communication practices; Employee productivity; Food and Beverages Industry; Nigeria

1. Introduction

Communication is an integral part of the organisational process as the flow of communication up and down the organisational hierarchy has its effects on efficiency, decision making and morale of organisations (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Thus, effective communication is regarded as an integral part

of today's successful business organisations and communication continues to be the hub of all business organisations (Ndlela & Madsbu, 2022). All organisations, both private and public entities rely on some form of communication to send their messages across to their target audience, or inform their target audience of the mission and vision of their entity (Nguyen & Mogaji, 2022). Employee mostly hypes performance at the work place when effective communication is at its ultimate for instance, when the information about an organisation's policies and procedures are at its optimum level with openness and accuracy; and also, when the information provided is adequate, factual and has good feedback (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

The employees constitute the workforce of any organisation, thereby representing an indispensable component of the entire entity. Ajalie, Ofuonybuzor, Tsoho and Auwal (2017) stated that an organisation is only as good as the workforce that runs the organisation. In essence, when employees are motivated, their morale tends to soar, leading to heightened performance and increased productivity. Consequently, this uplifted state substantially enhances the overall organisational performance level. To achieve such elevated productivity and bolster the organisation's performance, managers must consistently strive to find means of keeping their employees motivated. This introduces a fresh perspective on examining communication within the business or organisational context.

Despite the growing body of research examining this connection and its implications for employee productivity, a distinct gap persists, particularly within the specific context of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. The current

literature primarily focuses on global or Western organisational settings, overlooking the unique cultural and organisational dynamics intrinsic to the Nigerian business landscape, especially within the Food and Beverages sector. Neglecting cultural nuances, contextual factors, and the viewpoints of employees, the research lacks a nuanced exploration of communication practices' influence, hindering a comprehensive understanding of how these practices impact individual and collective productivity. Addressing these gaps is crucial for tailoring effective strategies and fostering a more contextually relevant understanding of the interplay between business communication practices and employee productivity in Nigerian Food and Beverages companies.

This study, therefore, sought to examine the impact of business communication practices on the employee productivity of some selected Nigerian Food and Beverages companies located in Benin City. Specifically, the study aimed at determining the relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; examining the relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; ascertaining the relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies; and investigating the relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Employee Productivity

Employee productivity describes the mental and emotional commitment that workers make to their company and its success as a whole. Paul and Sharma (2022) defined productivity at work as the harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work roles. Individuals must engage and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing their jobs in order to be productive. A Hewitt Associates study on employee engagement from 2008 to 2010 defined productivity as the number of workers who speak well of the company, show a desire to continue being productive members, and continuously aim to go above and beyond the organisation's minimum requirements. In addition to being devoted to their profession, truly productive individuals are also passionate about it. Because they

are engaged, productive employees are more profitable, focused, enjoy their work, and are less likely to quit (Gupta & Chowdhury, 2018). Employees that are productive demonstrate a sincere interest in the organisation's future and are prepared to make extra efforts to further it.

According to Glen (2014), the manufacturing industry is a dynamic one that faces new difficulties every year. The author pointed out that almost all media outlets regularly cover labor disputes between employers and employees, industrial unit closures, and labor force reductions brought on by the recession and other economic issues. Low pay, excessive employee turnover, unfavorable working conditions, subpar performance, and low productivity have so damaged the reputation of manufacturing industries (Obara, 2022). Productivity is the quantity of work completed in a specific length of time using a variety of production elements, including labor, capital, land, technology, and entrepreneurship. It illustrates the relationship between inputs and outputs and increases as output rises while input rises proportionately less. It also happens when fewer inputs are used to produce an equivalent quantity of output (ILO, 2005). According to Bhatti and Qureshi (2007), productivity can be viewed as a performance metric that includes both efficacy and efficiency. The ratio of output or production capacity of employees inside a company is another way to define productivity. It represents the connection between the number of inputs and the final products of a well-defined process. An organisation's performance, survival, and expansion are significantly influenced by the productivity of its employees.

2.2 Measures of Employee Productivity

Productivity measurements, which are frequently expressed in terms of output per unit of input, are quantitative indicators used to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of labor processes (Charnes et al., 1978). These metrics, which offer information on performance and areas for development, can be used at several levels, such as individual, team, departmental, and corporate. For instance:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): These are quantifiable, precise measurements connected to company objectives (Parmenter, 2015). KPIs for employee productivity can include things like project completion rates, customer satisfaction ratings, and revenue per employee.

Time Management Techniques: These are strategies and tools designed to maximize how workers divide their time between tasks and responsibilities (Lakein, 1973). Individuals can improve time use and prioritize

work by using strategies like the Eisenhower Matrix, the Pomodoro Technique, and time tracking software. **The Balanced Scorecard:** This is a strategic performance management tool that assesses organisational performance by taking into account both financial and non-financial variables (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). When used to measure employee productivity, it ensures a comprehensive approach by coordinating team and individual efforts with overarching organisational goals.

Objective Key Results (OKRs): These are a framework for setting goals that helps organisations define and track objectives and their outcomes (Doerr, 2018). When applied to employee productivity, OKRs align individual and team goals with overarching organisational goals, strengthening a results-driven culture.

Employee Engagement Surveys: These measure the emotional commitment and involvement of employees in their work (Saks, 2006). High levels of engagement are often correlated with increased productivity.

Although there are many different productivity measures available, it can be difficult to choose metrics that accurately reflect an organisation's goals. Putting too much emphasis on some indicators can have unexpected consequences. Technology integration, such as project management tools and automation software, has changed the way productivity is measured; real-time data and analytics offer more accurate insights (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Modern approaches to productivity measurement emphasize a human-centric approach, considering employee well-being, work-life balance, and job satisfaction as essential components (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Productivity measures shouldn't be static; instead, a balanced and flexible approach that balances organisational goals with employee engagement and well-being.

2.3 Concept of Communication

Numerous academics have attempted to provide a clear definition for communication. The Latin word *communis*, according to the Association of Perioperative Practice, is where communication first appeared. Lunenberg (2010) concurs that the Latin word *communis* is the origin of the word communication. On the other hand, he claims that it implies "common," implying that the source and the recipient must have a shared understanding of the message being given. Most people think of communication as an exchange that takes place in a social setting. A sender, or source, and a recipient are typically involved in communication. The interlocutors exchange cues in this situation.

According to Fatimayin (2018), these cues could be gestural, visual (photographic), or vocal. The basic idea behind communication is the use of codes that are made using the eyes, body, or voice. There is always a process where someone starts a meaning intent that is then transferred to the interlocutor (receiver), regardless of how it is done. According to Daniel (2013), the communication process is said to have completed when the sender (source) receives feedback, which is the result of the receiver reacting to the signal by starting a new circle of meaning exchange.

2.3.1 Basic Forms of Communication

There are three primary forms of communication: Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Non-Verbal Communication:

Written Communication: This involves the dissemination of information within an organisation through the use of emails, letters, memos, policy manuals, notices, books, and so forth. Tangible type of documentary proof that may be used as a reference in the future. Guarantees that the information is accurate and consistent for the whole audience. Benefits include efficient delivery of complex information and mass communication. Lack of instant response and modulations for efficient message delivery are among the drawbacks. Combining written and spoken communication improves effectiveness.

Oral Communication: This involves verbal and visual information transfer, such as speeches, presentations, conversations, etc. A quick and straightforward approach that allows for instant message delivery. Allows instant feedback and two-way contact. Adds a personal touch while enabling the message to be delivered with the appropriate pitch and tone. Saves time and effort because it is less formal and time-consuming. The possibility of misunderstandings and the requirement for excellent communication skills are among the drawbacks. Excellent for direct relationship building and immediate communication.

Non-Verbal Communication: This involves using one's appearance, body language, and facial expressions to convey ideas without using words. Physical distance, kinetic behavior, oculesis, chronemics, haptics, paralanguage, and paralinguistics are some of the categories. By using behavioral and visual signals to transmit messages, nonverbal communication is essential for increasing communication's overall efficacy.

2.3.2 Business Communication Practices

Business communication, therefore, firms is referred to as the sharing of ideas and information both within

and across organisations. A crucial component of corporate operations, it entails using a variety of communication channels, including social media, video conferencing, emails, phone calls, and meetings, to help information and ideas move between diverse stakeholders. Building and maintaining connections, advancing the company's reputation and brand, working and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, and making well-informed decisions are just a few of the many business goals that may be accomplished with effective business communication.

The exact tactics, procedures, and policies that businesses employ to control and encourage the exchange of ideas and information both within and between various stakeholders are referred to as business communication practices. Establishing clear routes and procedures for communication, teaching staff members effective communication techniques, and utilizing technology to promote communication are a few examples of these approaches. Industry, size, culture, and corporate objectives are some of the variables that may impact business communication techniques, which vary based on the particular requirements and environment of an organisation. To find areas for development and make sure they can successfully communicate with and meet the needs of their stakeholders, it is critical for firms to periodically evaluate and analyze their corporate communication methods.

2.3.2.1 Lateral Business Communication Practice

The conveyance of messages at the same lateral or comparable level within an organisation is known as horizontal communication, sometimes referred to as lateral communication. Team members, other teams, and employees at the same or comparable level all experience this. According to Ofuani and Ofuani (2014), horizontal communication occurs between individuals on the same or comparable organisational levels and is utilized to increase understanding and speed up information flow. Because interactive electronic communication technologies like e-mail and phone messages make it possible to create virtual teams of employees who collaborate even when they are in different places and learning communities, the use of horizontal communication is growing (Osinbanjo & Akintan, 2001).

The performance of employees is greatly impacted by lateral communication. Interactions between workers at the same level inside the company are made possible by this communication method, which boosts output. Teamwork is encouraged via lateral communication, which improves worker coordination and performance results. Consequently, this underscores the importance

of lateral communication in driving positive improvements in employee performance. This leads to the first hypothesis of the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.

2.3.2.2 Downward Business Communication Practice

When messages flow from a higher-level employee to a lower-level employee within an organisation, this is known as downward communication; in other words, conversations begin at the top and work their way down to the bottom (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Information flow from upper management to lower-level personnel is referred to as downward communication. Downward communication is used to postulate instructions and directions and to assign work accordingly. Additionally, it aims to provide feedback on prior performance, identify issues that require attention at different levels, and inform employees on employment processes and policies (Robbins et al, 2009).

According to Robbins et al. (2009), an organisation's effectiveness may depend on downward communication. Employees can better accomplish their responsibilities by understanding what their bosses expect of them through downward communication. Employee performance and execution of their various jobs are improved by timely information provided by efficient communication systems. It's also critical that workers are able to get orders from superiors, which will increase their productivity. Thus, the second hypothesis of this study is stated as:

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.

2.3.2.3 Upward Business Communication Practice

In order to become a high-performance organisation, organisations must have both effective upward and downward communication. Upward communication is defined as the process by which information moves from lower levels to the upper levels of a hierarchy in an organisation (Okoye, 2004). It is clear that this type of communication has grown in popularity while the formal form of communication is currently less common. It is argued that upward communication keeps managers alert in carrying out their duties and

also informs them of the intended actions of their subordinates. Through upward communication, superiors are able to learn about their subordinates' opinions about their work, their coworkers, and the organisation as a whole, which helps them find productive employees and improves organisational performance (Greenberg & Baron, 2008).

It is believed that upward communication is crucial to an organisation's success. A company may fail to achieve its aims and objectives if there is a lack of upward communication. According to Tubbs and Moss (2008), grassroots information has the power to make or break an organisation's ability to survive. The significance of upward communication is summed up by the authors in their study as providing management with the knowledge they need to make decisions and assisting staff in reducing workplace stress and obstacles. Furthermore, upward communication serves as a barometer for successful downward communication and raises employees' awareness of engagement. According to a study by Greenberg and Baron (2008), organisations must encourage upward communication and guarantee their overall quality. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of this study was proposed thus:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.

2.3.2.4 External Business Communication Practice

The dissemination of information and engagement with the immediate environmental elements—such as creditors, suppliers, and customers—are the focus of external communication. How well internal communication is managed will determine how effective this is. According to Johannessen et al. (2014), external communication is associated with controlling the flow of information or controlling communication to meet the needs of external stakeholders. Internal and external communication grows when the pace of exchange is high, and communication interpretation is useful when project complexity is low. According to Engwall (2002, cited in Johanssen et al., 2014), the primary causes of project failure are poor leadership (coordination, planning, and technical solutions), resistance from key players, a lack of resources, shifting goals, and project communications that indicate the complexity and pace of a project change in response to shifting social needs. As a project grows in size and complexity,

communication is becoming increasingly important (Johannessen et al., 2014). In order to deal with systematic dependence, larger projects require additional coordinating systems. Developing mutual understanding, exchanging information, coordinating actions, influencing, and socializing are all essential components of communication.

Thus, this study hypothesized that:

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of selected companies in the Nigerian food and beverages industry.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

A number of important theoretical perspectives from organisational communication, psychology, and management theories are incorporated into the theoretical framework for comprehending the relationship between communication and employee performance. This study, however, relies upon the social exchange theory and organisational culture theory.

Social Exchange Theory: According to social exchange theory, founded on the reciprocity principle, people want to maximize benefits and reduce costs in their interactions and relationships. In the workplace context, employees view communication with colleagues and superiors as social transactions. Employees view open, encouraging, and informed communication as a valuable resource (reward) that improves their motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. On the other hand, poor or inefficient communication comes at a price and results in discontent, disengagement, and decreased performance.

Organisational Culture Theory: Organisational culture theory highlights how communication shapes organisational norms, values, and practices. A culture of open communication, which is defined by transparency, trust, and inclusivity, creates a positive work environment that supports high employee performance. When leaders are approachable, communication channels are accessible, and employees feel empowered to express their opinions and concerns, organisational culture can act as a catalyst for productivity improvement. On the other hand, organisations with hierarchical structures, communication barriers, or punitive feedback mechanisms may see lower employee engagement and productivity as a result of their stifling work culture.

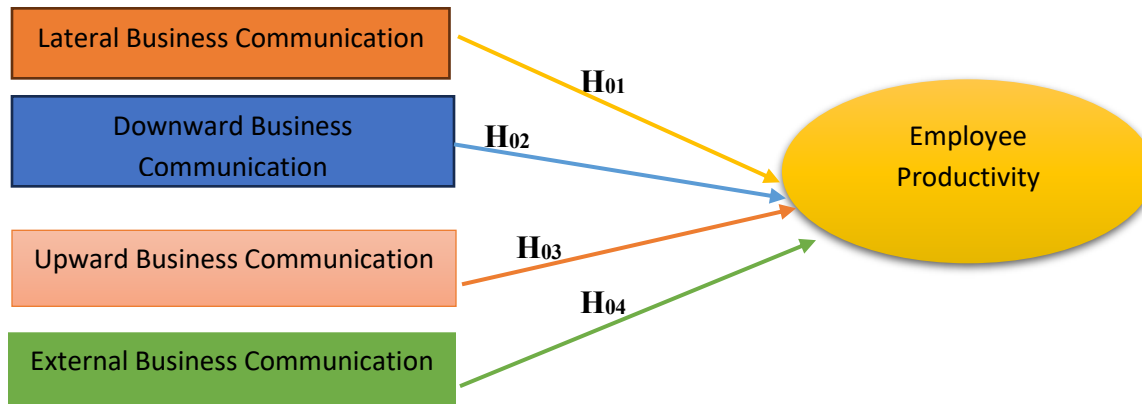


Figure 1: Business Communication Practices and Employees Productivity
Source: Researchers' Conceptualisation (2023)

2.5 Empirical Review

Igbokwe (2024) examined how communication strategies (open-door policy, team meetings, digital platforms) impact employee productivity. The study highlighted leadership's role in fostering open communication and feedback. Findings suggest that inclusive, transparent communication boosts motivation, performance, and satisfaction. The author emphasizes effective communication as crucial for workplace productivity and organisational success.

Kalogiannidis (2020) conducted a study to look into how business communication impacts employee performance. Data from 110 participants who worked for several Greek banking organisations was used to conceptualize communication into horizontal, downward, and upward forms and assess their impact on employee performance. Effective communication has a significant impact on employee performance in any company organisation, according to the study. Companies are urged to keep information flowing well throughout the company in order to enhance employee performance and long-term commercial profitability.

Ali (2016) studied communication's impact on employee performance in Somali non-profits, focusing on Help Leads to Hope (HLH). Using SPSS for descriptive and correlation analysis, he found that downward and peer communication positively influenced performance, while weak upward communication hindered employee improvement.

Atambo and Momanyi (2016) studied the impact of internal communication on employee performance at Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) in South Nyanza Region. They examined downward, upward, and horizontal communication using a stratified random sample of 30% of 256 employees. Findings showed that downward communication improved performance by ensuring timely information. The study concluded that effective communication enhances employee performance and recommended strengthening communication systems for better efficiency.

Shounubi and Akintaro (2016) investigated the relationship between effective communication and organisational performance based on a number of empirical research on communication and organisational performance. The results confirmed that effective organisational performance and communication strategies work in tandem. Additionally, they examined fifty-seven non-empirical works. The key elements of organisational communication were inferred from earlier empirical and non-empirical research.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a cross-sectional research design. A structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to gather data from respondents without manipulating the variables. This design aligns with Cooper's (2003) assertion that survey research is effective for understanding and predicting population characteristics, allowing respondents to express their feelings and attitudes anonymously.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population consisted of employees from twelve selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City, identified for having the highest employee counts in the sector. A total of 365 employees were surveyed using a stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula:

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

Where:

n= Sample size;

N= population size;

e = percentage level of significance; and

N = 4141

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 4141 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 4141 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{1 + 10.3525}$$

$$n = \frac{4141}{11.3525}$$

= 364.7654

Approximately = 365.

This method ensured a representative sample from the population, with proportions determined for each organisation as shown in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 Sampling Distribution of the Study

S/N	Organisation	Top Level		Middle Level		Low Level		Total Number of Employees to be Sampled
1.	CWAY Group	12 / 584 * 51 = 1	1	101 / 584 * 51 = 9	9	471 / 584 * 51 = 41	41	51
2.	Nigerian Breweries	21 / 349 * 30 = 2	2	97 / 349 * 30 = 8	8	231 / 349 * 30 = 20	20	30
3.	Seven Up Bottling Company	23 / 452 * 39 = 2	2	88 / 452 * 39 = 9	9	341 / 452 * 39 =	28	39
4.	Nigerian Bottling Company	22 / 512 * 45 = 2	2	69 / 512 * 45 = 6	6	421 / 512 * 45 = 37	37	45
5.	Okomu Oil Palm Company Nigeria PLC	18 / 303 * 26 = 2	2	57 / 303 * 26 = 5	5	228 / 303 * 26 = 19	19	26
6.	Presco Nigeria PLC	20 / 903 * 80 = 2	2	316 / 903 * 80 = 34	34	567 / 903 * 80 = 44	44	80
7.	Freedom Beverages Ltd.	9 / 92 * 8 = 1	1	24 / 92 * 8 = 2	2	59 / 92 * 8 = 5	5	8
8.	Guinness Nigeria PLC	31 / 228 * 20 =	4	79 / 228 * 20 =	8	118 / 228 * 20 =	8	20
9.	Crown Flour Mills Limited	12 / 170 * 14 = 2	2	46 / 170 * 14 = 4	4	112 / 170 * 14 = 8	8	14
10.	Lit Group Limited	8 / 93 * 8 = 1	1	22 / 93 * 8 = 2	2	63 / 93 * 8 = 5	5	8
11.	Nadia Bakery	3 / 49 * 8 = 1	1	13 / 49 * 8 = 2	2	33 / 49 * 8 = 5	5	8
12.	Notre Dame International Company	18 / 406 * 36 = 2	2	44 / 406 * 36 = 4	4	344 / 406 * 36 = 30	30	36
	Total		17		84		264	365

Source: Researchers' Computation (2023)

3.3 Model Specification

The study adopted Loveman's (1988) model, developing a multiple regression model to analyse the relationship between business communication practices (independent variable) and employee productivity (dependent variable).

The model is expressed as:

$$EMPPRO = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LBCP + \beta_2 DBCP + \beta_3 UBCP + \beta_4 EBCP + \epsilon$$

Where:

EMPPRO = Employee Productivity

LBCP = Lateral Business Communication Practice

DBCP = Downward Business Communication Practice

UBCP = Upward Business Communication Practice

EBCP = External Business Communication Practice

ϵ = Error term

The apriori expectation suggested a positive relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research supervisor and experts in Management Sciences. Their feedback was incorporated to enhance clarity and relevance, ensuring the instrument effectively measured the intended variables.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed through a pilot study involving 20 respondents. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct exceeded 0.6, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions and means, while inferential statistics involved Multiple Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient to explore relationships between variables. The analyses were conducted using SPSS version 20 at a 5% significance level.

4. Results

4.1 Description of Respondents' Socio-Demographics

This section contains a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic data drawn from the sampled respondents. The socio-demographic variables include gender, age, educational qualification, job experience, marital status and job designation of the respondents. In conducting the field survey, 365 copies of questionnaire were distributed, retrieved and found usable. This shows that 100 per cent collection rate was achieved as all copies distributed were also found usable and this was used in the analysis of the responses gotten.

Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

S/N	Categories	Frequency	
		No.	%
1.	Gender		
	Male	218	59.7
	Female	147	40.3
	Total	365	100
2.	Age		
	Below 20 years	16	4.4
	21-30 years	108	29.6
	31-40years	154	42.2
	41-50years	67	18.4
	51years and above	20	5.5
	Total	365	100
3.	Highest Educational Qualification		
	SSCE/GCE/NECO/NABTEB	41	11.2
	OND/NCE	34	9.3
	HND/B.Sc.	228	62.5
	MBA/M.Sc./Ph.D.	58	15.9
	Others	4	1.1
	Total	365	100
4.	Job Experience		
	0-5 years	237	64.9
	5-10 years	116	31.8
	Above 10 years	12	3.3
	Total	365	100

5.	Marital Status		
	Single	194	53.2
	Married	162	44.4
	Divorced	9	2.5
	Widowed	-	-
	Total	365	100
6.	Job Designation		
	Contract	176	48.2
	Permanent	164	44.9
	Adhoc/Other	25	6.8
	Total	365	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients were conducted on the data for all the variables in the study. Table 4.4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients among research variables.

Table 4.2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Research Variables

Variable	EMPPRO	LBCP	DBCP	UBCP	EXBCP
Employee Productivity (EMPPRO) Pearson Correlation	1				
Sig. (2-tailed)					
N	365				
Lateral Business Communication Practice (LBCP) Pearson Correlation	.693	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
N	365	365			
Downward Business Communication Practice (DBCP) Pearson Correlation	.356	.358	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
N	365	365	365		
Upward Business Communication Practice (UBCP) Pearson Correlation	.799	.682	.324	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
N	365	365	365	365	
External Business Communication Practice (EXBCP) Pearson Correlation	.313	.400	.712	.364	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
N	365	365	365	365	365

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

Table 4.2 shows that employee productivity in the Nigerian food and beverages industry is positively and significantly related to business communication practices. Lateral Business Communication Practice (LBCP) demonstrates a significant positive correlation with all other variables. It has a strong positive correlation with UBCP [$r = 0.682, p < 0.01$] and a moderately strong positive correlation with EMPPRO [$r = 0.693, p < 0.01$]. Downward Business Communication Practice (DBCP) shows a moderate positive correlation with LBCP [$r = 0.358, p < 0.01$], UBCP [$r = 0.324, p < 0.01$], and a weaker positive correlation with EMPPRO [$r = 0.356, p < 0.01$] and EXBCP [$r = 0.364, p < 0.01$]. Upward Business Communication Practice (UBCP) demonstrated strong positive correlations with EMPPRO [$r = 0.799, p < 0.01$] and LBCP [$r = 0.682, p < 0.01$]. It also exhibits moderate positive correlations with DBCP [$r = 0.324, p < 0.01$] and EXBCP [$r = 0.364, p < 0.01$]. External Business Communication Practice (EXBCP) shows moderate positive correlations with LBCP [$r = 0.400, p < 0.01$], DBCP [$r = 0.712, p < 0.01$], UBCP [$r = 0.364, p < 0.01$], and a weaker positive correlation with EMPPRO [$r = 0.313, p < 0.01$].

4.3 Results of Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was performed to show the relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity. Below are tables representing the output of the regression analysis.

Table 4.3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.831 ^a	.690	.687	2.44149	1.984

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Lateral Business Communication Practice, Downward Business Communication Practice, Upward Business Communication Practice, External Business Communication Practice
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

The coefficient of determination (R^2) stood at a value of 0.690, which indicates that 69.0 percent of all the systematic variations in the dependent variable (employee productivity) are accounted for by the independent variables (lateral business communication practice, downward business communication practice, upward business communication practice, external business communication practice) in this model. The adjusted coefficient of determinant (R^2) stood at 0.687 which shows that the data fits the model. The value of the Durbin–Watson (d) statistic was 1.984 and it was less than 2, hence, there is evidence of positive autocorrelation. This indicates that successive error terms are positively correlated.

Table 4.4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4776.786	4	1194.197	200.339	.000 ^b
	Residual	2145.915	360	5.961		
	Total	6922.701	364			

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity
b. Predictors: (Constant), Lateral Business Communication Practice, Downward Business Communication Practice, Upward Business Communication Practice, External Business Communication Practice

From table 4.4 above, The F-Stat was at a value of 200.339 with a P-value less than 0.05. This showed that business communication practices is a significant variable for employee productivity in the selected food and beverages companies in Benin City.

4.4 Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested with the p-value (Sig.) in the regression result. Where the p-values are greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypotheses (H_0) are not rejected. And where the p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypotheses (H_0) are dismissed. The results of the interpretations presented below.

Table 4.5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.192	.738		.260	.795
	Lateral Business Communication Practices	.281	.042	.273	6.620	.000
	Downward Business Communication Practices	.157	.044	.150	3.559	.000
	Upward Business Communication Practices	.674	.045	.609	15.023	.000
	External Business Communication Practices	-.121	.042	-.124	-2.897	.004

- a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Hypothesis 1

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Table 4.5 above showed the regression coefficients, t and P-value corresponding to the effect of lateral business communication practices on employee productivity in the selected food and beverages companies in Benin City. The P-value in the regression result is 0.000 which is lower than 0.015. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, which

states that there is no significant relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This shows that the study suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between lateral business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the

employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Table 4.5 above also showed the regression coefficients, t and P-value corresponding to the effect of downward business communication practice on employee productivity in the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. The P-value corresponding to the coefficient associated with the impact of performance bonuses on employee's performance in the regression result is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) that states that there is no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This is a proposition that there is a significant positive relationship between no significant relationship between downward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

The P-value conforming to the effect of upward business communication practice on employee productivity in selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City in the regression result is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 as indicated in Table 4.5 above. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) that states that there is no significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This denotes that there is a positive and significant relationship between upward business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

Hypothesis 4

H_{04} : There is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

The P-value matching the effect of external business communication practice on the employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City in the regression result is 0.004, which is lower than 0.05 as shown in Table 4.5 above. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{04}) that

states that there is no significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This infers that there is negative and significant relationship between external business communication practice and the employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that lateral business communication practices is significantly and positively correlated with productivity of the employees in the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. This is in line with Wang's (2005) study, which found that collaborative communication among peers foster streamlined collaboration, quicker problem-solving, and a more cohesive working environment. This is because when employees share information, ideas, and feedback with their peers or colleagues, lateral communication leads to streamlined collaboration, quicker problem-solving, and a more cohesive working environment, which in turn leads to increased productivity within the organization.

Additionally, the study found a strong positive relationship between the productivity of employees of the selected Nigerian food and beverage companies in Benin City and downward business communication practices. This may be due to the fact that when managers or superiors give their subordinates clear instructions, goals, and necessary information, it results in a well-informed workforce which may foster increased productivity. This finding is consistent with studies by Rajhans (2012) and Otoo et al. (2023), which found that management's clear directives, goals, and information contribute to clear instructions, shared goals, and an informed workforce, which in turn increases productivity levels.

The study also found that the productivity of employees at the selected Nigerian food and beverages enterprises in Benin City is positively and significantly correlated with upward business communication practices. This may be so because, when employees have a way to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns, it promotes inclusivity, increases employee engagement, and gives management insightful information. This could, in turn, leads to increased productivity within the organization. This result is consistent with Tumbare's (2009) investigation of internal communication at Lilongwe City Assembly, which found that giving employees a way to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns upwards promotes

inclusivity and engagement by increasing productivity.

Lastly, the study found a negative and significant relationship between the productivity of employees at the selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City and their external business communication practices. This negative relationship may be due to the fact that extensive external communication, including interactions with partners and stakeholders, can divert employees from their primary job responsibilities. Additionally, handling external interactions requires unique abilities and mental strain, which may result in higher cognitive load, exhaustion, and decreased performance. Furthermore, meeting the requests of external parties may conflict with internal goals, putting stress on staff members who are trying to strike a balance between these conflicting demands. This is consistent with research by Ainobushoborozi (2013), who found that prolonged engagement in external communication can divert workers, which may result in higher cognitive load, exhaustion, and worse performance.

However, the findings of this study may have been influenced by the demographic variables of respondents.

The data revealed that the majority of the respondents were males. Gender distribution might affect communication choices, as prior research by Wang (2005) and O'Neill (2011) implied. For instance, O'Neill (2011) discovered that female leaders favoured face-to-face communication, highlighting the possible impact of gender on communication channel preferences. Notable trends were also found in the respondents' demographic breakdown, especially with regard to the distribution of ages. A wide range of responders from various age groups were represented, according to the report. Thus, the distribution across different age groups is important because it sheds light on possible differences in respondents' communication preferences and styles. When thinking about successful communication strategies, it becomes essential to understand the age demographics. Studies by Hayase (2009) and Liu (2010) highlighted how age affects communication channel preferences. As a result, this demographic trait provides a useful lens through which organizations may customize their communication strategies and make sure they successfully connect with the range of age groups represented in the sample. For example, younger workers might choose digital methods of communication, but elderly workers might favour in-person encounters.

A variety of respondents were captured by analyzing the respondents' educational backgrounds.

Communication preferences and comprehension can be influenced by educational background. Tumbare's (2009) research underscored the significance of evaluating communication efficacy based on educational credentials.

It is noteworthy to mention that employment experience can influence communication expectations and practices. Additional sociodemographic analysis of the respondents revealed the length of time they had worked for their individual organizations. Asamu's (2014) research highlights the connection between employees' dedication and output and good communication.

The study further explored respondents' marital status with respect to communication preference. According to Robbins and Judge (2009), a person's communication preferences and patterns might be influenced by their marital status. For example, married people may have different objectives and communication demands than single people. For example, married people may place more importance on work-life balance issues, whereas single people may prioritize social contacts at work.

The analysis conducted also revealed that the contractual terms of the respondents' job could to a large extent influence their communication preferences. The distribution of job designations, such as contract basis and permanent staff, thus introduces another layer of complexity. Different job roles often come with distinct communication needs and expectations. Shockley-Zalabak (2015a) previously emphasized the role of communication in shaping organisational culture, particularly in diverse job designations.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the relationship between business communication practices and employee productivity of selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City. Specifically, it assessed the relationship between lateral business communication practice, downward business communication practice, upward business communication practice and employee productivity of Selected Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City.

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

Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City should promote and facilitate internal lateral communication channels. They can accomplish this by

putting in place systems or tactics that encourage cooperative communication between colleagues and various departments. To increase collaboration and productivity, this may entail the utilization of cross-functional projects, team-building activities, or common communication tools.

It is necessary for certain Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City to improve their downward communication strategies by making sure that management communicates with staff members in a clear, open, and consistent manner. They can accomplish this by consistently sharing information about objectives, plans, and performance reviews to promote understanding and cooperation among employees, which will increase their output.

Nigerian food and beverages companies in Benin City should establish an atmosphere that values and promotes upward communication. Putting in place systems that let staff members communicate their thoughts, worries, and criticism to their managers can help achieve this. An open-door policy or frequent feedback sessions are necessary to guarantee that workers' opinions are respected and heard, which could improve morale and productivity.

Lastly, organisations in the Nigerian food and beverages industry must strengthen and expand their external communication strategies with customers, vendors, and stakeholders. These organisations should optimize lines of communication and guarantee their efficacy, responsiveness, and transparency. This is because effective external communication can enhance the company's relationships and reputation, which in turn can indirectly affect staff productivity.

7. Limitation of the Study

This study offers insightful information about the relationship between staff productivity and company communication methods in the Nigerian food and beverage industry, but it's vital to recognize that there are certain limitations. First, the size and representativeness of the sample are the study's limitations. The results may not accurately reflect the diversity within the industry as a whole because they are specific to a subset of Nigerian food and beverage businesses in Benin City. Results may also be difficult to extrapolate to different businesses or geographical areas. Benin City's particular geographic setting and the distinctive features of the food and beverage sector may restrict the results' wider applicability. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the study records a moment in time of the relationship. The study's capacity to prove causation may be limited if

long-term patterns or changes over time are not adequately recorded. Furthermore, bias may be introduced due to the dependence on self-reported data from survey replies. Instead of reflecting their true experiences, respondents could give responses that match anticipated expectations. Last but not least, the study did not specifically account for outside variables that could affect worker productivity, including organizational culture, industry-specific trends, and economic situations.

8. Suggestion for Further Studies

Based on the limitations of this study, the researchers therefore recommend that future research should be extended to include similar companies in other states in Nigeria at large. Future research should attempt to examine the relationship between business communication practices and organisational resilience both in the private and public sectors in Nigeria and other countries around the world. These studies can also conduct comparative analyses across different sectors within the Nigerian economy to explore how various communication practices impact employee productivity in contrasting industries. They can also undertake a longitudinal study to observe the sustained impact of communication practices on employee productivity over an extended period.

9. Ethical Consideration

To safeguard the rights and dignity of each respondent participating in the survey process, the study complied with ethical standards. This included getting participants' informed consent, protecting the privacy of their answers, and giving them the option to withdraw at any moment.

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Electronic Banking: A Sustainable Tool for Customer Satisfaction in the Nigerian Banking Sector

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Abstract. Electronic banking has grown remarkably in Nigeria because customers view it as a way out of poor-quality services rendered on the counter which is labelled with the system of banking in Nigeria. The study seeks to assess the impact of electronic banking on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banking sector while the precise objectives include; (i) determining the impact of mobile banking app on customer satisfaction of users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis, and (ii) assess the influence of Web banking on customer satisfaction of users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis. The descriptive survey design was adopted by the study, and a sample size of 397 was arrived at using the Taro Yamane technique for sample size determinant for an infinite population. The method employed for data analysis is linear regression analysis. The study outcome reveals that mobile and web banking significantly affect customer satisfaction. The study, concludes that electronic banking is significant on customer satisfaction, on of GT bank. The bank's engagement in electronic banking tends to incur an increase or change in customer satisfaction. The study recommends that GTB should constantly ensure a very friendly App that will be easy to understand for their subscribers and a very secure web to ensure that customers' transactions are save.

Keywords: Banking App, Customer Satisfaction, Electronic-banking, Mobile banking, Web banking.

1. Introduction

The recent consolidation exercise in the Nigerian Banking industry has led to the emergence of e-banking in Nigeria (Ogunlowore & Oladele, 2014). New technology adoption cannot be ruled out in the banking industry to deliver effectively and efficiently to customers. The emergence of e-banking resulted from globalization (Kadir & Poddar, 2015). In most

developed countries, the banking sector has established the area of e-services and has been actively involved in developing it to meet the ever-changing needs and to satisfy modern customers (Hammoud, Bizri, & Baba, 2018).

The Nigerian banking industry has not only adapted the electronic payment strategies but has also progressed by the surge in the volume of shares and worth of dealings received from ATM, POS, Mobile Phones, etc. For instance, the volume of transactions executed with the ATM was put at N548.60 million in 2009 and this increased to N74.9 trillion in 2016 (Adegbesan, 2017). E-banking has tremendously gained ground in every nook and crane of Nigeria, especially in the centres of cities and towns. It has proffered solutions to so many challenges encountered on the counter before now.

Electronic banking adoption by commercial and financial institutions has made it easy for the head offices of banks to control the branch offices directly with ease thereby increasing the banking operation at convenience. Raza, Umer, Qureshi, and Dahri (2020) assert that online banking enables customers to make use of several banking services, pay bills, and even invest which is a real pattern of e-commerce. On average, all national banks engage in one kind of electronic banking service or the other including those in the rural areas. Online banking services are now being used as a strategic tool in developed and emerging parts of the world (Al-Dmour, Algharabat, Khawaja, & Al-Dmour, 2019).

Customer satisfaction leading to the grip of loyal corporate customers can be accomplished by facilitating the implementation of electronic banking processes, awareness, and adoption of electronic banking as well as delivering high-quality services and

service availability of electronic banking (Areeba, Mudassir, Talha, Shoaib & Adnan, 2016).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In trying to meet up with the developments around the world and advance the quality-of-service delivery to enhance customer satisfaction, banks have made a lot of investment in technology; and have broadly accepted electronic and telecommunication networks in conveying additional value to customers.

Nonetheless, frequent technical glitches, such as mobile app crashes and slow loading times, disrupt the ease of performing transactions. Users also cite difficulties with the app's interface, which can be confusing and non-intuitive, making it hard for customers to navigate and complete banking tasks efficiently (Su, Fan, Chen, Liu, Xu, Pu, & Su, 2020). Additionally, concerns about security and privacy when using the mobile app can lead to apprehension among users, further diminishing their overall satisfaction with mobile banking services.

Web banking offers the promise of convenience, but bank users have encountered several issues with the usage and navigation through banks' websites. The main problems include website downtime and slow performance, which hinder customers from accessing their accounts and completing transactions when needed. Navigation issues and a complicated user interface can also frustrate users, making it challenging to locate and utilize various banking services online (Jadhav, 2022). Additionally, concerns about online security and the potential for fraud can deter customers from fully embracing web banking, negatively influencing their overall satisfaction with GT Bank's online services.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions developed include:

- In what way does the mobile banking app impact customer satisfaction of the users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis?
- In what way does Web Banking affect customer satisfaction of the users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to assess the impact of electronic banking on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banking industry; the precise objectives are to:

- determine the effect of the mobile banking app on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis; and
- assess the influence of Web banking on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The study proposed the following hypotheses in line with its objectives:

H0₁: The mobile banking app does not have significant impact on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within the Ilorin Metropolis.

H0₂: Web banking does not have significant impact on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within Ilorin Metropolis.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1 Concept of E-banking

Mohammad and Asaad, (2018) defined e-banking as delivering banks' information and services to customers via different platforms. E-banking services delivery could be done in several means, for example through smartphones or personal computers but they rely on internet accessibility before they can function. E-banking is very important for both individuals and organizations and keeps improving continuously. For instance, it can improve monetary transactions and deliver them quickly (Alshurideh, Mohammad, Al-Hawary, & Al Kurdi, 2017). Timothy (2019) electronic banking refers to using the Internet as a remote delivery channel for providing services, such as opening a deposit account, transferring funds among different accounts, and electronic bill payment.

2.2 Mobile Banking apps

Accessibility to mobile phones on a Worldwide basis has helped in developing mobile apps that can bond organizations to their customers. Also, most banks and other financial institutions enable customers to manage their accounts via banking apps. Supporting this, Santhosh and Raghavendra (2015) noted that financial institutions want more people to try banking on mobile banking apps. According to Islam, Mustafi, Rahman, Nower, Rafi, Mayisha, and Hassan (2018), mobile banking app requires a smartphone to perform online banking tasks such as monitoring account balances, transferring funds between accounts, bill payments, and locating and buying call credit. Aleksandra (2018) noted that mobile banking app development has led to high accessibility and

flexibility of banking services. In fact this has made it possible for customers to be able to carry out instant and safe dealings anywhere they are without holding cash at hand or credit card. Haselton (2017) noted that using the mobile banking app requires the user to download the desired app and set up the app using card details either manually or through a mobile phone camera. After successfully setting up mobile banking apps, they can be used for bill payment, account transfers, peer-to-peer transfers, proximity and remote payments, discounts, and mobile ticketing (Oliveira, Thomas, Baptista, & Campos, 2016). Santhosh and Raghavendra (2015) noted that as good as access to mobile banking apps may be for customers, it is essential to understand the primary problems associated with their usage to improve customers' mobile banking experiences.

2.3 Web Banking

According to Liu, Bao, Liu, & Wang (2011), web banking refers to a site that provides bank users with online information and information-related services, such as account management functions, credit and debit features, commerce offerings, personal productivity applications, and a channel of communication with the bank and their customers. Web banking is creating a site that provides information online and services related to information to customers, with a form of design that is planned, artistic, coherent, purposeful, and useful (Flavian, Gurrea, & Oru, 2018). Web banking expresses the features of the bank's website which assists the users to carry out their actions and responsibilities. In the online banking system, attitudinal disposition and web features can predict electronic banking adoption (Ndubisi & Sinti, 2016). Accessibility to and the convenience of using the features on websites is seen as a way of satisfying the users. Factors including speed, availability, service fees, and bank operation management were described as critical factors despite their lower level than the major factors (Poon, 2018).

Web banking shows the power of corporation in the online pattern for performing bank processes; and also takes the attention of some determinants such as usability, ease of use, aesthetic design, interactivity, layout, navigation, checkout, search strength, and quality of information (Alkhouli & Samer, 2017). Through web banking, customer reliability is guaranteed by ensuring the conveyance of services as promised to the customers at the appropriate time. Customer support through web banking appears to be the corporation's capability to respond to the client's requests and complaints and commit the level of the corporation's preparedness to seriously solve and deal

with its user's requirements (Alhanatleh, 2021). Reliability is defined in terms of the quality of the website's operation and applies in particular to the technical functions of the website, its availability, and its proper functionality (Khatoon, Zhengliang, & Hussain, 2020). Pooya, Abed-Khorasani, and Gholamian-Ghouzhd (2020) opined that the ease of websites and apps is among the most critical things to be considered in internet banking. Also, easy usage is the main consideration in accepting any form of innovation by customers. More so, customers prefer the option of service that will require less stress by them in the usage.

2.4 Theoretical Review

2.4.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action was developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1975. The theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was developed to give a better understanding of the relationships between attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Fishbein, 1976). It is among the best essential theories that help in elucidating the behaviours of human. Behavioural intention to use technology is explicated by the attitudes and individual standards toward that behaviour. Intensified competition and deregulation have led many services and retail businesses to seek profitable ways to differentiate them; one strategy related to success in these businesses is the provision of high-service quality (Cheah, 2011). So, service quality has become a significant research topic in the past decade due to high revenues, increased cross-sell ratios, higher customer retention, purchasing behaviors, and expanded market share (Kaynak & Harcar, 2015).

As electronic banking is becoming more prevalent, so is the level of customer satisfaction hanging in the scenario of the technological environment (Hamisah, 2013). The part e-banking plays in ensuring quality services at a reduced cost cannot be overestimated. When satisfaction increases, mutual understanding also increases, leading to the ability to retain customer due to trust which brings about a tie amid customer and the bank. The level of customer expectation and service quality delivered by an organization is a role of customer satisfaction; e-banking plays a critical part in satisfying customers for it seals the gap between the service quality expected and perceived.

TRA is relevant to this study in the sense that the theory made us understand that, individuals' intentions to engage in a behavior, such as utilizing electronic banking services for instance, are determined by their

attitudes toward the behavior and individual norms, influenced by social pressure.

2.5 Empirical Review

Ismaila and Akintola (2023) assessed the effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction in selected deposit money banks in Ogun state, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises the customers of the selected deposit money banks in Ogun state, which are listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange as of December 2020 (CBN, 2020). Primary data was used to obtain data from 9589 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Regression analysis was used in analyzing the data, and the result shows that electronic banking has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. The study concludes that there is a significant effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction among the selected deposit money bank customers in Ogun State.

Zelege and Chauhan (2022) examined the effect of e-banking service on customer satisfaction with reference to the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in the Hawassa City administration. The study was a descriptive research design with a quantitative research method. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources for gathering data. A structured questionnaire, measured on a Likert scale was distributed to 400 respondents of which 343 were retrieved. The study adopts correlation analysis to analyze the data. From the result of the study, it was discovered that responsiveness, empathy, convenience, reliability, and assurance have a positive effect on customer satisfaction in the study area leaving out tangibility which has no effect on customer satisfaction. The study concludes that there is a significant effect of e-banking service quality on customer satisfaction.

Raji, Zamani, and Abdulwakil (2021) assessed the effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction in Nigerian banking industry, Kwara State. The study consists of 390 respondents which were reached through Google form questionnaire; regression and correlation was used in analysing the data collected. The result for the correlation indicates a positive correlation between the variables and the result of the regression analysis also shows significant impacts of the variable used. Therefore, it was concluded by the study that there is a significant effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction.

Aduaka and Awolusi (2020) assessed the impact of electronic banking on profitability in the Nigerian

banking industry. Survey research design was adopted, which involve the use of primary data to collect information from respondents through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data was also harvested from the company's financial statement which runs through 2010-2017. The population include 25 staff members each and the customers of the selected banks. Both the descriptive and inferential statistics were use in analysing data and multiple regression analysis was use in testing the hypotheses. The study indicates that cards play a great part compared to other channels, followed by ATM. It was also, noticed that E-Banking channels contributed to the Bank's profitability, meaning e-banking influences retention and loyalty of the bank's customers, also, quality of service, security, reliability, and efficiency significantly impact the usage of the services of e-banking. The study recommends that Nigerian banking industry should invest more in card products, followed by ATM amongst other electronic channels; as they generate more revenues for the bank.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive research design was adopted by the study. The research design is considered suitable because it centres on creating data via the views of respondents about a particular study.

3.2 Population of the Study

The users of GT banks withing the Ilorin Metropolis makes up the population of the study. It includes the existing customers of GT banks within the Ilorin Metropolis.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The customers were randomly picked through a random sampling technique. The total number of the customer base of the GT bank within the Ilorin Metropolis are infinite, therefore, Taro Yamane's (1967) statistical formula was applied;

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

Where:

n = sample to be determined

N = population size

1 = constant

e = margin of error (which is normally chosen) or significant level which is assumed to be 5% or 0.05. Therefore, $e^2 = 0.0025$, an error margin of 0.05 or 5%

implies a 95% confidence level. In calculating the sample size, the following result was obtained

$$n = \frac{53,000}{133.5}$$

$$n = 397$$

Therefore, the sample size = 397

3.4 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data on e-banking and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire used was measured on a 5-point Likert's scale which ranges from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (5 points).

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The study adopted a content validity method by giving the questionnaire to experts in the area. A pilot study was also carried out by testing and pre-testing the questionnaire with a few respondents from the study area.

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the questionnaire items for e-banking with 5-item questions on a five-point Likert scale was tested for accessing e-banking on customer satisfaction to confirm the reliability of the study.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of the mobile banking app on customer satisfaction of users of GT Bank within the Ilorin Metropolis

Table 1.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.168 ^a	.028	.026	.792

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mobile banking app

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024.

Table 1.1 model summary shows the correlation coefficient $r = 0.168$ which implies that a relationship exist between customer satisfaction and mobile banking app which are predictors. The table also reveals that $r^2 = 0.028$. This denotes that a 2.8% change in customer satisfaction can be explained by mobile banking apps but the remaining 97.2% is explicated by other variables that are not reflected in the model.

Table 1.2 ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	7.050	1	7.050	11.237	.001 ^b
Residual	239.674	382	.627		
Total	246.724	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mobile banking app

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024.

The ANOVA table 1.5 shows an overall significance of 0.000 which is less than the p-value of 0.05; this infers that the model is fit.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The data collected was self-administered and retrieved questionnaire. Questionnaires was distributed to users of GT bank within Ilorin Metropolis and retrieved back after filling by the researcher.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The inferential statistics, specifically, the regression analysis was used in analysing the data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social and Management Sciences (SPSS).

Model Specification

In assessing the effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction, the relevant model was developed. The model is given as:

$$Y = F(X_1, X_2) + e$$

Where Y is the dependent variable representing customer satisfaction, and X is the independent variable representing electronic banking features given as:

X₁ = Mobile apps

X₂ = Web banking

Table 1.3 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.694	.132		12.861	.000
	Mobile banking app	.210	.063	.169	3.352	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024.

From the coefficient table 1.3, the overall significant level = 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (the alpha level).

This implies a significant effect of mobile banking app on customer satisfaction therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Beta value of 0.168 for the mobile banking app (independent variable) denotes that an increase in the usage of the mobile banking app will lead to a 16.8% change in customer satisfaction in GTB.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of web banking on customer satisfaction of the users of GT Bank within the Ilorin Metropolis.

Table 1.4 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.189 ^a	.043	.040	.791

a. Predictors: (Constant), Web banking

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024.

Table 1.4 model summary shows the correlation coefficient $r = 0.189$ indicating that relationship exist between customer satisfaction and web banking which are predictors. The model summary also shows $r^2 = 0.43$. This infers that a 4.3% change in customer satisfaction can be explained by web banking while the remaining 95.7% is described by other variables that are not reflected in the model.

Table 1.5 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.822	1	7.822	12.507	.000 ^b
	Residual	238.902	382	.625		
	Total	246.724	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Web banking

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024.

The ANOVA table 1.5 shows an overall significance of 0.000 which is less than the p-value of 0.05; this infers that the model is fit.

Table 1.6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.574	.158		9.963	.000
	Web banking	.281	.079	.189	3.536	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024.

From the coefficient table 1.6, the overall significant value = 0.000, is less than the alpha level of 0.05, indicating a significant effect of web banking on customer satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis is

rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The Beta value of 0.189 for web banking denotes that an improvement in web banking gives rise to a 19%

positive change in customer satisfaction with GT Bank.

4. Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study is to determine the impact of mobile banking apps on customer satisfaction of GT Bank users at the University of Ilorin. Findings from the coefficient table 1.1 shows an overall significance of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05, this implies that the mobile banking app has a significant effect on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within the Ilorin Metropolis. This is in tandem with the outcomes of Raji, Zameni, and Abdulwakil (2021) on the adoption of mobile banking apps which has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, Ismaila and Akintola (2023) also revealed significant effects of electronic banking on customer service security experience, customers' user friendliness experience, accessibility experience, and availability experience.

The findings from the second objective also show an overall significance of 0.000 from the coefficient table 1.6, which infers that web banking, has a significant effect on customer satisfaction among the users of GT Bank within the Ilorin Metropolis. This is in line with the empirical findings of Aduaka and Awolusi (2020) which revealed that E-Banking channels contributed to the Bank's profitability and that E-banking services (EBS) had an influence on the retention and loyalty of the bank's customers.

5. Conclusion

This study assessed the effect of electronic banking on customer satisfaction in the Nigerian banking sector. Based on the outcome of the study, it was revealed that the mobile banking app has a significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction of GT bank users. Apps have significantly enhanced customer satisfaction by providing suitable access to banking services anytime, anywhere.

Also, it was revealed that web banking has a significant influence on customer satisfaction; the flexibility to access web banking, the convenience of managing accounts, payment of bills, and online transfer of funds has significantly increased customer satisfaction.

The study, therefore, concludes that electronic banking on a general note has a significant effect on customer satisfaction among the users of GT bank within the Ilorin Metropolis. The ability to carry out

electronic banking tends to incur an increase or change in customer satisfaction of GTB users.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is, therefore, recommended that:

GT bank in general, should improve more on certain mobile banking app features such as easy navigation, secure login options like biometric authentication, and an inclusive array of services including transfer of funds, payment of bills, and mobile check deposits etc. to increase their security, and make mobile App a fun to the users.

GT bank should try to offer a user-friendly website interface, easy navigation, and understandable features for even a lay man to understand and operate without compromising the security of the user's account to invite more users of Web banking through the delivery of maximum satisfaction to present users.

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Community Development and English Studies Programme in Higher Education: A Partnership for Progress

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Abstract. Community development refers to the collaboration between universities and local communities to address social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges. It is a partnership that supports growth and progress, with universities combining academic expertise, research output and student involvement to promote sustainable development within local communities. This paper interrogates this partnership in the context of English Studies and argues that collaboration with community stakeholders can deepen the students' understanding of social dynamics and empower them as agents of change when such opportunities for practical application are made available within the discipline's curriculum. This paper employs a qualitative research design focusing on students, faculty, and community members. The data collection methods are semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions with stakeholders and document analysis of the English studies syllabus as well as the SIWES programme. The data analysis is thematic identifying and analysing patterns and themes within the qualitative data. Findings include the need to integrate community-oriented content as well as SIWES into the English studies curriculum. By engaging in socially relevant projects addressing community needs such as literacy, cultural preservation, and social justice, English Studies students can enhance their academic development, critical thinking, communication skills and employability while making tangible contributions to their communities. However, challenges such as limited resources, faculty training, and sustainability of partnerships remain. The paper contributes to advancement in knowledge, educational planning and development, and effective decision making with the capacity to contribute to community resilience and sustainable development.

Keywords: Community development, English Studies, SIWES, Service-learning, Curriculum modification and integration

1. Introduction

Community development as the words imply means a group of people with common goals and aspirations forging ahead to actualise their visions for togetherness and sustainable development. In higher education, there is the academic community and the community outside the university which consist of the surrounding towns, cities, villages. The academic community does not exist in isolation. It needs the local community to achieve its aims and objectives, particularly that of peace and security. On the other hand, the immediate and remote community dwellers need the research efforts and students' engagement of the university to prosper. This is what is known as the town-gown relationship, a sustainable partnership for the growth and progress of all stakeholders.

In university, academic programmes equip students with the academic tools and theories they need to engage in societal issues, develop solutions and practicalise knowledge acquired through engagements in service learning, internships, and fieldwork. However, not all programme are given official opportunities for these practical activities. English studies is one of such programmes not so privileged, yet Nigeria has English Language as her official language. This paper examines how English Studies programme can foster partnerships with local communities. The Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), a programme aimed at providing Nigerian students with industrial exposure, is often limited to sectors like engineering, science, and technology (Obasi & Okolie, 2019) and there are limited spaces for students' placements. With the increasing need for all students to gain real-world,

hands-on experiences to meet the demands of the 21st century workforce, this paper advocates for the integration of community service into SIWES, so as to offer students of English Studies the opportunity to engage with socially relevant projects that will enhance their academic development and communication skills, while addressing local community needs such as literacy, cultural preservation, and social justice (Barker, 2013).

Through documented case studies and qualitative analyses, the paper examines how community service has been successfully integrated into English Studies curricula. While this approach presents significant opportunities, challenges abound which are addressed under the section on challenges. The paper advocates for a redefined role for English Studies within Nigerian higher education, one that fosters community resilience and sustainable development. In what follows on literature review, an overview of the English Studies programme is given as well as its intersection with community engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 English Studies

English Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that encompasses the study of the English language, literature, and culture. As a course in higher education, it aims to develop critical thinking, analytical skills, effective communication and understanding of cultural dynamics in students. English Studies prepare graduates for various careers in education, publishing, journalism, public relations, and other fields where strong language skills are essential (Nwankwo 2016, Ajayi 2014). It typically encompasses a wide range of subjects and approaches including, Linguistics where the focus is on structure, meaning, and use of the English language, covering areas such as syntax, semantics, and phonetics and phonology (Crystal 2008). Students engage with various theoretical frameworks for language analysis.

The course has ample provision for writing skills, including creative writing, academic essays, and persuasive communication. Students can also engage in media studies which examines the role of English in various media, including digital communication, film, and television (Kress and VanLeewen 2006, Jenkins 2006). The Literature aspect provides students with a wide range of literary works from different periods and genres. Students are exposed to analytic skills by analysing themes, styles, and cultural impacts of literary works (Eagleton 2008). Cultural Studies involves the investigation of the cultural contexts of

literature and language. Through literary and language analysis students address issues of identity, gender, race, and class (Hall 1997). The course also exposes students to critical theories which enables them to engage with various theoretical frameworks for analysing texts, including feminist, post-colonial, and Marxist theories (Barry 2002). The next section examines the intersection of community engagement and English Studies.

2.2 English Studies, Community Engagement and Educational Reforms

The English Studies programme offers unique opportunities for students to engage with their communities through literature, writing, and critical analysis. Below are some highlights.

2.2.1 Community Projects

One of the ways English studies students can engage with their communities is through community projects, service learning, and collaborative writing initiatives. This can significantly enrich students' learning experiences while benefiting local communities. Students could work with nonprofits to create promotional materials, write grant proposals or community newsletters. Another avenue for engagement with their communities is through literary and cultural events such as, poetry readings, author talks, or cultural festivals that involve both students and community members. English studies students could collaborate with local writers, poets, or cultural organisations to host events that showcase community talent. They could also be involved in the event.

2.2.2 Writing and Public Speaking

Engaging with the community allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations (Okebukola 2016). For example, when English students work on writing projects for local organisations or participate in public speaking events, they see the direct impact of their skills in various contexts which enhances their understanding of the subject matter of specific courses. In terms of critical thinking and problem-solving, community engagement challenges students to think critically and solve problems in dynamic environments thus sharpening their analytical skills. English studies often intersect with other fields such as sociology, history, and cultural studies. Community projects may require collaboration with professionals from these areas, therefore, broadening their academic horizons and helping them see the interconnectedness of knowledge.

2.2.3 Service-Learning

Service learning offers students opportunities to connect theory to practice. Through such practices, students apply their critical thinking and communication skills to real-world challenges, fostering a deeper understanding of community needs while developing practical solutions. (Omoera 2017, Adedimeji 2015). Service-learning project could involve students partnering with local schools to improve pupils' literacy rates. They could use their skills to develop engaging reading materials and workshops tailored to the needs of the students. They could also collaborate with local schools or libraries to develop teaching programmes or pioneer book clubs. (Ayo (2019), Langa & Marais (2018), Eyler & Giles (1999).

2.2.4 Teamwork and Collaboration, Digital Storytelling and Multimedia Projects

Many English studies programmes emphasise collaborative projects, teaching students how to work effectively in teams for solutions. This skill is vital when addressing community challenges that require the input and expertise of various stakeholders (Pillay 2016). Collaborative writing initiative involves narrative creation. Students can use digital storytelling to engage community members affected by a specific issue, thus humanizing the challenge and inspiring collective action. Digital storytelling requires students to leverage technology to create collaborative writing projects. They could use online tools like Google Docs or writing platforms like Wattpad (Ogunyemi & Akinwunmi (2021) and platforms for creating multimedia stories (videos, podcasts, or blogs). The final products can be showcased at community events or online platforms to reach a wider audience. Additionally, students can create documentaries or a series of podcasts featuring stories from community members.

2.2.5 Developing Communication Skills

The emphasis on critical thinking and communication within English studies programmes at the higher education level equips students with essential skills and competencies to address community challenges effectively. English studies encourage students to analyse texts and contexts critically, with an ability to dissect complex social issues. By evaluating multiple perspectives within literature, students learn to approach community challenges with a nuanced understanding, considering factors like history, culture, and socioeconomic conditions. When students

study works that explore themes of injustice or inequality, it allows them to better understand and tackle local issues such as educational inequities or issues of homelessness. Through critical analysis, students learn to identify underlying causes of community issues rather than just symptoms. This skill is crucial when working on initiatives that aim to create sustainable solutions.

2.3 Articulation of Ideas and Ethical Considerations

Strong communication skills enable students to articulate their ideas clearly and persuasively, in writing essays and documentations, in oral presentations of reports or analysis or group discussions for debates, talk shows, in committees and assignments. This skill can be put to use in advocating community needs and mobilising support for the community. Students who can articulate their ideas could engage in projects that involve writing policy briefs or grant applications. They could also write articles, create online social media campaigns, or engage in public speaking to raise awareness about local environmental issues while rallying community support. This ability to influence public opinion and policy is important for driving systemic change.

It is also worthy to note that English studies students are trained on ethical implications in interactions with society. This prepares them ahead to thoughtfully and respectfully handle challenges in advocacy and community engagement. For instance, when students need to handle issues on cultural sensitivity and awareness, there are courses in English studies that foster the understanding of diverse voices and perspectives, which help to prepare them to communicate effectively with various community stakeholders, including marginalised groups.

In summary, higher education institutions that promote community engagement often enjoy a positive reputation within their communities which enhances student recruitment, fosters alumni loyalty, and attracts funding and partnerships. Feedback from community engagement can inform curriculum development, ensuring that programmes remain relevant and responsive to societal needs. This creates a more dynamic learning environment that prepares students for real-world challenges. Community-engaged projects on studies that address community needs often present unique research opportunities for faculty and students to collaborate on, leading to impactful research outcomes that benefit both academia and the community. The next section

discusses the theoretical framework followed by methodology.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Ecological Systems Theory

This theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s. It postulates that human development is shaped by the different types of systems in the environments we interact with, from the immediate environments to the larger societal structures. The theory further categorised the influences individuals undergo in their environments in several different ways which are microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems. This theory is essential for community development because it recognises that development is influenced not just by individuals, but by the systems they are embedded in. This helps planners and researchers design multi-level interventions (individual, family, school, community, policy) that support inclusive development.

The understanding of the interconnectedness of social issues will assist, for instance, an English Studies department in its efforts to launch a community literacy initiative. Taking all the environmental systems into consideration, the microsystem would be that students work directly with community members. The mesosystem would be that the department partners with local schools and NGOs. The exosystem is to engage with endowed community members, local government or policies to support the outreach while the macrosystem will have to do with the cultural attitudes of community members toward education and language influence participation. Chronosystem deals with changing policies or shifting demographics which could impact the programme over time.

4. Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative research design to explore the partnership between English Studies programmes in higher education and community development initiatives. The research focus on understanding the experiences, perceptions, and impacts of such collaborations from the perspectives of students, faculty, and community members. The data collection methods are semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Focus group discussions with students regarding the need and effectiveness of the partnerships while document analysis of the SIWES programme and English studies syllabus was carried out to establish the grounds for the inclusion of community development into SIWES. The semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders

include ten (10) faculty members of English Studies programme in Benson Idahosa university, ten (10) key community leaders (the Ugbor Community head and members of the community association), and ten (10) students involved in community engagement activities in the English Studies programme. The data analysis is thematic identifying and analysing patterns and themes within the qualitative data. Ethical approval and informed consent were sought from all participants with an assurance of confidentiality. Participation was also voluntary, and pa

5. Results of Findings

The data collected from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were thematically analysed with the following key themes emerging:

1. Integration of Community-Oriented Content in Curriculum

The SIWES document and syllabus analysis revealed that while the English Studies curriculum included aspects of communication, public speaking, and writing for various purposes, there was limited direct reference to community-based projects. Meanwhile, some elements within the SIWES (Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme) programme suggested a growing emphasis on experiential learning through community engagement.

2. Perceptions of Stakeholders on the Value of Partnership

Interviews with faculty members indicated a positive disposition toward integrating community development initiatives into the academic experience. Many acknowledge that community partnerships provide real-world contexts for applying theoretical knowledge. When asked about the need to integrate community development into the SIWES programme, faculty members welcomed the suggestion stating that it will further authenticate the theoretical knowledge received. Community members echoed similar views while acknowledging that students' engagements in community will give them real world exposure and opportunities to meet with great minds thereby facilitating their speedy engagement into the workforce upon graduation from school. However, some noted that engagements with students of the SIWES were often short-term and lacked continuity, limiting their long-term impact. Students echoed these same views, citing some benefits such partnerships will bring, such as improved communication skills, confidence, and a sense of social responsibility. When asked on the need to integrate community

development into the SIWES programme, all embraced the concept with wholehearted desire.

3. Challenges in Implementation

Despite positive perceptions, several challenges were identified such as inadequate institutional support for faculty to engage with communities. Lack of structured frameworks to formally assess and integrate community projects into academic outcomes and logistical issues, including funding, time constraints, and lack of training for students on community engagement methods.

6. Discussion of Findings

Firstly, the findings suggest a nascent but promising partnership between English Studies programmes and community development efforts. The presence of community-oriented components in the SIWES programme will reflect a recognition of the role of higher education in addressing societal needs beyond academic instruction. Secondly, engaging students in community development initiatives enhances their academic and interpersonal competencies. This is consistent with experiential learning theory which states that practical application of classroom knowledge in real-world settings deepened students' understanding of course content and fostered critical thinking, empathy, and civic consciousness.

The third point is that though the curriculum reflects some intent toward social engagement, there remains a gap in systematically embedding community development as a core component of the English Studies programme. This finding supports earlier studies showing a gap between curriculum revisions relative to community engagement policies. Collaboration among all Stakeholder, students, faculty, and communities is essential but there exists a lack of formal institutional frameworks to guide, monitor, and sustain such collaborations. This underscores the necessity of creating policies, providing training, and allocating resources to facilitate effective community-based learning.

Finally, for community engagements to be impactful and sustainable, there must be long-term planning and consistent follow-up. The disconnect noted by community members between students on SIWES visits and lasting change points to a need for a strategic approach in designing projects with measurable outcomes and sustainability plans. One of the ways to empower the students of English to become more relevant to their world has to do with the incorporation of community development into the SIWES.

6.1 Integrating Community Development into SIWES

SIWES is an internship programme designed for students in higher institutions as a practical, work-related learning experience in Nigeria. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom and the practical skills needed in the professional world, making it an important component of many academic programmes. SIWES provide students with the required exposure to enable them to develop professional skills, explore potential career paths, gain hands-on experience, as well as network with professionals to enhance employability. Students are placed in industries, companies, or organisations relevant to their field of study for a specific period, usually ranging from a few weeks to several months. During this time, the students participate in real projects and tasks, working under the supervision of experienced professionals and getting exposed to the practical aspects of their chosen profession. The scheme is overseen by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) (ITF, 1973) as a mandatory component of many undergraduate and diploma programmes in Nigerian universities and polytechnics, ensuring quality control, and providing guidelines for participating organisations.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of SIWES in enhancing the employability of Nigerian graduates (Akerele & Adeyemi, 2013; Oladele et al., 2015). These studies emphasise the positive impact of SIWES on students' skill development, professional socialisation, and transition from academia to the workplace. However, there are challenges such as limited placement opportunities and funding constraints, which could be one of the reasons the humanities with specific reference to English Studies are not integrated into SIWES. This paper, therefore, advocates that community development be integrated into SIWES. One of the ways to ensure the students in English discipline acquire work-related learning experience in real-work settings is through engagement with community development programmes integrated into the English studies curriculum under SIWES.

While the specific name "SIWES" might be unique to Nigeria, the concept of work-integrated learning (WIL) or cooperative education (co-op) is widely recognised and implemented in various forms globally (Patrick et al., 2003; Doherty, 2010). WIL programmes share similar objectives with SIWES, focusing on integrating classroom learning with practical work experience. International research has consistently demonstrated the benefits of WIL which

are improved academic performance, enhanced career readiness, and increased graduate employment rates. The succeeding section discusses some of the ways to strengthen the partnership between English Studies programmes, community development and SIWES for maximum impact.

6.2 Incorporating Community-Oriented Projects into the SIWES Curriculum

The first step in the direction of sustainable partnership is to incorporate community-based projects into the SIWES curriculum and make it mandatory for English Studies students to engage with these community-based work during their placements. They can be attached to corporate affairs units or administrative units in organisations, amongst others, where they could be involved in tasks such as writing reports on local issues, producing public service announcements, or developing local content that serves the community. At the end of their SIWES programme, students could be required to design a capstone project that contributes directly to community development. This can be achieved through the development of formal partnerships with local organisations and community leaders who will identify areas of pressing needs as well as create projects that address these issues. The funds to actualize these projects and initiatives can be raised through seeking grants, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses and organisations (Garrrity 2019).

6.3 Enhancing Communication in the Community

English Studies students specialise in communication skills. When placed in community-based organisations or projects through SIWES, they can use their skills to craft messages that raise awareness of local issues, they can contribute to creating or managing communication campaigns that aim to improve literacy. They could help write educational materials, newsletters, or social media content focused on community development issues like sanitation, education, or public health. By interacting with diverse groups in a professional setting, students also become better communicators, able to convey messages clearly to different audiences, which is vital in community development work.

6.4 Fostering Local Media, Journalism and Partnership with Community-Based Organisations

Through SIWES placements in organisations or industries, students could be involved in community-based journalism, such as reporting on local issues,

events, or the needs of underrepresented groups in society as well as help create content for community outreach, design educational materials, or support advocacy campaigns. This may involve working with local media houses or NGOs. Higher institutions can forge partnerships with local NGOs, community organisations, or governmental bodies, allowing English Studies students to undertake their SIWES placements in environments where their communication and language skills can directly impact the community development projects in such places.

6.5 Promoting Volunteerism

Volunteerism can also be incorporated into the SIWES. Students can volunteer their services in local schools, libraries, community centres, or environmental organisations. By actively participating in these services, students gain hands-on experience while contributing positively to local development.

6.6 Support for Local Entrepreneurs

English Studies students could use their writing skills in designing promotional materials that help elevate local businesses to engage more effectively with their communities. This they can do by writing, editing and using digital media to create effective business narratives and brand stories that attract attention and support from the local population. Students could take the experience further by working alongside local business development programmes to offer training and educational materials on writing business plans, grant proposals, or marketing strategies for local businesses and startups.

6.7 Integration of Technology and Digital Literacy

As part of their SIWES experience, English Studies students can use their knowledge of social media and digital platforms to promote digital literacy projects that teach community members how to use technology for communication in businesses and in education. This helps bridge the digital divide in underserved communities and contributes to overall community development by ensuring that messages reach a wider audience.

7. Challenges and Considerations

The partnership between English studies programmes in higher education and community engagement presents numerous opportunities, but there are several challenges and considerations, such as institutional barriers presented as bureaucratic obstacles, funding

limitations, and lack of institutional support for community-engaged scholarship. others stem from curriculum constraints such as the need to balance academic rigour with community engagement. Below are some highlights.

7.1 Balancing Academic Objectives with Community Needs

One of the primary challenges in the English Studies programme is aligning the academic objectives of the English studies programme with the actual needs and interests of the community. There is sometimes a disconnect between what students are learning and what the community needs in terms of skills and support. (Mabokela, & Mlambo 2015). Therefore, it is important to conduct a thorough needs assessment to determine the community engagement projects that would be relevant and beneficial to all stakeholders so that they can be addressed and added to students' coursework.

7.2 Resource Allocation and Institutional Support

Community engagement initiatives often require significant resources, including funding, faculty time, and administrative support. Higher education institutions may struggle to allocate sufficient resources to sustain these partnerships effectively. Therefore, institutions can consider establishing dedicated funding streams or grants specifically for community engagement projects. Additionally, faculties can initiate faculty incentives that can encourage participation of faculty members in community development, such as recognising community engagement in tenure and promotion procedures. (Garrity, 2019).

7.3 Faculty Training and Involvement

Not all faculty members may have experience or training in community engagement methods. This lack of preparedness can hinder the effectiveness of partnerships and diminish the educational experience for students. Institutions can invest in professional development programmes for faculties that focus on service learning, community engagement strategies and culturally responsive teaching. This training can enhance faculty confidence and competence in implementing community-focused projects (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002).

7.4 Navigating Power Dynamics

Power imbalances can arise in partnerships between academic institutions and community organisations.

These imbalances may lead to misunderstandings, with universities potentially imposing their agendas on community members. Establishing equitable partnerships is crucial. This can be achieved by fostering mutual respect and collaboration through shared decision-making processes, ensuring that community voices are heard and valued in the planning and implementation stages of any initiative (Benson (2017).

7.5 Assessing Impact and Outcomes

Measuring the impact of community engagement initiatives can be difficult, especially when outcomes are qualitative rather than quantitative. This lack of clear metrics can complicate efforts to justify the time and resources invested in these partnerships. Therefore, developing comprehensive assessment frameworks that include both qualitative and quantitative measures can help in evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement projects. Collecting feedback from community partners, students, and faculty can provide insights into the programme's success and areas for improvement (Holland (2001).

7.6 Ensuring Sustainability

Many community engagement projects face challenges related to sustainability. Initiatives may lose momentum after initial funding or interest wanes, leading to incomplete projects or loss of community trust. To ensure sustainability, programmes should focus on building long-term relationships with community partners and creating plans that extend beyond individual projects (Oloyede 2012). This could involve training community members to continue initiatives or establishing community-led programmes that maintain engagement (Ramaley & Zlotkowski (2006).

In sum, these considerations are vital for ensuring that community engagement initiatives are not only impactful but also enriching for both students and community members. As institutions continue to develop these programmes, ongoing dialogue and collaboration will be key to navigating the complexities of community engagement successfully.

8. Conclusion

This paper has explored areas of partnership that could exist and result in progress between community development and English Studies programme in higher level education. It advocates for a shift in how English Studies is perceived and implemented, emphasising its critical role in fostering a more just

and equitable society through community engagement projects. By actively engaging with local communities, English Studies can transform academic experiences into practical reality of work experiences thereby contributing to meaningful social change. One of the ways to achieve this is the recommendation for English Studies programmes to be incorporated into the SIWES programme. This suggestion if implemented will not only enhance the educational experience for students but also contribute to the overall development and well-being of the communities they serve.

By implementing the recommendations discussed, students' learning experiences will be enhanced through partnerships between institutions and local communities. Students' engagement with real-world challenges they encounter through service learning and collaborative projects, not only make them acquire valuable skills but also make them become active participants in their communities. This reciprocal relationship enriches the educational experience, preparing students for future challenges while simultaneously benefiting the communities they serve. Overall, enhancing the partnership between English Studies programmes and community development in Nigeria and indeed Africa can only lead to transformative educational practices that will foster a new generation of socially responsible and engaged citizens.

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Seeking Peace by any means Possible: An Assessment of the Role Civilian JTF in Crime Management in North-East Nigeria

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Abstract. Crime and insecurity have been, and continue to be one of the major challenges confronting the nation, with the north-eastern part assuming a permanent theater of war between the Boko Haram terrorist group and the Nigerian state since 2009. This paper presents an assessment of the role the Civilian JTF in the fight against terrorism in Borno State. To execute this study very effectively, the following objectives have been pursued: (1) the examination of the role Civilian JTF in crime management (2) investigation of how effective they are in crime management and (3) the exploration of the strategy/method employed in carrying out their informal crime management function. This paper gathered data qualitatively. The qualitative data was collected through Key Persons Interviews (KPI) of some purposively selected individuals. The data was subjected to thematic content analysis. The finding showed that the failure of the formal social control agencies has birthed the civilian JTF, that have complemented and filled the gap created in a way and they are also effective in crime management. The study recommends that the formal law enforcement agencies should collaborate with the Civilian JTF in the area of training and retraining, as well as, in information sharing. Furthermore, they - Civilian JTF - should be given incentives by the Government and Communities for the risky job they are doing. This will serve as motivation to do more for their communities.

Keywords: Seeking Peace, Assessment, Role, Civilian JTF, Crime management, Northeast Nigeria

1. Introduction

Crime and insecurity have been, and continue to be one of the major challenges confronting all humans and societies regardless of their position on the rungs of the ladder of civilization. The threat posed by the

recurrent incidents of crime affects the well-being of individuals as well as their overall social, political, educational, religious and economic advancement (Kumar, 2009; Lambert, Khondaker, Elechi, Jiang & Baker 2012). As a stark social reality with dire consequences, crime has compelled individuals, groups and communities to strive to evolve various human and scientific approaches in a bid to curb its manifestations across cultures. These approaches are either formal or informal or both.

Formal crime control is basically a political, as well as, an administrative process carried out by the state as part of its key functions towards protecting the citizens. It is a social contract that the state has with the citizens. As Ugwuoke (2020) and Madaki (2021) observe, formal crime control entails the legal means of controlling the behaviour and actions of citizens through the criminal justice network which involves (the police, the courts and corrections). Generally, agents of the formal crime control carry out their functions in accordance with the law, and utilize formal sanctions against defaulters as stipulated in the constitution or any other law.

Then, as noted above, apart from the formal crime control, there is also the informal crime control. Explaining this type of crime control, Agwanwo and Onyige (2021) note that unlike the formal crime control, the informal crime control is a form of crime management system administered by the non-state actors. This type of crime control involves or rather refers to all informal measures adopted and applied by individuals and groups in society to regulate the behaviour of people so that they conform to the acceptable norms and values. These measures are built around or make use of the existing norms values, morality, mores, folkways and religion of the people (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2014; Madaki, 2020).

Without any doubts, the formal system of crime control has been known to play very important roles in the control of crime. However, in recent times, because of the incessant occurrence of crime, coupled with the resilient attitude of criminals, some community, ethnic as well as regional based informal crime management agents have evolved and put in place such organizations or groups as the Oodua People's Congress, Bakassi Boys, Civilian JTF, OSPAC, Amotekun (the Leopard), Eastern Security Network (*Ebubeagwu*) among other crime-fighting groups to control crime in their various domains (Ayakoroma 2014; Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018; Ikelegbe, 2021, Mezie-Okoye, 2023).

Here, it needs to be stated clearly that the establishment of these vigilante groups is intended to complement the efforts of the state and not to take over its duties. In every modern state system, the main responsibility of any sovereign state is the maintenance of law and order and guaranteeing the security of lives and property of citizens. In Nigeria, the constitution clearly states that, "in order to ensure the realization of these core state mandates, the police – the Nigeria police – has the responsibility to prevent crime and protect the lives and property of citizens as the foremost and the most visible arm of the criminal justice system." It is in the light of this that Alemika & Chukwuma (2003:4) see the police as "agents of the state established for the maintenance of order and enforcement of law."

Given the onerous task before the Nigeria police, it could be said that the police need the collaboration of these local vigilante bodies to assist it in the discharge of their constitutional mandate of crime prevention and the protection of the lives and property of citizens. In fact, generally speaking, Nigeria has witnessed all forms crime and criminality in recent time, these have ranged from terrorism and insurgency, herdsmen violent attacks, banditry, kidnapping of all classes of people, including pupils and students, armed robbery, ritual killings, politically motivated killings, "unknown gunmen," attacks, cultism, militancy to ethno-religious conflicts, among others. And, very unfortunately too, these realities have equally assumed perennial dimension. Worst still, the spike in insecurity spares no one region in the country. In fact, some scholars have blamed this situation on police ineffectiveness. Agwanwo and Bello (2018), Onwuama (2020) and Dilichukwu (2021) argue that the high and increasing rate of crime and insecurity in Nigeria stem from of the failure on the part of the Nigeria police to rise to the occasion. Even as it stands currently, the police officers themselves, just as the ordinary citizens of this country, from time to time,

have become casualties of criminal victimization of criminals too. Their stations are attacked and several of the officers are killed across the country. This has signaled a failure on the part of the police to contend with the criminal situation in country. They could not protect themselves; how would they be able to protect the citizens?

The clear failure or inability of the Nigeria police as the foremost law enforcement agent to prevent and detect crime, apprehend criminal, protect life and property, as well as guarantee social order has made the citizenry to lose hope in the ability and potency of the police to secure them (Soyombo, 2003, Alemika, 2014). It is this situation, according to Soyombo (2003), Ayakoroma (2014), and Ikelegbe (2021) which has compelled many communities, neighbourhoods, local government areas, states and regions in Nigeria to evolve and establish various forms of community policing/vigilantees groups to take up the task of protecting themselves, as well as, their people and property in their hands. In fact, Ikelegbe (2021:41) observes that "the gap in federal security management and responses are leading to the emergence of the regionalization of security response to security threats, through common frameworks woven around vigilantes and hunters." This, no doubt, is a crisis situation in disguise.

As a result of the inability of the formal police to prove its mettle in crime control and the subsequent emergence of various forms of community-initiated police, there has been increasing number of scholars who have researched on the recourse to this alternative form of policing. One of these scholars is Soyombo (2003) who examined the situation and stressed the need for community to be fully involved in crime control in Nigeria. Another scholar Ayakoroma (2014) investigates the failure of the policing system and the emergence of vigilantes from the lens of Nollywood films. On his part, Ajayi probes the involvement of ethnic militia in crime control in Nigeria and finds out that the involvement of ethnic militia in the control of crime dated back to pre-colonial era, but has recently, reemerged following the lack of competence on the part of the Nigeria police. Also, Ajayi and Aderinto (2012) investigates the role of Oodua People's Congress in crime control in Lagos. The study reveals that the vigilante group played key role in the reduction of crime. Ode (2003) as well, examines the role of vigilante groups in Makurdi, Benue state. Relying on information from questionnaire and focused group discussions, the study reveals that the existence of some vigilante groups has contributed to the reduction in the crime rate in the study area.

Also, Ijioma & Aku (2021) in their investigation, studied the centrality of vigilante security agency in the control of crime in Ozuitem, South-East Nigeria. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data, the study reveals that the local vigilante group is very useful in crime management. This is more so when viewed against the backdrop of the seeming (or do we say obvious) ineptitude or absence of the formal police and the high level of crime in the area. Having considered the number of researches on the recourse to alternative crime management by communities, states and ethnic groups in Nigeria as a fallout of inability of the Nigeria Police to protect lives and property of individuals and groups through vigilante groups, it is apparent that their very few research that had focused on the role of vigilante groups like the Civilian JTF in the north-east. Much of the previous studies on vigilante groups are generalistic in their approach with a few considering the performance of these bodies and not specifically on the Civilian JTF. This paper, therefore, fills the gap by examining the roles of the Civilian JTF in crime management. To execute this study very effectively, the following objectives have been pursued: (1) the examination of the role Civilian JTF in crime management (2) investigation of how effective they are in crime management and (3) the exploration of the strategy/method employed in carrying out their informal crime management function.

2. The Emergence of Vigilante Groups in Crime Management

Vigilantism or informal policing is not any recent phenomenon but had dated back to the pre-colonial era in Africa, and indeed in Nigeria. This has come to be because various communities had one form of insecurity or crime challenge or the other that has necessitated them to police their local communities. In fact, Akaruese (2007: 259) observes that part of the security challenges in this period was because the area was “dotted by a multiplicity of few autonomous empires, umpteen ethnically defined kingdoms, chiefdoms, etc; inter-ethnic conflicts and wars were a recurring decimal, given the dominant morals of that period ensconced on the rightness of might.” As a matter of fact, given the reality of some forms of norm violations and perennial wars of conquest and territorial expansion, local communities had standby armies, made up of able-bodied men from specific age grades who were there for the purpose of engaging intruders and fighting off invaders from other communities, and also helping to maintain law and order in their respective domains (Sesay, Ukeje, Aina & Odebiyi, 2003; Ajayi, 2014).

In fact, many local communities in Nigeria instituted these local armies and local policing agents as a way of fighting invaders, and curbing norm violation in pre-contact Nigeria. Then several forms of local policing agents existed with varying composition and method of operation. Unlike the formal policing system, the various forms of vigilante bodies in pre-colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, were comprised of able-bodied youth and men from the local communities. This, of course, earned the guards credibility and legitimacy (Atuguba, 2007). They were relied upon for arresting and dealing with anyone who violated the norms and values of the community. Petty thieves and those who went against the collective conscience of the community were adequately dealt with in line with their offences.

It is important to note that many of these agents of informal policing/vigilante groups in pre-colonial Nigeria were either warriors, youths, community guards or palace guards. Their basic task was to ensure that their community was protected from external incursion by neighbours. Also, they maintained internal peace and security. No members of these groups were forced to do these jobs. They were volunteers interested in the peace and security of their community. Anyone of them who distinguished himself in his service was rewarded with titles and with other community resources, as the community deemed fit for their commitment in ensuring social order in their domain (Sasey, e’tal; Atuguba, 2007). These local guards used some weapons that were available to them at the time. Ajayi (2014) and Maiangwa & Waziri (2018) noted that the weapons used by these community vigilantes were very rudimentary in nature and included tools such as clubs, cutlasses, cudgel, and local gun, were available. The use of these weapons was accompanied by the application of magical powers for their fortification and protection.

As noted earlier on, the local vigilante groups were very useful in many communities in traditional societies in Nigeria. Today, because of the exigencies of time, the need for these local armed groups has become overwhelming. This account for why in the 21st century Nigeria, there was heavy re-emergence of these local vigilante groups. Also, as part of the functions of these modern-day vigilante or voluntary armed groups as observed by Maiangwa & Waziri (2018) in Africa, in Nigeria the emergence of these vigilante or voluntary armed groups has been basically to align with government security agencies in the fight against criminals. This is the case because the formation of the vigilante groups in Nigeria has been largely based on the philosophy of defending their

communities against criminals and insurgents owing to the failure of the formal policing system.

3. Rationale for Involvement in Crime Control of Civilian JTF

As it should have been clear by now, the establishment of informal policing organs are not intended to serve as mere décor or adornment in the country's security outfit. These organs were evolved as a result of some critical events in the country. Nigeria, in the not so recent, and even currently has been acknowledged as a very hotspot of criminality, which the formal policing security system finds it difficult to contain. This means there should be some ancillary voluntary crime-fighting armed groups to help out the situation. Thus, on the emergence/re-emergence of informal policing organs, Maiangwa & Waziri (2018), Alemika (1993) and Ekpenyong (2020), explained what they referred to as the Nigerian crime problem, which they say has overwhelmed the nation. It has been observed that in more ways than one, Nigeria's crime profile has baffled the global community. For instance, in terrorism, Nigeria is rated as one of the leading terrorist countries in the world according to Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2023). Also, drawing on the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, Oguntunde, Ojo, Okagbue & Oguntunde (2018) observe that the most recurrent crimes committed in Nigeria include armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, burglary, rape, cyber-crime, fraud, bribery and corruption, ritual murder, herdsman killings, cult killings and banditry among others. The high and increasing incidences of crimes and its variegated patterns and sophistication have given rise to the establishment and involvement of these informal voluntary organs of crime fighting and prevention.

This time around, the focus is on the emergence and involvement of Civilian JTF in the North-east Nigeria. The origin and development of the *Civilian JTF* is traceable to the onslaught and the terror evoking actions against the innocent citizens of this country by the Boko Haram insurgents in the north-east, Nigeria. The gruesome killing of hapless and defenseless citizens in the north-east, especially in Borno State prompted the emergence of Civilian JTF vigilante group in 2013. The Boko Haram Islamic sect, with the killing of its ace leader Muhammed Yusuf, by the Nigerian state in 2012, has since intensified its armed engagement with the Nigerian state in what can be referred to as a guerilla warfare (Agwanwo & Ekpetorson, 2018). This warfare has the soft targets of the Nigerian population, that is, the innocent and defenseless Nigerians as its targets. Of course, these are Nigerians whom the law enforcement agents like

the police, and the various military agencies are incapable giving adequate protection as a result of some factors. One of these is the secret involvement and connivance of people in government and indeed, some high-ranking military officers in Boko Haram intrigues because of their profiteering interest in the insurgency in the north (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018).

Another very cogent reason that brought about the formation of the Civilian JTF was the strategy deployed by the military JTF in the fight against the insurgents that conduced to the intimidation and abuse of the fundamental right of the resident in the Borno and other Boko Haram infested state in the region. They imposed curfews, door-to-door search and arrest of sect members as well as innocent citizens, the destruction of people's homes and personal belongings, as well as, long detention of those innocently accused. The Human Rights Watch (2012: 59) corroborated this point when they observed that the "JTF abuses created growing resentment in communities, making community members more unlikely to provide information that could help curtail Boko Haram abuses by the JTF have created more distance between the people and the government."

In fact, it is the dissatisfaction and resentment against the military for their inability to crush the Boko Haram attacks and make the region habitable and devoid of the perennial killings and the destruction of property fueled the intervention of the Civilian JTF in the North-east. This intervention was driven by some strong motives, and Maiangwa & Waziri (2018: 211) identified these motives to include the following:

To revenge the death of loved ones killed by Boko Haram, to prevent the group from causing havoc to the civilian population, proved to the security agents that fighting urban warfare does not necessarily require heavy troop's deployment and lastly knowing the culture and terrain of where terrorist operate is significant in gaining advantage over insurgents.

These motives, as a matter of fact, boosted their morale in engaging their enemy the Boko Haram Islamic sect, moreover as they remember the death of well over 20,000 and the displacement of about 2.2 million of their people from their homes (BBC, 2016). However, as at 2018, in spite of their effort and zeal the Armed Conflict location and Event Data Project (ACLED) estimated that 37,346 had been killed by the Boko Haram Islamic sect (Campbell and Harwood, 2018).

But the point has been made that in spite of this heavy loss the involvement of the organized youth - Civilian

JTF-, in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgents has had some positive impact in the region. The Civilian JTF, has fought and also won the insurgents in a number cases. For instance, in 2013, some members of the Civilian JTF caught and handed some Boko Haram members over to the military in Maidugiri (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018). Also, Olugbuo & Ojewale (2018) declare that the Civilian JTF has made remarkable progress in fighting off major assault of the insurgents, and as well, raided the homes of suspected members of the Boko Haram terrorists to make arrest on behalf of the military.

Apart from effort they made to protect themselves and their communities, the Civilian JTF has worked as a worthy ally of the military in fight against the Boko Haram Islamic sect in the area of intelligence gathering. Lar (2018) notes that the usefulness of the Civilian JTF was clear in the area of intelligence gathering, surveillance patrolling and manning of checkpoints which aided the activities of the military in the state. Their partnership with the military JTF, has apparently strengthened and sustained the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in the region. Acknowledging the usefulness of the Civilian JTF in the fight against the Boko Haram sect, the Human Rights Watch (2017) observes that they were serving as foremen by guiding the military JTF navigate through the difficult terrain in search of the Boko Haram insurgents. In fact, the support the Civilian JTF gave to the military JTF facilitated the reorganization of this informal community security outfit into an organized command structure in various communities in Borno state, and is been overseen by the military JTF. The reorganization of the Civilian JTF along the military command made it possible for them to have a uniform for proper identification. Their uniform is made up of two colours- black shirt and trousers having blue stripes on the pockets and shoulders (Lar, 2018).

As it could be expected, however, in an armed conflict situation, there is usually the cases of maiming, the destruction of property, and at its extreme the loss of lives by parties involved. On the part of the Civilian JTF, the Vanguard (2017) reported that about 680 Civilian JTF members lost their lives, while trying to repel the reign of terror by Boko Haram insurgent in Borno State, between 2012-2017. Also, in order to demonstrate their avowed commitment to the course of protecting their communities, and to deal with the issues of betrayal among themselves, they all agreed to take an oath with the Quran, which is administered by the Chief Imam of Borno State (Maiangwa & Waziri, 2018).

4. Methods and Research Setting

The method a researcher deploys in carrying out any research depends on a lot of factors. Snape & Spencer (2003) stated that these factors include the researchers' beliefs about the nature of the social world and what can be known about it, the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired, the purpose and goal of the research, the characteristics of the research participants, the audience for the research, the financiers of the research and the position and environment of the researchers themselves. In the context of this this research, the qualitative research method was adopted. as Bryman (2004:46) had stated, qualitative research is an "approach to the study of social world which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied." The qualitative method helps the researcher to understand and interpret the social world of those being studied and how their social world is created and recreated in a patterned way that have enabled their continued existence.

The qualitative data for this study was collected through Key Persons Interviews (KPI) of some purposively selected individuals. They were selected on the basis of their knowledge of the security dilemma in the study area, and the role played by the informal security to curb insecurity in their areas. Those selected include the police, the military, community leaders and members of the Civilian JTF. A total of 20 Key Persons Interviews was conducted. While content analysis of the Key Persons Interviews was done for the qualitative data. Due to the distance of the state, coupled with security situation, the researcher, through the assistance of a colleague in the Department of Sociology, University of Maiduguri, helped to engage some graduate level students who assisted in the data collection process. The data collected were gathered and sent via email to us. Those involved in the data collection were paid for the work done.

As regards the geographical location of this study, the study was carried out in Borno State. Borno state is one of the states in the northeast Nigeria. The state was created on the 3rd of February, 1976 and currently has 27 local government areas. Christened as 'Home of Peace', Borno state has in recent time become a theatre of war and violence. It is now the epicenter of Boko Haram terrorist onslaught. The violent criminal activities of the Boko Haram terrorist in the state have led to the loss of lives and property. Boko Haram terrorist onslaughts have halted socio-economic, political, educational and religious activities in the

state. Granted that it is the responsibility of the state to protect the lives and property of citizens, their near failure in carrying out this constitutional mandate through the various law enforcement agencies has led to the emergence of the Civilian JTF. The presence of the civilian JTF as community-based security outfit, is very visible in other northeastern part of the country.

5. Results and Discussion

In this session, attempt was made to investigate the role of the civilian JTF in crime control.

The following persons were interviewed based on the topic at hand

- The police
- The military
- Community leaders

An interviewee explained that (Police Response).

In combating the Boko Haram terrorist group, the Nigerian army has not fought alone; it has found an invaluable partner in the form of the civilian joint task force, also called “Yan Gora”. This collaboration has dealt significant blows to Boko Haram, resulting in substantial losses for the group. However, the CJTF itself has also suffered significant casualties in the process (Police response 1).

In concomitant with the first respondent, the second interviewee stated that:

The role of the Civilian JTF is one of collaboration and mutual support. We work closely with them to address security challenges, especially in areas where our resources might be stretched thin. The Civilian JTF provides valuable local knowledge and intelligence that helps us in our operations. This is because they are familiar with the terrain and the communities, which gives us an advantage in combating crime and insurgency (Police response 2).

The above response is a clear depiction that the role of the CJTF in crime control involves a concerted effort. Synergy between the CJTF and the police is undoubtedly valuable. In fact, prompt intelligence needs to be gathered on time to avert certain criminal tendencies. Hence the third respondent stated that:

The Civilian JTF has been instrumental in facilitating the safe return of abducted individuals and reuniting them with their families. Their swift action and cooperation with the police have helped rescue many victims from the clutches of criminals. The most important role is that they serve as our eyes and ears on the ground, they know everybody in the community

and even most of the participants of the Boko Haram group. Some are their friends; others are either close relations or business mates. Therefore, it is difficult for Boko Haram to infiltrate the population without being detected. They also assist us in identifying and apprehending suspects, as well as, providing information on suspicious activities in their neighborhoods (police response 3).

The role of the CJTF in crime control (Military response).

The Civilian JTF serves as a force multiplier for the military in the fight against Boko Haram. Their grassroots presence and community trust enable them to gather intelligence, conduct patrols, and support the army operations effectively. This partnership significantly enhances our ability to combat crime and insurgency, especially the Boko Haram-afflicted regions (Military response 1).

The second responded added that:

The Civilian JTF's involvement in crime control is indispensable in Boko Haram-infested areas. Their local knowledge and deep understanding of the terrain enable them to detect and deter insurgent activities, contributing significantly to the overall security efforts led by the military. Their collaboration is pivotal in achieving our objectives against Boko Haram (Military response 2).

Yet, another respondent has this to say:

The Civilian JTF serves as a critical ally to the military in crime control endeavors. Their engagement at the community level not only helps in gathering intelligence but also fosters trust and cooperation among the local populace, which is essential for long-term stability. The Civilian JTF's role is indispensable in our collective efforts to combat crime and insurgency in these areas (Military response 3).

The role of the CJTF in crime control (Community leader response).

The community leaders were also interviewed concerning the role of the civilian JTF in crime control. Thus, the first interviewee appraised the efforts of the CJTF and stated their role since inception:

From a religious perspective, I can attest to the CJTF's commitment to protecting our mosques and religious gatherings. They work tirelessly to ensure that worshipers can practice their faith without fear of violence or intimidation. (Community leader 1).

The second respondent added that:

As a youth leader, I've seen firsthand how the CJTF engages with young people in our communities. They provide vocational training and mentorship programs to steer vulnerable youths away from joining extremist groups like Boko Haram. This preventative approach is essential for long-term peace and stability (Community leader 2).

In similar vein, the third interviewee stated:

Additionally, the CJTF's presence has boosted economic activities in our region. Their efforts in maintaining security allow businesses to operate without constant fear of attacks or extortion by Boko Haram insurgents. Even our market places are protected by them, people can now freely visit the market to carry out transactions without fear of being apprehended by herdsmen or the book harm sect (Community leader 3).

The responses from our respondents on the role of the Civilian JTF in crime control in the Northeast, Nigeria are quite revealing as regard crime reduction in the area of study. Prior to the evolution of the vigilante group, the members of Boko Haram terrorist group and bandits were said to have terrorized the people to the point that they had capture some local communities and local government areas in the Northeast. However, with the involvement of the Civilian JTF, the terrorist onslaught by the terrorist group has drastically reduced to the barest. Also, they have made it very difficult for the terrorist to capture and take control of communities as their main base. The critical role played by Civilian JTF have, to a reasonable extent, brought some respite to the residents as a result of the security gap created by the inability of the formal security agencies to prove their mettle. The finding of this study is supported by Brownyn's study. Brownyn (2001) in his study on vigilantism in Sierra Leone found that vigilante groups play pivotal role in the maintenance of law and order as a result of the failure of the police curbing incidences of crime and insecurity in the nation. Also, the finding of this study is further corroborated by Aderinto & Nwaeze (2010), and Mezie-Okoye (2023), when they noted that vigilante groups help to fill the security gaps created by the ineffectiveness of the police in Nigeria. Drawing from the works of these scholars, it is very clear that vigilante groups like the Civilian JTF, has played an important role in the fight against insurgency and sundry crime in the North-east Nigeria.

The second objective of this study is to investigate the strategies adopted by Civilian JTF in crime control. This is important because if they have played key role in security governance, it is necessary to underscore

the strategy they adopted to reduce the security threats in their localities. To answer this question, responses was elicited from the Police, the Military and the Community leaders. Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (police response).

The CJTF's community engagement approach is one of the effective strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control. They actually have strong ties with local residents and are deeply embedded in serving this community. This allows them to gather intelligence and identify potential threats more efficiently. This is of major help to us because not all of us here understands the language (police response 1).

Another respondent further explains:

In addition to their community-based efforts, the CJTF also collaborates closely with law enforcement agencies like ours. They share valuable intelligence and assist in joint operations targeting criminal elements, including Boko Haram insurgents (police response 2).

Also, another police officer had this to say:

Another noteworthy strategy is the CJTF's focus on youth empowerment and rehabilitation. By providing vocational training and mentorship programs, they offer alternatives to young people who might otherwise be susceptible to recruitment by criminal organizations (police response 3).

Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (Community leaders' response).

From a religious perspective, I've witnessed the CJTF's efforts in promoting peace and reconciliation initiatives. They work to resolve conflicts within communities and discourage violence as a means of resolving disputes, which contributes to overall crime reduction (community leader 1).

Secondly:

The CJTF also plays a significant role in fostering trust and cooperation between residents and security forces. They act as liaisons between the community and law enforcement agencies, facilitating communication and collaboration.

The last respondent added that:

One strategy I've seen is the CJTF's active involvement in neighborhood watch programs. They organize community patrols and engage residents in reporting any suspicious activities, which helps in preventing crimes before they occur (Community leader 3).

Strategies employed by the CJTF in crime control (military response):

One key strategy employed by the CJTF is community policing, where they work closely with the local populace to gather information on insurgent activities and provide security at the grass roots level. This helps in preventing attacks before they occur and also facilitates the arrest of suspects (military response 1). In addition to the first respondent, the second respondent stated that:

The CJTF conducts patrols in collaboration with the military to secure major roads and strategic locations. They act as the eyes and ears of the military, reporting any suspicious activities or movements (military response 2).

The last respondents added that:

Through counter-radicalization efforts, the CJTF engage with the youths and communities that are vulnerable to extremist ideologies. They provide alternative livelihood opportunities and promote peace building initiatives to mitigate the spread of radicalisation (military response 3).

Unlike the police and the military who are deployed to this area for the purpose of curbing or fighting the terrorists, and recently, bandits; the CJTF are locals who understand the environment and the language so well. Their knowledge of the people and their challenges has helped them come up with the strategies that have helped them to a reasonable extent, succeed. From the responses, it is evident that the CJTF employs a range of strategies, including identifying the root cause of the insecurity, collaborating with the state security agencies, promoting community engagement, conflict resolution, and fostering trust and reconciliation, so as to reduce insecurity and crime in Borno State. This finding is in tandem with Olamiyi (2005); Ajayi & Aderinto (2008) and Tankebe (2009), that vigilante groups adopt specific strategies such as collaborating policing with the police, utilizing the knowledge of the environment and language to source for intelligence, as well as, fostering a culture of trust and reconciliation among community members.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, criminal activities engender insecurity and this has continued to ravage human societies irrespective of their ladder of civilization. Both the formal and informal crime control management system are key to ensuring that the impact of these criminal acts is brought to a minimal. The Civilian JTF which is an aspect of the informal crime control system is traceable to the onslaught and the terror evoking actions against the innocent citizens of this country by the Boko Haram insurgents in the north-

east, Nigeria. While it is true that the formal system of law enforcement in the country has become increasing overburden with spiraling incidents of crime and security challenges that has made the 'force' incapable of proving their mettle in crime control, the informal, community-based Civilian JTF have emerged to complement their role. This button-up approach or community-evolved security control is effective mainly due to the fact that they understand the terrain and language for the purpose intelligence gathering; and also utilize the principle of youth engagement in the fight against Boko Haram onslaught in their localities.

7. Recommendations

The findings of this study have clearly shown that the formal law enforcement agencies are incapable of dealing with the increasing and complex security challenges in Nigeria, especially in the northeast that has been ravaged by Boko Haram terrorist group. This situation has inevitably led to the emergence of and the involvement of the Civilian JTF in security governance in the state. It is therefore recommended that the community and the state government should provide the much-needed equipment to enhance that role in crime management. By doing this, it will enable to effectively carryout their functions. Also, the formal law enforcement agencies should collaborate with them in the area of training and retraining, as well as, in information sharing. Furthermore, they should be given incentives for the risky job they are doing. This will act as motivation to do more for their communities.

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Balancing National Security and Human Rights: A Critical Analysis of Nigeria's Anti-Terrorism Laws

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Abstract. Under the Terrorism (Prevention) Act and other relevant laws, the long-serving war on terror in Nigeria has imposed robust counterterrorism measures. Implementation of the measures resulted in most barebones human right violations that surface serious concerns for checks and balances between national security exigencies and safeguard of liberties. The study is a discourse analysis of the anti-terrorism law of Nigeria scrutinizing its counter-terrorism efficacy and conformance with international human rights standards. Drawing from a doctrinal research approach for the study that critiques prominent concepts surrounding militarization or Islamic counter-terror 'war' and unlawful arbitrary detention and disappearance with political repressions in the name of security research. The scale of human rights violations under Nigeria's counterterrorism regime has been made clear by the Zaria Massacre, IPOB proscription and other human rights reports. Positive examples of balancing security and respecting human rights simultaneously: global international security frameworks such as the US Patriot Act, the UK Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, along with African frameworks such as from South Africa and Kenya through a cross-country review mega-analysis. The research reveals several shortcomings in the Nigerian counter-terrorism apparatus without adequate legal backing, judicial oversight or practiced accountability mechanisms for security agencies. The study, however, recommends legal and policy reforms to lay an appropriate balance between security and human rights sustainable with robust oversight of the

judiciary as well as intelligence-led security practices while not sacrificing international human rights standards and transparency in counter-terrorism keeps. The provisions combined will allow Nigeria to respond with a degree of legitimacy to global security threats while keeping democratic principles and respect for human rights in the cloak of legal counterterrorist policy that national defence is other consideration with fundamental freedoms.

Keywords: National Security, Human Rights, Counterterrorism, Anti-terrorism

1. Introduction

Human rights and national security are conflicting but essential themes for contemporary governance, especially for those countries which are threatened with armed rebellion and terrorism (Aidonojie, 2023; Aidonojie et al., 2022). National security is important for gaining control over land, achieving politico-military stability, and stability, but human rights are the foundation for democratic rule, where human dignity and freedom for individuals are ensured (Antai, 2024). It is especially at its highest challenge for Nigeria, as terrorism and violent extremism have posed enormities against nation stability. The Federal Government in light of security threats, passed several antiterror laws Omnibus Bill), with the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011 (as amended 2013 being the most striking in its extraordinary grant to security agencies for fighting terror. That implementation

however has been enmeshed in voluminous human rights questions - extrajudicial killing, arbitrary arrest, torture and other fundamental rights restriction (Edet et al, 2024).

Nigerian instability can also be attributed, as part of the solutions to these problems; Boko Haram and ISWAP (their secondary rebel group) are extremist influence alongside their armed militias that are active in various parts of the country (Aidonjio et al., 2021; Aidonjio & Victoria, 2022). This has resulted to thousands of dead, millions displaced since the armed rebellion began back in 2009 against which hardcore state responses have been taken, through armed forces being led such operations and the various security agencies using the use of force at fighting terror network, preventing attacks. Yet international human rights groups like Amnesty and Human Rights Watch have accused the agencies of widely systematic human rights violations as they go about such operations. This includes extrajudicial killings of civilians, enforced disappearances, degrading conditions of detention to the point of stifling opposition movements at all levels, done under the cloak of fighting terrorism (Antai, 2024).

Nigeria's move is understandable under the rubric of state security outweighing individual rights, particularly during an emergency. Antai et al (2024) argue that extreme threats call for extreme measures. This is very important both on legal and ethical grounds—in what circumstances can the security privileges to a nation justify human rights limitations? Are there sufficient safeguards of law that will eliminate abuse of discretion with regards to counter-terrorism operations for example? How does Nigeria's counter-terrorism policy stack up with international human rights norms? These are essential inquiries into evaluating Nigeria's counter-terrorism legislation's legitimacy and efficiency (Ojukwu, 2011). This research comparatively critically assesses Nigeria's counter-terrorism legal framework, the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, against international human rights instruments as well as the Nigerian Constitution. It also subjects Nigeria's measure against terror to a test for compliance with international law's necessity, proportionality, and legality principles. It also analyses cases for human rights abuse against terror countering, with a view to ascertaining whether there are sufficient oversight and control measures inherent within countering terror's legal framework (Kisubi et al, 2024). Furthermore, this research compares international best practice on countering terror with a view to ascertaining how best Nigeria can reconcile practice with its concept and practice of national security and human rights balance (Aidonjio et al.,

2020; Aidonjio & Francis, 2022). To these, this research seeks to shed light on gaps and pitfalls in Nigeria's counter-terrorism legislation and propose towards a better-balanced and rights-friendly approach. With a legal framework for ensuring security as well as protection for fundamental rights, Nigeria has a potential for a sustainable strategy against terror that maintains democratic values but is effective against security threats as well (Aidonjio et al, 2024).

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Concepts of human rights and national security are two core conflicting imperatives of governance, particularly for anti-terrorism. National security involves measures undertaken by a nation for preserving its sovereignty, public order, and avoiding threats of terror, rebellion, and other internal as well as external aggressions (Ashworth, 2007). Human rights, on the contrary, refer to inherent rights and guarantees given to human beings, including freedom against torture, freedom of expression, freedom against denial of fair trial, right to fair trial, and right to human dignity, among others (Antai, 2024). While the two are inherent in a peaceful society, their contradiction occurs whenever pursuit for security at a nation's level translates into a breach of human rights. Governments often claim that some of these rights may have to be curtailed for effective antiterrorism operations as well as for maintenance of public safety (Aidonjio et al., 2023; Aidonjio et al., 2024). That, however, invites fear for potential abuse of state force, particularly in countries where weak legal safeguards and checks and balances provide leeway for security agencies to carry on with abandon. Nigeria is a case in point, as its antiterrorist operations have all along been accused of human rights abuses (Anifowose et al, 2024).

Laws providing for countering terrorism in Nigeria are borrowed primarily from Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011, as amended 2013, which grants unqualified discretion on security agencies, e.g., detention without trial, prohibition on organizations, and surveillance on suspects. Apart from that, Nigeria's Constitution 1999 (as amended) also provides for human rights at Chapter IV, but subject to a derogation clause where there is a nation security emergency (Ekpenisi et al, 2024). Apart from that Nigeria is also a party to some regional and supranational human rights charters such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and a host of others (Anani et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2024). However, despite these protections, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have published numerous reports on rampant human rights violations in the name of countering terrorism including

extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, prolonged arbitrary detention and the politics gag (Araromi and Oke, 2014). A failure of balancing security with rights has led to very complex legal and ethical problems, the need for deeper theoretical discussion at this nexus.

The nexus of human and national security in Nigerian counter terrorism legislation is amenable to theoretical models' examination. Social contract theory as developed by the theorist Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau can be used as an interpretive tool for the state powers and accommodations of liberties. The theory is that people part with some freedoms in order to get protection and order which is provided by the State but excessive curtailing of rights is the repeal of the social contract which makes citizens wary and revolt, as seen in how Nigeria views insurance as counter-terrorism actions (Aidonjio et al, 2024). Relating to counter-terrorism, another relevant norm is the theory of just war which entails a set proportionality, necessity and distinction between combatant and non-combatant. Doubts of adherence to the Nigerian norm, especially in force application that is disproportionate against noncombatant civilians during counter-terrorism actions are enormous (Jufri et al., 2024; Haruna et al., 2024). To conclude, international human rights law contains the principles of proportionality and necessity that institute a means to evaluate according to if rights restrictions are valid (Akpanke et al, 2022). They should always involve (i) that limitation of rights is necessary in order to achieve a legitimate aim and (ii) that this limitation should be the least restrictive means available. However, the counter-terrorism actions of Nigeria fail this test as exemplified in mass arrests and detentions without trial or targeted arrests on activists/journalists for nation security grounded in the argument of counter-terrorism (Hanson, 2023).

We can apply the Securitization theory, for instance, Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan style, that shows us how governments select each problem as an existential threat to provide covering extraordinary securitised security measures (Agbede, 2020). National security is invoked to legitimate moves such as sacking of movements (e.g. Indigenous People of Biafra-IPOB) to media clamping. Securitization in governance-generated landscapes where human rights violations become acceptable and built. Antai (2024), wholeheartedly, argues differently and submits in the balance of the scales, as he believes human security places the focus on individual security by challenging state-centric orientation of state autonomy with an equal footing in the distribution of power; alongside that given to national security coordinated through

human rights. Drawing this out, the Nigerian Theatre of this model demands counter-terrorism not simply military measures but recognize the socio-economic causes amnesties in radicalization such as poverty, unemployment or non-involvement in governance.

An examination and conceptual/theoretical examination of the broad issues of human rights and security imperatives of a sovereign state against the anti-terrorism legislation in Nigeria illustrates that these are complex interdependent powers from which these imperatives arise (Aidonjio et al., 2025). Security is a legitimate issue but how it should be secured under the prism of legality, proportionality and responsibility is a concern. Any formula less than this will only further entrench the entrenchment of instability and crush democratic governance. Application of the theoretical lenses such as social contract theory, just war theory and just measure frameworks, securitisation theory, and human security approach aid us in the unique and insightful reflections that Nigeria can draw out to formulate another patterned strategy to eradicate terrorism (Bello and Mela, 2022).

3. Literature Review

Academic discourse around human rights and security nationalism intersection has drawn detailed arguments, particularly on issues around combating terror. Other authors have delved into the legal, ethical, as well as practical, ramifications emanating from striking a balance between these two competing imperatives. Authors such as Ojo (2016) assert that a nation's security is a fundamental state responsibility and that, out of necessity, authorities have a responsibility for recourse to extraordinary measures for ensuring their citizens against terror attacks. To Ojo, increased terror group sophistication, particularly where there is a terror-stricken terrain, necessitates laws vesting undue powers on security organs. Ojo, however, acknowledges that, where there exist emerging democratic regimes, laws become human rights violation, e.g., Nigeria's experience with countering terror. Similarly, Awotayo et al (2018) critically examine Nigeria's Terrorism (Prevention) Act, pointing out how its overbroad definitions on what constitutes terrorism and security threats have been manipulated into muzzling opposition through taming dissidence and persecution of opposition figures. To his view, though the law allows for a framework for terror prosecution, its practice is with a lot of arbitrary arrest, long detention, and extrajudicial killing.

Other authors have engaged with the international legal framework for a balance between human rights

and security. Onwuazombe (2017) observes that international human rights law, specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), has specific norms on limitations on rights for reasons of state security. He explains that in his opinion, some kind of legal restriction exist during a national emergency i.e. not all rights set, like freedom of expression and movement however absolute ones such right to life the prohibition for torture can never be derogated. That according to Eze, Nigeria's counterterrorism measures flagrantly disregard this at the same time the suspects are arrested on grounds of "security". For his part, Worluh-Okolie and Joseph-Asoh (2024) takes a state-centric position and argues that international human rights norms are blind to the particular security challenges faced by Nigeria and many other states. Worluh-Okolie and Joseph-Asoh says blind adherence to human rights norms can affect counterterrorism not only by imposing over-regulation on security entities but also by undermining their effectiveness. While Yusuf (2020) and some of the critics suggest that if governments are so inclined they will spew threats in order to legitimate human rights abuses. Yusuf provides examples of how the Nigerian state has been using national security discourse to suppress the press and silence movements like IPOB [Indigenous People of Biafra]. In Yusuf's view they are not steps to consolidate security but precipitate religiosity and diminish state institution credibility in front of populace.

There has also been comparative research done on investigating Naija regime against best international countering terrorism practice. Bello (2021) has compared Nigeria's antiterror legislation with sections of the Terrorism Act in the United Kingdom and United States to find that although as all terrorism legislation are categorically tough across these countries, Nigeria does not have strong oversight bodies as exist in Western democracies. Counterterrorism legislation, for instance, is subject to judicial scrutiny, as well as independent agencies tasked with ensuring human rights compliance, in the United Kingdom. Nigeria, however, has weak oversight, and security agencies consequently act with virtual impunity. Such absence of oversight has also been witnessed through human rights bodies such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which have accused Nigeria's security agencies of being perpetrators of gross abuse during countering terror operations. Bello concludes that while countering terror legislation is necessary, such legislation must also have effective safeguards against abuse.

Despite these thorough analyses, there are spaces in the literature for the sophisticated way in which Nigeria's counterterrorism regime interacts with its constitutional and international human rights obligations. While most studies focus on the legal regime or human rights violations but do not provide critical analysis of how the counterterrorism laws can be amended to balance security with the maintenance of rights, most of the literature is focused on the federal government with little coverage of the role that must be played by state and local governments in counterterrorism. Last but not least, while some authors have taken note of international best practice, there are few authors who have focused on the potential role that regional human rights regimes, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, can play in establishing accountability in Nigeria's counterterrorism regime. The objective of this study is to bridge these gaps by carrying out a systematic review of Nigeria's counterterrorism legislation, investigating their compatibility with domestic and international human rights standards, and providing policy recommendations that enhance security while maintaining fundamental rights.

4. National Security and Human Rights in Nigeria's Counterterrorism

4.1 Framework

Nigeria's anti-terrorism laws have come into place against the backdrop of increasing acts of terrorism as well as insurgencies perpetrated by non-state actors, most notably Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and extremist violent actors. National security has been at the forefront of Nigeria, and they have responded with a combination of military might, intelligence, and legal measures against such actions The Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011 (as amended 2013) is the primary legislation that sets up counterterrorism operations, granting blanket capacities for law agencies on one end and prescribing stringent punishment for acts of terrorism on another end. Enforcement, however, has raised an eyebrow, with suspicion on human rights abuse, as well as abuse of state agencies, on their part (Aidonjio et al, 2024). Nigeria's interest as a nation against terrorism is about neutralizing terror threats and preventing extremism from spreading. The state has employed a multi-drawn-out approach through military operations, intelligence policing, de-radicalization, and international cooperation with universal and regional security actors. The effective National Counter Terrorism Strategy, NACTEST, which took place from 2016, outlined five pillars: preventing terrorism, securing the surrounding, detecting and countering

radicalization, pursuing law and justice, and encouraging regional and international cooperation. The strategy supports unity of effort against terror among military, law, and civil society, as well as addressing causative drivers for radicalization (Majekodunmi et al, 2024). Despite holistic approach, there have been persistent calls regarding disproportionate military focus at the expense of human rights and socio-economic measures against countering causative factors for terrorism, e.g., poverty and exclusion (Izevbuwa et al, 2024).

Nigeria's security agencies and military are tasked with implementing anti-terror operations centrally. The military, aided by the military air force, fights terror groups, primarily through direct military action, primarily in the northeast theatre. The Joint Task Force, a unit made up of a composite of military and paramilitary units, has also been used against Boko Haram for silencing the unrest in hotbeds. Intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence, and internal security are handled by the Department of State Services, which also conducts counter-terror operations and surveillance on a daily basis (Antai et al, 2024). Nigeria Police Force (NPF) also carries out countering terror operations, either as urban security operations or through intelligence operations. Activities by such organizations have, however, been tainted with human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest, and use of force against civilians. Documentation of human rights is that antiterror activities have, at best, equated to infringement of fundamental rights, eroding confidence among citizens with respect to the security apparatus and providing grievances to be channelled towards further radicalization (Simon, 2015).

There have been a few case studies on human rights repercussions of Nigeria's anti-terrorism system. Some have been cases involving 2015 Zaria Massacre, where members of Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), a Shi'ite religious group led by Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, were attacked by the Nigerian Army. The military explained that members of IMN had blocked a convoy carrying the Chief Army Staff, after which a fierce crackdown resulted in over 300 members of IMN being shot. Human rights activists claimed a disproportionate force and extrajudicial killing based on accounts, with evidence pointing towards a majority being unarmed civilians. Sporadic detention of years since court decisions for his freedom in the wake notification has elicited fears that aspects of anti-terror law have worrying aspects too as to how minority religious community and opposition personalities could be crushed by powers that be.

Massive resorting to arbitrary detention and torture in the garb of counter terrorism is the security forces which must give serious alarm. This has been done through Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on many occasions that persons have been arbitrarily detained for weeks at routine basis such as military detention facilities like Giwa Barracks, Maiduguri. The men, women and children have been given painful and often fatal treatment. Easier violations of such human rights have been committed because of the use of clandestine detention centres and the absence of judicial oversight, and criticisms about the legality and accountability of Nigeria's anti-terrorist campaigns have been mounting. Break in due process dis-qualifies antiterror acts and incompatible with Nigerian obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. It also shows the conflation between terrorism legislation and neo-repressive practices in countering terrorism through the proscription of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). IPOB was in 2017 banned as a terrorist group by the Terrorism (Prevention) Act because IPOB is composed of a secessionist organization advocating for Biafra independence. Well, this is because members of IPOB had plundered themselves with a series of indiscriminate violent acts such as going on rampage to government buildings and security agents. Some critics however state that the action was politically motivated and affirmatively censored a right to self-determination for peaceful manifestation. Different Human rights organisations have acknowledged when members of IPOB are being targeted with disproportionate force by security agents, suspecting that the law against terrorism is being abused to silence differing voices rather than dealing with actual security threats (Antai et al, 2024).

The cases touch on much larger issue for Nigeria's struggle against terrorism — reconciling human rights with state security. This de-legitimizes counter-terrorism when what we need to measure and effectively deal with genuine security threats – the very maximum measures are in place by our lack of application of human rights standards (Kisubi et al, 2024). Widespread violence, arbitrary detention and impunity of abuse ensures a culture of impunity, producing grievance which incentivize further radicalization. Broader recognition of the policy is required as a higher empowered response that balances between security needs and fundamental rights, increases judicial control and transparency of counter-terrorism operations (Antai et al, 2024). Otherwise, what is in store for Nigeria's counter-terrorism will be an affront to the very security she seeks.

4.2 Best Practices in Managing Counterterrorism and Human Rights

The countries with a more comprehensive antiterrorist apparatus such as United States and United Kingdom have established legal frameworks, which are robust enough to suffocate terror under democratic law. Likewise, African countries like South Africa & Kenya through its specific security situation have also enact their own antiterror laws that both snap at home realities and the pocketbook of universal human obligations. Nigeria, a country continually afflicted by terror movements such as Boko Haram, ISWAP and other insurgent forces pushed on these international paradigms in shaping a legal policy of terror but is skeptical for their presumptions and adherence to human rights straitjackets (Okpong and Antai, 2024).

The corresponding Patriot Act of America, created in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001 America broadened the states surveillance capacity; expanded law enforcement capability and imaginable terror detect & deter models. But the legislation bolstered efforts at national security, but also generated alarm over governmental over cunning infringing on civil rights chiefly pertaining notably to: wiretapping for fearless and ensuring of decades long detention without trial Muslim racial profiling among others. All the attempt to authorize financial transaction intercept and secret searching without notice was met by a smattering of howls that the law would violate due process across its territory (Agboti et al, 2024). More recently in the USA Freedom Act of 2015, for example, there were controls that were put in place. Controversial Security-rights trade-off and US Counter-terrorism policy.

There is significant ground in the UK for countering terrorism while safeguarding human rights through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. One of the acts is passport revocation, internet communications tracking and travel restrictions on citizens deemed to be potential terrorists. To ensure a level playing field for human rights observance, this legislation has the judicial oversight and same terrorism legislation independent monitor. It only gets more complex with 'Prevent' from the UK's counter-terrorism fight at the top and everything dealing with radicalisation being integrated into communities, school and religious institutions for deradicalisation programs no matter. Its 'Northerner Companion' emphasises the South African Protection of Constitutional Democracy Against Terrorist and Related Activities Act (2004) with an added emphasis on insulation from practice terror against human rights measure.

The Act essentially ensures safeguards from arbitrary detention, courts' role over security operations, forbids terrorists' criminality and have right to freedom. The Constitutional Court of South Africa, has been instrumental in applying and implementing above provisions as law so that antiterror practice does not breach fundamental rights (e.g. right to a fair trial as against torture). SA is the go-to for a good balance between human rights and constitutional democracy priority that have been enshrined in South African antiterrorism laws. Kenya has been shaped by its terror past — quite serious terrorist incidents e.g. Westgate mall attack in 2013 as well Garissa University 2015 have fashioned Kenya's terror policy in small parts. Pre-Terrorism Act of 2012 and the Security Laws (Amendment) Act 2014 contain sweeping powers for human rights apex troika sadly along with pre-trial detention extending to well over ninety days in excess as well additional surveillance powers, media gagging restricting reporting of terror attack etc. Terrorism actors have recorded abusive security agencies, mainly on Toronto-based (Somali ethnic communities), which is systematic in nature with impunity as chronicled by human rights actors prior to the Prevention and Prohibition of Terrorism Act of 2012 & 2014's "Security Laws (Amendment) Act (2014) " Arresting suspects for terrorists, arbitrary detention over long term; secret detention camp military and non-invokement of counter-terrorism operations are clear breaches on international due process, fair trial norms. Cutting off organizations like IPOB, where physical violence is suspected to have been done under its grounds signals that antiterrorism legislation could be misused for silencing opposition politics and not for genuine threats to national security (Antai et al, 2024).

In the Nigerian case there is an inherent problem under its counter-terrorism system because there are no independent agencies of oversight with the powers to investigate and remedy human rights abuse by security/ law enforcement agencies. The Nigerian judiciary in comparison to South Africa has largely failed to uphold accountability on the security forces abuses (Chinweze et al, 2024). Terrorism law in its oversight, as with the United Kingdom's system of balancing national security against human rights requires an independent reviewing institution as present within the hierarchy. Second, Nigeria's Absence of a systemic Countering Violent extremism policy, like the United Kingdom's "Prevent" initiative reduces its capacity to address root causes of terrorism such as socio-economic radicalization and marginalisation. A comparison to other best practices in international law on Nigeria's strategy for countering terror shows a need for reforms promoting

security safeguards against human rights costs (Aidonjio et al, 2024). Strengthening the multiple of judicial oversight -- as brakes against abuses is building and an all-of-society terror countering approach in line with community engagement and deradicalization that would have Nigeria's terror counter policy also be on par with best practice in global standards in countering terrorism. This would mean that without reforms, Nigeria is likely to embed internecine violence cycles which are counterproductive to the legibility and efficiency of its terror fight.

4.3 Challenges and Gaps in Nigeria's Anti-Terrorism Laws

Frustrations and flaws abound in Nigerian counter-terrorism legislation with itself too mired in defects and weak spots to serve as a practical bulwark against contradictions between national security imperatives and human rights furtherance. This is the biggest, there are no strong safeguards and monitoring bodies which infantilises a rampant despoliation of human rights. The Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011 which was amended in 2013 provides for extensive and largely uncurbed investigation, arrest and prosecution authority of security agencies on the triad of terrorism incitement- few checks from judiciary even with minimal oversight by courts (Wakili et al, 2025). Extensive discretion has led to abuses of arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention, enforced disappearances and torture in a manner that violates Nigeria's international human rights obligations. This worsens the problem when there is no independent review body to review counter terrorism operations. Contrast this to states such as the United Kingdom with an Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation to examine whether human rights are being observed in the application of law for policing-terrorism-checking, or to be more precise. Because of this reason the vileness of the unrestrained discretion handed to security forces amounted to a state of affairs where counter-terrorism activity normally was a smokescreen for repression rather than an authentic course for stop terrorism (Antai et al, 2024).

Countering terror strategy being pursued by Nigeria has some major flaws and one of them is the over-militarization counter terror operation. The state leaned heavily on the military solution for insurgencies, particularly what is left of Boko Haram and ISWAP (north-east). Keeping the Nigerian Army, Joint Task Force (JTF) and other security agencies for internal security operations turned focus from policy all security-oriented with force-heated approach to the

exclusion of intelligence gathering, operations centring terrorism paradigm-mindedness. The military utilization in lieu of that is unbelievable crimes against humanity including extrajudicial killings indiscriminate bombing, mass evacuation of civilians and mass arrest and detention without legal warrant (Aidonjio et al, 2024). Various international human rights bodies, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported cases of security forces used against terrorism committing atrocity war crimes on civilians. See for example the 2015 massacre at Zaria where hundreds of members of Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) were massacred by Nigerian Army. It is an unambiguous signal of how dangerous our reliance on the military is to fighting terrorism. The failure to use non-military efforts (e.g. mega deradicalization programs community outreach initiatives, socio-economic initiatives etc.) opened the door for mass revenge and revenge to erupt between affected communities 40 creating an easy soft entry point for terror orgs to recruit souls.

Instead of militarization, lack of accountability and judicial oversight of Nigeria counter-terrorism operations is a major root in the failure to secure balance between security and human right achievement (Aidonjio et al, 2024). Some of the Counter-terrorism operations are done in shadows no information at all, whether arrests, detentions and prosecution of terrorists. The use of secret military detention centres including notorious Giwa Barracks, where abusers will have tortured and arbitrarily executed their own detention prisoners is a clear pointer that there are no checks and balances in Nigeria counter-terrorism system. The judiciary has also not provided adequate assurance for a fair trial for terror suspects. Most detained suspects remain detained for years on end, and those on trial experience trials devoid of due process and international standards for a fair trial. Lack of effective oversight through the judiciary on counter-terrorism cases has promoted a culture of impunity where security agencies have no second thought regarding involvement in human rights abuse with a hope that they will not end up on the receiving end (Umo et al, 2024).

Furthermore, prohibition of such organizations as the IPOB through anti-terror legislation is questionable on the basis that such measures against terror are being abused for politically motivated repression. Although IPOB operations have been contentious, the decision on the part of the government to declare the group a terror organization with no noticeable evidence of continued terror operations has fuelled accusations that Nigeria's anti-terrorism legislation is being politicized for politically motivated oppression rather

than addressing real security threats. Such unmoored utilization of antiterror laws erodes confidence on the part of the citizenry in the judicial process and establishes a dangerous template whereby the government can criminalize opposition for the sake of national security (Ogu et al, 2024). Loopholes and deficiencies in Nigeria's anti-terrorist legislation indicate reforms involving more legal protections, independent oversight, and a balanced policy against terrorism that is human rights-sensitive. In the absence of such reforms, Nigeria will be left with a policy against terrorism that not only infringes on fundamental freedom but also one that cannot successfully combat terrorism in the long run. The government will need to employ people-oriented, transparent, and accountable mechanisms against the causes of terrorism but not at the cost of rights and freedom (Chinweze et al, 2024).

5. Recommendations

To properly balance human rights and national security within Nigeria's antiterrorism framework, various policy reforms and measures should be on board. It is imperative that measures to improve security are followed by a human rights protections bill of antiterrorism policy in order of enhancing security does not infringe on basic rights. Re-from the Nigerian government: re-write Terrorism (Prevention) act making obligation and discernible safeguards in it to curb extrajudicial killing, torture, arbitrary arrest etc. Human rights training should be made mandatory for all security personnel involved in antiterrorism operations, with a focus on compliance with international rights and humanitarian laws. The government must likewise set up human rights monitoring bodies with the required power to check on the conduct of terrorism operations for respect to legal safeguards, including human rights abuse occasioned (Antai and Aidonjio, 2024).

We need to safeguard the judicial checks on the activities of security agencies and their accountability so that terrorism laws are not employed in making human rights violations and political persecution. The judiciary must continue with oversight on counterterrorist operations but also adjudicate cases against security agents for human rights violation. Special courts to try terrorism suspects with judges that know more on security and human rights law would enhance procedure quality as well as get more terrorism trials done in a realistic time frame. Similarly, extending the functions of National Human Rights Commission along with granting powers to prosecute security officials for abuse will eliminate impunity. And legislation should also be enacted to help

safeguard whistleblowers from travel safety treatment following security agencies suing them for the abuse.

Terrorism counter-measures need to be reformed within detention policy and intelligence for efficacy as well as the rule of law. Wholesale detentions for great lengths in Nigeria must be supplanted by a strategy driven on the basis of intelligence to the extent feasible, and not on indiscriminate sweeps. These include very strong safeguards in place for the detentions of terror suspects such as limits to pre-Trial Detention and Right to Counsel. It is thus necessary to create Autonomous oversight agencies for detention centres around the world, and freeing properly humanely treated prisoners according to international human rights standards. In addition, the security agencies need modern methods of intelligence collected which will be as technology-, data-, and people based as possible and not force- and coercion-based.

Increased compliance with international human rights norms is central to Nigeria being capable of upgrading its system on countering terrorism to international best practice. Domestication of international treaty obligations through instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights must be evidenced through action on the part of the Nigerian state. Periodic review by international human rights institutions must also be embraced, and their recommendations integrated into policy action. Nigeria must also engage with regional and international actors towards the adoption of counterterrorism frameworks balancing security with core rights through learning from states that have been successful in adopting human rights-based practices (Agboti et al, 2024).

Transparency on such countering terrorism, such as through reporting on arrests, detention, and military operations, would also engender greater confidence among citizens and evidence compliance on the part of the state with accountability. These suggestions, if acted on, will not only consolidate Nigeria's security infrastructure but also make certain that antiterrorism operations do not breach fundamental human rights. It is only through a well-balanced strategy that includes the rule of law, human rights, and intersectoral confidence that lasting stability and effective antiterrorism will ever be achieved (Antai et al, 2024).

6. Conclusion

Nigeria's legal countering-terror framework is thus challenged with finding a balance among security interests and protection of human rights. The research

finding is that as much as Nigeria's terror legislation, especially the Terrorism (Prevention) Act, are directed at curbing the growing spectre of terror, they will shortchange universal human rights standards. Counter-terror militarization, secrecy, and loose legal protections have all contributed toward entrenchment of widespread human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killing, torture, arbitrary detention, and political repression. Case studies on the Zaria Massacre, handling of IPOB, and reports from international human rights agencies further act as a testament toward highlighting reforms. Comparative analysis on best practices on a global scale, for example, with U.S. Patriot Act, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act for the United Kingdom, as well as best practices on a continental African scale, for example, South Africa and Kenya, establish that Nigeria can enhance its security regime at a cost not necessarily needing fundamental freedoms.

It calls for a fundamental shift of Nigeria's anti-terrorism approach into a sustainable balance of human rights and national security. It calls for reforms in law and institution for institutionalizing human rights safeguards, judicial oversight, and accountability of security agencies. The judicial review procedures have to be strengthened against arbitrary use against opposition politicians and activists. The detention policy also has to be revamped for ensuring fair trial rights, halting indefinite detention for non-prosecution, and abolishing torture as a tool for interrogation. Intelligence-based strategy for security agencies have to minimize coercive force and focus on precision, not on mass detention. Nigeria must demonstrate greater international human rights conformity as well through synthesis with international convention and best practices against terrorism at the policy level. There cannot be excess emphasis on calls for urgent legal and policy reforms on Nigeria's countering terrorism legislation. Democratic values, human dignity, and rule-of-law limitations on security agencies' operations, an institutionally engineered framework, are a sine qua non for stability that endures. Open and transparent countering terrorism not only maximizes national security but also enhances people's confidence, eschewing radicalization common with state oppression. Nigeria must move beyond a securitization approach and adopt a judiciously balanced approach that is consistent with its constitutional obligations and international obligations. By embracing these reforms, Nigeria will be countering-terrorism at minimal cost to citizen fundamental rights and freedoms and a rule-based and just society that enhances security alongside human dignity.

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Press Freedom and National Security: The Place of Human Rights in Nigeria's Cybercrime Laws

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Abstract. The study addresses the nexus of press, national security and human rights as found in Cybercrime (Mediation, Prevention, etc.) Law 2015, Nigeria. It delves into the experiences of Nigerian law against cybercrimes like cyberstalking, identity theft and online terrorism on freedom of expression and work of journalists. Even though the government justified the Act as a vital way to fight cyber terrorism and protect national security, critics have suggested its broad and vague provisions have been weaponized as one mechanism for the press freedoms and democracy rights. The research avertefully points out some provisions of the law, foremost among which one is section 24 of the Cybercrime (Mediation, Prevention, etc.) Law 2015, which talks about cyberstalking which can be used most by journalists/bloggers/activists who dare criticize government policy or expose corruption. It further examines the duty of courts, activists and international human rights norms in securing press freedom as well a reasonable response to genuine security concerns. Through a comparative study of Nigerian practices with other countries on the continent, including South Africa and Kenya, the research finds best practice in reconciling national security with press freedom. The study concludes by suggesting legislative reforms; judicial review of the discretion of police officers and an active civil society to ensure that cybercrime laws of Nigeria heed international human rights obligations whilst balancing press freedom in the digital age.

Keywords: Cybercrime, cyberstalking, online terrorism, press freedom

1. Introduction

The equilibrium between freedom of the press and national security has forever been the object of worldwide policy and legal discussion, more so in the era of the internet, where cybersecurity has been exploited by governments as the reason for the regulation of online expression (Antai, 2024). In Nigeria, the passing into law of the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015, was the biggest progression in the nation's regulatory policy toward tackling cyber-based crimes. Even though the law was mainly reserved for the prosecution of fraud-based cybercrimes like identity fraud and cyberterrorism, the application has raised fundamental concerns regarding what it portends for freedom of the press and human rights protection (Antai, 2024). Criminalization of expression on the Internet by using laws amounting to cyberstalking, doctored information, and online intimidation has attracted criticism for government intrusiveness and silencing critical voices like journalists, bloggers, and civil society activists.

Freedom of the media constitutes one of the fundamental norms of democratic government institutionalized in the Nigerian Constitution and reaffirmed by other international human rights charters, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which ensures freedom of the media operatives and journalists to report and inquire

about issues without undue hindrance and to disseminate information which are critical in fostering government accountability, transparency and engagement by the citizens in a democratic government (Budiyanto et al., 2024; Ikubanni et al., 2024). Nevertheless, in light of the new threats facing the nation such as cyberterrorism, disinformation and hate speech, the Nigerian government has found itself heavily reliant on repressive cybercrime laws to police the web content in the interest of national security (Edet et al., 2022). That has created the worry that the law has been utilized as a weapon for silencing opposition voices rather than combatting actual cyber threats.

An overriding issue of concern is the extent to which the cybercrime law of Nigeria squares with the international human rights law obligations of the state (Haruna et al., 2024; Ekpensisi et al., 2024). Proportionality of the limitation of freedom of expression is an established legal principle of human rights theory that requires that the limitation by the state is necessary, narrow, and not excessive. There have been numerous cases, however, of the arbitrary arrest and prosecution of journalists and activists under the Cybercrime Act for sharing critical news regarding government activities. Vagueness and generalised terms in clauses such as Section 24 on cyberstalking have been criticised as being politically inspired and open-ended. Consequently, there has been argument as to if the Act in the manner that has been published maintains the balance between combatting cyber threats and the protection of core freedom rights.

Aside from the law, the convergence between media freedom and national security in Nigeria reflects overall socio-political reality between government and the freedom of the media and the civic space. Political communication has been amplified by the presence of digital spaces, and government efforts towards regulating the online sphere have translated into repressive measures such as banning spaces on the social media, shutting down the internet, and increasing surveillance practices being employed as instruments of information control (Eboibi, 2018). The challenge is therefore how the constitutional and institutional framework evolves in order to balance the protection of national security and human rights without unnecessarily curtailing democratic freedom. Comparative lessons from other states and from the African continent in general provide useful lessons on the manner in which the competing interests are balanced by the state in ways that respect human rights norms. This research work critically examines the cybercrime law in Nigeria and the implications thereof

on the freedom of the press and the balancing act between human rights protection and national security (Safi' et al., 2024; Mukhlis et al., 2024). It also seeks to critically assess the justification for the current regulatory framework, review the human rights impacts of the application of cybercrime law and suggest law and policy recommendations towards the achievement of the balanced approach. Utilising the doctrinal research approach, the work will critically analyse the statutory provisions, the decisions of the courts and the international best practice towards determining the alignment or otherwise of the Nigerian cybercrime law with international norms on human rights. The work will contribute to the literature on digital rights, the freedom of the press and national security and provide practical input towards the reforming the law and the media campaign in Nigeria.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Apart from press freedom and human rights, national security are key constituents of the legal provisions on cybercrime in Nigeria. Press freedom is defined as the liberty of journalists, media professionals and citizens to disseminate information or ideas without censorship or interference. Press freedom is a pillar for fostering of democratic government; it makes possible transparency, accountability and participation by citizens (Antai et al., 2024). Under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), there includes a right to information and freedom of expression among others. Section 39 of the Constitution guarantees of this fundamental right. Moreover, international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) protect the natural right to press freedom. However, the right is not absolute and may be curtailed where enjoyment of such right is likely to cause harm to public order, morality or the national security.

National security, on the other hand, are the policies and actions taken worldwide by governments to protect the sovereignty, territorial sovereignty/regularity of its citizens from both internal and external threats (Mutawalli et al., 2024). Today, in the age of internet and cybersecurity which is inextricably linked to national security, various governments have enacted cybercrime legislations to counter those threats such as cyberterrorism, cyberfraud, mis-information and cyberespionage. These interventions are usually being rationalized as need-your-stability-and-or-some-compromise-of-security-out-of-the-way types, but at the same time might well be an instrument in whose name arbitrary

state control is then exercised infringing fundamental rights and freedoms (Kisubi et al, 2024). The Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention etc) Act, 2015 was enacted to control cybercrime in Nigeria but pros and cons had been widely debated over various provisions used, especially those relating to cyberstalking, hate speech, fake news. Application of the law against journalists, bloggers, and activists has reinforced the apprehension that national security is being used as a tool in order to muzzle the media and shrink civic space (Aidonjio et al, 2024).

Human rights as a global norm and a moral principle provides the benchmark against which domestic legislation on national security, including cybercrime law, must be measured. Human rights law's 'Proportionality Principle' provides that any restriction on the enjoyment of basic rights like freedom of the press must be necessary, lawful, and proportionate to the legitimate purpose being pursued (Nwabueze, 1999). Nigeria's ratification into international law by the African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights rearticulates the principle by avowing that states must ensure that the restrictions on rights should not weaken the essential object. The tension between the interest of the state in national security and protection of human rights raises basic questions regarding whether Nigeria's cybercrime law accords with these international norms or if the law itself constitutes repressive means (Antai, 2024).

This study takes theoretical inspiration from three political and legal theories. Firstly, the *Liberal Democratic Theory*, which highlights the significance of freedom of the press as being one of the inherent rights necessary for the operation of democratic states. It assumes that the free press is the watchdog that keeps the government from becoming excessive and that the same is necessary for an informed citizenry. From the view of this theory, laws that unnecessarily restrict the freedom of the press are undemocratic and should be subject to strict judicial and parliamentary review (Osibanjo & Fogan, 1991). Secondly, the National Security Doctrine presents the other view where the necessity of states adopting strict measures towards safeguarding national interests even if that involves restricting certain rights is highlighted. Proponents of this theory assume that the threats presented by the cyber world require strict legal regimes to manage the net and neutralize the rising threats to security (Aidonjio, 2023; Aidonjio et al., 2022). Critics argue that national security is being used as an excuse to justify the abuse of human rights and thus create a "securitization" of the law that disproportionately targets political opposition members, journalists, and activists (Anifowose et al, 2024).

The third theoretical framework applicable includes the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) that prioritizes the balance between the demand for security and the protection of basic freedoms. According to this theory, the limitation that is reasonable in the national interest for the purpose of national security should also meet international human rights standards and not be applied arbitrarily. The approach encourages strict judicial review, reform through the law-making process, and adherence to international human rights treaties in order to prevent abuse of the law of cybercrime (Aidonjio et al., 2021; Aidonjio & Victoria, 2022). The application of the approach to the Nigerian case sheds light on the gap in the Nigerian law on cybercrime, that on the overly wide and vague provisions that facilitate selective application against opposition voices (Ogunwole, 2015). This study in investigating the conflict between press freedom, national security, and human rights in the Nigerian cybercrime law will adopt these theoretical foundations to critically examine the degree that the constitutional framework regulating online expression is compliant with democratic ideals. It will also examine the manners that international best practice must inform constitutional reforms to ensure that cybersecurity measures are not used as tools of suppression of fundamental rights. It will make contributions to ongoing debates on law and policy by offering insights on the manners that Nigeria can develop a balanced system that effectively counters cyber threats without encroaching on the constitutional and international commitment to the safeguard of press freedom and human rights.

3. Literature review

The argument around freedom of the press, national security, and human rights in the cybercrime legislations has garnered considerable scholarly attention, where the views are divided on the degree to which national security concerns are adequate reasons for the restriction of online speech. For example, Obebe (2017) believes that freedom of the press is essential for democratic governance since it provides transparency, public accountability, and an enlightened citizenry. He maintains that any legislation for the regulation of the press has to meet international and constitutional standards of human rights. However, in Nigeria, the application of the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015, is of concern regarding the possibility that the law can muffle free speech, particularly on the internet. That the law does so receives affirmation from Lawal-Arowolo (2021), who indicates that the law against cybercrime has disproportionately been applied

against journalists, bloggers, and critics who are activists. In his narrative, there are cases where one is arrested and taken to court for the posting of critical opinions online, an inference that the law is being employed as tool of oppression instead of being used as a tool for the prevention of cybercrime.

Other experts are more security-conscious in the sense that they demand the need to take charge of the online platforms so that cyberterrorism, hate speech, and disinformation are maintained at zero levels. For Adetayo (2021), the online platforms have proved themselves as effective mediums for disinformation that will lead to violence, complicate national security, and destroy the public's confidence in institutions. In his opinion, if no strict legal intervention was made, the cyberspace would become the weapon that would fight the state and the strict provisions of the Cybercrime Act would become necessary. Ekpenisi et al (2024) noted that cybersecurity law performs the critical function that inhibits digital threats that have the potential of sabotaging national governance institutions. They, nonetheless, admit that the catch is that the law must not cross the line by criminalizing genuine dissent and investigative journalism.

There exists growing scholarship that has examined the nexus between human rights and the law of cybersecurity, the doctrine of proportionality in limiting freedom of expression being one. According to Akpanke et al (2022), any limitation on the freedom of the press on the pretext of national security has to be necessary, lawful, and proportionate. They criticize loose and imprecise wordings in certain provisions within the Nigerian Act on Cybercrime, notably the ones on cyberstalking and giving out false information, which in his view open up avenues for the arbitrariness in the enforcement and application thereof. Okeke (2022) writes about the manner in which international instruments for human rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights being two examples thereof, and the International Covenant on the Right to Civil and Political Rights shield against the misuses of the law on cybersecurity. He makes the observation that despite Nigeria having acceded to the aforementioned treaties, the domestic juridical order does not necessarily give expression to the ideals found within these international instruments. In light of the large volume of scholarship on cybercrime law and the freedom of the press, there are still gaps in the literature (Aidonjio et al., 2020; Aidonjio & Francis, 2022). First, whereas numerous accounts have chronicled the problems created by Nigeria's Cybercrime Act, empirical work evaluating the direct effects of the law on journalists and the media are few.

Most analyses are theoretical ones, and few case analyses demonstrate the frequency at which the law has been deployed to stifle the freedom of the press. Secondly, whereas researchers have engaged in the lawfulness or otherwise of cybersecurity and the freedom of the press, there is little discussion about possible legal and policy changes that would harmonize national security interests and the protection of human rights. Little is said about the manner in which the balance between the two could be obtained. Thirdly, comparative reviews involving other jurisdictions are few. Whereas certain studies refer allusively to international human rights instruments, systematic comparative analyses on the manner in which other countries, notably in Africa, have tackled the problem of regulating the cyber activities while protecting the freedom of the press are few. Filling the gaps will give better insight into the manner in which Nigeria's cybercrime law infringes on the freedom of the press and human rights and provide tangible recommendations for policy and law changes (Aidonjio et al, 2024).

4. Legal Framework on Press Freedom and National Security in Nigeria

Nigeria's national freedom of the press and national security law draws lessons from national constitutional provisions and international law upholding the intrinsic right to freedom of expression. Freedom of the press as provided for in section 39 of the Constitution of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) guarantees no question. It states that all persons have the freedom to expression and hold opinions, the right to receive and communicate ideas with full freedom without interference by the state MPs system media enterprises. The constitutional provision recognizes the importance of the free press in democratic society and the contribution the free press makes towards transparency, government accountability and access by the public to information (Aidonjio et al, 2024). There does exist recognition by the same constitution of the limitations on the freedom of the press in the public interest in national security, public order, and morality. These have been the pretext for the passing into law and policy of the legislation regulating the operation of the media and curtailing the operation of the digital and conventional presses.

At the international level Nigeria has acceded to various treaties and conventions which protect freedom of expression. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 19 [everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression] including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information via any media and regardless of frontiers. Although, non-binding, the provisions of the UDHR shaped

international norms on human rights and subsequently enacted into law, notably by way of example: in its various provisions by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [1966]. Article 19 repeats the UDHR on freedom of expression, whereby it is subject to the condition that it may be restricted only in cases of national security, public order or morals. These limitations must, however, be proportionate and must not unduly stifle journalistic practice or free speech (Antai, 2024). The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted in 1981 and domesticated into Nigerian law provides under Article 9 that any person is entitled to receive information and hold and disseminate opinion subject to the laws. This is yet another regional document which just lays down on the table, Nigeria's commitment to freedom of press under international law and subject to law against arbitrariness in censorship of the media by any limitation declared acceptable by any laws in accordance to protect against it, but international and constitutional safeguards have not quenched the thirst for national security which sought to increase government control over the media, media sovereignty masking under the cover name of freedom (Aidonojie et al, 2024).

Aside these international and constitutional safeguards, national security has justified state hegemony over the media by claiming state security in the form of suppressing freedom of journalists. The National Broadcasting Commission Act is the main regulator for broadcast services in Nigeria. The NBC has been described as holding an enormous amount of power to license, monitor and fine broadcast stations because it miseducated and has been unfairly utilised in terms of how they have been made to suit politically driven fervour. A few stations have also had licenses revoked or been struck off for programmes that are contradicted by government accounts of events. Likewise, de-regulatory powers in Nigeria are conferred upon the Nigerian Communications Act that conferred them to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to regulate telecommunications which include Internet service providers. The NCC is accused of a periodic role in blocking online media access, and online platforms or services that are spoiling a website, which the government wants with digital freedom of the press. These regulatory frameworks illustrate the challenges of balancing national interest in security versus the protection of baseline human rights in the digital era (Majekodunmi et al, 2024).

Finally, under the law in Nigeria, both in the realm of national security and freedom of the press, there seem to be a bit of collage for its governance, with laws and

regulations being constantly enforced over varied timescales that do not fit within constitutional and international guarantees. National security is a valid interest, yet the expansive interpretation and enforcement of limiting legislation have resulted in censorship of the media, detention without charge of journalists, and contraction in the room for independent journalism. These circumstances necessitate the presence of a fairer normative framework that guarantees that steps taken in the interest of security do not transgress the constitutional right to freedom of expression. Legal reform aimed at the inclusion of explicit guarantees against misuses of the regulation of the press and the alignment of national security legislation into Nigeria's international human rights commitments would address this (Izevbuwa et al, 2024).

5. Examination of Nigeria's Cybercrime Laws

Nigeria's Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015, was signed into law in order to curb the rising threats posed by Internet-based crimes like fraud, stealing of identities, cyberterrorism, and hacking. While the law aimed at increasing national security and protecting citizens from Internet-based threats, the provisions in the law have stirred up alarm among the media and human rights. Some provisions in the Act have been criticized for having been used to stifle critical writing, silence opposition views, and roll back digital rights. Ambiguously worded and sweeping provisions in the law have been misused on multiple occasions by the agents of the state against journalists, bloggers, and activists who publish government abuse or post opposition views on the Internet (Antai, 2024).

Perhaps, the most problematic portion of the Act is Section 24 that makes cyberstalking a crime. Under the said section, the sending by means of electronic communication; "grossly offensive", "indecent", "obscene" or "menacing" communication with the intent of annoying or inconveniencing or criminally intimidating any person has been made punishable. While the purpose behind the provision is the prohibition of online abuse and harassment, the said provision has been faulted on the ground that the terms are ambiguous and open-ended and are subject to selective application and enforcement. Several journalists and bloggers have been arrested and prosecuted using this provision for writing critical posts or tweets about government policy or for revealing corruption. This chill to online expression has made several bloggers and journalists feel the need to self-censor out of fear to be prosecuted with no

definition on what would be termed as "offensive" or "menacing" communication (Kisubi et al, 2024).

Further on cyberstalking, the Act contains some provisions against the circulation of false information and hate speech. The fight against misinformation is to be applauded, but the all-encompassing nature of this law invites misuse. Some critics complained that the government militarized the provisions to censor critical voices with an excuse of denying the means of falsehood dissemination (Aidonjio et al, 2024). No guidelines on what is termed as misinformation or even an objective news report have resulted in people being arrested and prosecuted for their politically critical posts. Journalists, too have been more assiduous in their self-censorship to avoid being criminalised at the hands of a prosecution, limiting the very role of media in holding governance accountable.

A major problem raised by the Cybercrime Act is the implications of it for digital privacy and surveillance. The law provides the spy agencies an unbridled power to bug electronic communications, monitor trace data and private information with non-nix adjustment for judicial scrutiny. These provisions have further emboldened the surveillance on journalists, activists and opposition politicians with more fear of curtailing digital rights along with freedom of speech. The possibility of authorities eavesdropping online communication was further magnified through intimidation and threats, which in turn confined the space for independent, unbiased media. Ambiguous assurances of government overreach have also primed fear that national security has been repackaged as the cloak for a top-down authorization of mass surveillance and totalitarian repression (Antai et al, 2024). The arrest and prosecution under Nigeria's cybercrime law have been done on reports from journalists, bloggers and activists on social media. There are many other examples of how the law was used to suppress critics. This includes the arrest of journalist Agba Jalingo in 2019 for publishing a case on misappropriation by Cross River state government funds. The writer, Jalingo spent several months in detention without bail as he was tried under the Cybercrime Act where he had refused to name his sources and published police abuse stories. An example on this also includes the 2018 arrest of investigative journalist Samuel Ogunipe who was arrested for not disclosing his sources when filing an article exposing police bullying (Jufri et al., 2024; Haruna et al., 2024). It shows just a small few ways in which you can be turned into an outlaw for investigating what the government is doing through cybercrime law.

Independent journalists are by no means the only ones to have been caught up in the law, digital news media and civil society that participate in digital activism have been persecuted as well (Aidonjio et al., 2025). National authorities have also, on numerous occasions, ordered the closure of access to news websites that are critical of the government by the internet service providers, and the security agencies have also stormed the office buildings of the media outlets in the guise of investigating cybercrime. Political bloggers and influencers on the social media have also faced growing scrutiny, and most of them have been arrested or driven into exile in order to escape persecution. Overall, the result has been the contraction of civic digital space that hampers the freedom of citizens in engaging in public discourse for fear of being persecuted by the government (Okpong & Antai, 2024). In general terms, while Nigeria's Cybercrime Act came into effect to address genuine cybersecurity issues, the enforcement of the law created serious human rights and freedom-of-press issues. Vagaries in the law's loose and sweeping provisions have been misused by the government in stifling critical voices, curbing digital expression, and silencing dissent. Widespread use of cybercrime law against journalists and activists emphasizes the urgent need for reforming the law balancing national security and the protection of basic human rights. Lacking clear protection measures and judicial intervention, the continued use of such a law threatens democratic values and Nigeria's commitment towards freedom-of-press and the protection of digital rights (Antai et al, 2024).

6. National Security Justifications vs. Human Rights Concerns

The Nigerian government justifies its cybercrime laws as justified measures in protecting national security, neutralization of cyber threats, prevention of the propagation of misinformation, and upholding public order. Government authorities argue that in today's age of digital communication and the prevalence of the internet, the threats posed by cyber-enabled crimes such as terrorism, fraudulence, and the propagation of misinformation have increased (Wakili et al, 2024). The Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015, is therefore justified as legislation that will neutralize such threats by criminalizing activities such as cyberstalking, cyberterrorism, fraud by pretence or by using the person's private life or image, or sending mischievous information. The government therefore believes that the above regulations are meant to prevent the use of online spaces for the dissemination of hate speech that promotes violence, causing the government instability or the propagation of propaganda that will lead to national instability. The

government also argues that cyber laws are crucial in maintaining that online spaces are not places for hate speech, recruitment by extremists or money crimes that will have catastrophic national security implications (Antai et al, 2024).

However, critics argue that the Nigerian cybercrime law has been employed as a tool against journalists, activists, and opposition voices. The very wide and loose provisions of the Cybercrime Act, most notably Section 24 on cyberstalking, have been applied against persons who post critical opinions about government officers or institutions. Arresting journalists, bloggers, and influencers on the web for alleged cybercrimes has attracted the issue of abuse of the law. In most instances, what often turns out is that the individuals prosecuted using these provisions are the ones that expose corruption, lay bare human rights abuses, or engage in investigative work that dares challenge the government. That mode of enforcement means that the cybercrime law is being utilized more in silencing opposition than in the actual tackling of cybercrime. Squeezing out the freedom of the press in the name of national security also finds expression in the shutting down the web, tapping into the web, and the censorship of the web. Not only do such actions consolidate undemocratic rule, but they also amount to the abuse of Nigeria's obligations in international human rights instruments that guarantee the right to freedom of expression (Umo et al, 2024).

A comparative analysis between South Africa and Kenya provides useful lessons on the tightrope that other African states are balancing between national security and freedom of the press within their cybercrime law. Hacking, interference with data and malicious communications are cybercrimes under the Cybercrimes Act, 2020 of South Africa. The law is intended to control misuse, threats to national security online and South Africa holds a stronger provision of freedom of speech in its law. The judiciary in South Africa is also interpreting the constitution to mean that its country's cybercrime law cannot be used to prosecute journalists and critics, undeterred by the term "law". It was also lambasted in Kenya, for example the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, 2018 begun causing controversy once many saw it coming to oppress. Kenya courts more proactive in ruling laws unconstitutional viz-a-vie as they applied criminal laws to media work that involved good-faith. Courts have intervened to ensure that national security interest does not come at the cost of the basic human rights (Aidonjio et al, 2024).

Balancing national security, and freedom of press in a healthy way by looking into best practices. For one,

cybercrime legislation defines certain terms and protects journalists, as well as advocacy groups. Laws need to distinguish between true cyber threats and the acts of dissenting opinion speech as to control free press does not mean that avenue will get waylaid in favour of national security. Secondly, we require assurances that judicial control be independent against arbitrary application of cyber law. We need courts to check and balance the powers that rule because, in order for freedom of expression to be safe in the constitutional/international human right standards, the power needs to be constrained. Finally, regulators and enforcement must be transparent. This would mean governments should have completely separate (and independent) courts for cybercrime-focused prosecutions, not to prevent prosecution based on political motivations. Fourthly, open dialogue between policymakers, journalists and human rights activists contribute to creating well-balanced legislation which takes into account the need in security without cost on human rights. Reforming the cybercrime law in a manner that it does not become a best practices law in Nigeria by the way has to do with making room for democratic values, international human rights standards and independence of press (Aidonjio et al, 2024).

7. Reconciling Press Freedom, National Security, and Human Rights

In Nigeria, safe national security, human rights and a free press calls for legislative changes. It also calls for judicial review, and civil society activism added with global good practices. The existing Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention and Registration of Electronic Document) Act, 2015 is almost blanket and vague enough in Nigeria for the government to prosecute freedom of press. Law reform is paramount in this aspect, so that cybercrime laws do not encroach upon constitutional rights. The provisions of proposed Cybercrime Act, which make the decent journalism practiced without any assault on fundamental rights is one criminal offence (essentially aimed at journalists) and uncertain net communication bans must be rewritten in the context of New South Wales. Certain provisions, for example Section 24 which deals with cyberstalking needs to be reformed to define the thin line between threats on the net (endangering someone life) and free criticism (Aidonjio et al., 2023; Aidonjio et al., 2024). There are also other things that the law needs to specify more clearly with regard to offences so it does not leave open indiscriminate application, or canned cases driven by political strings. Protective provisions must also be enshrined in law to ensure that people and journalists are not arbitrarily arrested, detained or spied on under the veil of security

measures reform must institutionalize (Ogu et al, 2024).

Also, there should be increased judicial oversight on whether the cybercrime law would be implemented in a manner that it should not become means for the censorship. The courts in Nigeria must continue to be on the tiptop of her crown in maintaining oversight over cases involving bloggers, journalists or activists prosecuted under the Cybercrime Act. In terms of judicial interpretation, it should be done in a manner so that freedom of press and free speech assurances under the law are strengthened. Allowing special benches in courts for hearing nexus to cybercrimes cases concerning freedom of press can also serve as a higher order protection against abuse by the administration (Anani et al., 2023; Zaman et al., 2024). The courts further need to make sure that national security-based prosecutions are based on substantial evidence and are not becoming a tool for the suppression of opposition. Judicial precedent for laws on defence of online rights should be actively laid down, making itself through with an example like law enforcement training where the aim is to create optimum synergy between security operatives and commitment to respect of human rights (Chinweze et al, 2024).

Civil society and media activism have the crucial role of holding the government accountable for government actions under the use of cybercrime. Human rights organizations, civil society actors, and media organizations must maintain the pressure on the misuse of cybercrime law through awareness campaigns, strategic litigation, and parliamentary activism. Newsrooms and reporters must organize themselves into coalitions in an effort to pressure government misuses and promote digital rights. Legal remedy training and digital protection protocols training for the media would empower reporters to endure oppressive cyber laws while minimizing risks. Civil society actors must also engage lawmakers in a bid to pressure for reforms that direct cybercrime law towards democratic values (Agboti et al, 2024). Harnessing digital platforms for campaign and mobilization would pressure policymakers into adopting more balanced cyber laws that ensure freedom of the press. Compliance with international best practice and Nigeria's international human rights commitments in human rights standards would be the better guarantor for providing freedom for the press in the police work on national security. Some have managed to develop cybercrime law that does not trade democratic rights. Nigeria may learn from South Africa and Kenya where the courts have invalidated expansive cybercrime provisions in order to protect

online expression. International human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights all emphasize the need for balancing the interests in security and the fundamental rights (Antai et al, 2024). As the signatory to the instruments, Nigeria owes itself the responsibility that the cybercrime law does not violate international obligations. By engaging the international human rights institutions such as the United Nations Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Nigeria may ensure that the regulations on the cyber are consistent with the best practices. Through reforming the law, empowerment of the judiciary and civil society and adherence to international standards, Nigeria may establish the law order that meets the challenge being posed by the cybersecurity without impairing the freedom of the media and the rights of individuals (Antai et al, 2024).

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article brings into perspective the fine balance between national security, freedom of the press, and human rights in Nigeria's cybercrime law. While the government's rationale for enacting the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015 in order to provide protection for national security and curtail the rising cyber threats may sound sensible, the excessively sweeping and ambiguous provisions in the law have created very serious concerns regarding the stifling of freedom of the press and the incursion into the cardinal human rights. Enforcement of the cybercrime law has in the main been used to victimize the journalists, activists, and opposition voices and taint the democratic heritage of Nigeria as well as international human rights commitments. Balance between national security and human rights, and indeed the right to freedom of expression, must receive utmost consideration as well as reform. The article also brings into perspective the imperative importance of judicial review, civil society activism, and compliance with international norms in ensuring that the fight against cybercrime does not translate into the sacrifice of democratic norms and individual rights.

Based on these discoveries, certain policy recommendations are made towards the development of a more just approach. First, legislative reform in Nigeria must retool the overly expansive and nebulous provisions in the Cybercrime Act that have the potential to encroach on the freedom of the press and target journalists. These must have very specific definitions and provisions that ensure against the

arbitrary enforcement of the law. Second, the judiciary must ensure that freedom of the press cases based on the cybercrime laws must go through rigorous scrutiny by the law. Constitutional protection must be enabled by the judiciary in order to prevent the manipulation of the laws for political or repressive motives. Third, the government must open up the government to engagement by the civil society, media community, and human rights institutions in order to ensure that the cybercrime law is in line with democratic values. Civil society must continue to pressure for the protection of digital rights and freedom of the press using the tools of lawsuits and public pressure in order to liberalize the restrictive legislation. Fourth, Nigeria must commit towards bringing the cybercrime laws into line with international good practices and norms on human rights and ensure compliance with treaties and standards such as the UDHR, ICCPR, and African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

This would enable Nigeria to have a legal system that would combat cybercrime while ensuring the protection of the citizens' unalienable rights above all the right to freedom of expression. That would be in the manner that would ensure the development of a better democracy where the issue of national security would not override the rights of citizens to express themselves and hold the government accountable.

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The Linger Legacy of Colonialism: The Case of Angola and its Post-Colonial Struggles

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Abstract. This article examines the impact of colonialism on Southern Africa, with a particular focus on Angola, a country once colonised by Portugal. The study traces the early amicable relationship between pre-colonial Angola and imperial Portugal, which later deteriorated into an exploitative and autocratic colonial regime. The article highlights the nature of the colonial conquest, the structure of Portuguese rule, the struggle for independence, and the resulting post-colonial dynamics. It argues that colonialism left a significant legacy, creating a power vacuum upon Portugal's abrupt departure and contributing to the ensuing civil war that devastated the country. The research further explores the destructive effects of colonial policies on Angola's social, political, and cultural fabric, and the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Despite the end of formal colonial rule, the paper contends that Angola, and Africa as a whole, must now confront and dismantle the lingering colonial mindset. The study concludes with a call for African nations to focus on internal development by promoting good governance, reinforcing the rule of law, and fostering accountability to ensure lasting progress.

Keywords: Colonialism, Angola, Post-Colonial Struggles, Independence Movements, Colonial Legacy

1. Introduction

The European exploration of Africa marked the start of a significant chapter in the continent's history, eventually leading to the slave trade. This trade represented the first major interaction between Africa and the West (McKay, 1963). With the decline of the slave trade in the 19th century, there arose a demand for legitimate trade, culminating in the European

scramble and partition of Africa. This event signified another phase of colonialism, during which European powers occupied Africa to maintain a fragile peace in Europe (McKay, 1963).

Colonialism, as defined by Brett (1973), is a system of governance where one group imposes its authority on another, creating a dynamic of dominance and dependency. This system subordinated the governed population to an imported culture in social, economic, and political domains. Notably, European colonialists employed both diplomatic and violent methods, including acts of genocide, to establish their rule. For instance, Germany has acknowledged its use of genocide during its occupation of Namibia (Steinhauser, 2021).

However, some scholars caution against viewing colonialism solely as a European phenomenon tied to Africa's partition, as other actors also engaged in colonial endeavors. For example, Ethiopia under Menelik II participated in colonial practices (Heldring & Robinson, 2012). Nevertheless, this study focuses specifically on European colonialism. Justifications for the colonial enterprise in Africa included the discovery of the New World, industrialization, the pursuit of prestige, claims of "civilizing" the continent, and the desire to trade surplus goods (Davidson, 1992; Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). The methods used to occupy and govern African nations encapsulate the essence of the colonial experience. As Boahen (1991, p.169) observed, "Of all the external traumas and influences that Africa has experienced—external invasions, the slave trade, Islam, and Christianity—none proved as superficially fleeting yet deeply transformative as European colonialism for Africa and Africans."

While scholars have extensively explored the impact of colonialism on regions such as Latin America (Tedesco & Barton, 2004), the study of southern Africa remains relatively underexplored. This region includes Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This paper focuses on the effects of colonialism in Angola, aiming to contribute to the growing body of literature on southern Africa. Although not exhaustive, this work provides insights into this under-examined area. This is germane as it underscores the impact of colonialism not just on Angola but the wider and larger post-colonial State. The paper is organised into six sections: an introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, the impact of colonialism on Angola, an analysis of colonial and post-colonial governance in Angola, and a conclusion.

2. Colonialism and Post-colonialism: Literature Review

Inyang and Bassey (2014) contended that treaties provided moral justification for the use of force, as the British made it standard practice to respond with military action to any violation of treaty terms. Furthermore, while some colonialists sought to subtly influence the cultural identities of their colonies, others outright imposed their own cultures. However, the process of treaty signing was not without resistance. Many African pre-colonial societies opposed early European overtures of friendship but were ultimately overpowered by superior European military forces, with Ethiopia standing as a notable exception (Boahen, 1991). Nevertheless, the European success in colonizing Africa had profound historical implications for the continent's future development and its subsequent relationship with the colonisers.

Rodney (1973) argued that Africa's pre-colonial era was marked by a vibrant and glorious past, which was disrupted by the arrival of Europeans. This encounter initiated a hostile period in Africa's history, contributing to the continent's underdevelopment. Similarly, Haq (1976) traced the roots of global inequality to historical events, particularly colonialism. He posited that colonialism deepened the divide between developed and developing nations by positioning wealthy Northern countries at the center of global economic activity and relegating poorer Southern countries to the periphery as raw material suppliers. According to Haq, these exploitative dynamics, manifested in economic dependence and intellectual subjugation, persist despite formal

decolonization. As Smith (2009) aptly observed that Britain's approach to spreading its culture was more pragmatic than its continental neighbors, as it preserved indigenous cultures and social structures when politically advantageous, while France and Portugal pursued assimilation, aiming to turn native peoples into Europeans, particularly through Western education, which influenced the development of areas where local elites aligned with European culture (2009, pp. 2-3).

Smith (2009) elaborated on the far-reaching effects of colonialism on both colonial and post-colonial states, highlighting its influence on areas such as national income levels, industrialization, economic integration, and human development, including education and health (2009, pp. 11–15). Supporting the argument about the developmental impact of colonialism on Africa, Ake (1996) emphasised that understanding Africa's current challenges requires a thorough examination of colonialism and its enduring political legacy. He argued that the stagnation or regression of African economies and enterprises stems from various interconnected factors. These include the colonial legacy, social pluralism and its divisive tendencies, corruption among leaders, poor labor discipline, insufficient entrepreneurial skills, ineffective planning and management, inappropriate policies, suppression of market mechanisms, low levels of technical assistance, and the limited flow of foreign capital (1996, p.1).

In addressing the impact of colonialism on the post-colonial state, Ake (1996) provided a clear and concise perspective on the enduring challenges it left behind:

Although political independence brought some change to the composition of the state managers, the character of the state remained much as it was in the colonial era. It continued to be totalistic in scope, constituting a statist economy. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority

Nwaura (2005) argues that Africa's current underdevelopment is a consequence of slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism. He identifies several barriers to development, including foreign investment, a lack of effective leadership, and insufficient capital. Similarly, Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012) highlight the visible impacts of colonialism on Africa, which include the underdevelopment of African territories, the disarticulation of African economies and markets, the premature integration of African markets into the global economy, urbanization patterns, and the emergence of class structures and struggles,

particularly among the petty bourgeoisie created by colonial powers.

A recurring theme in the literature is that while colonialism affected all aspects of African societies, its most profound and enduring consequences were economic, leaving a legacy of underdevelopment (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2018). Therefore, understanding the nature and effects of colonialism, particularly in the southern African sub-region, is crucial for comprehending its broader implications.

Machava and Pitcher (2017) identified armed struggles for independence, socialism, post-independence conflict, political instability, and authoritarianism as common features of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau since independence. In contrast, Botswana's colonial experience was minimal, as the British invested little in the region due to its perceived lack of profitability. Consequently, Botswana's post-colonial success has been attributed to light colonial rule, the harmonization of pre-colonial Tswana and modern institutions, and favorable post-independence policies (Beautlier, n.d.; Seidler, 2010).

For the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), colonialism under King Leopold II was marked by brutal exploitation disguised as international trade, leaving the nation with enduring poverty, identity crises, and conflicts (Mudane, 2017). Lesotho's colonial experience involved missionary-led "Christianity, Civilization, and Commerce" campaigns, followed by Dutch colonial policies akin to South Africa's apartheid system. This history fostered dependence on South Africa and violent indigenous resistance (Maliehe, 2014; Strom, 1986). Similarly, Madagascar's colonial legacy of French repression has influenced its political attitudes and behaviors (Garcia-Ponce & Wantchekon, 2018).

Malawi, formerly Nyasaland, saw British settlers promoting cash crops like cocoa and tobacco, leaving a legacy of economic dependency and civil conflict (McCracken, 2012; Pachai, 1974). In Mauritius, despite its high human development index, reliance on Britain and the West remains a significant post-colonial legacy, alongside a history of indentured slavery (Frankel, 2010; Allen, 1999). Namibia experienced German economic exploitation before falling under apartheid South African rule, which sparked violent resistance until independence in 1990 (Lechler & McNamee, 2018).

South Africa's colonialism was characterised by settler domination, systemic exploitation, and long-

lasting economic and social inequalities. The white-dominated economy contrasts sharply with marginalised black communities plagued by social issues, marking South Africa's colonialism as particularly distinctive (Oliver & Oliver, 2017). Zimbabwe faced similar British settler policies, including land acquisition and cheap black labor, sparking violent guerrilla resistance. Post-colonial challenges include corruption, ethnic intolerance, and authoritarianism (Mlambo, 2013). Zambia's colonial experience mirrored that of its southern neighbors, with exploitative rule and post-independence issues like corruption and autocracy under Kenneth Kaunda's leadership.

The South Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) is another legacy of colonialism, with its leadership often comprising elites shaped by colonial states. Vanheukelom and Bertelsmann-Scott (2016) revealed that approximately 79% of the SADC's budget comes from donor funding by foreign entities, including former colonial powers, thereby enabling neo-colonial influences to persist. According to Vanheukelom (2017), historical factors have profoundly shaped the institutional arrangements of SADC member states, with lingering ties to former colonial powers influencing the organization's development.

However, despite these insights, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding Angola's specific contributions and impact within the SADC, especially in contemporary times. While existing studies have explored the nature of colonialism across the region, there remains much to be uncovered about the nuanced impacts of both colonialism and post-colonialism in Angola. This suggests a need for further research to better understand Angola's role and the broader implications of colonial legacies in Southern Africa. In summary, colonialism's diverse manifestations across Southern Africa reveal common patterns of economic exploitation, cultural disruption, and violent resistance, with post-colonial legacies often marked by corruption, dependence, and socio-political challenges.

3. Theoretical Explanation

The paper adopts the Dependency Theory. Dependency theory emerged in the late 1950's in response to concerns of the gap between rich and poor countries (Agbebi & Virtanen, 2017) and that economic growth in the advanced industrialised countries did not lead to growth in the poorer countries (Ferraro 2008). However, it has been under debate since the 1960's. Based on these definitions,

“dependence” in the international system can be used as a measure for explaining global inequalities.

In order to adequately examine the usefulness of the concept of dependency theory for explaining global inequalities, this essay deals initially with some of the constraints of dependency theory and its problem of ethnocentrism and generalization (Farny, 2016). The main aim of the scholars has seemed to be to explain the cause and result of the dependent status of the global south in the international political and economic systems. In spite of its criticism on the basis of nomenclature, the relevance of dependency theory for understanding North-South and regional integration processes and their relation to global inequality becomes visible when examining the relationship between Angola and Portugal.

4. The Colonial Experiences of Angola

Angola's tropical climate supports diverse ecosystems, with oil palms and mangroves abundant along the coast as far south as Benguela. Archaeological evidence suggests that northern Angola was historically inhabited by hunter-gatherer groups. Today, the main ethnic groups include the Umbo, Kongo, Lunda-Chokwe, Mbundu, Mganguela, Nyaneka, Ovambo, and Ovimbundu, all of whom had well-organised societies before the onset of the transatlantic slave trade, which was heavily influenced by Portuguese involvement (Uwechue, 1991).

The Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão was the first European to encounter Angola's indigenous peoples during his late 15th-century quest for a route to India. Initial European-indigenous interactions escalated into conflict when the Portuguese sought to conquer Angola militarily, beginning in 1575 with the establishment of Luanda. By 1640, the Dutch briefly controlled parts of Angola, and by the Berlin Treaty of the 1880s, Portugal had solidified its control over most of the country.

The early 20th century witnessed fierce resistance from various ethnic groups. Significant uprisings included the Kongo revolt led by Alvaro Buta (1913–1915), the Mbundu's Dembos resistance, and the Ovimbundu's Bailundo revolt of 1902, one of the largest African revolts against colonial rule. Despite this resistance, the Portuguese colonial administration implemented forced labor and heavy taxation, offering minimal education and social benefits, apart from limited schooling by missionaries.

To stimulate its economy, Portugal expanded coffee and cotton cultivation for export and established

diamond mining operations. It also encouraged Portuguese migration to Angola. A decree in 1947 institutionalised a social hierarchy within the colonial state. Indigenous people aspiring to gain the status of *assimilado* (assimilated or "civilised" persons) were required to meet stringent criteria, including fluency in Portuguese, a clean police record, economic independence, and approval from the district governor. Those unable to meet these standards, termed *não assimilados* (unassimilated or "uncivilised" persons), were subject to forced or contract labor.

The colonial social structure was divided into three classes: natives, *assimilados*, and *mestizos* (people of mixed European and African heritage). This rigid hierarchy fostered systemic inequality, with lasting effects on Angola's social and economic landscape.

In 1951, Angola was officially declared an integral part of Portugal, and by 1952, the Portuguese government-initiated settlement projects known as *Colonato* programs (Uwechue, 1991). These policies, coupled with the socio-economic marginalization of the indigenous population, fueled the rise of nationalist struggles across Angola. Various social and political movements emerged to challenge the colonial administration and its discriminatory practices, including the Angolan Communist Party (PCA), Partido de Luta dos Africanos de Angola (PLAA), Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), União das Populações do Norte de Angola (UNPA), and União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA).

Due to colonial restrictions on social movements, many of these groups operated from outside Angola. Beyond their shared goal of ending colonial rule, internal divisions eventually led to infighting among these groups. The colonial government exploited these rifts, strategically positioning UNITA—a group it saw as a potential puppet successor—over the more prominent MPLA. However, international support from African nations like Nigeria and Namibia, as well as socialist allies such as Cuba and the USSR, undermined these plans and bolstered the MPLA's resistance.

On April 25, 1974, Portugal's Armed Forces Movement (MFA), weakened by its inability to win the colonial wars in Africa, staged a coup that overthrew the Portuguese government. By July of the same year, the MFA promised independence to Portugal's African colonies, including Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. In January 1975, the MPLA, UNITA, FNLA, and the Portuguese government signed the Alvor Accords, which recognised the legitimacy of these parties and

scheduled elections for a national assembly in October 1975.

On November 11, 1975, Angola was granted independence. However, the transition was far from harmonious. The MPLA declared independence in Luanda, the FNLA celebrated in São Salvador (Mbanza Kongo), and UNITA in Huambo. This fractured independence, combined with Portugal's lack of preparation to effectively relinquish power, created centrifugal forces and an anarchical post-independence state.

The seeds of discord sown during colonial rule quickly escalated into a protracted civil war immediately after independence. This war, marked by external intervention and ideological divides, would define Angola's political and social trajectory for decades (Ackesson, 2016).

Peace finally returned to Angola, but the toll of decades-long civil war was devastating. By the end of the 1992 war, over 600,000 people had been internally displaced, and countless thousands had lost their lives after more than 25 years of conflict. The war was accompanied by widespread atrocities, including rape,

starvation, genocide, and other crimes against humanity (Enor, 1994; Rosie, 2020).

When the civil war officially ended in 2002, Angola was left in ruins. The prolonged conflict between the two sides had ravaged the country for 27 years, resulting in an estimated 1.5 million deaths. Additionally, over 4 million people were internally displaced, while another 500,000 fled the country as refugees (Hanson, 2008). This tragic legacy underscored the severe human and economic costs of the war and left Angola facing immense challenges in rebuilding its society and infrastructure.

4.1 Impact of Colonialism on Angola

The impact of colonialism on Angola is enormous. This can be seen in all spheres of lives ranging from economic, social to political. In Angola, the colonisers took the natural resources from Angola and sold their products there, thus destroying indigenous local economy and entrepreneurship in the country. The significance of this is that such attempt prevented the development economy, over-reliance on petro-dollar economy and over-reliance on Portugal and the European Union as a whole for survival.

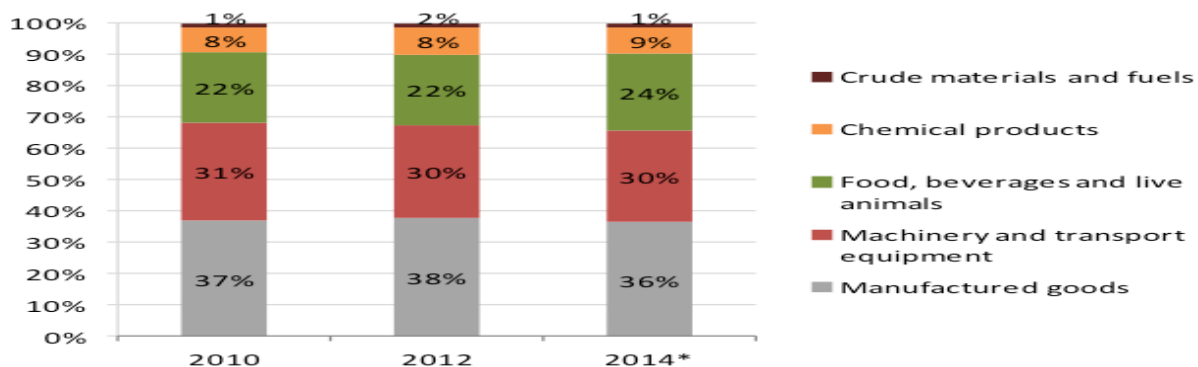
Table 1: Main Origin countries for Angolan Imports, 2010-2013

2010		2011		2012		2013	
Portugal	14%	Portugal	15%	Portugal	16%	Portugal	16%
Netherlands	10%	Netherland	13%	Singapore	11%	Singapore	13%
China	9%	Korea	11%	China	9%	China	10%
USA	7%	USA	8%	Netherland	8%	Korea	7%
Belgium	7%	China	8%	Belgium	7%	Belgium	5%

Source: National Bank of Angola in Fildago (2015)

Table 1 shows that Portugal was the consistent trading partner with Angola under the period of study. This volatility in the Angolan GDP growth reflects its extreme dependence on the oil sector. One of the main indicators of the influence of Portugal in Angola is the position of Portugal as the first origin country for Angolan imports. Portugal has ranked first since 2003 (the first year of the series from the National Bank of Angola), always with a significant lead over the other main origin countries.

Figure 1: Breakdown of Angola Imports from Portugal by Sector



Source: National Bank of Angola in Fildago (2015)

Portugal and the European Union (EU) are not only among Angola's primary trade partners but also some of its largest investors. This dynamic is rooted in the longstanding and close relationship Angola maintains with its former coloniser and the broader EU. This relationship has perpetuated a framework of economic dependency, often characterised as a master-servant dynamic.

On June 10, 2016, the EU signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the SADC EPA Group, which includes Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). While Angola has the option to join this agreement in the future, its current trade patterns align with the overarching framework of the EPA. This agreement facilitates the continued supply of primary products from Angola and other SADC countries to the EU, while finished goods flow back to the region from their former colonisers. As one report aptly describes it:

Other products from the region include agricultural products (beef from Botswana, fish from Namibia or sugar from Eswatini), oil from Angola or aluminum from Mozambique. South Africa's exports to the EU are much diversified and range from fruit to platinum and from manufactured goods to wine. The EU exports a wide range of goods to the Southern African Development Community EPA countries, including vehicles, machinery, electrical equipment, pharmaceuticals and processed food (European Commission, nd).

Despite efforts to reintegrate the sub-region and the broader African continent, the trade relationship between Angola and its sub-regional (Southern African Development Community, SADC) and regional (African Union, AU) bodies remains relatively insignificant compared to its relationship with its former coloniser, Portugal (Redvers, 2013). Additionally, although Angola is a member of the African Union, it only ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement in November 2020, highlighting a delayed commitment to regional economic integration. This delay reflects the complexities of Angola's economic and political alignment, especially in relation to its historical ties with Portugal.

Table 2: Number of Portuguese Companies Exporting to Angola

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Portuguese Companies exporting to ANgola	7,874	7,497	7,893	8,821	9,401

Source: Fildago (2015)

This dependency has resulted in Angola relying heavily on foreign expertise to enhance its industrial

and technical capacities. While Portugal remains Angola's largest trading partner, the country, like many African nations, has also sought stronger ties with China. Angola now benefits from favorable loan schemes and a significant influx of Chinese experts, particularly to address its infrastructural deficits. However, this growing reliance on foreign powers carries potential risks, including increased vulnerability to external influence, economic dependency, and the possibility of exploitation, which could undermine Angola's long-term self-sufficiency and sovereignty. As a critic warns:

The government will need to focus more attention on planning and organization to ensure the sustainability and transfer of know-how—or risk relying on the Portuguese and others returning in the near future to rebuild what the Chinese have just completed (Hanson, 2008).

The growing interdependence between Portugal and Angola, particularly in economic and political spheres, is undeniable. This relationship has extended to cultural aspects, such as religion, language, and migration patterns. While migration from former colonies to their colonisers is a common trend in post-colonial literature, Angola's migration pattern has been reversed since the end of the civil war in 2002. Rather than fostering the importation of jobs, foreign direct investment, and technological knowledge, this migration has created tensions as returnees, or *retornados*, now compete with locals for limited resources, including employment opportunities (Akesson, 2016; Waldorf, 2017). The returnees have also developed a sense of superiority, leading to disparities in pay, welfare, and working conditions between the Portuguese and Angolans, despite the latter's greater experience. For example, Akesson (2016) in her ethnographic study of an Angolan view of the disparity between Angolans and Portuguese as seen below:

The salary difference is considerable. They [the Portuguese managers] don't disclose their salaries, but we know. It is a discomfort. A foreigner without experience receives more than an Angolan with a lot of experience. I have 11 years of work experience and I earn US\$ 2,300 a month. A Portuguese with two or three years of experience earns US\$ 5,000 (Quoted in Akesson, 2016)

On the contrary, the Portuguese denied the claims made by the Angolans. In a discussion of the current Portuguese role in Angola, a young, highly skilled Portuguese argued:

We contribute to positive changes. If they close the border the country would collapse. The big problem in

Angola is primary education. Good schools can change societies. We can pass on a lot, help them structuring their minds. This is not a question of intelligence. There are different ways. But they are bad at synthesising, they are not pragmatic, they are enslaved by bureaucracy, and don't think. There is a lack of intellectual independence and structured thought (Quoted in Akesson, 2016).

The implication is that the *retornados* who come to Angola are not solely focused on contributing to the development of the host nation. Instead, their primary objective seems to be making money in Angola with the intention of eventually returning to Portugal. This dynamic contributes to capital flight, as the wealth generated in Angola is often transferred back to Portugal, rather than being reinvested into the Angolan economy or used to foster long-term development in the country. As an interviewee stated:

I have never met a 25-, 35-year-old here that wants to be here. All want to go back. They cope badly with the garbage and the traffic. Then there are racial clashes. The only reason they cope is because of the job, the money, the experiences they are getting here and how it affects their CV [becoming more competitive for the EU market]. None of my sons' colleagues and friends want to come to Africa, but there is no work in Europe (Quoted in Waldorff, 2017).

Colonialism in Angola also led to the establishment of a bonapartist state, where political leaders, primarily driven by the desire to control state resources, sought to either maintain their hold on power or transfer it to their descendants or an authoritarian successor who would serve their interests. In this system, state resources were appropriated and distributed among allies and adversaries alike, often to ensure loyalty and suppress opposition. Due to the tight control over economic resources by the political elite associated with the MPLA regime, the vast economic growth in the country did not benefit the majority of Angolans (Birmingham, 2015). For instance, in 2013, Isabel dos Santos, the daughter of President José Eduardo dos Santos, was estimated by *Forbes* Magazine to be the richest woman in Africa, while the average Angolan lived on less than \$2 a day (Forbes, 2015, p.226). Her wealth accumulation over her father's long reign reflected the extent of corruption and cronyism, as she became Africa's richest woman. According to a report:

In January, the Luanda leaks investigation revealed numerous schemes apparently used by Dos Santos and her husband to obtain Angolan state funds during her father's presidency. The revelations were based on a leak of 715,000 files obtained from administrators of the Dos Santos empire (Garside, 2020)

The question arises regarding the sincerity of former colonisers when large sums of money were being laundered into their countries. It is clear that the repatriation and seizure of such funds only occurred at the request of a new government, and the Portuguese government had little choice but to cooperate in order to maintain the long-standing, albeit unequal, master-slave relationship. Colonialism also fostered a form of international political patrimony, where agreements were not negotiated among fellow African nations but rather in the capital of the former coloniser, Portugal. For instance, the MPLA and UNITA leaders were forced to the negotiating table due to lack of international support, culminating in the Bicesse Accords signed in May 1991 in Portugal. Both parties agreed to demobilise their forces and hold elections the following year, a deal that ideally should have taken place within Angola or within the territory of any of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) or Southern African Development Community (SADC) members.

Additionally, colonialism created an avenue for elites to transfer state resources to foreign safe havens, usually in the former coloniser's territory, where the looted wealth is often secured unless demanded by a new government. This practice of looting further perpetuates dependency on the former coloniser. The lack of development within ex-colonies also led to the elites seeking medical treatment, leisure, and property in the former colonial powers. For example, President Dos Santos was known for regularly traveling to Spain for treatment during his reign (VoA, 2017). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Angola, like many other former colonies, had to rely on foreign partners for vaccines rather than developing indigenous solutions. The country was one of the first in the Eastern and Southern African bloc to receive the controversial AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine from the Serum Institute of India (WHO & UNICEF, 2021).

The deliberate underdevelopment of former colonies has made them increasingly dependent on the former colonisers for aid, thus reinforcing the political relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. In Angola's case, Portugal's increasing aid, given the country's structural challenges, was both understandable and strategic. The Indicative Cooperation Programmes (ICPs) saw Portuguese aid increase from EUR 13.262 million in 2001 to EUR 17.249 million in 2003. Portugal also implemented a multi-year framework for 2004–2006 with a total budget of EUR 42 million (Seabra & G o r j ã o, 2011), further cementing the ties between the two nations.

5. Colonial vs. Post-Colonial Angola: A Comparative Analysis of the Eras

This section seeks to address the crucial question: How did Angola fare during the colonial period compared to the post-colonial era? Did colonialism have a positive or negative impact on the country, especially in light of the foreign values introduced? As discussed earlier, colonialism in Angola brought about significant changes, but its long-term effects are more complex.

Heldring and Robinson (2013) argue that colonialism retarded development, especially in centralised pre-colonial states and those with white settlement. They emphasise that colonial rule often blocked political development in centralised pre-colonial states, and in places where indirect rule was implemented, local elites became less accountable to their people, adopting predatory behavior. In settler colonies, such as Angola, colonialism was highly extractive, leading to land grabs and exploitation.

Colonialism also altered the political landscape by creating a class of nationalist leaders who were often seen as pawns of colonial powers. For example, in Lusophone colonies, the elites were referred to as the “civilised,” and similar categories existed in other colonial contexts, such as the “évolués” in Belgian-controlled territories. These elites became entrenched in power, often repressive, dictatorial, and resistant to relinquishing authority, as seen in Angola, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, among others.

Additionally, the violent nature of colonial resistance had lasting impacts on inter-group relations, further exacerbated by the departure of colonial powers. In some Lusophone countries, the hasty departure left behind unprofessional military forces that failed to maintain stability, which was in contrast to what Huntington (1957) envisioned for post-colonial states. Angola, while not experiencing a wave of coups like other African nations, faced its own challenges with a corrupt military, involved in oil racketeering (Gavin, 2020). This contrasted sharply with the pre-colonial political systems, where leaders had more respect for traditional institutions.

Furthermore, colonialism shaped Angola's political economy to favor the needs of the colonisers, often at the expense of other vital sectors. The concentration of resources in a mono-economy, particularly in oil, led to the phenomenon known as the “Dutch disease.” This created an economic system heavily reliant on a single industry, and the political behavior that followed became more violent, with elites often justifying extreme measures to maintain control.

These patterns were learned from the colonial period, where power was centralised and the ends often justified the means.

In conclusion, colonialism left Angola with an entrenched elite, a distorted political economy, and a weakened state structure. While Angola has made progress since independence, the legacy of colonialism continues to shape the country's political, economic, and social dynamics.

6. Conclusion

This article explores the impact of colonialism on Southern Africa, with a particular focus on Angola, which was once a colony of Portugal. It delves into the nature of the conquest, the structure of colonial administration, the struggle for independence, and the ensuing post-colonial relationships. The study finds that the initial relationship between pre-colonial Angolan society and imperial Portugal was relatively amicable, but it eventually soured. The colonization, which involved force and exploitative policies, was autocratic, segregated, biased, and unequal. This provoked numerous anti-colonial movements, many of which resorted to violence. Under pressure, Portugal withdrew without transferring power to any of the political parties or nationalist groups.

The colonial legacy had a profound impact on the formation of the Angolan nation-state. It created a power vacuum that eventually led to civil war, resulting in loss of life, destruction of property, and the collapse of the few colonial infrastructure remnants. Additionally, the social, political, and cultural consequences of colonization deeply affected the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser, which was more asymmetrical than cooperative. Interestingly, this period also saw a reverse migration pattern, where the colonisers now migrated to the formerly colonised state, continuing the exploitation.

The paper suggests that while colonialism has ended, Africa—particularly Angola—must now look inward for solutions. It emphasises the need for African leaders to shed the colonial mindset and advocate for good governance, the rule of law, and accountability in order to assert the continent's independence and reinforce its development.

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Employee Retention Policy as HR Best Practice and Organisation Performance

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Abstract. This study examined the impact of employee retention policies as a human resource best practice on organizational performance, using the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) as a case study. The focus was on two key components of retention policies, including competitive compensation and benefits, and career succession development programs. Using Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of three hundred and sixty (366) was arrived out, however, on distribution of the research questionnaire only 360 was found usable for this study. Data was collected through structured questionnaires. The analysis utilized both descriptive statistics such as (frequency, mean, and percentage) and inferential statistics such as (regression analysis) to evaluate the relationships between various variables used. The findings revealed that competitive compensation significantly enhance organizational performance. Conversely, career succession development was found to have no significant effect. Based on these findings, the study recommends that improving compensation packages, while reevaluating and redesigning career development initiatives to support the achievements of organizational goals and also to meet employee expectations.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Organizational Performance, Competitive Compensation, Career Succession Development.

1. Introduction

The healthcare sector in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and a significant shortage of skilled healthcare professionals. According to the World Health Organization (2022), Nigeria has a physician-to-patient ratio of 4 per 10,000 people, significantly

lower than the recommended minimum of 1 per 1,000 people. This disparity underscores the critical need for effective Human Resource (HR) strategies to enhance organizational performance. Organizational performance, a multifaceted concept, encompasses efficiency, effectiveness, and the achievement of organizational goals (Aguinis, 2021). In the healthcare context, organizational performance is crucial as it directly impacts patient care quality, staff satisfaction, and overall operational performance and sustainability (Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola, & Heirmsmac, 2021). Enhanced performance within healthcare organizations leads to improved patient outcomes, reduced operational costs, and increased staff morale, ultimately contributing to the sector's sustainability and growth (Onyemечи, 2020). These highlight the significance of adopting best practices in HR, such as robust employee retention policies, to foster organizational performance in Nigeria's healthcare sector.

Employee retention policy, is defined as a strategic approach to maintaining a stable workforce by reducing turnover and fostering long-term employment relationships. (Oruh, Mordi, & Oke, 2022), has evolved from early 20th-century programs addressing industrial revolution turnover rates, initially focusing on financial incentives and job security (Cascio & Boudreau, 2020). Over time, retention strategies have broadened to include career development opportunities, work-life balance, and organizational culture (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2021). In today's competitive environment, the relevance of sophisticated retention policies has increased, addressing talent scarcity and enhancing employee engagement, loyalty, and productivity, thus contributing to improved

organizational performance (Deery & Jago, 2021; Kyndt, Dochy, Michiels, & Moeyaert, 2021).

There are various types of employee retention policies, essential for addressing workforce needs and organizational goals. This includes competitive compensation and benefits packages aimed at providing financial security and motivation (Trevor, Reilly, & Gerhart, 2020), career succession development programs for continuous learning and advancement (Tyman, Stumpf, & Smith, 2021), and work-life balance initiatives such as flexible hours and telecommuting (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2020). These policies are crucial for a comprehensive HR strategy to maintain a committed and productive workforce.

Employee turnover in the public sector healthcare system in Nigeria is alarmingly high, with significant implications for the quality and efficiency of healthcare services (Akinwale and George, 2020). The World Health Organization (2021) reports that Nigeria faces a critical shortage of healthcare workers, exacerbated by a high attrition rate. This troubling trend has prompted healthcare institutions to adopt various strategies aimed at improving employee retention. For instance, the implementation of comprehensive employee retention policies, such as competitive compensation and benefits packages, and career development and succession programs, has become increasingly prevalent as a means to mitigate turnover and enhance workforce stability (Eze, Okpala & Ezeanolue, 2018). Despite these efforts, the impact of such retention policies on overall organizational performance remains underexplored, particularly within the context of Nigeria's public healthcare sector.

Several studies have explored the relationship between employee retention policies and employee performance (Nwosu & Ogbuli, 2018), and employee retention (Alnaqbi, 2021; Samuel & Chipunza, 2019). These studies consistently underscore the positive effects of robust retention policies as a strategy for workers' job satisfaction, performance, and retention rates. However, there remains a notable gap in the literature concerning the healthcare sector, particularly in the Nigerian context. Thus, this paper addresses this gap by examining the effects of employee retention policies (competitive compensation and benefits packages, career development and succession programs) on the organizational performance of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organisational Performance

Kaplan and Norton (2019) describe organisational performance as the effectiveness with which an organisation meets its financial and operational goals through strategic alignment, reflecting its ability to achieve objectives efficiently. Dess and Lumpkin (2018) emphasized the need to assess both financial and non-financial outcomes, suggesting that performance encompasses profitability, innovation, and market share. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) argue that organisational performance should also consider employee engagement and stakeholder satisfaction as core metrics of success. Moreover, Richard (2018) views organisational performance as a multidimensional construct involving productivity, flexibility, and adaptability in the face of market dynamics.

Echoing similar sentiments, Oke, (2021) suggests that for organisations in developing economies like Nigeria, performance must account for socio-cultural and economic constraints, thus broadening the scope to include corporate social responsibility and local community impact. Similarly, Inuwa (2022) integrates organisational learning as a crucial determinant of performance, advocating for continuous improvement and innovation as essential drivers of sustainable growth. Despite these differing perspectives, all definitions highlight the holistic nature of organisational performance, encompassing financial outcomes, employee well-being, and broader societal impacts.

2.2 Employee Retention Policy

Employee retention policies have been conceptualized in diverse ways by various scholars, particularly within the context of human resource management (HRM). Employee retention policies generally refer to strategies or initiatives designed by organizations to reduce turnover and maintain a stable workforce. Akindele, (2020) defined employee retention policy as a comprehensive approach that organizations use to reduce employee turnover by ensuring satisfaction through improved work conditions and career development opportunities. Similarly, Uche, (2019) described it as a strategic process focusing on providing financial and non-financial rewards to retain employees. Aluko, (2021) expanded on this by emphasizing that retention policies are rooted in fostering strong employer-employee relationships to enhance loyalty. On another note, Ogundele and Obaje (2018) argue that retention policies are about aligning

organizational goals with employees' personal and career growth objectives. Likewise, Balogun (2022) highlighted that retention policies aim to maintain employee engagement by addressing key factors such as recognition, rewards, and flexible work conditions.

While these definitions vary in focus, they converge on the central idea that employee retention policy involves creating a conducive work environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and aligned with organizational objectives. Akinyemi (2021) integrates these perspectives by emphasizing the dual focus of retention policies on job satisfaction and long-term career growth within the organization, ensuring coherence between employee needs and organizational goals.

2.3 Competitive Compensation and Benefits Packages

Competitive compensation and benefits packages (CCBP) are critical for employee retention and organizational success, particularly within the healthcare sector. Different scholars have provided nuanced definitions of CCBP, emphasizing its importance in attracting and retaining talent. Armstrong (2019) describes it as the strategic provision of monetary and non-monetary rewards that are competitive within the labour market, aimed at motivating and retaining employees. Similarly, Dessler (2020) notes that competitive compensation refers to wages, benefits, and incentives that align with industry standards to attract top talent. This definition is echoed by Mondy (2021), who highlights that a well-structured compensation package includes both direct financial rewards and indirect benefits such as healthcare and retirement plans. Noe (2020) further elaborates that competitive packages must consider the employee's total well-being, including psychological and social needs.

Additionally, Martocchio (2022) argues that beyond monetary gains, employees often value flexibility and work-life balance as part of a competitive package. In a more sector-specific context, Olaniyan (2022) focuses on the healthcare industry, arguing that effective compensation systems are essential in retaining skilled professionals amidst the high turnover rates characteristic of this sector. Collectively, these definitions emphasize that competitive compensation packages encompass more than salary, integrating various benefits that appeal to employees' holistic needs and expectations.

2.4 Career Succession Development Programs

Career Succession Development Programs (CSDPs) have been defined in various ways by scholars, reflecting the evolving understanding of talent management and career progression within organizations. According to Adeoye (2021), CSDPs are structured frameworks designed to ensure the continuous identification, development, and retention of future leaders within an organization. Similarly, Akintayo (2019) defines CSDPs as systematic approaches aimed at preparing employees for key roles through training, mentoring, and hands-on experience. In the healthcare sector, Akinbode (2020) emphasizes that CSDPs involve the deliberate nurturing of talent pools to ensure sustainability in workforce leadership and operational efficiency. Ogbebor (2022) provides a more comprehensive definition by noting that these programs not only focus on leadership development but also ensure alignment with the organization's strategic objectives, thus creating a pathway for career advancement.

Expanding on this, Ibrahim (2021) posits that CSDPs are integral to mitigating the risks of talent loss by providing employees with clear career trajectories, which enhances retention. Lastly, Ogundipe (2023) highlights that CSDPs focus on identifying high-potential employees early in their careers and providing them with the resources to grow into critical organizational roles. Collectively, these definitions illustrate that CSDPs are not only about preparing employees for succession but also serve as a holistic mechanism for employee engagement, retention, and long-term organizational sustainability.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also referred to as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, was proposed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. Herzberg, an American psychologist, developed this theory to explain the factors that influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. His research identified two categories of factors that drive employee behaviour: motivators, which promote job satisfaction, and hygiene factors, whose absence causes job dissatisfaction but do not necessarily lead to satisfaction when present (Herzberg, 1959).

The theory has been widely applied across different industries and is often used in human resource practices to develop policies that improve employee motivation and retention (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Herzberg's emphasis on intrinsic motivators such as career development opportunities, recognition, and

achievement are particularly relevant for designing retention strategies that go beyond financial incentives (Onah & Anikwe, 2016). For instance, offering continuous professional development and opportunities for specialization could address motivational deficits and enhance employee satisfaction. Additionally, improving hygiene factors, such as increasing salaries, enhancing job security, and providing adequate healthcare infrastructure, may reduce dissatisfaction and thus curb high turnover rates (Ofili & Asuzu, 2020).

2.6 Empirical Review

Ugoani (2022) conducted a study titled employee retention strategies and organisational performance in the Nigerian Banking Sector. The research utilized a sample of 250 employees from five different commercial banks located in Lagos, Nigeria. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires, and analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis. The study revealed that competitive compensation, career development opportunities, and conducive working environments are significant factors that positively influence employee retention, which in turn improves organisational performance. The study recommended that banks invest in employee training programs and create a more inclusive work culture to enhance retention.

Okoye and Ezech (2021) examined the impact of training and development on employee retention and organisational performance in Nigerian SMEs." The study was conducted in Enugu State with a sample of 150 employees from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The researchers used descriptive statistics and regression analysis to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that continuous training and development programs significantly contribute to retaining employees, thereby improving overall organisational performance. The study recommended that SMEs in Nigeria prioritize training as a critical aspect of human resource management.

Nwosu and Kalu (2020) in their research titled effect of reward systems on employee retention and organisational performance in the Nigerian oil and gas sector, sampled 210 employees from oil companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using correlation and regression techniques. The study found that monetary and non-monetary rewards such as bonuses, promotions, and recognition programs significantly enhance employee retention, leading to better organisational performance. The researchers suggested that the oil and gas industry should develop

comprehensive reward systems that cater to both intrinsic and extrinsic employee needs.

Ibrahim and Yusuf (2019) conducted a study on employee retention and organisational performance: a study of multinational corporations in Nigeria. The study, which sampled 300 employees from multinational corporations in Lagos State, employed a survey method. Data were analysed using logistic regression analysis. The findings revealed that factors such as competitive salaries, international career opportunities, and diversity in the workplace positively influence employee retention, which in turn drives organisational performance. The researchers recommended that multinational corporations in Nigeria invest in competitive compensation packages and foster a diverse work environment to enhance retention.

3. Methodology

This section explains in details the research methodology adopted in concluding this research work.

Creswell (2014) described research design as the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the research problem. It is a framework that was created to find answers to research questions. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population is made up of employees of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The simple random sampling technique was employed because it is straightforward and affords every employee an equal chance of being selected. The population of the study, as retrieved from the Human Resource Department of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital was 4,250 (Human Resource Department, UBTH, 2024). The sample size of the study was obtained using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula which resulted in 366 respondents. Therefore, three hundred and sixty-six (366) copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to the respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire that was divided into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of respondents' personal data (such as sex, age, marital status, educational qualifications, and number of years in service), while Section B comprised questions on the independent variables (competitive compensation and career development programs), as well as questions regarding the dependent variable (organizational performance). All items were based on

the modified five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The nature of the study necessitated the use of primary data. The data were collected through the administration of questionnaires to employees of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. Data collected were analyzed using mean, percentages, standard deviation and regression analysis via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0.

Model Specification

The model adapted for this study explains the functional relationship between the dependent variable (organizational performance) and the explanatory variables (employee retention policies):

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CC + \beta_2 CDS + \varepsilon$$

4.1 Demographic Analysis

Gender, age, marital status, respondents' educational qualification and working tenure were all evaluated in the demography data.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S/N	Variables		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	161	44.7
		Female	199	55.3
		Total	360	100.0
2	Marital Status	Single	153	42.5
		Married	207	57.5
		Total	360	100.0
3	Age	22-26 years	58	16.1
		27-31years	66	18.4
		32years and above	236	65.6
		Total	360	100.0
4	Educational qualification	Diploma	-	-
		OND	4	1.1
		HND	99	27.5
		BSC	184	51.1
		Postgraduate Degree	62	17.3
		Others	11	3.1
		Total	360	100.0
5	Working Tenure	less than 5 years	205	56.9
		5-10years	92	25.6
		11years and above	63	17.5
		Total	360	100.0

Author's Compilation (2025)

Gender

In terms of the gender of the respondents, the above table shows that majority of the respondents were female. This category of respondents accounted for 199(55.3%) of the total respondents while 161(44.7%) were males.

Age

Where:

OP = Organizational Performance

CC = Competitive Compensation

CDS = Career Development and Succession Programs

β_0 = Constant (intercept term)

β_1, β_2 = Coefficients of the independent variables

ε = Error term representing unobserved factors affecting organizational performance

The a priori expectation is that Competitive Compensation (CC) and Career Development and Succession Programs (CDS) will have a positive effect on Organizational Performance (OP), implying that β_1 and $\beta_2, > 0$.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

A response rate of 98% was achieved as three hundred and sixty (360) responses were completely submitted by the respondents.

On the age range distribution of the respondents, table 4.1 indicates that most of the respondents were aged 32years and above. This category of respondents accounted for 236(65.6%) of the total respondents while 58(16.1%) were aged between 22-26years, and 66(18.4%) were aged between 27-31years.

Marital Status

On the marital status category, table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents were married. This category of respondents accounted for 207(57.5%) of the total respondents while 153(42.5%) were single.

Educational Qualification

On the category of educational qualification, table 4.1 indicates that majority of the respondents had B.SC qualification. This category accounted for 184(51.1%) of the total respondents while 4(1.1%) had OND qualification, 99(27.5%) had HND qualification, 62(17.3%) had post graduate qualification, and 11(3.1%) had other qualifications.

Working Tenure

On the issue of working tenure, Table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents have worked with the teaching hospital for less than 5 years. This category of respondents accounted for 205(56.9%) of the total respondents while 92(25.6%) of the respondents have worked with the teaching hospital for 5-10years, and 63(17.5%) have worked with the teaching hospital for 11 years and above.

Test of Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were tested utilising regression analysis in order to achieve the current study's objectives. The hypotheses were evaluated with an Alpha level of significance of 0.05 (Decision rule: computed level of significance <0.05, reject null hypothesis; computed level of significance >0.05, accept null hypothesis).

Table 4.2: Model Summary of Employee Retention Policy as HR Best Practice and Organisational Performance.

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.841 ^a	.708	.702	.41476	.708	118.240	5	354	.000	1.921

a. Predictors: (Constant), CC, CDS

b. Dependent Variable: ORGP

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The model summary in Table 4.9a shows that the predictors competitive compensation and benefits (CC) and career development and succession programs (CDS), collectively explain 70.8% of the variance in organizational performance (ORGP), as indicated by the R Square value of 0.708. The adjusted R Square value of 0.702 suggests that the model remains robust even after adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (0.41476) indicates the average deviation of observed values from the predicted values. The F-statistic (F Change = 118.240, $p < .001$) confirms that the model is statistically significant, demonstrating that the independent variables together significantly predict organizational performance. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.921) indicates that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, supporting the validity of the regression model. These findings highlight the critical role of HR best practices in enhancing organizational performance.

Table 4.3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Employee Retention Policy as HR Best Practice and Organisational Performance.

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.701	5	20.340	118.240	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.974	354	.172		
	Total	143.674	359			

a. Dependent Variable: ORGP

b. Predictors: (Constant), FCC, CDS, WLB, SWE, RS

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The ANOVA table in Table 4.9b explains a significant portion of the variance in organizational performance, with a regression sum of squares (SS) of 101.701 compared to a residual sum of squares (SS) of 41.974. The F-statistic of 118.240, with 5 degrees of freedom for the regression and 354 degrees of freedom for the residual, is highly significant ($p < .001$). This confirms that the combined effect of the predictors is statistically significant in explaining variations in organizational performance. These findings underscore the importance of HR best practices in driving organizational success.

Table 4.4: Regression Output of Employee Retention Policy as HR Best Practice and Organisational Performance.

Regression Output

Coefficients ^a									
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-.064	.210		-.305	.760	-.478	.350		
CC	.362	.076	.327	4.757	.000	.212	.512	.254	3.940
CDS	-.024	.062	-.014	-.380	.705	-.098	.145	.834	1.199

a. Dependent Variable: ORGP

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The unstandardized coefficients (B) indicate that CC ($B = .362$, $p < .001$) have statistically significant positive effects on ORGP, with RS showing the strongest impact (standardized Beta = .368). In contrast, CDS ($B = -.024$, $p = .705$) is not statistically significant predictors of ORGP, as their p-values exceed the significance threshold ($p > .05$). The variance inflation factors (VIF) for all predictors are below 10, indicating that multicollinearity is not a major issue. Competitive compensation is found to be a key driver of organizational performance, while career development has minimal direct impact in this model.

Hypothesis I: Competitive compensation and benefits packages have no significant impact on the organizational performance of UBTH.

The regression output shows that competitive compensation and benefits (FCC) have a significant positive impact on organizational performance, with a coefficient of $B = .362$ and a p-value of .000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating that competitive compensation and benefits packages significantly influence the organizational performance of UBTH.

Hypothesis II: Career succession development programs have no significant effect on the organizational performance of UBTH.

The output reveals that career development and succession programs (CDS) have an insignificant effect on organizational performance, with a coefficient of $B = -.024$ and a p-value of .705, which is greater than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating that career succession

development programs do not have a significant effect on the organizational performance of UBTH.

5. Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that competitive compensation and benefits significantly influence organizational performance ($B = .362$, $p < .001$), indicating that a well-structured compensation policy enhances employee retention and, in turn, organizational success. This finding aligns with Armstrong (2019) and Olaniyan (2022), who emphasize that competitive compensation motivates employees and reduces turnover, particularly in sectors with high attrition rates like healthcare. Ugoani (2022) corroborates this, finding that competitive salaries significantly influence retention in the Nigerian banking sector. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Yusuf (2019) assert that competitive pay packages are critical for employee loyalty and organizational performance, particularly in multinational corporations. However, Mondy (2021) and Noe (2020) argue that compensation should also address non-monetary benefits, such as healthcare and retirement plans, to appeal to employees' holistic needs. This study supports their claim, as it highlights compensation as a driver of organizational performance, emphasizing the need for HR policies that balance monetary rewards with broader benefits.

The findings show that career succession development programs have an insignificant effect on organizational performance ($B = -.024$, $p = .705$). This result contrasts with prior studies such as Adeoye (2021) and Akintayo (2019), who describe career development programs as essential for talent retention and leadership continuity. Okoye and Ezech (2021) also found that training and development significantly

enhance retention and performance in Nigerian SMEs, suggesting that the absence of significant effects in this study may stem from limitations in how these programs are implemented within UBTH. Ogundele and Obaje (2018) emphasize the importance of aligning career development with organizational goals, suggesting that ineffective alignment may undermine its impact. Ibrahim (2021) posits that clear career trajectories enhance employee retention, a perspective that aligns with findings by Ojo and Ajibade (2020), who highlight career paths as critical in Nigerian universities. This result may indicate that career development initiatives at UBTH lack the strategic focus or visibility needed to create meaningful impact.

6. Findings and Conclusion

This study investigated employee retention policy as HR best practice and organisational performance using University of Benin Teaching Hospital as a case study. The findings revealed that competitive compensation and benefits significantly contribute to enhancing organizational performance. Conversely, career succession development programs was found to have no significant effect on organizational performance, suggesting gaps in their design or implementation at UBTH. These results underscore the importance of prioritizing financial and non-financial rewards, fostering a supportive workplace, and improving recognition systems to enhance performance outcomes. At the same time, the findings highlight the need to reassess and strengthen career development and work-life balance initiatives to better align them with employee expectations and organizational goals.

7. Recommendations

From the research analysis and conclusions above, the following recommendations were made:

UBTH should prioritize designing and implementing comprehensive compensation packages that meet or exceed industry standards. This includes not only competitive salaries but also robust benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and performance-based bonuses. Additionally, incorporating non-monetary benefits, such as flexible work arrangements and career development allowances, can further attract and retain skilled professionals in the highly competitive healthcare sector.

The finding that career succession development programs have an insignificant effect on organizational performance suggests that these

programs may be inadequately structured or misaligned with employees' needs. UBTH should conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps in its career development framework and create tailored programs that provide clear career trajectories, mentorship opportunities, and leadership development. Emphasis should also be placed on aligning these programs with the organization's strategic goals to ensure mutual benefits for both employees and the institution.

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Indiscipline Related Behaviour and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Mathematics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between indiscipline related behaviours and academic performance of secondary school students in mathematics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study three null hypotheses were generated to direct the study. Literature review was done according to the variables under study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to measure the relative and composite contributions of tendency to indiscipline related behaviour and secondary school students' academic performance. A sample of three hundred and thirty-six (336) respondents was randomly selected for the study. The selection was done through the stratified random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts in measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the Cronbach alpha reliability method. Regression analysis was the statistical analysis technique adopted to test the hypotheses under study. The results of the analysis revealed that, bullying, absenteeism, truancy, lateness to school and examination dishonesty significantly relate to students' academic performance in mathematics. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that principals and teachers should check mate bullying by disciplining any student who intentionally or incidentally engages in these dastardly acts, that students should be made to

understand the dangers of examination malpractice and culprits caught in examination should be used to set good examples for others to enable them model adequate behaviours and study hard for their examination.

1. Introduction

In recent times it has been observed that majority of primary school students in our society not only perform poorly in their academic but also have shown indiscipline behaviours which are not in line with norms and standard of the school and ideas of society. Some education stakeholders such as head teachers, government, parents and students themselves have expressed concern over the poor academic performance exhibited by primary school students. This is because students are not performing up to popular expectation in the academics. This poor performance of students in mathematics implies that majority of these students will not be able to embark on a course of study at the tertiary level that requires mathematics as a core subject area.

Available statistics from National Assessment of Universal Basic Education Programme show that the percentage of non-performers (those not up to credit level) are usually more than 75% of the total examination. This situation is so bad, that experts now attributed it to mathematics being foreign, difficult and abstract, alongside the method of teaching it. The poor performance of students in mathematics has been a major source of concern for school authorities, mathematics educators, mathematician and

stakeholder in mathematics sector. This poor performance has been attributed to several factors which include teaching method, poor background, dislike of mathematics, lack of conducive learning environment which may make it study uninteresting, as well as lots of indiscipline related behaviour associated with the students. The negative consequence of these poor performance affects not only the students but also the educator. Hence the phenomenon continues to perplex all and sundry.

Indiscipline behaviour have been identified in the literature as one of the major factors influencing students' academic performance. Several efforts have been made in the quest to curb this problem both by the government and school authorities in order to have problem nipped at the bud. In Cross River State, the government has put a lot of effort towards the renovation as well as provision of more infrastructure in most public schools, guidance and counsellors have been posted to public schools in the state to help the schools handle students educational and personal social problem, more teachers are also being trained to equally assist as teacher counsellor in order to choose different careers from school. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) were instituted in public primary school and meeting holds regularly in school premises. Also, workshops, seminars and symposia are on-going efforts to equip head teachers and teachers with professional knowledge and skills that will enable them make education as interesting as possible so as to enable it play its part in nation building. However, the government as part of its transformation agenda and in keeping with the yearnings of education stakeholders directed that all public primary school must close at 1:30pm daily in order not to make school work look burdensome, also school on their own part have organized seminars, enrichment activities and counseling sessions to enlightened parents on how well to handle their wards by inculcating good discipline among children at early age, enforcing school rules and regulations more effectively. The present researchers observe that the tendency towards indiscipline related behaviour among primary school students in the school has continued to perplex educational stakeholders and make them restive. This is because the negative impact of condoning these behaviour among students in the school system would be too harmful to the society at large. Students who engage in indiscipline behaviour are involved in activities that undermine their safety and wellbeing as well as create discomfort for themselves and others. Other consequences of indiscipline behaviour like truancy, bullying, dodging of assignment, late coming include punishment from the school authority. Also when students are continually serving punishment,

especially during school hours they would miss out on lessons taught. As a result, students are likely to perform poorly and this may hinder their educational progress in life. As a means to motivate students to strive for excellence in their academic, schools have come up with awards for good performance and also awards like well-behaved awards, hard work, punctuality and so on. The desired qualitative education has heightened the need for the understanding of how and why these indiscipline behaviours came to be, as well as the extent to which it has hampered the achievement of educational goals.

Moreover, the state government has been playing its own part through renovation of schools and providing more facilities and infrastructure and furnishing of school libraries with textbooks in view to improving students' performance. School administrations regularly supervise teaching and learning activities in order to ensure that students' academic performance is improved. Teachers on their part are putting into practice the learner centered approach in their teaching, facilitating and guiding students to be more active in constructing knowledge for themselves.

Despite these efforts, students' poor performance in various subjects offered in school still persists in Calabar Educational Zone as read, witnessed and heard through newspaper and various other media, reports by significant persons in the schools in the area as well as Cross River Television and radio broadcasts, perhaps these efforts have not been directed toward the right direction.

Continuous poor performance in mathematics will eventually worsen the situation of not having economic and technological development in the country, reduced enrolment of students in mathematics related courses in higher institution, thus gradually killing that sector. Thousands of employment opportunities will also become wasted. In this study, the researchers are asking could indiscipline related behaviour such truancy, bullying, lateness to school, absenteeism, unwillingness to do homework and examination dishonest influence primary school students' academic performance in mathematics? It was in a bid to answer this question that this study was carried out.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Absenteeism behaviour and academic performance

Absenteeism as some studies have shown, disturb the dynamic teaching and learning environment by

creating a dead and tiresome unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable and irritable. It is apparent that when learner absenteeism is excessive, it impacts negatively on learning, truncates the teaching process leading to a decline in overall student's academic performance. Students who attend school regularly are found to have better teacher-learner interaction, problem solving skills, peer relationships and language development compared to absentees. Absenteeism can be associated with poor academic performance and dropout of school. Students who are chronically absent from school are more likely to struggle academically and have greater chance of becoming dropouts. (Simink and Reimer, 2005). In other words, those that missed classes regardless of the reason, lose the opportunity to gain skill and knowledge to be academically successful and subsequent loss of long-run benefits. It can also result in failure to fulfill major responsibility in school and work. Studies show that one of the significant costs associated with absenteeism is violation of social norms and the right of others, criminal activity and display of various antisocial behaviours. Uche and Maliki (2013) stressed that absenteeism and dropout can be caused by difficult terrain and long distances from school which tempt or force children to withdraw prematurely from school. Also, absenteeism can be influenced by many factors such as environment, anxiety, parental attitude, phobia, personality traits, poor teaching skills etc.

According to Bill Carlson (2012), the main influence of absenteeism on the pupil is low academic performance. He explains that students who miss most of their instructional hours are in no doubt behind the school's curriculum, based on which they are assessed at the end of the term. It is rarely likely for a regular absentee to perform creditably in school because, he or she is not abreast with what goes on in the school. He stresses that, an absentee pupil is likely to have attitudinal and behavioral issues leading to drop out. Similarly, Milikah Walters (2010) find in a study conducted that absenteeism leading to school dropouts has long term effects such as, lower income, higher incidences of unemployment and likelihood of social vices.

It is undeniable fact that some truants perform very badly in exercise, tests and examination. Since they are not regular in class to cope with lessons taught. Besides, truants are always disturbed when they come to school because their friends laugh at them when they are punished for not coming to school, they feel bad and humiliated the result is that, they end up being dropout or involve themselves in immoral activities like stealing. In his view Malikah (2015), asserts that

school absences cause valuable loss of instructional education time. Attending school regularly is a vital factor in school success for both students and teachers. Excessive school absenteeism is often linked to poor school academic achievement, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom and loss of confidence. So, school attendance by students plays an integral role in the success and educational advancement levels of any academic institution and all students enrolled.

Successful school cannot survive if students are not physically present. According to Williams (2014) excessive absenteeism by students may result in unlearned course material from fewer hours of instruction, and disruption of class instruction for teachers who have to administer remediation for the absent student when he returns to school. Williams (2014) goes on to say, absenteeism by students may additionally result in poor academic achievement because students are not receiving instruction on a consecutive basis. This problem also causes low test scores because absent students are not present to learn by concepts and skills are assessed on exams.

Amalu and Abang (2015) carried out a study to examine the causes of school absenteeism among primary school students and the effect of school absenteeism among primary school students. Two research questions were posed to guide the study. The study is descriptive in nature and it adopted a survey design. Multistage sampling technique involved stratified and simple random technique were used for the selection of three hundred and twenty (320) secondary school students from sixteen (16) primary schools in eight (8) selected local government areas in three (3) senatorial districts in Cross River State. A self-developed fifteen (15) items questionnaire titled "Absenteeism Questionnaire (SAQ)" structured by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient 0.70 ascertained the reliability of the instrument used in the study. The finding revealed that financial constraints, lack of interest, illnesses, pampering from family, location of school were the major causes of absenteeism among students. Based on the result it was recommended among others that parents and their children/wards should be counselled on the effect of absenteeism on school performance and its long-term consequence on national development. The study by Jhemson (2016) aims to determine the effects of absenteeism among fourth year students to their learning performance in San Agustin National High School, Philippines. The study adopted descriptive design was used in the study and instruments for data collection were 4 sets of questionnaires for teachers and students. Data were

analyzed using mean standard, frequency and chi-square. The aim of study by Musa (2014) is to investigate absenteeism and truancy and their impact on the academic performance of secondary school student in Ogun State. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The sample consisted of two hundred SSS 2 students that were randomly selected from five selected secondary schools. A structured four point scale questionnaire titled Non-school Attendance Assessment Scale (NAAS) was constructed by the researcher and used to collect data for the study. Data analysis was done by use of simple percentages and weighted mean. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Finding revealed that peer group factors, socio-economic background of student, poor academic performance of students, are contributory factors to absenteeism and truancy in our secondary school. Based on the finding it was suggested that, parents should guide their children and be of good models, also they should pay serious attention to financial and material needs of these children.

Mafa (2018) stated that a learner who experiences high rates of family related factors such as having parent with little or no educational background, unemployed mother and shortage of food shortages at home is likely to miss 10% or more of school year compared to their peers with more positive family related factors. Sahin and Arseven (2016) carried out research to determine the causes of student absenteeism and school dropout in primary, secondary and high school students in Duzce province. A semi-structured interview was used to obtain data from 64 principals of selected schools.

Senyamator, Gyimah and Minadzi (2018) employed purposive sampling technique to select 34 students from Junior Secondary Schools 1-3 attending Felicomfort JHS at Amamoma in order to determine the factors affecting the students' absenteeism. The analysis of the data using Predictive Analytical Software (PASW) found a learner absenteeism prevalence rate of 71.4%. The major in-school factor responsible for this rate of absenteeism was teachers' inability to care and find out from students the cause of their absenteeism In-School Factors Cook and Ezennne (2010) stated that the main causes of student absenteeism is related to school factors especially school curricula. A study by Seeley, Tombari, Bennett and Dunkle (2011) found a connection between school bullying and learner absenteeism. They stated clearly that if bullying can succeed in reducing a learner engagement in school work, it can also succeed in keeping the learner away from class.

2.2 Tendency to lateness behaviour and academic performance

The study by Onolemhehen and Omonigbo (2022) sought to determine whether academic stress, depression or emotional stability is responsible for lateness to school among secondary school students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A total sample of one hundred and sixty three (163) secondary school students was used for the study. The instrument for data collection were a questionnaire titled psychosocial factors to lateness survey questionnaire (PFLSQ) Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation and data was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The result showed that academic stress, depression and emotional instability predispose lateness to school among secondary school students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. It was recommended that schools should operate a strict and functional punctuality policy whereby every student, teacher or any other staff of the school that resumes after a particular scheduled time will not be allowed into the school premises.

Onoyase (2017) carried a study to investigate lateness as a recurrent problem among secondary school students in Akoko South East Local Government Area of Ondo State. The study adopted ex-post facto design which utilized descriptive method. Four hypotheses were formulated for the study with 20 items questionnaire title causes of "lateness to school questionnaire" (COLTSQ) for data collection. Data collected were analyzed and the t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their identification of electronic media as a reason for lateness to school, there is no significant difference between students from high and low socio-economic status in their identification of broken home as a reason for lateness to school, there is no significant difference between student in urban and rural areas in their identification of cultural background as a reason for lateness to school. Based on findings, it was recommended that parents should put in place enforceable rules or time for watching television programmes at night and ensure that their children go to bed early.

The study by Adegunfor, Ola and Agubssi (2019) was to investigate the factors responsible for student lateness to school as expressed by Nigeria teachers in elementary school. The study is descriptive in nature. A sample of two hundred (200) teachers in elementary schools was drawn from the total population of the

teachers in Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection were twenty (20) item questionnaire title Factors Responsible for Lateness to School Questionnaire (FRLSQ) was constructed by the researchers and used to collect data for the study. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while analysis of variance tested at 0.05 level of significance using test statistical tools. The result revealed that the factor responsible for students' lateness to school as expressed by Nigeria teachers in elementary schools are poor preparation for school, going late to bed, distance of school from home, high level of poverty, peer pressure, single parenting among others. Based on the finding it was concluded that the factors responsible for lateness to school are enormous and practical solutions were recommended ranging from administrative improvement to learner behavioural change.

The purpose of study by Mary, Sam and Lydia (2021) is to examined factors that influence the late coming of both male and female learners in selected schools in the Soshangure Township in South Africa with a view to assessing their impact on learner academic performance and emotional stability within the school environment. The study used exploratory descriptive design. The sample of the study comprised eighty purposively selected learners from six (6) selected schools in Soshangure Township and the instruments for the data collection were twenty (20) items questionnaire which participants respond. The data was collected from respondents through semi-structure interview. The information collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Result was analyzed using analysis of variance and paired simple t-test. The finding shows that factors such as mode of transportation to school geographical location of school/homes, learner involvement in household chores, watching television at night, sleeping late and child care responsibilities are predominantly responsible for late coming. The study further revealed that male learners were more often late for school compared female learners. Late coming of female learners hinged to a large degree on domestic factors while the late coming of male learners reluctant to change the habit as it was not perceived to be an emotional disturbance while female learners were amenable to habit change. Likewise, the study by Maile and Olowoyo (2017) investigated the causes of late coming among high school student in selected secondary schools of Shoshangure, Pretoria South Africa. The study adopted a multiple case study research. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw sample from the population. Data was collected

from respondent through qualitative approach. The finding revealed that late-coming is common among learners in selected secondary schools of Shoshangure. Learners in selected secondary schools of Shoshangure, it was commended practical solutions ranging from administrative improvement to learner behavioural change.

In another study, Chukujindu, James and Chiamaka (2020) investigated the relationship between late resumption on the academic performance of English education students in Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between late resumption on the academic performance of English education students in Benson Idahosa University. To guide the study, two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated. The study employed descriptive survey employing ex-post factor research design and the population of the study comprised of all English education in Benson Idahosa University. Total number of 104 full-time education students in levels 100 – 400 in the department were used as the sample for the study. The research instrument used for this study was a questionnaire, the analysis of data obtained showed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students that resume lately to academic activities among education students in Benson Idahosa University. Based on the findings of this study, it was therefore, recommended that Benson Idahosa University authority and lecturers should emphasize on student's early resumption as late resumption has a negative influence on their students' academic performance.

2.3 Tendency to examination dishonesty and academic performance

Examination malpractice is any activities of a student or group of students whose purpose is to give any of them higher grades than they would likely receive on the basis of their own achievements. Examination malpractice has far reaching effects on the educational system and society at large. It poses a serious effect on the purpose of education (Kolawole, 2019) has many effects on the students, the teachers, the educational institution and the educational system. Student who is in it are most likely to grow with lack of self-confidence especially in future examinations. They are also more likely to be dishonest in life. Examination malpractice is an unlawful behaviour or activity engaged in by students to have personal advantage in an examination over their colleagues or mates who are taking the same Olushola (2013). Examination malpractice could be committed before, during or after

the examination Dike (2012) from the psychological point of view saw examination malpractice as all forms of cheating which directly or indirectly falsify the ability of the students. It refers to counter practice that is against the ethics of examination. It is also an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the good conduct of any examination or any evaluation process.

The study by Cornelius-Ukpepi, and Erukoha (2012) was carried out to determine the perception of examination malpractice and academic performance in primary science. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which students perception of examination malpractice relate to their academic performance in primary science. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises 68,201 sixth grade students selected through simple random technique from the three educational zones in Cross River State. The instruments, the perception of examination malpractice questionnaire (PEMQ) and a 50 item primary science achievement scores were used to collect information from sample used in the study. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation and one-way analysis of variance tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there is significant relationship between examination malpractice and academic performance.

Ayang, Edu & Edu (2012) investigated the relationship between parental childrearing patterns on senior secondary school students' tendencies towards delinquencies and their consequent academic performance in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. Three dimensions each of childrearing patterns were identified and used to formulate 1 null hypothesis that directed the study. A 20-items questionnaire was used in generating data from 1,080 Senior Secondary II students as the sample from 7 out of 16 senior secondary schools, using the stratified and proportional random sampling procedures and based on the ex-post Facto research design. Data analysis was by the descriptive, one-way ANOVA and Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparison statistics. It was found that parental childrearing patterns significantly influence the delinquent acts of examination malpractices and consequent poor academic performance of these students in the study areas. It was concluded that the delinquent acts of students' involvement in examination malpractices is due to poor parenting, which has contributed to the consequent poor academic performance of Nigerian students in external examinations. It was recommended that government should among others,

expand senior secondary school studies as well as employ more guidance and Counselors to cause attitudinal changes in students to improve their academic performance.

Emaikwu, Sunday Oche (2012) carried out a study titled Assessing the impact of examination malpractices on the measurement of ability in Nigeria. The purpose of the research work was to assess the impact of examination malpractices on the measurement of ability in Nigeria. The design of this study is survey research. A sample of 300 students and 100 lecturers randomly selected from four universities in North Central Nigeria was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. Four research questions were answered and one hypothesis was tested. The result indicates that lecturers and students indulge in examination malpractice in Nigeria. It is affirmed that examination malpractice is caused by undue emphasis on paper qualification, fear of failure and inadequate preparation among other factors. The result also shows that the major types of examination malpractice being perpetuated in universities are possession of 'foreign materials' during examination, collusion by students to cheat in examination and continuous assessment malpractice. It reveals further that examination malpractice leads to lack of confidence in Nigerian educational products, results in half-baked graduates, discourages hard work and lowers the standard of education. The article maintains that the calamity of examination malpractice is not just the havoc it wrecks in our educational system but the gradual indoctrination of youths into the practice of fraud. It is recommended that examination malpractice legislation should be enforced and that guidance and counseling services be adequately provided in universities to minimize the incidence of examination malpractice.

The study by Udofia and Sambo (2021) examined the perception of senior secondary school science student on the extent of teacher's involvement in examination dishonesty in Akwalbom State, Nigeria. A total sample of 600 SSIII students selected through stratified random technique out of population of 6300 SS 3 science students in 2019/2020 session both public and private schools in Akwalbom State. Survey design was used in the study and the instruments for data collection were obtained through a questionnaire tagged science teachers examination dishonesty questionnaire (STEDQ) for principals. Data collected were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that science teachers were involved in examination malpractice in the area of supporting extortions of money from students. Based on the

findings it was recommended among others that science teachers should be given value re-orientation as well as improved upon their salaries, this will help to curtail examination dishonesty and also teachers should spend more time in preparing students for examinations. If they do it, it is likely that the science teachers would have confidence on their students' capability of facing the examination without any assistance.

3. Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the correlational design. This design is chosen because this research is designed to explore the nature of statistical or pure relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The study area is the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of all the 8,770 secondary school students of which 4,330 are male while 4,440 are female in seven local government in Calabar Educational Zone in Cross River State for 2022/2023 academic session. The study adopted stratified proportionate sampling technique. The stratified sampling technique help to select schools from the different strata of the population. The sample of this study comprised of 345 which is 5% of secondary school students selected from five local government areas in Calabar Educational Zone of Cross River State. Two instruments were used for data collection. The first was a fifteen (15) item instrument titled "Tendency to indiscipline related behaviour questionnaire (TIRBQ)" and a 30 item achievement test in mathematics for students were designed by the researcher for the data collection. The questionnaire were a modified four point likert scale type. The Tendency to indiscipline related behaviour rating scale questionnaire (TIRBQ) was divided into two sections of A and B. section A tendency to indiscipline behaviour which includes tendency to lateness to school, tendency to absenteeism and tendency to examination dishonesty with five item each. Each response on section B of the TIRB was given a range of responses from strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The mathematics achievement test was constructed to provide a measure for students' academic performance

in the subject. The 30 multiple choice items in the test were developed from a unit of scheme of work of the secondary school students to reflect three levels of cognitive domain (memory, comprehension and application). Each question had four option lettered A – D.

Two kinds of validity are established for the instrument of this study. These are the face and content validity. The face validity was established by giving the items developed to the experts who identified flaws and errors, which were corrected with the assistance of the supervisors, who thereafter certified the face validity of the instruments. The content validity was established through the development of the table of specification. To establish the reliability estimate of the instrument used for this study, the Cronbach Alpha method was adopted. The reliability of the mathematics achievement test was determined using Kuder Richardson 20 reliability estimate which gave reliability coefficient of 0.75

The researcher first visited the sampled schools to familiarize with the school authority and explain the purpose of the study. Secondly, the class teachers assisted the researcher to administer the instruments after selecting the number of students required from each of the schools. The respondents were informed of the exercise and essence of giving objective responses to the items. The respondents were also told to be honest in their responses to the items as the information obtained would be treated with all amount of confidentiality and used for the research purpose only.

4. Presentation of Results

In this section each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test it is presented. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one: Truancy does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in mathematics. The independent variable in this hypothesis is truancy; while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in mathematics. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple regression result of the relationship between truancy and students' academic performance in Mathematics

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.493(a)	.243	.241	1.57523	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	266.707	1	266.707	107.485	.000(a)
Residual	828.766	334	2.481		
Total	1095.473	335			

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the relationship between truancy on the students' academic performance in mathematics yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .493 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .243 and an adjusted R^2 of .241. The adjusted R^2 of .241 indicated that the truancy accounted for 24.1 % of the determinant students' academic performance in mathematics in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that Truancy is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 107.485$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 334. The implication of this result is that truancy is a significant relate toor of students' academic performance in mathematics. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that students' academic performance in mathematics = $13.094 + .403$ (truancy)

Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between lateness to school and students' academic performance in mathematics. The independent variable in this hypothesis is lateness to school; while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in mathematics. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple regression result of the relationship between lateness to school and students' academic performance in Mathematics

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.601(a)	.362	.360	1.44710	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	396.041	1	396.041	189.122	.000(a)
Residual	699.432	334	2.094		
Total	1095.473	335			

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the relationship between lateness to school on the students' academic performance in mathematics yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .601 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .362 and an adjusted R^2 of .360. The adjusted R^2 of .360 indicated that the Lateness to school accounted for 36.0% of the determinant students' academic performance in mathematics in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that Lateness to school is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 189.122$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 334. The implication of this result is that Lateness to school is significant relate toor of students' academic performance in mathematics. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that students' academic performance in mathematics = $6.473 + .678$ (Lateness to school)

Hypothesis three: Examination dishonesty does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in mathematics. The independent variable in this hypothesis is examination dishonesty; while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in mathematics. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Simple regression result of the relationship between examination dishonesty and students' academic performance in Mathematics

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate	
1	.733(a)	.538	.536	1.23145	
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value
Regression	588.975	1	588.975	388.387	.000(a)
Residual	506.499	334	1.516		
Total	1095.473	335			

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the relationship between examination dishonesty on the students' academic performance in mathematics yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .733 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .538 and an adjusted R^2 of .536. The adjusted R^2 of .536 indicated that the examination dishonesty accounted for 53.6% of the determinant students' academic performance in

mathematics in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that examination dishonesty is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 388.387$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 334. The implication of this result is that examination dishonesty is a significant relate toor of students'

academic performance in mathematics. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that students' academic performance in mathematics = $13.609 + .423$ (examination dishonesty)

5. Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis indicated that there is a significant relationship between truancy and students' academic performance in mathematics. The finding of this hypothesis is in agreement with the view of Landan (2018) who showed that there was no significant difference between male and female students on the cause of truancy among primary school students in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. There was a significant gender difference on favour of male students on the effect of truancy among primary school students. It was recommended that the schools should ensure that truancy is reduced to the barest minimal by ensuring good student teacher relationship is maintained, threat and bullying is reduced, security of the students is guaranteed at all times, the parents of the students should ensure that the needs of their children are taken care of at all times.

It was recommended that parents should be encouraged to address their children's physical and emotional requirement, also keep an eye on their children to ensure that they complete their homework and attend school on a regular basis and also education groups and the government should work together to ensure that every child of school age attend school and law enforcement should take any student found outside during school hours into custody.

Bassey, Achigbe & Otu (2016) also revealed that truancy significantly influence the academic performance of secondary school students. Based on the findings, it concluded that well behaved student should be given special recognition/award by the school and other well-meaning individuals as recommended by the school authority. Agege (2010) also showed that truancy affected the academic performance of secondary school students negatively to a very high extent. This implies that for students to achieve their educational goals there is need for them to abstain from truancy and absenteeism. The study recommended among others that the school authorities should be strict on their rules and regulation, especially as it pertains to school attendance of students and truancy.

Adelabu, Oyelana and Adelabu (2016) also showed that students that came from moderate family socio-economic background stayed at school more than the less privileged students who came from low family

socio-economic background. In view of the above points, it is recommended that for vast punctuality of students to be adequately maintained within secondary schools in Nigeria, government should provide the necessary learning materials, conducive environment, sufficient and qualified teachers for effective teaching. In addition, the government should establish the monitoring and evaluating team to visit various schools and assess both teachers and students' promptness. The study also recommends that all teachers should create positive interest among their students and encourage them to always show more interest on the school extra-curriculum activities or classroom activities in order to stay in the school. Parents should visit their children at schools for at least once or twice in a month and the students in question should be willing to learn at any point in time.

The result of the second hypothesis showed that lateness to school has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in mathematics. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the study of Manguro, Whitney and Charka (2011) who observed that there has been a high prevalence of indiscipline among learners at all levels of the Nigerian educational system and that the most common students' behaviour problems include lateness, not doing home work and stealing. Many factors that could make students get late or develop the habit of getting late to school, have been identified as sleeping late, poor preparation for school, school factor, illness, economic influence and family background watching film at night, lack of motivation for school, engagement in too many house chores and lack of stringent rules in school against lateness. Also, social status of parents could influence students' lateness to school.

The result of the third hypothesis revealed that examination dishonesty has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in mathematics. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Cornelius-Ukpepi, and Erukoha (2012) who showed that there is significant relationship between examination malpractice and academic performance. Ayang, Edu & Edu (2012) also found that parental childrearing patterns significantly influence the delinquent acts of examination malpractices and consequent poor academic performance of these students in the study areas. It was concluded that the delinquent acts of students' involvement in examination malpractices is due to poor parenting, which has contributed to the consequent poor academic performance of Nigerian students in external examinations. It was recommended that government should among others, expand senior secondary school

studies as well as employ more guidance and Counselors to cause attitudinal changes in students to improve their academic performance.

6. Conclusion / Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached. Bullying, absenteeism, truancy, lateness to school and examination dishonesty significantly relate to students' academic performance in mathematics. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

Students should be made to understand the dangers of examination malpractice and culprits caught in examination should be used to set good examples for others to enable them model adequate behaviours and study hard for their examination.

Parents should put in place enforceable rules or time for watching television programmes at night and ensure that their children go to bed early.

In order to handle verbal and developing cyber-bullying, school guidance and counseling should be improved by having qualified teacher-counselors.

School should provide counselling and support services for students who might be victim of emotional bullying in order to enable them meet up academically.

The government should improve the living standards and socio-economic capacity of parents.

The schools should ensure that truancy is reduced to the barest minimal by ensuring good student teacher relationship is maintained, threat and bullying is reduced, security of the students is guaranteed at all times, the parents of the students should ensure that the needs of their children are taken care of all at all times.

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Work-Life Balance and Physical Work Environment as Retention Strategy for Health Care Workers

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Abstract. This study examined how work-life balance and physical work environment serves as retention strategies on Health-care workers, using the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) as a case study. The focus was on three key components of retention policies, including work-life balance initiatives, supportive physical work environment, recognition and competitive reward systems. Using Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of three hundred and sixty (366) was arrived out, however, on distribution of the research questionnaire only 360 was found usable for this study. Data was collected through structured questionnaires. The analysis utilized both descriptive statistics such as (frequency, mean, and percentage) and inferential statistics such as (regression analysis) to evaluate the relationships between various variables used. The findings revealed that a physical supportive work environment, and recognition and competitive reward systems significantly enhance organizational performance, with recognition and rewards having the strongest impact on organisational performance. Conversely, work-life balance initiatives were found to have no significant effect. Based on these findings, the study recommends fostering supportive workplaces, and implementing robust recognition systems while reevaluating and redesigning work-life balance initiatives to support the achievements of organizational goals and also meet employee expectations.

Keywords: Employee Retention, Organizational Performance, Work-Life Balance, Supportive work environment, and recognition and competitive reward systems

1. Introduction

In the healthcare context, organizational performance is crucial as it directly impacts patient care quality,

staff satisfaction, and overall operational sustainability (Osibanjo, Adeniji, Falola, & Heirmsmac, 2021). Enhanced performance within healthcare organizations leads to improved patient outcomes, reduced operational costs, and increased staff morale, ultimately contributing to the sector's sustainability and growth (Onyemechi, 2020). These highlight the significance of adopting best practices in HR, such as robust employee retention policies, to foster organizational performance in Nigeria's healthcare sector. Over time, retention strategies have broadened to include career development opportunities, work-life balance, and organizational culture (Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2021).

There are various types of employee retention policies, essential for addressing workforce needs and organizational goals. This includes work-life balance initiatives such as flexible hours and telecommuting (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2020). These policies are crucial for a comprehensive HR strategy to maintain a committed and productive workforce. Employee retention policy as HR best practice has significant implication on organizational performance, as it reduces turnover rates, which lowers recruitment and training costs (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2021). By maintaining a stable and experienced workforce, organizations ensure continuity and retention of institutional knowledge, critical for sustaining high performance (Piening, Baluch, & Ridder, 2020). It also fosters a motivated and engaged workforce, leading to higher levels of productivity, creativity, and commitment to organizational goals (Roberts & Davenport, 2021).

The World Health Organization (2021) reports that Nigeria faces a critical shortage of healthcare workers, exacerbated by a high attrition rate. This troubling trend has prompted healthcare institutions to adopt various strategies aimed at improving employee

retention. Despite the development of several strategies, the impact of such retention policies on overall organizational performance remains underexplored, particularly within the context of Nigeria's public healthcare sector. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the effects of employee retention policies (work-life balance initiatives, work environment and recognition and reward systems) on the organizational performance of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

2. Conceptual Review

2.1 Employee Retention Policy

Employee retention policies have been conceptualized in diverse ways by various scholars, particularly within the context of human resource management (HRM). Employee retention policies generally refer to strategies or initiatives designed by organizations to reduce turnover and maintain a stable workforce. Akindele (2020) defined employee retention policy as a comprehensive approach that organizations use to reduce employee turnover by ensuring satisfaction through improved work conditions and career development opportunities. Similarly, Uche (2019) described it as a strategic process focusing on providing financial and non-financial rewards to retain employees. Aluko (2021) expanded on this by emphasizing that retention policies are rooted in fostering strong employer-employee relationships to enhance loyalty.

On another note, Ogundele and Obaje (2018) argue that retention policies are about aligning organizational goals with employees' personal and career growth objectives. Likewise, Balogun (2022) highlighted that retention policies aim to maintain employee engagement by addressing key factors such as recognition, rewards, and flexible work conditions. While these definitions vary in focus, they converge on the central idea that employee retention policy involves creating a conducive work environment where employees feel valued, motivated, and aligned with organizational objectives. Akinyemi (2021) integrates these perspectives by emphasizing the dual focus of retention policies on job satisfaction and long-term career growth within the organization, ensuring coherence between employee needs and organizational goals.

2.2 Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Work-Life Balance Initiatives (WLBIs) have emerged as a pivotal aspect of human resource practices, particularly in sectors demanding intensive labour,

such as healthcare. Numerous scholars have defined WLBIs from different perspectives. According to Deery and Jago (2018), work-life balance initiatives refer to structured programs that allow employees to manage their professional responsibilities while maintaining a personal life, aiming for equitable harmony between both. Similarly, Kelliher (2020) emphasizes that such initiatives represent organizational policies designed to facilitate a balance between employees' work and personal obligations. Kalliath and Brough (2018) argue that WLBIs focus on creating a flexible environment where employees can manage family, personal commitments, and work tasks efficiently, which is fundamental for their overall well-being. Adeoye and Elegunde (2020) indicated that work-life balance, has a positive effect on employee retention. Oshodi and Aluko (2022) found that employees who experience a healthy balance between work and personal life are more likely to remain with the organisation, thus improving overall performance.

On the other hand, Mazerolle (2019) sees WLBIs as a collection of employee-centred benefits that focus on reducing work-induced stress, while McCarthy (2020) defines them as policies that help in managing both personal and professional time effectively without conflicts. Broadly speaking, the underlying concept in these definitions is the strategic structuring of organizational policies to create an environment where employees can meet their personal and professional obligations simultaneously. Consequently, work-life balance is increasingly recognized as a significant determinant of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Deery & Jago, 2018; McCarthy, 2020).

2.3 Physical Work Environment

In the context of human resource management, the concept of the work environment is essential to understanding its role in employee retention and overall organizational performance. Various scholars have defined the work environment in slightly different but conceptually similar ways. For instance, Akinyele (2021) describes the work environment as the combination of physical, social, and psychological conditions that influence employee behavior and productivity. This aligns with the definition by Ogunleye and Odetunde (2019), who argue that it encompasses not only the physical layout but also the organizational culture and interpersonal relationships. Akintayo (2022) broadens this further by emphasizing the role of emotional and psychological safety in creating a conducive work environment.

In contrast, Daramola (2020) highlights the infrastructural aspects, focusing on the adequacy of tools, resources, and workspace arrangements. Similarly, Salau (2018) underscores the interaction between employees and their immediate environment, noting how factors such as lighting, ventilation, and temperature can impact job satisfaction. Taken together, these definitions suggest that the work environment is a multi-faceted concept that spans physical, emotional, and social dimensions, all of which collectively influence employee well-being and productivity. Nevertheless, Ugoani (2022) revealed that conducive working environments is a significant factor that positively influence employee retention, which in turn improves organisational performance.

2.4 Recognition and Reward Systems

Recognition and reward systems (RRS) have been defined and conceptualized by various scholars in recent literature, each providing nuanced perspectives relevant to employee motivation and organizational outcomes. According to Jehanzeb and Hamid (2018), RRS refer to a set of strategies and practices aimed at acknowledging employees' contributions and achievements, which in turn fosters organizational loyalty and commitment. Otoo (2019) expands on this by emphasizing that effective recognition involves non-monetary acknowledgment that satisfies employees' intrinsic motivations, while reward systems focus on extrinsic, tangible incentives.

Similarly, Ibrar and Khan (2019) underscore the dual nature of recognition and reward systems, where intrinsic rewards (verbal praise) and extrinsic rewards (bonuses) are crucial for holistic employee engagement. Further refining this, Achor and Gielan (2020) argue that recognition systems are a psychological need fulfillment mechanism, aligning employees' sense of belonging and accomplishment with organizational objectives. Nwosu and Kalu (2020) found that monetary and non-monetary rewards such as bonuses, promotions, and recognition programs significantly enhance employee retention, leading to better organisational performance. Chukwu and Nwachukwu (2021) showed employee recognition and involvement in decision-making has a significant positive effect on retention and overall performance.

In contrast, Agwu (2021) interprets RRS as a strategic framework in which consistent performance feedback is paired with reward mechanisms to create a performance-oriented culture. More recently, Khan and Aleem (2023) define RRS as a multi-dimensional concept where both immediate, informal recognition and formal, structured rewards serve to build

employee morale and reduce turnover. Across these perspectives, a common thread emerges: RRS are crucial not only for reinforcing desired behaviors but also for shaping the long-term commitment and satisfaction of employees, especially in sectors like healthcare, where workforce stability is vital.

2.5 Organisational Performance

Organisational performance has been defined in various ways in academic literature, with scholars offering both narrow and broad interpretations. Kaplan and Norton (2019) describe organisational performance as the effectiveness with which an organisation meets its financial and operational goals through strategic alignment, reflecting its ability to achieve objectives efficiently. Dess and Lumpkin (2018) extend this definition by emphasizing the need to assess both financial and non-financial outcomes, suggesting that performance encompasses profitability, innovation, and market share. Armstrong and Taylor (2020) argue that organisational performance should also consider employee engagement and stakeholder satisfaction as core metrics of success. Moreover, Richard (2018) views organisational performance as a multidimensional construct involving productivity, flexibility, and adaptability in the face of market dynamics.

Echoing similar sentiments, Oke (2021) suggests that for organisations in developing economies like Nigeria, performance must account for socio-cultural and economic constraints, thus broadening the scope to include corporate social responsibility and local community impact. Similarly, Inuwa (2022) integrates organisational learning as a crucial determinant of performance, advocating for continuous improvement and innovation as essential drivers of sustainable growth. Despite these differing perspectives, all definitions highlight the holistic nature of organisational performance, encompassing financial outcomes, employee well-being, and broader societal impacts.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943, is one of the most widely recognized frameworks in psychology and management. Maslow proposed that human needs follow a hierarchical order, starting from basic physiological needs to more complex ones, such as self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The Hierarchy of Needs model has been widely critiqued and evaluated in the context of organizational behaviour and employee retention. Critics argue that Maslow's theory

lacks empirical support, particularly when applied to diverse cultural contexts and complex work environments, such as healthcare (Tay & Diener, 2011). For instance, the rigid hierarchical structure of needs has been challenged by research showing that employees often pursue higher-level needs such as self-esteem and social belonging even when lower-order needs remain unmet (Kaur, 2013).

Studies also suggest that the interrelationship between needs is not as linear as Maslow proposed. According to Benson and Dundis (2003), employees might prioritize organizational belonging and recognition over physiological needs when these higher-order aspects are threatened. Further, in the healthcare sector, where stress levels and burnout are prevalent, models such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework may offer a more dynamic understanding of employee motivation and retention (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thus, while Maslow's framework provides an intuitive understanding of motivation, it may not comprehensively capture the complexities of employee retention, especially in high-stress environments like healthcare.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The research design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine retention policy as an HR best practice and its impact on organizational performance. This design was considered suitable for the study because it ascertained whether the independent variables (work-life balance, a physical supportive work environment, and

recognition systems) were responsible for any changes in the dependent variable (organizational performance). The population of this study was 4,250 employees of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) and the sample size of the study using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula was 366. Therefore, 366 questionnaires were randomly distributed to the respondents.

For this study, the instrument used for data collection was a carefully structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of respondents' bio data, while section B covers the variables of the study. All items in section B were based on five-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data from the responses were retrieved, cleaned and used for this analysis indicating a response rate of approximately 98%. A total response of 366 was targeted, out of which three hundred and sixty (360) responses were completely submitted by the respondents.

Description of Demographic Variables of Respondents

Gender, age, marital status, respondents' educational qualification and working tenure were all evaluated in the demography data.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S/N	Variables		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	161	44.7
		Female	199	55.3
		Total	360	100.0
2	Marital Status	Single	153	42.5
		Married	207	57.5
		Total	360	100.0
3	Age	22-26 years	58	16.1
		27-31 years	66	18.4
		32 years and above	236	65.6
		Total	360	100.0
4	Educational qualification	Diploma	-	-
		OND	4	1.1
		HND	99	27.5
		BSC	184	51.1
		Postgraduate Degree	62	17.3
		Others	11	3.1
		Total	360	100.0
5	Working Tenure	less than 5 years	205	56.9
		5-10 years	92	25.6
		11 years and above	63	17.5
		Total	360	100.0

Author's Compilation (2025)

In terms of the gender of the respondents, the above table shows that majority of the respondents were female. On the age range distribution of the respondents, table 4.1 indicates that most of the respondents were aged 32years and above. On the marital status category, table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents were married. On the category of educational qualification, table 4.1 indicates that majority of the respondents had B.SC qualification. On the issue of working tenure, Table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents have worked with the teaching hospital for less than 5 years.

Descriptive Analysis of Objective Variables

This section presents the descriptive analysis on employee retention policy as HR best practice and organisational performance.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Analysis of Work-life Balance Initiatives.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
1	I feel that my workload is manageable within my official working hours.	135 (37.50)	102 (28.33)	14 (3.89)	59 (16.39)	53 (14.72)	3.60
2	I am able to fulfil my job responsibilities without compromising my personal or family time.	141 (39.17)	119 (33.06)	22 (6.11)	37 (10.28)	41 (11.39)	3.78
3	The hospital's policies allow me enough flexibility to handle urgent personal matters effectively.	134 (37.22)	108 (30.00)	23 (6.39)	55 (15.28)	40 (11.11)	3.67
4	I feel supported by the management when I need to adjust my schedule for personal reasons.	129 (35.83)	115 (31.94)	21 (5.83)	49 (13.61)	46 (12.78)	3.64
5	The institution provides sufficient leave options that help me recharge and prevent burnout.	77 (21.39)	107 (29.72)	77 (21.39)	79 (21.94)	20 (5.56)	3.39
	Average	123.2 (34.22)	110.2 (30.61)	31.4 (8.7)	55.8 (15.5)	20 (11.11)	3.62

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.2 presents a descriptive analysis of employees' perceptions of work-life balance initiatives within the hospital. A significant majority 72.23% of respondents agreed that they could fulfill their job responsibilities without compromising personal or family time, yielding the highest mean of 3.78. Overall, the average mean score of 3.62 indicates a generally positive perception of the hospital's work-life balance initiatives, particularly in areas such as flexibility, managerial support, and workload management, though leave options appear to require further improvement to address employee concerns.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis of Work Environment

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
6	The hospital provides adequate facilities and resources needed for me to perform my job effectively.	83 (23.06)	118 (32.78)	58 (16.11)	79 (21.94)	22 (6.11)	3.45
7	The physical conditions in my workspace (e.g., lighting, cleanliness, and space) support my productivity.	211 (58.61)	105 (29.17)	32 (8.89)	7 (1.94)	5 (1.39)	4.42
8	I feel safe from workplace hazards and health risks in my daily duties at the hospital.	116 (32.22)	99 (27.50)	61 (16.94)	53 (14.72)	31 (8.61)	3.60
9	There is a supportive atmosphere among colleagues and supervisors in my department.	77 (21.39)	102 (28.33)	55 (15.28)	77 (21.39)	49 (13.61)	3.23
10	The hospital's infrastructure (e.g., equipment, technology) is well-maintained and readily available.	142 (39.44)	123 (34.17)	42 (11.67)	23 (6.39)	30 (8.33)	3.90
	Average	125.8 (34.9)	109.4 (30.4)	49.6 (13.8)	47.8 (13.3)	27.4 (7.6)	3.72

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.3 presents the descriptive analysis of the work environment within the hospital, highlighting employee perceptions of various aspects. The physical conditions of the workspace, such as lighting, cleanliness, and space, were highly rated, with 87.78% of participants in agreement and a mean score of 4.42, indicating strong satisfaction. Overall, the average mean of 3.72 indicates that employees generally perceive the work environment positively, particularly in terms of physical workspace conditions and infrastructure. However, interpersonal dynamics among colleagues and supervisors appear to require attention to foster a more supportive atmosphere.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Analysis of Recognition and Reward Systems.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
11	I feel that my contributions to the hospital's success are acknowledged by management.	125 (34.72)	95 (26.39)	63 (17.50)	49 (13.61)	28 (7.78)	3.67
12	The hospital provides adequate incentives that motivate me to perform better.	113 (31.39)	98 (27.22)	43 (11.94)	79 (21.94)	27 (7.5)	3.53
13	I am satisfied with the frequency at which I receive positive feedback from my supervisors.	98 (27.22)	121 (33.61)	61 (16.94)	37 (10.28)	43 (11.94)	3.54
14	I believe that my efforts are rewarded in a fair and timely manner.	128 (35.56)	79 (21.94)	81 (22.5)	43 (11.94)	29 (8.06)	3.65
15	The hospital recognizes exceptional work in ways that make employees feel valued.	113 (31.39)	98 (27.22)	43 (11.94)	79 (21.94)	27 (7.5)	3.53
	Average	115.4 (32.1)	98.2 (27.3)	58.2 (16.2)	57.4 (15.9)	30.8 (8.6)	3.58

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.4 provides an analysis of employees' perceptions of the hospital's recognition and reward systems, illustrating mixed but generally positive responses. Regarding acknowledgment of their contributions, 61.11% (strongly agree and agree) of employees felt that their efforts were recognized by management, resulting in a relatively high mean score of 3.67. On average, the mean score of 3.58 indicates a moderately positive perception of the recognition and reward systems. While employees generally appreciate acknowledgment and incentives, the relatively high levels of neutrality and dissatisfaction (15.9% and 8.6% on average, respectively) suggest that improvements are needed in providing consistent and meaningful recognition and rewards.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Analysis of Organisational Performance.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
16	The teaching hospital effectively meets the needs of its patients, providing high-quality care.	107 (29.72)	91 (25.28)	66 (18.33)	39 (10.83)	57 (15.83)	3.42
17	The financial stability of the teaching hospital is evident through prudent management and resource allocation.	107 (29.72)	101 (28.06)	31 (8.61)	71 (19.72)	50 (13.89)	3.40
18	Operational processes within the teaching hospital are efficient, resulting in timely and effective service delivery.	77 (21.39)	102 (28.33)	55 (15.28)	77 (21.39)	49 (13.61)	3.23
19	The teaching hospital is innovative in medical research and frequently witnesses scientific breakthrough.	72 (20.00)	98 (27.22)	84 (23.33)	67 (18.61)	39 (10.83)	3.27
20	The teaching hospital demonstrates effectiveness in its educational and training activity.	134 (37.22)	77 (21.39)	62 (17.22)	51 (14.17)	36 (10.00)	3.62
	Average	99.4 (27.6)	93.8 (26.1)	59.6 (16.6)	61 (16.9)	46.2 (12.8)	3.38

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.5 offers a descriptive analysis of employees' perceptions of the teaching hospital's organizational performance across key dimensions. The hospital's performance in educational and training activities received the highest level of agreement, with 58.61% of respondents affirming its effectiveness, resulting in the highest mean of 3.62. On average, the overall mean score of 3.38 indicates a moderate level of satisfaction with organizational performance.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix is presented in Table 4.6. Essentially, the result reveals the pairwise relationship among the variables used in the study. Principally, Correlation analysis is used to examine the strength (strong or weak) and direction (positive or negative) of relationship that occurs between two or more variables.

Table 4.6. Correlation Analysis

		ORGP	WLB	SWE	RS
ORGP	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	360			
WLB	Pearson Correlation	.692**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	360	360		
SWE	Pearson Correlation	.793**	.805**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	360	360	360	
RS	Pearson Correlation	.783**	.698**	.843**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	360	360	360	360

SPSS output, Version 22

The correlation analysis highlights significant relationships between organizational performance (ORGP) and the other variables at the 0.01 level. A strong positive correlation exists between ORGP and supportive work environment (SWE, $r = .793$, $p < .001$) as well as recognition and reward systems (RS, $r = .783$, $p < .001$), indicating that improvements in these areas are strongly linked to better organizational outcomes. Work-life balance (WLB) demonstrates a slightly lower but still substantial correlation ($r = .692$, $p < .001$), signifying their critical influence on organizational performance. These results underscore that a supportive work environment, recognition systems, and work-life balance are pivotal drivers of organizational performance.

5. Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that supportive work environment (SWE, $r = .793$, $p < .001$) significantly influence organizational performance, indicating that improvements in these areas are strongly linked to better organizational outcomes. The study found that a supportive work environment significantly contributes to organizational performance ($B = .204$, $p = .040$), aligning with scholarly consensus that conducive work conditions are pivotal for employee satisfaction and retention. This finding supports Akinyele (2021) and Ogunleye and Odetunde (2019), who argue that a positive work environment—including physical, social, and psychological conditions—enhances employee productivity and engagement. Similarly, Daramola (2020) highlights the importance of adequate resources and infrastructure, while Salau (2018) emphasizes the role of interpersonal relationships and organizational culture in fostering retention. Ugoani (2022) also found that conducive

work environments positively influence retention in Nigerian banks.

The study revealed that recognition and reward systems (RS, $r = .783$, $p < .001$), significantly influence organizational performance indicating that improvements in these areas are strongly linked to better organizational outcomes. Jehanzeb and Hamid (2018) and Nwosu and Kalu (2020) assert that recognition and rewards significantly improve retention by addressing employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs. Similarly, Chukwu and Nwachukwu (2021) found that employee recognition positively impacts retention and performance in Nigerian telecommunications firms. Achor and Gielan (2020) emphasize the psychological benefits of recognition in enhancing employees' sense of accomplishment, while Agwu (2021) stresses the importance of pairing recognition with structured rewards to create a performance-oriented culture. This study underscores that recognition and rewards are indispensable for aligning employee efforts with organizational goals, particularly in the high-pressure healthcare environment, as also highlighted by Balogun (2022). These findings suggest that improving recognition strategies at UBTH could further strengthen its organizational performance.

Work-life balance (WLB) demonstrates a slightly lower but still substantial correlation ($r = .692$, $p < .001$), signifying their critical influence on organizational performance. For instance, Deery and Jago (2018) and Kelliher (2020) argue that effective work-life balance policies reduce stress and turnover, ultimately enhancing productivity and organizational performance. Oshodi and Aluko (2022) found a significant positive relationship between work-life

balance and retention in Nigerian banks, while Adeniji, Osibanjo, and Abiodun (2019) similarly reported that flexible work arrangements improve retention in Nigerian manufacturing firms. The significant finding in this study may indicate that UBTH's work-life balance initiatives are fairly communicated to employees. This contrasts with Balogun (2022), who emphasizes that flexible policies are central to retaining employees, particularly in high-pressure sectors such as healthcare. Addressing these gaps could yield better results in future studies.

6. Findings and Conclusion

This study investigated employees' work-life balance and physical work environment as retention policy and HR best practice of Health-care workers performance using University of Benin Teaching Hospital as a case study. Data were primarily sourced through the administration of questionnaires, and a total of three hundred and sixty (360) were found usable for the empirical analysis. Based on the correlation analysis work-life balance was also found to have a fair significant influence on organizational performance, while physical supportive work environment, recognition and reward systems significantly contributes to organizational performance.

The findings revealed that work-life balance, a supportive work environment, and recognition and reward systems significantly contribute to enhancing Health-care workers performance, with recognition and rewards having the strongest impact. These results underscore the importance of prioritizing financial and non-financial rewards, fostering a supportive workplace, and improving recognition systems to enhance performance outcomes. At the same time, the findings highlight the need to reassess and strengthen work-life balance initiatives to better align them with employee expectations and organizational goals.

7. Recommendations

From the research analysis and conclusions above, the following recommendations were made:

Although work-life balance initiatives were found to have little significant impact, they remain a critical aspect of employee retention, especially in high-stress environments like healthcare. UBTH should redesign its work-life balance policies to incorporate more practical and flexible solutions, such as telecommuting options, remote work schedules to reduced workload and worn-out stress, introduce employee wellness programs, and better scheduling to accommodate personal needs. Effectively communicating these

initiatives to employees is equally essential to improve uptake and perceptions of their effectiveness.

As a supportive physical work environment was found to significantly enhance organizational performance, UBTH should invest more in improving both the physical and interpersonal aspects of the workplace. This includes ensuring adequate resources and infrastructure, maintaining clean and well-lit workspaces, and fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect among employees and supervisors. Regular feedback sessions and open communication channels can help address workplace concerns and create an emotionally stable and psychologically safe environment for employees.

Given that recognition and reward systems had the most significant impact on organizational performance, UBTH should develop a structured and transparent framework for acknowledging and rewarding employee contributions. This could include regular performance reviews, employee-of-the-month programs, public recognition for exceptional work, and awards for long-term service. Both intrinsic rewards (verbal praise, appreciation letters) and extrinsic rewards (bonuses, promotions) should be integrated to cater to diverse employee motivations and foster a culture of appreciation and loyalty.

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Sociological Perspectives to Impact of Strike Actions in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustment of University of Lagos Undergraduates.

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Abstract. Strike action is a legitimate means through which workers make their employers accede to their demands. Nigerian tertiary institution workers have employed the means over the years in their labour-relations with their government employers. Although the use of strike actions has not always yielded the desired results, it would sadly remain a legitimate option when every other means of engagement fails. The impact this may have on the products of the system and the society is a concern to all education stakeholders. This research hence, investigated the impact of strike actions on social adjustments among undergraduate students of the University of Lagos. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a sample size of 280 undergraduate students drawn from study population using proportionate random sampling technique. Five hypotheses guided the study. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled Impact of Strike Actions on Social Adjustment Questionnaire (ISASAQ) with $r = 0.71$ was used for data collection, Chi-square and ANOVA statistical tools were employed for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that incessant strike has a significant impact on the schools' academic programme, students' interest in education and students' interpersonal relationships. Also, there is a significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students at the University of Lagos. Based on the research findings, the study recommends; fostering positive labour relations and open communication to minimize the frequency and duration of strikes and adopting in addition, flexible academic programmes that allow for alternative modes of learning during strike periods to alleviate disruptions to students' education. Also, strengthening student support services, promoting transparency and timely communication, and prioritizing initiatives that foster social integration is essential to support students' social adjustment during periods of strikes.

Keywords: Incessant strikes, Education, Interpersonal relationship, Social Adjustment.

1. Introduction

Tertiary institutions are considered as the fountain of knowledge throughout the world; the fountain of intellectualism and the most suitable place for the intellectual incubation of leaders of tomorrow. Shimawua (2020) observed that tertiary institutions fulfill one major function: a knowledge and value provider. Universities are usually in the forefront of any social, economic, and political challenges, especially with the power of research being focused on areas that will promote human development and solve existential problems (Amadi and Urho, 2016). Research finding is part of a society's knowledge base, which is transmitted to students and industries. A university must be an institution for the people, a Centre for knowledge and problem solving for the society.

According to Chijioke (2013), a strike refers to a collective action by a body of workers to stop carrying out their regular duties to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer or a group of employers. It is a collective, organized cessation or slowdown of work by employees to force acceptance of their demands by the employers (Amadi and Urho, 2015). Parker (2012), views a strike in labour employment relations as a combined action of a group of employees, thereby withdrawing their labour totally or partially to persuade an employer to accept their combined demands. The purpose of strike action is to force employers to accede to the workers' demands. Strike action by trade union is lawful within the Nigerian laws, because Nigeria is signatory to the charter of the International Labour Organization (Jega, 2013). Staff industrial actions in Nigeria University, Polytechnic, College of Education, Secondary and

Primary Educational System have become the common phenomenon with the detrimental effects on the academic success of Nigerian students, academic calendar, delay in the duration of studies and the management.

The history of strikes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria dates back to 20th May, 1980, when a trade dispute was declared with the Governing Councils of Universities in Nigeria, which demanded improved funding of the universities, academic freedom, autonomy, as well as setting up of a special body to review the conditions of service of the universities' staff (Odim, Anashie and Solomon, 2018). Early in 1992, members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) declared an industrial dispute, over gross underfunding of universities in Nigeria, poor conditions of service of the academic staff, university autonomy, as well as the need for academic freedom. Numerous strikes have since followed by both academic and non-academic unions of the tertiary institutions to compel the government to meet the needs of public universities lecturers, non-teaching staff and schools, especially in the areas of wages, allowances, and infrastructural facilities (Yusuf, 2017). ASUU has been noted specifically for actions that were intended to improve the welfare of the public university, lecturers, students, and society at large. Sule, (2020) noted that disagreement or lack of understanding between the government and the academic community often results in a deadlock that usually disrupts the academic calendar.

Social adjustment is a skill that requires people to adapt well socially. Social adjustment points out one's skill to meet some criteria demanded by the environment to fit well in his or her environment socially. Pascarella and Terenzini (2014) stated that the process of adjusting socially at a higher institution was a complex process that involved socialization and desocialization. The students must prepare themselves to deal with the new beliefs and values as collegians while discharging the previous ones. As students navigate their daily schedules within the ivory towers to meet up with the social and academic demands of their education programme, adjustments are inevitable, either short-term or long-term.

Odubela (2012) observed that disruption in academic programmes occasioned by strike action breeds disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological trauma, unpreparedness on the part of the students, and lack of motivation, which sum up to a non-conducive environment for active learning in Nigerian Universities, a situation that dampens human development. During strike actions, some students

may engage themselves in unproductive activities such as sexual immorality, cyber scams, pool betting, playing video games, gossiping, watching films, and reading comic materials for entertainment purposes rather than reading the school notes. These may affect their academic performance. According to Arukaino (2013), idling youths at home could cause security problems. Isangedighi (2011) opined that the way a stimulus excites or impacts on an individual would trigger his/her responses. These are indication that students may lose the skill for preparedness and readiness to learn at the time of the strike. Hence, their educational attainment becomes adversely affected. This study, therefore, attempts to examine the influence of incessant strikes on the social adjustment of undergraduate students of the University of Lagos.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The action and counteraction of the academic staff union: the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) and Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in recent years to the recalcitrant attitude of the federal government towards the past agreement; conditions of services, salaries, and allowances, adequate funding as prescribed by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), University autonomy, integration of polytechnic academic staff payroll had led to frequent industrial actions by COEASU, ASUP and especially ASUU. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, the students struggle psychologically to adapt to changes occasioned by these strike actions in an attempt to cope with new standards and values in their physical and social environments. The social, emotional, and intelligent quotients of students are disrupted by strike actions hence, most students find it difficult to retrace their academic flow following a long period of strike actions.

The physical state of the university is impacted by strikes as well; University structures and equipment are most often left without use. The local economy where the university is founded and operates suffers. Enterprises that are established to supply the demands of the individuals that come to the area because of the university are crippled due to the strike actions and if the duration of the strike extends for a long time, some businesses will fold up. The economic lives of those whose business activities depend on tertiary institutions for survival are affected.

An academic institution disrupted by so many strikes cannot produce quality education. The time that is to

be spent learning and carrying out research is spent in crisis and conflict, yet strikes take place more than once every four years. This, however, will continue to be the trend in Nigeria's higher education system if strikes continue to disrupt academic calendars and activities. It is against this background that this study investigated the impact of the incessant strike in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustments of undergraduate students at the University of Lagos.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the Impact of Incessant strikes in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions on the Social Adjustment of Undergraduate Students of the University of Lagos. The specific objectives are to:

- Ascertain the impact of incessant strike action on the schools' academic programme among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Determine the impact of incessant strike actions on students' interest in education among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Ascertain the impact of incessant strike on students' interpersonal relationships among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Ascertain the age impact of incessant strike on Social Adjustment among Undergraduate Students in University of Lagos

1.3 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on schools' academic programme among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interest in education among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interpersonal relationships among University of Lagos Undergraduate Students.
- There is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among Undergraduate Students in University of Lagos.

2. Theoretical Framework.

This study was anchored on conflict theory. The Conflict perspective is a social, political, and economic philosophy embedded in the writing and ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883). This theory examines the effect of capitalism on labor, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker's revolution to overturn capitalism in favor of communism. Marx posits that the struggle between social classes, specifically, the bourgeoisie or capitalist and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist economy will invariably lead to conflict (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). Okunade (2016) explains that the conflict perspective includes conflicts among segments of a society and is not limited to economic determinism. Conflict is pervasive and exists among family, union and management, social institutions, and industrial systems.

This theory is relevant to the study as industrial relations in Nigeria are largely imbalanced and antagonistic between the parties involved and often in favour of the employer. Hence, strike actions are organized by the Academic Staff Union of Universities in response to unfavourable working conditions, funding, and management of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design.

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It is an approach of descriptive research that blends qualitative and quantitative data to provide relevant and accurate information. Nworgu, (2015) describes survey research design as a type of research in which a group of individuals or things are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few samples considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research design is suitable for this study because data was collected from a representative sample of the total number of undergraduate students from the Akoka campus of the University of Lagos.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population of this study are the undergraduate students of the University of Lagos. There are currently eight faculties in the Akoka Campus of the University. The researchers considered the students to be in the best position to be respondents for this research because they are directly affected by the variable under study.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study used a proportionate random sampling technique to select the participants from the faculties. As such, thirty-five (35) students were selected from each faculty. Hence, the sample size for the study was two hundred and eighty (280) undergraduate students drawn from the eight faculties that make up the University of Lagos Akoka Campus. A total of one hundred and thirty-two male and one hundred and forty-eight female students were involved in the study.

3.4 Research Instrument.

A structured questionnaire titled “Impact of Incessant Strike Actions on the Social Adjustment Questionnaire (IISASAQ)” was used in data collection. It comprised of sections A, and B. Section A provided information on the Biodata of the respondents while Section B contained four clusters, derived from each of the formulated hypotheses. The Likert scale measurement format of ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA), ‘Agree’ (A), ‘Strongly Disagree’ (SD), and Disagree (D), was adapted to the study.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The validity is intended to ensure the

instrument’s relevance, comprehensiveness of content, appropriateness of items and clarity of statements. The validators’ opinions and comments guided the production of the final draft of the instrument which the researchers used for data collection. The researchers conducted a pilot study on the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis was used to analyze the data that was obtained. The overall reliability index of 0.71 was obtained and was used to determine the adequacy of the research instrument for the study.

3.6 Administration of the Instrument.

The research instrument was administered to the respondents electronically through a Google form. The respondents were enjoined to complete the instrument electronically and submit it. In all, a total of thirty (35) questionnaires were distributed to the students in each of the faculties involved in this study. Afterward, the questionnaire was retrieved for data analysis.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The formulated hypotheses were analyzed using inferential statistics, Chi-square (X²), and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion

Hypothesis One: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on the school’s academic programme.

Table 1: Chi-Square (X²) Analysis of the Impact of Incessant Strike Action on the School’s Academic Programme.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E) ²	Chi-Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	120	70	50	2500	91.457	3	RejectH ₀
Agree	96	70	26	676			
Disagree	45	70	-25	625			
Strongly Disagree	19	70	-51	2601			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom = 279, Level of Significance = 0.05

The result from Table 1 shows that the Chi-square (X²) calc value of 91.457 is greater than the Chi-square tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 Level of Significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on the school’s academic programme.

Hypothesis Two: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interest in education.

Table 2: Chi-Square (X2) Analysis of The Impact of Incessant Strike Action on Students' Interest in Education.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E)2	Chi- Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	130	70	60	3600	92.314	3	RejectHo
Agree	76	70	6	36			
Disagree	55	70	-15	225			
Strongly Disagree	19	70	-51	2601			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom = 279, Level of Significance= 0.05

The result from Table 4.5 shows that the Chi-square (X2) calculated value of 92.314 greater than Chi-Square (X2) tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on students' interest in education.

Hypothesis Three: Incessant strike action does not have any significant impact on students' interpersonal relationships.

Table 3: Chi-Square (X2) Analysis of the impact of incessant strike action on students' interpersonal relationships.

Scale	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E)2	Chi-Square test	DF	Decision
Strongly Agree	115	70	45	2025	58.828	3	Reject Ho
Agree	80	70	10	100			
Disagree	58	70	-12	144			
Strongly Disagree	27	70	-43	1849			
Total	280	280					

*Degree of Freedom= 3, Level of Significance= 0.05

The result from Table 3 shows that the Chi-square (X2) calculated value of 58.828 is greater than Chi-square (X2) tabulated value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 Level of Significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, incessant strike action has a significant impact on the students' interpersonal relationships.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

Table 4: One Way Analysis of Variance of Age impact of Incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

	Sum of squares	DF	Mean square	F	Mean	St. Deviation	Sig.
Between Groups	1.978	1	1.978	12.571	2.50	.460	.000
Within Groups	43.750	278	.157		1.28	.287	
Total	45.729	279					

Table 4 result shows that the significant figure (.000) with a total degree freedom of 279 and F-value of 12.571 is less than the level of significance (α) at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students' is rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant age impact of incessant strike on social adjustment among undergraduate students.

5. Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one states that incessant strike action does not have a significant impact on the school's academic programme. From the results of the study, it is concluded that the incessant strike actions have a

significant impact on the school's academic programme. The compressed academic calendar skipped curriculum content, poor examination preparation, and disruption of academic activities collectively contribute to the decline in the overall quality of education and hinder students' appropriate knowledge development. This finding corroborates Adekunle (2017), who conducted a comprehensive study highlighting the adverse consequences of strikes on academic programs. The research revealed that strike actions invariably disrupt the smooth flow of academic activities, leading to a compressed calendar and inadequate coverage of essential curriculum content. Also, Okonkwo (2018) conducted an in-depth analysis of the impact of strikes on the knowledge development of students. Findings indicated that the

disruptions caused by strikes create gaps in students' learning experiences, leaving them with insufficient knowledge in various subject areas.

Hypothesis two was rejected as the findings indicated that incessant strike actions has a significant impact on students' interest in education. The reason may be that the lack of a stable and conducive learning environment negatively affects students' motivation, causing them to perceive education as less relevant and valuable. This is in line with Isangedighi (2017) and Iheanacho (2022), that the occurrence of incessant strike actions acts as a non-motivational factor for students. These frequent disruptions to the academic calendar create a drawback in the effectiveness of learning. Okechukwu (2018) conducted a study on the psychological impact of strikes on students' interest in education and found that the constant disruptions to the academic calendar due to strikes diminish students' motivation to engage with their studies. Similarly, Afolabi (2019) explored the relationship between incessant strikes and students' educational engagement. The study affirmed that strikes disrupt the continuity of learning and create a sense of disillusionment among students, leading to a decline in their interest in education.

Hypothesis three states that there will be no significant impact of incessant strike actions on students' interpersonal relationships. The findings from the study reveals that incessant strike has a significant impact on students' interpersonal relationships. The disruptions to the academic calendar and the inconsistent learning environment poses a challenge to students' ability to adapt. The lack of regular interaction with peers and teachers and the uncertainty caused by frequent interruptions, can have adverse effects on students' interpersonal relationships. This corroborates Uzochukwu (2018) that the lack of consistent interaction with peers and teachers during strike actions can lead to social isolation, hinder the development of crucial social skills, and affect students' emotional well-being. Adewale (2019) conducted a study examining the psychosocial effects of academic disruptions on students. Her research emphasizes that the uncertainty brought about by strikes can lead to stress and anxiety among students, further straining their interpersonal relationships. The disruptions in academic activities make it difficult for students to maintain a sense of belonging within their educational communities.

Hypothesis four stated that there will be no significant age impact of incessant strikes on undergraduate students' social adjustment. The research findings indicate that incessant strikes have a significant impact

on age and social adjustment among undergraduate students. The findings suggest that age does indeed have a significant influence on how students adapt socially during periods of incessant strikes. Mature-age students may experience challenges in social adjustment due to the lack of tailored activities, leading to feelings of exclusion. According to Dawborn-Gundlach and Margetts' (2018) research, mature-age students expressed reservations about the lack of specific activities catering to their needs during periods of incessant strikes. They opined that events open to all undergraduate students lacked relevance for older students, which could lead to feelings of exclusion and difficulty in social adjustment. Additionally, Dawborn-Gundlach (2018) highlighted that the relationship between student adjustment and age has been mainly studied by comparing the academic performance of younger and older students. However, research findings from studies comparing the performance of older students with school-leaver students have been inconclusive, indicating that the age impact on social adjustment during incessant strikes is an essential and complex factor to consider.

6. Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of incessant strikes on the social adjustment of undergraduate students at the school. The analysis yielded significant findings that shed light on the effects of strikes on various aspects of students' lives.

The research revealed that incessant strikes have a considerable impact on the school's academic program, disrupting the continuity and effectiveness of the educational process. This disruption, in turn, affects students' interest in education, leading to reduced motivation and engagement in their academic pursuits.

Moreover, the study identified a significant impact of incessant strikes on students' interpersonal relationships. The uncertainty and instability caused by strike actions can strain social connections and create challenges in maintaining positive relationships among students. Furthermore, the research highlighted the influence of age on social adjustments among undergraduate students during strike periods. Different age groups may experience and cope with strike-related challenges differently.

In conclusion, the study underscores the detrimental effects of incessant strikes on the social dynamics within the school community. It emphasizes the importance of addressing strike-related issues to promote a conducive and supportive environment for students' social adjustment and overall well-being. The

findings can serve as valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers to develop strategies aimed at minimizing the adverse effects of strikes and fostering a positive learning experience for students. By addressing these issues, educational institutions can better support their students and create an environment conducive to academic success and personal growth.

7. Sociological Implications of the Study

By examining the sociological implications of the study, we gain a deeper understanding of the broader social processes at play within educational institutions during periods of strikes. These implications can inform discussions on social cohesion, power dynamics, resilience, and access to resources in educational contexts. Furthermore, they can contribute to the development of policies and practices that foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, even in times of social disruptions. The key implications are:

Social Disruptions and Instability: The study highlights how incessant strikes disrupt the social fabric within educational institutions. These disruptions can create a sense of instability and uncertainty among students, affecting their interpersonal relationships and overall social adjustment. Sociologically, this reveals how labor disputes in educational settings can have far-reaching consequences beyond the immediate academic disruptions.

Socialization and Social Bonds: The educational system is at the center of socialization, and provides opportunities for students to form social bonds and connections that shape their identity and sense of belonging. There, this study reveals that incessant strike actions can strain these social bonds, impacting the quality and strength of relationships among students. This emphasizes the significance of the educational environment in fostering social integration and cohesion.

Age and Life Stage Perspectives: The finding that different age groups of students may respond differently to strikes highlights the significance of life stage perspectives in understanding social adjustment. Thus, this underscores the importance of considering students' life stages and developmental trajectories when studying the effects of social disruptions like strikes.

Institutional Power and Student Agency: Strikes in educational institutions can illuminate power

dynamics between students and institutions. The study's findings bring attention to how students navigate their agency in the face of labor disputes and how institutional decisions impact their lives. Sociologically, this raises questions about student participation and decision-making processes within the educational setting.

Social Resilience and Adaptation: The study provides insights into students' resilience and adaptive strategies during periods of strike disruptions. Hence, this contributes to the understanding of how individuals and groups respond to social challenges and adapt to changing circumstances within educational environments.

Social Inequality and Access to Resources: The impact of strikes on students' interest in education and social adjustment may have implications for social inequality within educational institutions. Students from marginalized backgrounds may face greater challenges during strike periods due to limited access to resources. Sociologically, this emphasizes the need to address disparities in access to educational opportunities and support services.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

Flexible Academic Programs: Institutions should introduce flexible academic programs that support adjustments and alternative modes of learning for students during strike periods.

Enhanced Student Support Services: Educational institutions should strengthen their student support services, providing counseling, mental health resources, and support networks during and after strike periods. These services can help students cope with the stress and uncertainty caused by strikes and support their social adjustment.

Transparency and Communication: To reduce uncertainty, educational institutions should adopt communication channels that facilitate open and timely communication with students during strike periods. These channels should provide updates on strike developments, potential resolutions, and contingency plans to eliminate anxiety and foster trust between students and the institution.

Promotion of Social Integration: Institutions should explore initiatives that promote social integration and belongingness among students. Thereby creating

opportunities for social interactions, extracurricular activities, and student engagement to strengthen social bonds within the university community.

Age-Appropriate coping mechanisms of students at various life stages: The interventions adopted should also consider the developmental levels of the students and age groups can better address the social adjustment challenges experienced during strike actions.

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Harnessing Epistemology with Consumer Decision-Making and Marketing Strategy

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Abstract. The article advocates for an epistemological framework regarding consumer choices and marketing tactics. Consumer behavior, particularly in relation to selecting products from various alternatives, poses several questions: Why do individuals engage in shopping? Why do they opt for specific items among numerous options? How is it that a particular product becomes the preferred choice for certain consumers and consumer segments? How can marketers create a portfolio for such a product, considering the range of diverse consumers/customers? Given that the consumer process of making purchasing decisions is increasingly intricate. The reality is that every company makes choices grounded in its understanding. However, how does an organization determine what it knows? This inquiry is crucial since a company's insights influence its decisions, strategies, and activities. In the realm of philosophy, the examination of knowledge is termed epistemology; it explores the origins of knowledge, how we validate its accuracy, and how we apply it. Nowadays, businesses possess more data than at any time in history, thanks to technology and data. However, possessing a wealth of information doesn't necessarily equate to having substantial knowledge. The paper argues that Sensory analysis is an essential collection of techniques for gaining research and marketing insight into product consistency and variability. Although these sensory evaluations are straightforward and easy to implement; others are more intricate and necessitate training and expertise.

Keywords: Epistemology, Consumer, Ideas, Perception, Primary qualities, Secondary qualities.

1. Introduction

Epistemology is the examination of the legitimate nature of knowledge: through our understanding of epistemology, we can discern the truth from the untrue by conducting a thorough assessment. An

epistemologist poses these questions: what are the origins of knowledge? What is the essence of knowledge? Is our knowledge credible? With the understanding of epistemology, we can acquire an understanding of the environment surrounding us. This research work is premised on John Locke's epistemology. We are not going to consider other aspects of John Locke's philosophy, except where they have connections to his theory of knowledge. We will confine ourselves discussion to John Locke's distinction between the epistemology of primary and secondary qualities of bodies, but because Locke's distinction between our knowledge of primary and secondary qualities did not emerge in isolation, our investigation will include an examination of John Locke's philosophy of idea.

In his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke divides ideas into straightforward and intricate. Straightforward concepts are additionally categorized into four groups based on their origins in experience: (a) straightforward concepts from a single sense (b) straight forward concepts from multiple senses (c) straightforward concepts of introspection (d) straightforward concepts combining sensation and introspection (Locke, 1959: 48), to John Locke, no concepts exist that lie beyond these categories. Complex notions can be understood by breaking them down into their simpler components; no ideas are exclusively simple or complex, and no ideas can be classified as both simple and complex simultaneously. while perception through reflection entails the emergence of basic ideas of reflection. In John Locke's examination of the workings of the mind concerning its ideas, terms such as 'remembering,' 'perceiving,' 'comparing,' 'abstracting,' and 'compounding' represent ideas themselves rather than merely labels for the processes that create our ideas. Outline of simple ideas are: Of One Sense are Eyes: Varieties of Tints of Hues and Illumination. Ears: Noises, Sounds, Tones. Palate: Tastes. Nose: Smells. Of Touch: Heat, Cold, Solidity (Locke, 1959:149). Of More than One Sense are: Space or extension,

Figure, Rest, Motion. (Locke, 1959:158). Simple Ideas of Reflection are: Perception or Thinking, Volition or Thinking. (Locke, 1959:159). Basic Concepts of Sensation and Reflection are: Pleasure or Delight, Pain or Uneasiness, Lower, Existence, Unity. (Locke, 1959:160). The paper contends that consumer perception delineates how clients and prospective buyers perceive a business and its products and services. The perception of consumers holds significance as it can affect their behavior and, ultimately, a company's profitability, how consumers perceive a brand can decide a business's success or failure.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To reveal the connection between our understanding of John Locke's epistemology of the ideas of primary and secondary qualities
- To comprehend the possibilities and challenges of our understanding of the epistemology of primary and secondary qualities
- To analyze how our understanding of the epistemology of the ideas of primary and secondary attributes influences our purchase decision
- To demonstrate how our understanding of sensory attributes can be developed and aimed at fulfilling consumers' needs, desires, and buying habits.

1.2 Research Questions

- What is the connection between our understanding of John Locke's epistemology of ideas of primary and secondary qualities?
- What are the potentials and challenges related to our understanding of the epistemology of the primary and secondary qualities?
- How can our perception of primary and secondary characteristics impact our purchase decision as consumers?
- Is it possible to utilize our understanding of sensory attributes to address consumers' desires and purchasing behaviors?

2. John Locke's Theory of Ideas and Theory of Knowledge

John Locke argues that our knowledge extends no further than we have ideas, without ideas there would be no opportunity for relation and identity, which then prevents understanding. To him knowledge can go no further than we can perceive their agreement or disagreement. We can see the unification of the theory of ideas and theory of

knowledge as Locke's goal. Locke's theory of knowledge should be understood as a systematic application of his wholly empiricist theory of ideas. The goal of Locke's historical plain method is to hold the theory of knowledge within the scope of the theory of ideas.

We understand Locke's knowledge to be a relation entirely between ideas and only ideas. However, controversy has persisted whether the objects of knowledge need be ideas. Yolton is of the view that in the case of knowledge of real existence, knowledge can be a perception of agreement of ideas with things that are not ideas. (1970:111). Woozley disagrees with Yolton and argues that no perceived agreement or disagreement could ever consist of anything but ideas. (Woozley, 1972:7) The point here is how to understand a perceived agreement or disagreement, by restricting perception to the domain of ideas. Because agreements and disagreements are relations they cannot be prized from their constituent ideas. To John Locke there is no difference between relations and ideas of relations, relations are just nothing more than occurrent mental comparisons. These comparisons are the complex ideas consisting of the reflective simple comparing annexed to two ideas. In his analysis of knowledge John Locke argues that because the mind "hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate, it is evident, that our knowledge is only conversant about them, in another sense he characterizes idea as whatever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception." (Locke, 1959: 169), ideas now turn out to be John Locke's basis for the definition of knowledge. It is only ideas that the mind does or can contemplate in achieving knowledge. Locke view the external sense and the internal sense as the fountain of knowledge, because this is where all the ideas we have or can naturally have do spring, (Locke, 1959: 122). Hume's distinction overlaps John Locke's distinction of knowledge and judgement, the mind's apprehension is grounded in experience and not in mere contemplation of the related ideas. Locke acknowledge the facts that many situations are ill suited to knowledge, but allow for practical assurance. His limit of human understanding enables us less likely to perplex ourselves and others with disputes about things to which our understandings are not suited. This also avoid skepticism because when we extend our enquiries beyond our boundary, we are apt to increase our doubt.

For instance, our secondary quality of color could be explained by a theory relating the color aspects of visual sense – data to the sub – microscopic textures of seen surfaces. John Locke claims: if then external objects be united to our minds when they produce ideas therein, and yet we perceive these original

qualities in such of them as singly fall under our senses, it is evident that some motion must be thence continued by our nerves, or animal spirits, by some parts of our bodies, to the brains or the seat of sensations, there to produce in our minds the particular ideas we have of them. And since the extension, figure, number, and motion of bodies of an observable bigness, may be perceived at a distance by the sight, it is evident some singly imperceptible bodies must come from them to the eyes, and thereby convey to the brain some motion, which produces these ideas which we have of them in us.” (Locke, 1959:172).

John Locke is of the opinion that our perceptions of secondary qualities may vary greatly according to the state of our body and the environment. Secondary qualities he claims are powers to produce various sensations in us. To say that ‘A’ has a power to produce ‘B’ in me is to say, among other things, that if ‘A’ were related to me in certain way then ‘B’ would occur in me. Secondary quality of an object is its power to induce in something else an idea, secondary quality perceptions are to be explained through the primary qualities of the perceived objects. In his: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke uses perception and sensation as equivalent to idea. The use of these terms is hard to justify. There is an idea of perception, of course, but perception is not an idea. This loose way of using perception and sensation can lead only to confusion. When the mind has an idea which is caused by or annexed to an impression on the body made by an external object, the mind has the power to observe this having an idea so caused by a distinct object or idea.

Having an idea so caused is perception, so if we call it sensation, sensation is a part of perception. Neither one is an object at first, both can be object when the mind reflects upon its own processes. We cannot say we have a sensation in the sense that we have an object or idea. All we can say is that we have the idea of perception or sensation. The only valid use of the term sensation is that it is that part of perception which refers to the mind’s having ideas caused by or annexed to impressions on the body by an external object. Sensation or perception is the power or the quality of the mind by virtue of which the mind has ideas. It is a process not an object. To John Locke perception or thought which actually accompanies and is annexed to, any impression on the body, made by an external object being distinct from all other modifications of thinking, furnishes the mind with a distinct idea, which we call sensation, which is as it were, the actual entrance of any idea into the understanding by the senses. The same idea when it again recurs without the operation of the like object on the external sensory, is remembrance, if it be sought after by the mind, and

with pain and endeavor found, and brought again in view, it is recollection. If it be held there long under attentive consideration, it is contemplation. (Locke, 1959: 298). In John Locke’s analysis of the same water feeling hot to one hand and cold to the other he says “for if we imagine warmth, to be nothing but a certain sort of degree of motion in the minute particles of our nerves or animal spirits, we may understand how it is possible that the same water may, at the same time produce the sensations of heat in one hand, and cold in the other.” (1959:177). Locke is of the opinion that the objects the mind immediately perceives, trees, stones, houses are its ideas, for instance when I say the rose is red and of a certain shape and size all I am warranted in meaning is that a certain complex idea, rose has in it the simple ideas redness, form, and extension.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Qualities and Sensory Perception

Downing, L. (2009), “Locke: The Primary and Secondary Qualities Distinction”, opines that John Locke formulates the most famous and influential version of ideas of primary and secondary qualities. To her, John Locke does not deny that secondary qualities are in bodies, but that they are not in bodies in the way we naively take them to be, but rather in some ways inferior to the way in which the ideas of primary qualities are there. She sees John Locke’s distinction as a distinction between qualities which are really in bodies and qualities which are at best in bodies in some lesser or dependent fashion. Downing captures the core of John Locke’s distinction between ideas of primary and secondary qualities with the distinction between the intrinsic and irreducible qualities count as secondary qualities for John Locke.

Ayers, M. (1975) “The Ideas of Power and Substance in Locke’s Philosophy”, affirms that the concept of substance is as important in Locke’s philosophy as the concept of an idea. He sees John Locke as a classic expression of a philosophy of nature. To him, John Locke’s doctrine of substance helps to constitute the end to which the general theory of ideas and knowledge is a means or preliminary the mapping of the extent and limits of human understanding. Ayer argues that the observable qualities of any particular sort of substance are said to flow from the unknown essence of that substance, if this is the same relationship as inherent in substance, then it seems that the essence from which observable properties flow and the substance from which they do result must be the same thing. But John Locke’s argument points to a distinction between them. To Ayer the general ideas of substance is everywhere the same and from observation we know these properties.

Jacovides, M. (2010) "Locke's Distinction Between Primary and Secondary Qualities", suggested that John Locke's definition of ideas of primary qualities as "such as are utterly inseparable from the body" and secondary qualities as "powers to produce various sensation in us" does not entirely serve the purpose, because it seems indistinguishable from what seems to be his official definition of quality as "the power to produce any idea in our mind. I call quality of the object wherein power is". Jacovides however, doubts if John Locke genuinely intends to define secondary qualities as powers to produce sensations in us. Jacovides is of the opinion that there is no principled difference to be drawn between the power to produce the idea of red and the power to produce the idea of oblong and that he could not understand why our ideas of colour pick out mere powers to produce ideas in us, and our ideas of shape pick out intrinsic, mind-independent qualities.

Whiteley, C. H. (1969), "Sense Data", contends that sense data have specific attributes such as hue, form, and proportional dimensions, and they typically do not correspond numerically or qualitatively to physical objects. These characteristics are directly observed, they cannot be questioned by the individual who perceives it. For him, the challenges in utilizing sensory information emerge when one needs to ascertain if a characteristic is sensorially presented and genuinely exists or is merely imagined or believed to exist. He sees the distinction between datum and interpretation clear, for instance the blue color, the bend, the diminishing sound are actually seen or heard. To whiteley we encounter uncomfortable situations where the difference seems ambiguous, for instance, if an object appears distance, is its distance perceived, assumed or assessed? Are we able to perceive the sorrow in a facial expression? Or sense the sorrow in a musical composition? he does not regard distance and sadness as characteristics of sensory information, the emphasis here is not the analysis of experience but instead the examination of an idea, for example he perceives blueness as a characteristic of sensory information, since to be blue is not more or less than appearing blue, therefore stating that a physical object is blue does not automatically imply that it appears blue to a particular person on a particular occasion.

Cohen, J. (2011) *The Red and the Real: An Essay on Color Ontology*, affirms that colours are constituted in terms of relation between objects and subjects, defending relationalism about colours. To him, something is red, for instance, if it causes reddish experiences in the relevant individuals in relevant circumstances. Cohen is a real colour enthusiast, he offers a 'master argument relationalism based on perceptual variation. He argues further that the most important form of colour

relationalism is the dispositionalist view that identifies colours with dispositions to look coloured. To him, the guiding idea behind color disposition is that colours are analogous to properties like fragility or solubility in having characteristic manifestations that occur only when appropriate circumstances obtain. To him, fragile objects shatter when they are struck sufficiently hard but not held together by extrinsic supports such as packaging material. From Cohen's argument we can see that the way an object is presented is best understood in terms of external mind-independent and situation dependent qualities of objects, such as colours and the situational qualities such as lighting conditions, and perceiver's location in relation to the perceived object.

Lamprecht, S. (1929), "Sense Qualities and Material Things", asserts that sensory attributes and substance are both attributes of events and ultimate units of reality. There is a causal connection, matter being cause and sense qualities the effects. He perceives sensory qualities as a trustworthy and dependable sign of a physical object. The outside realm consisted of vast physical forms, with specific size, shape, density, and mass acting in particular manners. As per Lamprecht, sensory qualities and substance are not two categories of material, but two descriptors that pertain to occurrences; sensory qualities and substance are not two separate domains of existence, but two different attributes we observe in the same series of natural occurrences, for example, sensory qualities such as hues, noises, scents, etc. exist in the moments and places they are perceived. We separate the sensory characteristics from their original context during occurrences. For him, we interpret the yellow hue as an indicator of sodium, a dull pain as a signal of fatigued nerves and a requirement for rest; we regard this flavor as a warning of decomposed meat hazardous to health. He sees relationship between sense qualities and substance as a consistent and uniform correlation.

3.2 Sensory Evaluation of Objects Under Different Varying Conditions

Rizzo, P. V. Harwood, W. S. and Drake, M. A, (2020), "Consumer Desires and Perceptions of Lactose-Free Milk", characterize consumer views and choices regarding lactose-free milk. Three 1.5-hour focus groups (n-25), a structured survey (n-331), trained panel descriptive analysis, and a consumer acceptance taste test (n-160) were carried out with lactose-free milk consumers. Focus groups were assessed based on the frequency of responses, revealing that habits and flavor resemblance to cow's milk significantly influenced the preference for lactose-free milk over plant-based options. Higher sweetness and reduced viscosity were identified as the main sensory distinctions between lactose-free milk and conventional milk. The information collected from these methodologies offered valuable

insights into consumers' perceptions of ideas of primary and secondary qualities and purchasing behaviors. Understanding consumer preferences for lactose-free milk will provide practical guidance for new product development within the dairy sector for this market segment.

Obadina, N. O. Oyewole, O. B. and Ogundipe, F. O. (2009), "Effect of Packaging Material on the Storage and Shelf life of Cooked Fufu", identify qualities such as color, texture, odor and acceptability of cooked "fufu" stored at ambient and refrigeration temperatures. The changes observed include the spoilage and shelf life of cooked "fufu" under different storage and packaging conditions. The physical changes in cooked "fufu" during storage at ambient condition reveals that for the first three days, the samples remain unchanged in color, odor, and texture. On the sixth day, there was color change, yellow, black, and green spots were observed in the "fufu" packaged in leaf. The result indicates that cooked "fufu" stored in refrigerator remains stable in color, texture, and odor while those of ambient condition showed color, odor and textural changes. This reveals that cooked "fufu" will keep best when stored refrigerated.

Eke, J. Sanni, S. A. and Owuno, F. (2009), "Proximate and Sensory Properties of Banana Cakes", (2009) identify the primary and secondary qualities in Wheat/Banana composite cake. Banana and Wheat flour were milled into flour. Banana and Wheat flour were sieved through a size screen to obtain flour of uniform particle size; cake samples were prepared. Sensory evaluation of the Cake was conducted within 24 hours of baking in the nutrition and processing laboratory of the department, using a panel of 20 consumers of cakes. The panel was asked to score for aroma, color, texture, taste and overall acceptability using a 9 points hedonic scale, where 1 and 9 represent dislike extremely and like extremely respectively. The panelists were instructed to rinse their mouth with water after tasting each cake sample. Sensory evaluation showed no significant difference between the control wheat and banana flour in taste, texture and general acceptability.

Babajide, J. M. and Onaderu, O. A. (2009), "Effect of Local Preservatives on the Sensory Properties of Dried Yam Slices "Gbodo", Flour and Paste", reveal that there were some differences in the sensory attributes of treated samples of dried yam flour and paste compared with the untreated sample. The differences were within the acceptable limits. Collected samples of white yam tuber of local variety of "ijedo" "Abafe" and "Agelu" leaves. The processing of Yam tubers to dried yam "Gbodo" flour and paste was carried out. Coded samples of dried Yam slices, flour and paste were presented to 20 trained panelists, each treatment group was

compared with untreated sample respectively. Sensory evaluation of dried Yam slices, flour and paste were conducted on different days in a well – lit sensory laboratory. The trained panelists consisted of male and female adults who are familiar with the samples and each conducted an independent assessment in separate sensory booths. The levels of the attributes of the dried Yam slices and their products were assessed using the scoring difference test. The color attribute was assessed using a 6 points scale with 1 = darker brown, 2 = dark brown, 3 = brown, 4 = moderately brown, 5 = light brown, 6 = lighter brown, for the dried Yam slices and flour. Amala paste was also presented to the panelists for identification of any difference/similarities between qualities such as color, aroma. With 1 = bad aroma, 2 = poor aroma, 3 = fair aroma, 4 = good aroma, 5 = very good aroma, and 6 = excellent aroma. Taste with 1 = very bitter, 2 = bitter, 3 = slightly bitter, 4 = bland, 5 = slightly sweet, 6 = sweet. Mouldability with 1 = very sticky, 2 = sticky, 3 = neither sticky nor moldable, 4 = highly moldable. The panelists were provided with water to rinse their mouths before and after tasting each sample. A 9 – point hedonic scale was used to determine the overall acceptability of dried yam paste "Amala" with 1 = dislike extremely, 2 = dislike very much, 3 = dislike moderately, 4 dislike slightly, 5 = neither like nor dislike, 6 = like slightly, 7 = moderately, 8 = like very much and 9 = like extremely.

The results shows that all the treated samples had acceptable color (secondary quality) which ranged from lighter brown to brown except the Yam paste treated with dried 'agehu' leaves. There were significant differences in the color, taste, mouldability and overall acceptability of treated paste compared with the untreated sample. There were no significant differences in the aroma of the paste of all the treated samples compared with the untreated sample. However, higher concentrations of preservatives could negatively affect the sensory attributes of "gbodo" flour and paste.

Nzeagwu, O.C. and Udugwu, A. N. (2009), "Nutrient Composition, Physical and Sensory Properties of Fruit Juices Produced from Velvet Tamarind, Pineapple and Pawpaw" evaluated for taste, flavor, appearance and general acceptability of three juice samples namely: Velvet Tamarind, Pineapple, and Pawpaw juice. Velvet Tamarind fruit was sorted and the shells were removed manually by breaking the pods and bringing out the pulp – covered seed. The juice was filtered with a clean cloth to obtain a clear sample free from seeds and other particles. The pineapple fruits were thoroughly washed in tap water and peeled manually with a stainless-steel knife. The fruits were covered and the edible portions were cut into thin slices blended in a ken-wood food processor and sieved. Similarly ripe

pawpaw fruit was thoroughly washed peeled, seeds removed and cut into small pieces. The fruit was blended in an electric food processor, to produce pulps which was further sieved using a clean cheese cloth to produce juice. The evaluation was based on a 9 points hedonic scale namely: 9 = like extremely and 1 = dislike extremely. The evaluation was randomly carried out under full illumination. The juice samples were presented in randomized order in transparent glass cups coded with alphabets. Bottled water was provided for the judges to rinse their mouth as they evaluated the samples. The judge responses showed significant difference in taste, flavor, and general acceptability for all the single juice samples: Velvet Tamarind juice, Pineapple juice, and Pawpaw juice. In appearance, Pineapple juice and Pawpaw juice did not differ significantly. In taste there were no significant difference between Pawpaw juice and blends of Velvet Tamarind juice/Pineapple juice and Velvet Tamarind juice/Pawpaw juice. There was also no significant difference in general acceptability between Velvet Tamarind juice and all the blends. But Pineapple juice was highly accepted, while Velvet Tamarind juice neither rejected nor accepted for taste, appearance, flavor, and general acceptability. This could be as a result of the natural sweetness and flavor and familiarity of the judges to the pineapple juice.

4. Research Methodology

This research utilizes the qualitative approach, incorporating both primary and secondary source materials: Literature, scholarly articles, and credible online resources have been directed to enhance this paper's depth and significance. This research is also based on textual analysis and case review approach, it uses the tools of exposition, analysis and criticisms. The research made recourse to the historical antecedents of the philosophy of John Locke. The issue of synthesis is addressed by drawing attention to the relationship between John Locke's epistemology of sensory qualities (primary and secondary) on the one hand and other classical criticisms on the other.

5. Results / Findings

Epistemology of sensory qualities are necessary to help manufacturers appeal to the conscious and unconscious preferences of consumers. Consumer panels, trained sensory panels and instrumental analysis can be used to help guaranteed that a product's color is consistent from batch to batch. Some of the most colossal failures in the history of processed foods involved the color of a food product that did not fall in line with consumer expectations, for example, caffeine – free cola, failed to generate a satisfactory profit because consumers could not relate to a clear soda that tasted like a brown cola. It

could even be said that when a product is widely successful, color seldom is credited for the success. (Ajayi, 2016:172).

Not only is the relationship between taste, smell, and texture important for enjoying food, drink and other things, but the disruption of the relationship can lead to many more problems. Smell and taste are natural defenses that protect humans from danger e.g. poison, fire etc. The relationship between smells and taste in one human body can have a major impact on a person's life. A couple of days ago I was watching one of my favorite shows, supreme chef, a reality TV show in which contestants try to out cook each other in multiple competitions to become the ultimate "supreme chef". During one of the final episodes a contestant, who was being asked to why his food tasted so bad admitted to the judging panel that he had a weak sense of smell. The judges told the contestants that to be a "supreme chef" one must have a perfect sense of smell, or at least a very strong one, because smell is one of the most important factors in understanding the tastes food. So why would it be detrimental for a chef to not have a good sense of smell? Not only would a decrease sense of smell be a huge detriment for a professional chef, but it would also affect someone who would just be enjoying food for pleasure.

A better understanding of color – shape compositions can be used as a tool for creating labels that are recognizable and evoke brand and corporate images. For instance, consumers seem to be affected by size, shape, and color of an object. Shape offers an opportunity to get a strong response from audiences, buildings, product packaging and company logos. All include the use of shape as excitement. In the late 1980s, car manufacturers became aware of the fact that many more women were making decisions about auto purchase, car designs, as a result began to include more curves.

Flavor like color and texture is a quality factor. It influences the decision to purchase and to consume a food product. Food flavor is a combination of taste and smell, and it is very subjective and difficult to measure. People differ in their ability to detect tastes and odors. People also differ in their preferences for these. Consumer expects certain qualities from their food. These include, color, flavor, texture, and even size. When these are missing or different than expected, the food is rejected. For instance, consumer expect meat to be red, apple juice to be light brown and clear, orange juice to be orange, egg yolks to be bright yellow – orange and so on. Color is an indication of ripeness or spoilage. The end product of cooking process is judged by color. Changes in expected colors can also indicate problems with the processing or packaging. Depending on product, consumers expect food to

have certain sizes and shapes, fruits and vegetables are graded based on their sizes and shapes. In the area of texture, consumer expects gum to be chewy, crackers to be crisp, cookies to be crunchy. The texture of food refers to the qualities felt with the fingers, tongue or the teeth. Texture in food varies widely but any departure from what the consumers expect is a quality defect. The ultimate judgement on any product consumed or service rendered is given by the end user - the customer. Any decision for a repeat is determined by the personal satisfaction gained from its consumption or use by the consumer. (Gatchalian, 2024:10). Every idea is an object of some action of perception or thinking. It means that when one perceives an object, one thinks of it. That is the mind perceives an object and transforms it into a thought or an idea.

6. Conclusion

Harnessing epistemology with consumer decision making and marketing strategy opens new opportunities for marketing research, the relevance of shape, size, colour, odour and taste has been a topic of philosophical research. Strong emotional connection of shape, size, colour, odour and taste between consumers and products affects the perceived links between price and quality as a detriment of purchase intent. Objects cause various ideas in us such as size, colours, smells, taste and odour. They act on our sense organs in ways that are determined by their qualities. The ability to cause an idea in us is a secondary quality of the object that depends on the ideas of primary qualities. Secondary qualities result from an object's primary qualities, all our secondary quality perceptions would be causally explained in terms of the primary qualities of the things we perceive.

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Importance of Proper Waste Management Programme in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Health care facilities are established to provide treatment and safeguard the health of the people against conditions that pose risk or threat to health care providers, patients, waste handlers and the entire community. Health care activities are carried out to protect, restore health and save lives but paradoxically, they are known to generate wastes that poses obvious health risks either by direct infection or through exposure to dangerous chemicals and radiation materials. The purpose of the study was to determine the medical waste management practice in health care facilities in Edo State. Eight research questions were raised to guide the study while six hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population for the study comprised the 1,383 health care facilities in Edo State. A sample size of 276 respondents was selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used was a validated Dichotomous scale format questionnaire with 29 items. The instrument's reliability was established using the test-retest method of estimating reliability and a co-efficient value of 0.68 was obtained. Data generated from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage and inferential statistics of binomial test and chi-square. The findings revealed that some health care facilities still do not fully comply with the dictates of approved practices specifically in the areas of segregation, incineration method, use of water proof floor with good drainage, treatment modalities and that there was no absolute difference in the urban and rural settings in terms of medical waste management. It was concluded that the immense benefits of proper waste management should be fully utilized in compliance with the approved practices to avert the possibility of accidents and disease outbreak that could result in loss of life and property. It was recommended that health care facilities should improve practices at all the stages of waste management. Therefore, all health care facilities owe a duty to protect the public and the environment and should have peculiar responsibilities as regard the waste they produce in a sanitary manner to reduce infection and illness.

1. Introduction

Medical waste is an overwhelming public health problem that affects public health, social and economic well-being of the people. The management of medical waste has become a major challenge in most health care facilities all over the world especially in the developing countries and Nigeria in particular. The management of medical wastes is critically at suboptimal level reflecting especially in poor handling and ineffective disposal methods of medical wastes. These have a high propensity to expose human beings and the environment to potentially hazardous wastes. Medical waste constitute waste materials generated in health care facilities such as hospitals, clinics, health centres, blood banks, dental centres, veterinary clinics, research and laboratory facilities etc (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2012). The contribution of medical wastes to environmental pollution and associated health risks due to their infectious nature and unpleasant sight and smell have generated increased public interest in both developed and developing nations of the world (Awodele, Adewoye and Oparah, 2016). Generally, health care institutions and facilities are expected to take care of public health issues including medical wastes. These health facilities are considered unique environments that would provide health care to patients and ideal work environments for medical and other staff. Specifically, health care institutions apart from ensuring patient care, would also be expected to apply specific approaches to ensure clean and healthy environment for workers and the community at large. As a matter of fact, the Basel Convention Agreement reached by member states of the United Nations states that it is the responsibility of health care establishments to treat and dispose wastes generated in such a manner as to ensure that there would be no adverse health or environmental risks (United Nations Environment Programme, 1999).

It has generally been observed that developed countries face challenges with the sheer volume of

waste from the use of disposables on one hand, while on the other hand developing countries whose supplies are limited are dealing with the dilemma of sorting and disposing all types of medical wastes in sanitary manner (Globalisation), 2010. Health care activities all over the world are known to generate significant amounts of these hazardous medical wastes. It is believed that several hundreds of tons of medical wastes are deposited in open waste dumps and surrounding environments, often alongside non-hazardous solid wastes (Abah & Ohimain, (2010). Recent studies in Nigeria have estimated waste generation of between 0.562 to 0.670kg/bed/day and as high as 1.68kg/bed/day (Longe & William, 2006; Olubunmi, 2009).

The problem of medical waste is considered a huge one considering the fact that medical waste is the third largest source of waste in the United States of America and that in developing countries, the unsanitary disposal of medical waste has put millions of lives at risk. This is because dumping sites are often visited by scavengers for goods. In other words, these emerging countries face a myriad of health problems arising from the burning of waste as open dumping in unsanitary landfills and incinerators are still the main vehicles used to dispose medical wastes. It is paradoxical to note that health care activities that are expected to protect health, cure patients and save lives, are known to throw up wastes that pose obvious health risks either by way of direct infection or through exposure to chemical and radiation materials (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2011).

The problem associated with sanitary medical waste disposal in the developing world are also ascribed to poor funding and the lack of government regulatory laws which would serve as legal backing for proper waste management (United Nations Development Programme, 2014). The poor management of health care waste potentially exposes healthcare workers, waste handlers, patients and the community at large to infection, toxic effects, injuries and the risks associated with environmental pollution. The UNDP (2014) therefore advocated that it is essential for all medical waste materials to be segregated at the point of generation, appropriately treated and disposed off safely. The transmission of diseases and micro-organisms, defacing the aesthetics of the environment, environmental pollution, as well as contamination of soil and underground water tables by untreated medical waste are some of the negative health and environmental impacts of medical waste (Manyela and Lyasenga, 2010).

WHO, estimates that each year, there are about 8 to 16 million new cases of Hepatitis B virus (HBV), 2.3 to 4.7 million cases of Hepatitis C virus (HCV) and 80,000 to 160,000 infectious cases of Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) mostly due to very

poor waste management systems particularly those involving disposal of unsafe infectious materials (WHO, 1999). It was also observed that in many health care facilities in the developing world, the waste is not segregated but burnt in harmful incinerators, even in the open. Unfortunately, these methods of waste disposal further pollute the environment and spread diseases as Nigeria is not paying enough attention to the problem of medical waste. In most developed countries, a holistic approach to health care waste management has been adopted as an integral part of the national health care systems. These include the establishment of regulatory framework, development of national plans and the development of innovative approaches. In many developing countries like Nigeria, many health concerns are competing for limited resources, therefore, the management of medical waste has not received the attention and priority it deserves. Medical wastes are still handled and disposed together with domestic wastes in the same collecting bins at road sides and disposed in similar fashion. This practice was observed in some hospitals in Lagos by Awodele et al (2016) where medical waste is still mixed with municipal waste in their on-site storage facility. An initial visit to some health institutions in Benin city by the researcher also confirmed similar practices of mixing untreated medical wastes with municipal wastes in collecting bins and at dump sites and disposed of in residential waste landfills.

There may not be much difference in the way and manner medical wastes generated in various health care facilities are managed in Nigeria. Olubukola (2009) reported similarity in waste generated and health care waste management practices in two general hospitals as characterized by a lack of waste minimization or waste reduction strategies, poor waste segregation practices, lack of instructive posters on waste segregation and disposal of health care wastes with general wastes. A near total absence of institutional arrangement for health care waste in Nigeria has been reported by others (Coker, Sangodoyin and Ogunlowo, 1998). WHO (2014) has always advocated that it is essential for all medical wastes materials to be segregated at the point of generation, appropriately treated and disposed off safely. It is crucial to note that as long as modern medicine is constantly maintained and sustained to ensure quality of life and healthy well-being, the health sector is likely to generate by-products that would adversely affect people and the environment.

In Nigeria, the extent to which medical wastes are managed on the basis of government regulatory laws and policies, careful planning, sound organization, adequate financing and full participation by trained staff is not very clear. There is therefore, the urgent need to assess the medical waste management

practices of health care facilities in Edo State as part of efforts to protect public health.

2. Exigency of Proper Waste Management Programme

Protecting the public and the environment absolutely from potentially infectious disease-causing agents, the medical waste management programme is imminent as this regulates the generation, handling, storage, treatment and disposal of medical waste (California Department of Public Health, 2016). In Nigeria, USA, even Edo State, proper waste management is crucial to public safety and that of the environment as there are four reasons why proper waste management is important (Tiger Sanitation Utah, 2015):

- Protects the environment- when waste is disposed of properly, it can prevent hazardous materials from contaminating the environment.
- Recycling helps in making extra money. This is achieved by sorting all the recyclables, then make some money out of it and then dispose all the waste materials.
- Reduce waste – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. The beauty about recycling is that you can reduce waste and reuse your materials.
- Safety- ensure that trash is properly stored and disposed because it can be harmful to others.

According to Mohammed (2016), waste management is important because improperly stored refuse can cause health, safety and economic problems as all living organisms create waste but humans create much waste than other species and that preventing the damage on the earth's ecosystems and maintaining a high quality of life for the planet's inhabitants, humans must manage and store their waste efficiently and safely. Wikipedia (2014b) added that disposal of waste is an environmental concern as many medical wastes are classified as infectious or hazardous and could potentially lead to the spread of infectious diseases. Rushton (2003) asserted that the process of waste management is important for both the health of the public, aesthetic and environmental reasons and that the potential health effect of both waste and the consequences of managing it have been the subject of vast body of research. There is dire need to reduce waste. According to Maroufi, Javadi, Yaghoubi and Karimi (2012) waste minimization is the latest alternative for risk reduction and that it benefits the waste producer as the costs for both the purchase of goods for waste treatment and disposal are reduced.

3. Methodology

This chapter discussed the methods and procedures that were used in carrying out this study, and they are as follows:

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used for the conduct of this study. This was considered appropriate because information about how medical waste is managed and its impact on human health and the environment were collected and described as they exist without manipulating their conditions.

3.2 Population of the Study

There are currently 1,383 (one thousand, three hundred and eighty-three) registered public and private health care facilities in Edo State (Edo State Ministry of Health, 2016). They are located in urban and rural areas of the three senatorial districts of Edo State. Specifically, there are 182, 59 and 35 health care facilities in Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central respectively (Appendix II).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size for the study. It involved stratifying the health care facilities in the eighteen local government areas into three senatorial districts, viz Edo South, Edo Central and Edo North. The systematic random sampling technique was used to select 10% of the health care facilities within each senatorial district. This was done by arranging the health care facilities alphabetically after which the first name and every other 10th names were selected in each Local Government Area making a total of 138 health care facilities as the target sample size. Purposive sampling technique was then used to select the officer in charge and the next ranking officer in each health care facilities to respond to the questionnaire. The purpose was to select officers who have adequate knowledge of the normative activities in the health care facilities and to help clarify where observations appear to be confounded. A total of 276 respondents were selected as sample size.

3.4 Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of two sections (A and B). Section A elicited information about the bio-data of the respondents while section B consist of 29 items eliciting responses on medical waste management in health care facilities. The response set was patterned along Likert scale format response of Strongly

Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Responses from the respondents were graduated into levels of utilization. From 90%-100% were categorized as high, 80%-89% was medium, and 79% downward was categorized as low. In the same vein, for specific levels of usage, 90% to 100% were categorized as excellent while 80% to 89% as good, 70 to 79% as average and 69% downwards was categorized as poor respectively.

3.5 Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was content validated by the researcher's supervisor and other two experts in the Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education in the Faculty of Education, one from the Department of Nursing Services and the other from the Department of Waste Management, UBTH, Benin City, making a total of five validators. Their suggestions and corrections were effected and incorporated in the final draft of the instrument.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The test-retest method of reliability was used in determining the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to 36 respondents across the eighteen local government areas that are not part of the study. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the same group of respondents. The scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to establish the reliability of the instrument. A coefficient value of 0.68 was achieved which was deemed high enough for the study.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

Letters of introduction were given to all the Directors/Administrators of the various selected health care facilities in Edo State. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of 5 trained research assistants who were briefed on how to be courteous and persuade the respondents to respond to the questionnaire. After completion, 276 questionnaires were retrieved.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The fully completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, and inferential statistics of t-test, binomial test and chi square. These were done using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

4. Findings

Findings revealed that despite the advantages inherent in the employment of proper medical waste

management, some health care facilities in Edo State still do not fully comply with the dictates of best practices. Specifically, the findings revealed that:

- Some health care facilities still do not segregate their medical waste at the source of generation despite being a major medical waste management practice.
- Some health care facilities still employ incineration method which is now being discouraged in emerging countries in an attempt to reduce the volume of waste.
- The use of water proof floor with good drainage is low in some of the health care facilities.
- In some of the health care facilities, treatment modalities of medical waste are generally poor. It was however established that there should be regular and proper waste management practices in these health care facilities.
- There is no absolute difference between the waste management practices of the medical centres in the urban setting compared to those on the rural setting.

5. Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, it is the conclusion of the researcher that the immense gains accruable from proper waste management should be fully utilized in compliance with the approved practices in the management of medical waste in the areas generation, collection, segregation, storage, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste thereby averting the possibility of accident and disease outbreak that could result in loss of life and property. Therefore, all health care facilities owe a duty to protect the public and the environment and should have essential responsibilities as regard the waste they produce in a sanitary manner, thereby reducing infection and illness. There should be awareness campaign for proper waste management.

6. Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- That health care facilities in Edo State should improve practices in their waste management.
- There should be efficient segregation of different categories of medical waste at the source of generation as it is the key to achieving a sound medical waste management in these health care facilities.
- Medical waste should be effectively stored in water proof floor with good drainage in these health care facilities.

- There should be strict compliance of treatment modalities of medical waste in these healthcare facilities especially disinfection of waste.
- Transportation of medical waste should be secured if the benefits of segregation are to be realized in these health care facilities.
- There should be enabling laws and strict enforcement of these laws.

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