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THE ROLE OF LEGISLATIVE CONSTITUENCY OFFICES AND PROJECTS IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The role of constituency offices and projects in any liberal democracy globally cannot be overemphasized. It is against this backdrop that the paper examined the role of the legislature in the consolidation of democracy in Jigawa State. Data for the survey were collected through Mixed method of data collection. The primary data were generated using three different instruments namely; questionnaire, structured interview and Focus Group Discussion. Whereas, secondary data were generated through textbooks, journals, conference papers etc. The findings of the study reveal that the Senator, Members of the House of Representative as well as the Member House of Assembly Dutse constituency in the Jigawa State House of Assembly have no officially designated constituency offices in their respective constituencies and that to a large extent affected effective communication and good representation of the constituents thereby denying them genuine channels of contacting their representatives. Furthermore, the finding reveals that the Senator, Member House of Representative and the Member State House of Assembly provided some of the constituents with constituency projects like boreholes, drainages, school buildings and albeit insufficient and that most of the allocated projects are dilapidated and not sustainable and largely in the form of gifts or donations. The study recommends that the community/constituents must take ownership of the allocated constituency projects in their respective constituencies by ensuring that they are deeply involved in the continuous maintenance of projects such as boreholes and desilting of the drainages to ensure long term sustainability of the projects for the overall benefit of the constituent.
Keywords: Constituents,Constituency Projects, Constituency Office, Democracy, Good Governance

Introduction

Authoritarian regimes have been on the retreat on the African continent since the end of the Cold War era in the late 1980's. The transition to democracy and democratic consolidation has undeniably not been easy. Indeed, civilian regimes, which replaced authoritarian ones, are faced with the challenges of imbibing the ideals of liberal democracy that fosters sustainable development and security. This is essentially so because of the role of authoritarian regimes, especially the role the military played in governance since the 1960's which gave rise to so many complex and interrelated processes, most of which have significant negative consequences on national development. The impact of authoritarian rule on transition to democracy and the quest for good governance in the current trend of democratization in the African continent are profound for all countries.

The process of change from military to civilian government has received popular endorsement. People are no longer interested in military regimes, because of the limited freedom of expression and the right to participate actively in governance. General Abdul-Salami Abubakar spearheaded a transition between 1998-1999 that ended military rule and ushered in a new civilian administration on May 29th 1999. The swearing in of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the

President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the swearing in of Governors and Chairpersons of both state and local government councils, and the subsequent inauguration of the Members of the legislature at both federal, state and local government levels signaled the commencement of the democratic journey into the Fourth Republic.

The role of the legislature in any political dispensation especially in a democracy cannot be over-emphasized. The legislature as an arm of government has major role to play in the consolidation of democracy through the entrenchment of good governance, probity and accountability toward the provision of democratic dividends to the general populace. The major responsibilities of the legislature include law-making, endorsement of public officials, approval of the budget, impeachment of the members of the executive if they err, oversight into the activities of public agencies, representation as well as checks and balances makes it the repository of the socio-economic and political stability of the society which are vital in bringing positive changes to the nation. Consequently, Members at the State Assembly and Members of the National Assembly have enormous role to play in engendering positive change in the lives of the people they represent in their various constituencies.

The function of the Jigawa State legislators at the State and Federal levels can be better appreciated by the electorate if they engage in constructive interactions periodically with their electorates in their respective constituencies. This interaction will give the Honorable Members the opportunity to fully grasp the developmental needs of their people. The major forum that provides an opportunity for such an interaction is the constituency offices put in place by the legislators through which the yearnings and aspiration of their constituencies are communicated to them for further action. More so, the members can also utilize their powers to influence developmental projects to their respective constituencies through lobbying the executive arm of government.

This research therefore explores the usefulness and utility of the legislators in Jigawa State in transforming the lives of their constituents through the provision of constituency projects and constructive engagement with them. The thrust of this research is to unveil the potentiality of the legislators and the legislative arm of government in the consolidation of democracy and good governance in Jigawa State with particular reference to the National Assembly representative only. This research is a survey to ascertain the contributions of Jigawa State legislators at state levels through the provision of dividends of democracy in the form of portable water, access roads, medical care and so on. The study is also aimed at examining the constituency projects undertaken by the legislators in Jigawa State within the period 2015-2023, so as to ascertain whether such projects are executed and sustained toward serving the needs of the electorates.

The general objective of this study is to identify the contributions of the Jigawa State legislators towards the transformation of the life and livelihood condition of the people through the provision of constituency projects and the utilization of their constituency offices toward democratic consolidation. The specific objective also includes;

i. To assess whether the legislators utilize constituency projects and offices as a means of providing democratic dividends to the electorates in Jigawa State.
ii. To examine the impact of constituency projects in improving the livelihood condition of the people of Jigawa State.
iii. To identify the constituency projects executed by the legislators in Jigawa State within the period 2015 – 2023.

iv. To ascertain if the constituency projects are sustained overtime for the overall benefit of the constituents in Jigawa State.

Conceptual Clarification

According to Barkan (2009) the concept of the "legislature" is utilized inversely in numerous nation-states. In the United Kingdom (UK) the legislature is called the "Parliament", in Nigeria, is regarded as the "National Assembly" whereas in the United States of America (USA) it is regarded as the "Congress". This differences in terminology, nonetheless, it is regarded as the collection of the voted people saddled with the primary mandate of law making, representation and oversighting the executive (Abegunde, 2016). Stapenhurst&Pelizzo (2004), considered the legislature as a symbol of authority and legality since it is comprising chosen representatives from a demarcated constituency. These definitions above suggest that for one to be a legislator he has to secure the mandate from his constituents through legal highest votes. In this regard, the legislature is a legal body recognized by law comprising of men and women that are empowered with the task of making laws and oversighting the executive in order to ensure good governance and the provisioning of the dividends of democracy to the teeming electorates that voted for them into the assembly. The legislature in a liberal democracy is sine qua non as it serves as the fulcrum of democracy and representation which are major distinction with military regimes.

On the other hand, constituency according to Federico (2011) is a geographical part where a representative is elected into the legislature. Constituency servants are indeed elected officials that dedicate themselves and are dedicated to their voters through noticeable performances (Federico, 2011). That means that a constituency is a mapped setting that produces a representative duly elected by the electorates to represent them in the parliament. Therefore, a constituency office is regarded as a building/structure where the legislators interact with their respective citizens toward facilitating the delivery of their wants during legislative business.

Gatherings may find it advantageous to suggest encouragements and recompences for electorates service if they have the conviction that that will assist him/her success during elections; put differently, parties may act as intermediaries between the electorates and activists' favorites and the performance of lawmakers (Marangoni &Tronconi, 2011). To Udefuna, Jumare, & Adebayo (2013) constituency offices serve as a channel between the congresspersons and citizens, hence, guaranteeing the unbiassed and equitable allocation of infrastructure and other developmental activities. Constituency office(s) can be regarded as built structures or hired buildings by a parliamentarian in a constituency that serve as a medium for interfacing directly or indirectly through a legislative aid with his constituents for further necessary action at the parliament or by the executive. It serves as a platform or a liaison office between the electorates and their elected representatives.

According to Udefuna, Jamare & Adebayo (2013) constituency projects are fashioned toward ensuring the existence of government presence in each constituency by having some grassroots projects situated in each constituency, during the budgeting procedure. Legislators were simply required to earmark projects to be inserted in their respective constituencies in the budget, which has a budget cap provision for such projects identified by the legislator. A legislative constituency project is a project that is initiated, premeditated or implemented within a constituency with the partnership, input or influence of the legislator(s) representing a specific constituency in the parliament (Micah, 2015). In the words of Yusuf, Yusof &TapiwaZengeni, (2018) constituency projects are those works, or projects provided by either the federal government or state in exchange for the legislative member for house support on issues that are imperative. In this regard, it can be referred to as projects that are aimed toward addressing the

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most pressing needs of the constituents that are largely determined by the legislator(s) or in consultation with his/her constituents so as to provide them good life. This implies that constituency projects are targeted toward improving the livelihood condition of the constituents that are being represented by an elected representative that is a legislator.

Democracy on the other hand, is derived from the Greek words Demos and Kratos. With Demos simply meaning the people while Kratos (rule) simply denoting people's rule. In this regards, Adeyemo (2009) defined democracy as the means of authority toward meeting the yearnings and desires of the voting public and their involvement in policy and decision-making affairs of their country. In his own submission Oche (2004:10), highlighted basically three present-day usage of the term: as a form of governance whereby the right to undertake political decisions are utilized directly by the entire populace, acting under mandate of majority rule, generally referred to as direct democracy; a form of governance whereby the electorates utilize the same right not personally but indirectly through their representatives; and a form of government, generally a representative democracy, whereby the powers of the majority are exercised within a constitutional framework that limits power and guarantees the entire citizens satisfaction and their collective rights like freedom of speech and religion, recognized as liberal or constitutional democracy.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected through both primary and secondary sources. The primary data generation were generated using three different instruments namely; questionnaire, structured interview and Focus Group Discussion. While secondary data were generated through textbooks, journals, conference papers etc. Jigawa State has three Senatorial District comprising Twenty-Seven (27) local government areas. The study therefore covers only Southern Senatorial District with Dutse as sample. The sampled local government area is selected purposively. The selected councils are Dutse Local Government Area (South-West Senatorial District) with a population of 431,800. Consequently, the sample size is 400 and it shall be administered based on proportionate representation. However, relevant secondary data were sourced from Center for Legislative Studies and Institute of Legislative Studies Abuja, Nigeria.

In undertaking this research, simple random sampling was utilized in selecting the respondents, both questionnaire and the interview questions were designed in such a way that an uneducated person can conveniently respond through an interpreter. The assistance of a local guide was utilized in order to have easy access to the study sites to observe certain projects that are central to the research. The data gathered were limited to the electorates and party officials in the South West Senatorial Districts and limited to only the Senate and House of Representative. In the final analysis, the data obtained were analysed through the use of statistical tables of analysis involving and descriptive explanation of the data obtained.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In the Southern Senatorial District (Dutse Local Government Area in Jigawa State) a total of 400 questionnaires were administered, 140 questionnaires were administered for the Senator, 130 for Member House of Representative, 130 for Member State House of Assembly. However, questionnaires were retrieved out of 140 for the Senators, 133 were retrieved out of 130 administered for the Member House of Representatives, 115 were also retrieved. Also, 93 for Member State House of Assembly were retrieved out of 130 administered.

SENATOR
Constituents Responses on Constituency Offices

Table 1.1 Gender distribution of the Respondents in Dutse

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	113	84.96
Female	20	15.04
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1.1 above shows the distribution of the gender of the respondents in the focal area. It depicts that 84.96% of them are male, even though the females that participated in the survey are 15.04%. This wide gap implies that the females are less in comparison to the males that are dominant in the surveyed area. The high number of male respondents as against female ones may not be unconnected with the easily reach of men in the focal area and this can largely be attributable to sociocultural and socioreligious factors and belief system inherent in the area.

Table 1.2 Respondents Age Distribution

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages (%)
18-25	40	30.08
26-35	35	26.31
36-55	40	30.08
56-70	18	13.53
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1.2 demonstrates the respondents age distribution showing that 30.08% of them are between the age of 18–25 years. While 26.31% of them are between the ages of 26–35. Moreso, 30.08% of the respondents are between the ages of 36–55. Meanwhile, 13.53% of them are within the ages of 56–70 years.

The above data depicts that most of the respondents 87.9% collectively merged together are between the ages of 26 and 55 years. This population is very important because they constitute the most active population. This category of population represents their ability to give positive conclusion toward the realization of the goals of the study.

Table 1.3 Respondents Ward/Constituencies

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya	17	12.78
Chamo	17	12.78
Dundubus	17	12.78
Karnaya	15	11.29
Kudai	17	12.78
Limawa	16	12.03
Madobi	17	12.78
Sakwaya	17	12.78
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1.3 shows the respondents ward/constituencies based on their political wards of affiliation. The respondents were selected purposefully and targeted toward ensuring equal representation among the wards. The respondents were driven from eight distinct political wards: Abaya, Chamo, Dundubus, Karnaya, Kudai, Limawa, Madobi, and Sakwaya.

Table 1.4 Respondents Party Affiliations

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
APC	98	73.68
PDP	35	26.32
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

The above table depicts that 73.68% of the respondents are of the APC extraction. 26.32% of them are of the PDP extraction. Hence, depicting that the study area is heavily populated by members of the APC. This may not be unconnected with the fact that Jigawa State is predominantly an APC controlled state.

Part B

Table 1.5: Is there the presence of a constituency office in your area?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	9.77
No	120	90.23
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

The table above shows that 9.77% of the respondents indicated that the Senator has no constituency office in the senatorial District. While 90.23% of them declared that the Senator has no constituency office in the Senatorial District. Thus, inferring that a sizable chunk of the respondents were of the believe that the Senator has no constituency office in the Senatorial District.

Table 1.6 Is the Member Visiting Your Constituency Regularly?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	-	-
Monthly	13	9.77
Quarterly	50	37.59
Yearly	40	30.08
During Election	30	22.56
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The above table explains that 9.77% of the respondents noted that the Senator only pay them visits monthly. Moreso, 37.59% of them affirmed that the Senator only visits his constituency on a quarterly basis. 30.08% of them asserted that the Senator only visits them annually. 22.56% acknowledge that they only see their Senator during election circle. One can infer that the Senator does not regularly visit his constituents and is not well connected with them.

Table 1.7 The Member Representing your Constituency Usually Consults with the Community to Present to their Case to the Senate

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	10	7.52
Agree	08	6.02
Uncertain	-	-
Disagree	50	37.59
Strongly Disagree	65	48.87
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field survey 2025

Table 1.7 illustrates that 7.52% and additional 6.02% of the respondents strongly agreed and agree that the Senator is always in consultation with his constituents and always takes their matter to the floor of the Senate. Additionally, 37.59% and another 48.87% of them disagree and strongly disagreed that the Senator is always in consultation with his constituents and takes their matter to the Senate. It can be inferred that a sizable chunk of the respondents asserted that the Senator is not constantly in consultation with his constituents and does not adequately air their matter at the floor of the National Assembly.

Table 1.8 The Senator Implements Projects at his/her own wish in the provision of democratic dividends.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	12	9.02
Agree	15	11.28
Uncertain	10	7.52
Disagree	50	37.59
Strongly Disagree	46	34.59
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

The above table suggests that 9.02% and additional 11.28% strongly agrees and agreed that their Senator embarks on the provision of democratic dividends to them. While 7.52% were uncertain. However, 37.59% and additional 34.59% do not agree that the Senator provides them with projects so as to enjoy democratic dividends in their area. It can be inferred from the above statistics that most of the constituents are of the believe that the Senator does not democratic dividends to them.

Table 1.9 The Constituents Usually Demand and Exert Pressure on the Member to Implement Projects

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	10	7.52
Agree	10	7.52
Uncertain	-	-
Disagree	53	39.85
Strongly Disagree	60	45.11
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1.9 illustrates that 7.52% and 7.52% strongly agrees and agreed that the constituents compel the Senator to attract projects in their areas. However, 39.85% and another 45.11% disagree and strongly disagreed that the electorates compel the Senator to provide them with constituency project. It can be deduced that a sizable chunk of the respondents asserted that the constituents do not exert pressure on their Senator to provide them with constituency projects toward improving their livelihood condition. This inability to take up on their Senator may be attributable to the simple reason that it is not their mandate provide such projects for them.

Table 1.10 In an Event the Member is Not Performing Up to Your Expectation, What Steps Will You Prefer to Take:

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recall	30	22.56
No Re-election	103	77.44
Total	**133**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1.10 demonstrates that 22.56% of the respondents preferred to recall the Senator in case he does not live up to their expectations. 77.44% of them asserted that they will prefer to vote him out of office should in case he isn't performing. This preference of voting him out as against recalling the Senator may be attributable to the difficulty associated with the process of recalling an elected representative.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) participants in Jigawa South-West Senatorial District, suggest that most of the respondents identified that the Senator provided tube wells on their farms, water pumping machine, boreholes and drainages. Many of them did not state or are not familiar with or are not aware of projects. The unawareness depicts low presence of such projects provided by the Senators. On the issue of functional projects in the constituencies, many respondents noted the existence of drainages and boreholes with many of them noting that majority of the boreholes are dysfunctional.

A sizable chunk of the respondents noted that the Senator made a lot of non-physical contributions to his constituents. He was engaged in the sharing of cloths, Sugar and Rice as well as learning materials and the provision of medical outreach most specifically eye care. Notwithstanding the donations, most of the respondents voiced displeasure, with the way the Senator impacted on them. Few of the respondents noted that the senator should focus more on the provision of public goods to the electorates.

With regards to initiating bills in the Chamber, only a few of them could affirm his contribution in that regard. While many of them did not answer the question. This may not be unconnected with the fact that the constituents are unaware or the Senators action in that regard. On how the Senators constituency office can be enhanced, most of the respondents noted that the Senator needs to establish an office that will serve as a contact between them and the Senator. The constituency office will bring about synergy and constant consultations among them.

Data from the interviews and FGD participants revealed noteworthy gaps in the conspicuousness and availability of constituency projects and representation within Jigawa South-West Senatorial District. Even though the Senator contributed immensely to his constituents, the inability of the Senator to have a designated constituency offices in the Senatorial District affected the quality of representation because it hindered access to him as

they are deprived channel of reaching out to him to present their challenges. The respondents call on the Senator to as a matter of urgency establish his constituency office in Dutse Local Government Area. As this will enhance good representation and contact between them and the Senator.

Discussion

From the data obtained, it revealed that the constituents are displeased with the Senator because of his isolation from them, inadequate communication channels, as well as his palpable contributions to them. On the issue of accessibility to constituency office, an overwhelming number of (90.23%) of respondents affirmed that the Senator has no constituency office in his constituency. A few of the respondents constituting only 9.77% asserted that the Senator has a constituency office. Observations by the researcher in the constituency also confirms that the Senator has no constituency office in Dutse.

On the issue of the Senator visiting his constituents, some of the respondents (37.59%) noted that the Senator visits his constituents on quarterly basis. 30.08% of them asserted that the Senator visits his constituency annually. While a few of them asserted that (22.56%) the Senator only visits them during election time, thus, inferring a detachment with his constituents. On the issue of the Senator consulting his constituents, a sizable chunk of the respondents representing (86.46%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Senator often consults his constituents before presenting their matter at the floor of the Senate. Hence, indicating little consultation by the Senator with his constituent.

Furthermore, with regards to the execution of projects by the Senator, it appearsthat the constituents are unaware of the presence of constituency projects executed by the Senator. Most of the respondents (72.18%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Senator executed constituency projects aimed at providing them with public goods. Hence, indicating that most the constituents have not felt the impact of such projects on their livelihood due to absence of such projects in their respective communities.

On the constituents pressurizing their Senator to execute projects, majority of the respondents representing (84.96%) asserted that the constituents do not exerts a lot of pressure on their Senator to provide them with projects that will have direct bearing on their lives this may be as a result of the fact that the constituents are aware that it’s not the mandate of the Senator to provide them with projects.

Moreso, on the issue of electoral accountability, most of the respondents representing an overwhelming (77.44%) preferred to vote their Senator out. Only a few of them (22.56%) are predisposed toward embarking on recalling their Senator. This mirrors disappointment with the performance of the Senator and the cumbersome nature of the process involved in the recall process. On the issue of unawareness and impact of the Senator, FGD and interviews showcased unawareness concerning definite executed projects by their Senator as some of them identified that the Senator provided boreholes and drainages for the electorates but several of them observed that the infrastructure are no longer in usage.

On the Senators contributions on legislative contributions, most of the respondents were basically uninformed of the legislative contributions or bills initiated by the Senator. Hence, indicating a disconnect or showing communication gap between the Senator and the constituents. Furthermore, on the issue of the desire of improving constituencyoffice, most of

the respondents highlighted on the need for the Senator to establish a functional office in Dutse so as to bridge the gap between them and offer robust and constructive engagement with the people for better representation and good governance.

Summary of Major Findings

Findings from the study revealed a detachment of the Senator and the constituents, hence, highlighting a high concern over representation and communication, contact and being in touch with the electorates as well as effective service delivery to the constituents. Thus, depicting a disconnection.

On the issue of constituency offices,the inability of the Senator to establish a constituency office with an overwhelming 90.23% of the respondents, signifies a lack of an official communication channel and inaccessibility to the Senator by his constituents. This finding corroborates with the findings of Ezike (2022) where he asserted that constituency offices serve as a bridge through which the constituents channel their appeals to their voted representatives (Ezike, 2022). The inability of the Senator to provide an operational constituency office in Dutse depicts poor representation and exclusion of the electorates from participating actively in governance and decision making.

On the Senator's frequency of visits, the irregularity of visiting his constituent's majority (37.59%) of respondents affirmed that the Senator only visits them quarterly. 30.08% affirmed that he visits them annually. While few of the respondents (22.56%) stated that the Senator visits them only during election circle, signifying a divide and unfavorable representation between them and the Senate. Constituency offices, in essence, represent the legislative representation demand of bringing representation to the constituencies as well as bringing the parliament nearer to the electorates aimed at addressing their concerns and desires (Benjamin, 2022). With only 20.83% of the respondents affirming that the Senator visits his constituency suggests an accidental contact with their Senators instead of constant connection.

On the issue of consulting with the community (86.46%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Senator frequently consults with them. Hence, suggesting alienation of the constituents from actively participating in governance. Fenno (2000) argued that constituency offices are vital avenues for the representatives to discuss with their constituencies on the awareness of government policies, lobby toward resource allocation to their voters/districts, and to offer other constituency-related amenities. The inability of the Senator to consult the electorates depicts that the approach to governance is not bottom top and projects and programs may not reflect the yearnings and aspiration of the constituents.

Furthermore, on the issue of projects execution an overwhelming percentage of the respondents expressed dismay. 72.18% strongly disagreed and simply disagreed. Dan-Azumi (2018) beforehand revealed that representative view of their constituents or districts inspires their sensibility and representation

Moreso, on the issue of community advocacy for projects 84.96% of the respondents specified that they don't exert pressure on the Senator. One can infer may be the constituents are not predisposed toward the commitment of the Senator to be committed to addressing their plight. When communities lose fate in their representatives, they are less likely to advocate for change or hold them accountable (Wollack, Powers and Hubli, 2012)

On the issue of underperformance majority of the (77.44%) of respondents preferred voting out the Senator, whereas on a negligible few (22.56%) were predisposed toward invoking the recall procedure aimed at removing him. Additionally, voters' knowledge of constituency offices, in addition to the interface between them and their representatives, is commonly near to the ground, with several citizens voicing displeasure with the way constituency offices are utilized (Ezike, 2022).

On non-physical contributions many of the respondents affirmed that that the Senator provided them with gifts during festive periods, sponsored some students in furthering their education among others. The intervention in that regard is grossly inadequate.

On the need for the Senator to have a functional constituency office, most of the respondents' demanded for the establishment of a constituency office in Dutse so as to ensure robust representation and the easy channeling of their demand to the Senator. This does not align with (Simmons) view where expressed the constituents vote their representatives with the view that they will represent varied sections of the society as this accord the constituents the ability to speak and offer recommendations plainly and succinctly (Witner, 2014).

Conclusively, on the matter of the Senators legislative Contributions, most of the respondents, expressed unawareness about the contributions of the Senator in the hallowed chamber. Thus, reflecting inadequate contact with constituents. This depicts alienation of the constituents from the act of governance and decision making that involves their livelihood, hence poor representation.

Member Federal House of Representatives, Dutse/Kiyawa Constituency
Constituents Responses on Constituency Offices

Table 2.1 Gender distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	101	87.83
Female	14	12.17
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2.1 demonstrates that that 87.83% of the respondents are males nevertheless 12.17% of them are females. Thus, suggesting that most of those that participated in the survey are males. The high number of male respondents as against the female ones may not be unconnected with the easily reachable of men in the focal area largely attributable to sociocultural and socioreligious factors and belief system inherent in the area.

Table 2.2 Respondents Age Distribution

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages (%)
18-25	20	17.39
26-35	35	30.43
36-55	50	43.48
56-70	10	8.70
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

The data in table 2.2 illustrates that, 17.39% of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25; 30.43% of them are within 26-35 years of age whereas 43.48% of them within 36-55 years of age. Though, 8.70% of them as well are within 56-70 years of age. One can deduce that most of the respondents are aged between 26-55, hence, denoting their activeness in comparison with other age categories that participated in the survey.

Table 2.3 Respondents Ward/Constituencies

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya	10	8.70
Chamo	10	8.70
Dundubus	10	8.70
Karnaya	15	13.04
Kudai	15	13.04
Limawa	15	13.04
Madobi	20	17.39
Sakwaya	20	17.39
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field survey 2025

Table 2.3 recapitulates the responses of the respondents on political wards in the study area. They were selected purposively, so as to ensure adequate representation from different political wards in the constituency. They were selected from eight different political wards. These are, Abaya, Chamo, Dundubus, Karnaya, Kudai, Limawa, Madobi, and Sakwaya. The method was cautiously premeditated so as to accomplish an unbiased selection of the respondents with knowledge of comprehending the research intent.

Table 2.4 Respondents Party Affiliations

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
APC	85	73.91
PDP	30	26.09
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025.

Table 2.4 above explains that 73.91% of the respondents are members of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) in the area. 26.09% of them are of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) extraction. One can deduce that the area is populated with more APC supporters and this may not be unconnected with the fact that the state is predominantly an APC state.

Part B

Table 2.5: Is there the presence of a constituency office in your area?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	24.65
No	87	75.65
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

The above table 2.5 indicates that 24.65% of the respondents affirmed that the Member of House of Representatives have a constituency in his constituencies. 75.65% representing an

overwhelming number of the respondents debunk that he has a constituency office in his constituencies. This implies that most of the respondents are not aware of him establishing a constituency office in their locality.

Table 2.6 Is the Member Visiting Your Constituency Regularly?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	04	3.48
Monthly	06	5.22
Quarterly	55	47.82
Yearly	30	26.09
During Election	20	17.39
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2.6 depicts that only 3.48% of the respondents affirmed that the Member; Federal House of Representatives pays them visit on a weekly basis. 5.22% of them noted that he pays them vit evey month. 47.82% of them says that he visits them quarterly. Additionally, 26.09% of them noted that he only visits them annually. Furthermore, 17.39% of them indicated that he only visits them during election time. The display of data above is an indication that the Member; Federal House of Representatives does not visit his constituency regularly, thus, signifying a disconnect between him and his constituents.

Table 2.7 The Member Representing your Constituency Usually Consults with the Community to Present to their Case to the House of Representative

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	15	13.04
Agree	10	8.70
Uncertain	-	-
Disagree	40	34.78
Strongly Disagree	50	43.48
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field survey 2025

Table 2.7 suggests that 13.04% and 8.70% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that the Member; Federal House of Representatives is in consultation with his constituents before he makes presentations on their behalf in the House. 34.78% and 43.48 of them disagree and strongly disagreed that he makes consultation with them before any action in the parliament. Suggesting that most of the respondents are inclined toward the Member; Federal House of Representatives is not in constant consultation with his electorates before he forwards their matter to the parliament.

Table 2.8 The Member House of Representatives Implement Projects at his/her own wish in the Provision of Democratic Dividends.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	15	13.04
Agree	10	8.70
Uncertain	05	4.35
Disagree	40	34.78

Strongly Disagree	45	39.13
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2.8 shows that 13.04% as well as 8.70% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed that the Member; Federal House of Representatives provide projects to them. While 4.35% of them were uncertain. However, 34.78% in addition to 39.13% of them disprove that he provides them with projects that touches their lives positively. Hence, inferring that most of them have not felt the impact of the projects provided by the Member; Federal House of Representatives in their respective constituencies.

Table 2.9 The Constituents Usually Demand and Exert Pressure on the Member to Implement Projects

Respondents	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Strongly Agree	05	4.35
Agree	15	13.04
Uncertain	-	-
Disagree	45	39.13
Strongly Disagree	50	43.48
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2.9 depicts that 4.35% in addition to 13.04% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that constituents pressurize the Member; Federal House of Representatives to provide them with e projects in their respective areas. More so, 39.13% as well as 43.48% of them disagree and strongly disagreed that they do exert pressure on him to provide them with projects in their respective constituencies. This may partly be attributable to the fact that it's not the responsibility of the parliamentarians to execute projects but that of the executive arm of government.

Table 2.10 In an Event the Member is Not Performing to Your Expectation, What Steps Will You Take:

Respondents	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Recall	20	17.39
No Re-election	85	73.91
Total	**115**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2.10 shows the view of the respondents concerning measures that they are likely to take should in case the Member; Federal House of Representatives is not performing up to their expectations. 17.39% of the respondents choose to recall him as their option. Whereas 73.91% of them indicated that they will vote him out of office should he perform below their expectations. Their preference of voting him out may be attributable to the burdensome process involved with the recall procedure.

Data obtained from the qualitative data (interview/FGD) suggest that the Member representing Dutse/Kiyawa Federal Constituency. Few respondents stated that the member of House of Representative provided them with drainages, wells and boreholes. Most of the participants were unable to recollect the citing of projects in their area or lack information or knowledge of

where such projects were executed probably due to lack of sufficiency of the projects. Few respondents from Dundubus and Dutse ward noted of hearing of the allocation of constituency projects in other wards represented by the member.

On the issue of projects executed by the member, many participants declared the presence of culverts, drainages but decried lack of sustainability of the cited projects overtime due to many of them not functional. With regards to non-physical contributions by the Member, many participants revealed that that he has distributed several gifts items particularly the Sallah periods, in addition to learning materials for schools, medical outreach to many visually impaired persons and sending people to perform pilgrimages. Despite these efforts some participants decried that such gesture does not go round and as such the provision of public goods should be accorded utmost priority.

On the contributions of the member in the legislative chamber, most of the respondents noted that they are not conversant with any bills or motion spearheaded by the member at National Assembly and cannot simply understand what the member has achieved in the past almost two years.

With regards to the issue of improvement, majority of the respondents harped on the desire for the member to put in place a viable constituency office even if it is in Dutse alone as this they suggest will enhance contact and quality representation that will have direct bearing on them.

On the whole, qualitative data reveals that there is a disconnection in the presence and availability of projects in Dutse/Kiyawa Federal Constituency. Notwithstanding the noteworthy donations, the lack of a constituency project in the two constituencies hampered connection and good representation. The electorates demanded for the establishment of a constituency office or Kiyawa so as to accord them easy accessibility to their representative.

Summary of Major Findings

The findings of the research reveal that:

On the issue of the member House of Representative having a constituency office, a high number of the respondents representing 75.65% noted that the Member House of Representative has no constituency office in their constituency while only a few (24.35%) noted that the Member House of Representative have a constituency office in their locality their area.

On the issue of the member House of Representatives paying visits frequently to his constituents, 47.82% of respondents believes that the Member only pay them visitation on quarterly basis, meanwhile 26.09% believes that he visits them annually. A few of the respondents (3.48%) believes that he visits them every week. Whereas, 17.39% noted that he only visits them during election circle. Hence, signifying low visitation and less consultation with the constituents.

On the issue of the member House of Representatives with the constituents, an overwhelming number of the respondents (78.26%) believes that the Member House of Representatives disagrees that he is in consultation with members of his constituency before he forwards their matter to the parliament. Thus, depicting a detachment of the member and his constituents hence, affecting the quality of representation.

On the issue of the member House of Representatives executing projects to improve the livelihood of his constituents, a sizable chunk of the respondents representing 73.91% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Member House of Representative implements projects in order to offer them with democratic dividend. Therefore, implying lack of knowledge or the constituents are displeased with the projects provided by the member House of Representative.

On the issue of the constituents exerting pressure on the member House of Representative to allocate and implement laudable projects, majority of the respondents representing (82.61%) disagreed that the constituents mount pressure on their representative to implement projects. Hence, depicting that the electorates are unaware of how to channel their demand or they are of the believe that it is not the core mandate of the member to provide such projects.

On the issue regarding underperformance and what option to take should in case the member House of Representative performs abysmally low, most of the respondents (73.91%) are more inclined toward voting out the Member House of Representation should in case he is not performing up to their expectation. A negligible few (17.39%) prefer to recall the Member House of Representative in case he underperforms. The majority inclination toward not voting him as against recalling him may be attributable to the difficulties involved in recalling a representative.

On the issue of knowledge of constituency projects provided by the member House of Representative,Data collected from qualitative data (Interviews and FGDs) reveals that majority of the respondents identified the hiring of houses as hostels for students, provided boreholes and drainages, building as well renovation of Mosques. While few of the respondents were unable to identify projects provided by the Member. The respondents decried the lack of sustainability of the projects as most of them are unviable.

On the issue of non-physical contributions by the member House of Representative**,** most of the respondents recognized the delivery of several gifts to them most specifically in festive occasions. They acknowledge the donations of learning materials, some of them noted the provision of tricycles, motorcycles, medical outreach and renting of hostel for students. Many of them as well noted contributions during naming and wedding ceremony in both cash and kind. Some of them have a feeling that the donations and interventions by the member is not enough and preferred the provision of sustainable projects that will have more bearing on their lives.

On the issues of Lack of Communication on Legislative performance of the Member House of Representative, a sizable chunk of the respondents did not know of bills or motions initiated by the Member. Thus, inferring a disconnect and lack of open communication by the member and his constituents.

On the issue of the need for improved engagement with the constituents,almost all the constituents demanded the immediate opening of a constituency office and be made operational in the state capital (Dutse) aimed at creating an open access to the member and establishing an avenue to channel their challenges. The non availability of a constituency by the Member of House of Representative stalls effective communication and accessibility hence hampering on governance and community meeting.

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Summary of Major Findings

This section discusses the findings of the research:
On the presence of constituency office for the Member House of Representative, an overwhelming majority of the respondents representing 75.65% observed that the member has no any functional constituency office in their constituency. This is not in tandem with global best practices that recognizes the important role that accessibility to constituency offices offers in enhancing effective communication between the representative and the constituents (Toksoz, 2008).

On the issue of visitation by the Member House of Representatives to his constituency, majority of the respondents representing 47.82% affirmed that he visits them on a quarterly basis. 26.09% of the respondents noted that the member visits them annually. A few of the respondents representing a negligible percentage (3.48%) observed that he visits them every week. 17.39% affirms that he visits them only when the election cycle is on. This corroborates the findings of () where he noted that lack of contact through constant visitation weakens the quality of representation and the provision of public good to the constituents hence, diminishing participation and representative governance (Macleod, 2006).

On the issue of consulting with his community, a sizable chunk of the constituents representing 78.26% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed that the Member House of Representative is in consultation with his constituents initially before he presents them to the parliament. Partaking in the democratic process is essential and indispensable for actual governance and representation (Jimoh, A. (2019). The inability of the member to consult with his constituents depicts alienation of the electorates in governance by excluding them from participating on matters that affects their lives.

On the matter of project execution by the Member of the House of Representation, 73.91% of the respondents are displeased with the level of project execution by the member. Hence, inferring the non-conspicuousness of projects in their constituency. Hence, underpinning the electorates dissatisfaction. Equitable project allocation and consultation in citing such projects will create awareness, ownership and support (Ezenyili, 2012).

On the issue of the constituents exerting pressure on the Member of the House of Representative, a sizable chunk of the population representing 82.61% affirmed that the constituents do not mount pressure on their representatives toward him executing projects for them that will positively affect their livelihood condition. Hence, depicting low participation in the act of governance and public policy making (Dan-Azumi, 2018).

On the issue of the fate of the Member of House of Representative should in case he performs abysmally below their expectation, majority of the constituents representing 73.91% are predisposed toward not reelecting the member. Few of the respondents representing 17.39% of them preferred initiating a recall process aimed at recalling their member in the House of Representative. The preference for not reelecting the member instead of recalling him is as a result of the cumbersome process involved in the recall process.

On the issue of constituency projects and contributions, most of the constituents noted the provision of boreholes and drainages as the most prominent donations. They however, decried the lack of availability of such projects across different constituency and inability to sustain the

allocated project. This finding aligns with that of (Toksoz, 2008). the non-provision of constituency or poor execution of the projects diminishes confidence and trust.

On the issue of physical contributions, an overwhelming constituents acknowledge the donation of teaching aid as well as the provision of medical outreach support to many constituents. They however, decried that such gifts or donations does not go round as it is grossly insufficient and not sustaining.

On the issue of contributing toward initiation bills or motion on the floor of the house, majority of the constituents noted that they lack knowledge of bills or motion directly sponsored by the Member House of Representative. Thus, depicting a disconnect and wide communication gap between the member and his constituents. Enhanced and open communication is indispensable panacea for engendering legislative accountability (Friedberg, 2011).

Almost all the constituents highlighted the desire of a functional constituency office in the state capital (Dutse) so as to allow room for robust constructive engagement aimed at promoting good governance and representation. The yearning for the provision of constituency offices is in line with global best practices encouraging open and reachable avenue of communication between the representatives and their electorates (Kurtz, 1991).

Member State House of Assembly
Constituents Responses on Constituency Offices
Table 3.1 Gender distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	83	89.25
Female	10	10.75
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 2.1 highlights that a noteworthy percentage of the respondents, 89.25%, are male, while 10.75% are female. This outstanding gender difference suggests that males constitute the majority of the participants in the study area. One reasonable clarification for this disproportion is the comparatively larger approachability of men in the study area in comparison with women. This accessibility gap may be as a result of different socio-cultural and religious factors inherent in the state as there are restrictions on the female gender and that may restrict their public involvement in the survey. Hence, the limited number of female respondents in the survey.

Table 3.2 Respondents age Distribution

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages (%)
18-25	26	27.96
26-35	25	26.88
36-55	30	32.26
56-70	12	12.90
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3.2 shows the age distribution of respondents in the focal area. It depicts that 27.96% within ranges between 8–25 years. Correspondingly, 26.88% of them are between 26–35 years, whereas 32.26% of them are 36–55 years. Lastly, 12.90% of the respondents are between 56–70

years. This above data illustrates that most of the respondents, 59.14% ranges between 26–55 years. This demography is mainly substantial, as persons in this category of age are mostly considered as the most agile and productive. This highlights their likelihood of stimulating the research results and depicts their significance toward accomplishing the study's aims.

Table 3.3 Respondents Ward/Constituencies

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abaya	12	12.90
Chamo	12	12.90
Dundubus	12	12.90
Karnaya	11	11.83
Kudai	11	11.83
Limawa	12	12.90
Madobi	12	12.90
Sakwaya	11	11.83
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3.3 Demonstrates the constituencies of the respondents that filled the questionnaire during the research. The Respondents are from the from eight wards: Abaya, Chamo, Dundubus, Karnaya, Kudai, Limawa, Madobi, and Sakwaya. This method was carefully designed to achieve a balanced distribution of participants, enabling comprehensive insights into the research topic. A total of 93 respondents participated in the study, with equal representation from each ward—11 or 12 respondents per ward (11.83% or 12.50%).

Table 3.4 Respondents Party Affiliations

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
APC	65	69.89
PDP	28	30.11
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3.4 shows that 69.89% of the respondents are of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) extraction. 30.11% of them belong to the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This depicts that APC is dominant in the study area. This may not be unconnected with the fact that the state is governed by the APC for the past almost 13 years.

Part B

Table 3.5: Is there the Presence of a Constituency Office in your Area?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	13.98
No	80	86.02
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3.5 illustrates that 13.98% of the respondents noted the presence of a constituency office for the member of House of Assembly in their constituency while 86.02% of them observe that the member has no constituency office in their constituency. This means that a sizable chunk of them responded by saying that the member has no office in their area.

Table 3.6 Is the Member Visiting Your Constituency Regularly?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	05	5.38
Monthly	06	6.45
Quarterly	35	37.63
Yearly	30	32.26
During Election	17	18.28
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.6 demonstrates 5.38% of the respondents noted that the member frequently visits his constituents on a weekly basis, 6.45% affirms that the member visits them monthly. 37.63% of them said that he visits them quarterly even though 32.26% of them noted that he only visits them annually. Additionally, 18.28% of them declare that the Member is reachable during election time. It can be inferred that the Member does not visit his constituents regularly and detached from them.

Table 3.7 The Member Representing your Constituency Usually Consults with the Community to Present to their Case to the House of Assembly

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	05	5.38
Agree	05	5.38
Uncertain	01	1.08
Disagree	32	34.40
Strongly Disagree	50	53.76
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field survey 2025

Table 3.7 illustrates that 5.38% as well as 5.38% strongly declared that the Member consults with them and air their challenges to the Member. Though, 1.08% respondent was uncertain on that. 34.40% and 53.76% of them strongly disagreed that the Member consults with them before presenting their issues to the Member. This depicts that most of them declared that the Member occasionally consults with them.

Table 3.8 The Member State House of Assembly Implements Projects at his/her own wish in the provision of democratic dividends.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	15	16.13
Agree	10	10.75
Uncertain	05	5.38
Disagree	30	32.26
Strongly Disagree	33	35.48
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 3.8 shows that 16.13% and 10.75% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed that the Member implements projects toward the provisioning of democratic dividends. 5.38% of them were uncertain. Conversely, 32.26% and 35.48% of the respondents disprove that the Member

implements projects in that regard. It can be inferred that most of the constituents are uninformed of projects carried out by the Member.

Table 3.9 The Constituents Usually Demand and Exert Pressure on the Member to Implement Projects

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	05	5.38
Agree	04	4.30
Uncertain	01	1.08
Disagree	33	35.48
Strongly Disagree	50	53.76
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.9 depicts that 5.38% and 4.30% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they do mount enormous pressure on their member to implement projects for them. 1.08% were undecided. On the other hand, 35.48% and 53.76% of the respondents strongly disagreed and agreed that they exert pressure on their member to deliver. This is likely not unconnected with the fact the electorates have the understanding that the legislator's primary obligation is law making and oversighting the executive as project execution is not their mandate.

Table 3.10 In an Event the Member is Not Performing to Your Expectation, What Steps Will You prefer to Take:

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Recall	19	20.43
No Re-election	74	79.57
Total	**93**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3.10 shows that 20.43% of the respondents chose recalling their member if he is not performing up to their expectations. While 79.57% of them are of the view of not electing their member as a better option should in case he is performing below their expectations. The desire by most of the respondents to vote their member out of office may be attributable to the difficult process of recall system in the polity and the acceptance of election as a viable means of reelection or rejection of their member in a democratic setting.

From the Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with participants in Dutse State Assembly provided by the lawmakers from 2015-2023. Majority of the respondents observed that the lawmakers provided them with boreholes and drainage systems, in addition to building mosques and Holy Quran, some of them were unable to recollect definite projects or they are uninformed of one. Their inability to mention any project depicts the low visibility or insufficient communication about the projects.

One FGD participant from Dundubus ward observed that the use to hear about projects executed by their member but it is yet to be cited in their area." Follow-up discussions encouraged participants to identify handy projects in their wards. Though many recognized the presence of boreholes and drainage systems, several participants revealed that they are not functioning at the moment. A Limawa ward participant observed that several boreholes are not functional because of breakdown and out of usage for a very long time and there was no attempt aimed at fixing

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them. Many of the FGD respondents gave account of the functional ones and the locations of mainly functional boreholes, schools and predominantly mosques in their communities.

Apart from physical projects, a sizable chunk of the respondents noted the provision of series of contributions by the member which includes, the donation of cloths, rams and cows during festive period like Sallah and Maulud. Medical outreach campaigns and teaching aids to schools and the donation of motorcycles among others. Notwithstanding these concerted contributions, majority of the participants voiced displeasure, stating that the member did not touch on their lives positively. An FGD respondent from Kudai ward noted that while gifts during festive period are commendable, they prefer projects to be cited in their communities as projects are public goods.

With regards to the member contributions in the sponsorship of bills in the member, none of the respondents said that they are aware of any bill or motion sponsored at the floor by the member while some respondent's decline commenting in that regard. This may not be unconnected with the fact that they may not have followed through the proceedings in the member floor or have no access to communication network that covers the member proceedings.

On the issue of how constituency offices can be enhanced, participants constantly underscored the desire to have a devoted and wholly active office in Dutse where they can liaise with the member and lodge their demands.

From the FGDs and interviews, it reveals that there exists a noteworthy gap in the conspicuousness and availability of constituency projects and representation within Dutse. While the member has made some remarkable gains, the lack of a viable constituency office in the constituencies he represents have to a large extent hampered real contact and effective service delivery required of him. The provisioning of constituency offices will further boost confidence and make meaningful impact on governance and democratic consolidation.

Discussion

On the issue of an operational constituency, an overwhelming majority (86.02%) of respondents affirmed the nonexistence of constituency offices for the member in their local government arear. Hence, suggesting that there is no means of engaging the constituents in the locality. Observation from the researcher did not as well suggest the presence of a constituency office for the member.

On the issue of the Member House of Assembly's (Dutse) frequent visitation to his constituency, majority of the respondents constituting (69.89%) suggests that Member representing Dutse in the House of Assembly visits his constituents on a quarterly basis, annually, or during elections only. Hence, inferring uncommon connections. The irregular visits indicate disconnection of the member and his electorates.

On the matter of Member House of Assembly's (Dutse) consultation with his constituents, a sizable chunk constituting (88.16%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that Member State House of Assembly is not in consultation with his constituents and channel their demands to the House of Assembly. This illustrates a disconnection and poor inclusion and communication.

On the issue of the Member House of Assembly's (Dutse) executing projects for his constituents, majority of the respondents (67.74%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that Member of State House of Assembly representing Dutse constituency does not implements projects in a

bid to offer his constituents with dividends of democracy. It can be deduced that there is feelings of disappointment with his provision of physical development.

On the issue of the constituents mounting pressure on the Member House of Assembly's (Dutse), most of the respondents constituting 89.24% disagreed or strongly disagreed that electorates exert pressure on their member to provide them with projects. This suggest that the constituents appreciates that it is not the mandate of the member to provide them constituency projects.

On responses of underperformance by the Member House of Assembly's (Dutse) and preferable cause of action by the constituents, an overwhelming number of the respondents representing (79.57%) are more predisposed toward voting out the Member of the State House of Assembly should in case he is performing below their expectations. whereas 20.43% of them preferred to initiate a recall process aimed at recalling him from the assembly. Thus, indicating a displeasure with the quality of representation and appreciating the difficulty involved in recalling a representative.

On the issue of Awareness of Constituency Projects provided by the Member House of Assembly's (Dutse) Qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) participants reveals low cognizance and conspicuousness of constituency projects provided by the Member. Majority of the participants identified the provision of hostels for students, drainages as well as wells were provided by him. Few of participants were unable to identify any precise project provided by the Member.

On the issue of provision of non-physical contributions by the Member House of Assembly (Dutse), most of the respondents mentioned the provision of donations most specifically in festive periods, by the some of them noted the provision of medical outreach, and gifting them with motorcycles by the member.

On the issue of Legislative Contributions by the Member House of Assembly (Dutse),there was a lack of cognizance concerning legislative initiatives by the member of the State House of Assembly. Virtually no respondents were able to sanction the sponsorship of any bills or motion by their member, demonstrating poor contact and disconnect.

On the need for a functional constituency Office to be provided by the Member House of Assembly (Dutse) Respondents unanimously highlighted the desire of the have a functional constituency office so as to give the constituents a platform of lodging their demands, as well as enhance effective communication between the member and his constituents. The inability of the member to open a constituency hinders actual representation.

On the issue of Community Perceptions of Governance, findings revealed a wide-ranging displeasure with the effect of Member of the State House of Assembly representing the constituents. Largely as a result of low visibility of executed projects, sporadic visits, as well as lack of effective communication. The constituents prefer the allocation of supportable projects and dependable meeting rather than irregular and representational motions.

Summary of Major Findings

On the issue of the presence or availability of constituency office, an overwhelming number of the respondents (86.02%) affirmed that the Member of State Assembly representing Dutse Local

Government Area has no constituency office in their constituency. This finding aligns with assertions by Lafenwa (2009) that physical infrastructure for legislative engagement is a foundational component of participatory democracy. However, the effectiveness of these offices in fostering communication and addressing constituents' needs remains in question.

On the **Member House of Assembly's (Dutse)** frequent visit, the observed frequency is erratic, signifying that (69.89%) of the respondents suggesting that he visits them on quarterly basis, annually, or during election circle). Therefore, revealing a wide gap between the member and his electorates. This in line with the findings of Mobolaji (2014), where he observed that neglecting the constituents affects the confidence of the electorates and undermines governance and representation. Constant contact accords the legislator the opportunity to comprehend the challenges of his constituents for better representation.

On the matter of the member consulting with his constituents, it will be deduced that 88.16% disagreed that the member consults with his constituents. Hence, implying lack of inclusion of the electorates in governance. According to Okoosi-Simbine (2010), broad consultation is a recipe for robust engagement between the Member and his constituents. The inability of the legislator to constantly interface with the constituents weakens democracy and consultation.

On the issue of the member executing projects for the constituents, the respondents are to a large extent displeased with the level of project execution (67.74%). Thus, depicting the nonavailability or visibility of projects in their constituency. Scholars such as Nnorom, K. and Odigbo (2015) accentuated the position of constituency projects in offering public goods to the constituents. The low allocation of project is an indication of low performance by the member.

On the constituents exerting pressure on the member to allocate/implement projects, a remarkable number of the respondents (89.24%) noted that they do not exert pressure on the Member toward compelling him to allocate projects in their constituency. Hence, suggesting an understanding their it is not his mandate to provide them with projects. Nevertheless, as highlighted by Turaki (2010) the inability of the constituents to mount pressure on the member and demonstrates alienation of the constituents and not familiar with how to influence public policy in their favor.

On responses of should in case the member is underperforming,majority of the respondents (79.57%) prefer to vote the member out of office with only few of them opting for a recall (20.43%) of the member. Thus, revealing a feeling of disappointment with underachieving of the member as well as acknowledging the cumbersome nature of the recall procedures Udefuna, Jamare and Adebayo (2013) observed that the recall process is difficult hence, the preference for voting him out instead.

On the issue of the constituents aware of constituency projects provided by the member, there suggests to be low understanding of constituency projects hence, implying lack of constructive engagement in addition to communication gap as depicted by shown by revelations from FGD. Turaki (2010) contend that conspicuousness of constituency projects is vital in promoting fair sharing of resources to the constituents.

On the issue of non-physical contributions to the constituents by the member,constituents noted contributions in the form of donations, such as medical supplies and outreach, as well as other

charitable acts highlights contributions that are not enduring as these contributions are not public goods. Some of them noted cash donations by the member during events.

On the issue of the legislative Contributions by the member, the is unawareness of the such contributions in legislative affairs, hence, furthermore accentuating the challenge of communication between the Member and his electorates. Oni (2013) underscores the position of parliamentarians educating their voters on how to aggregate their demands.

On the need for a fully functional constituency office, the constituents demand for opening of a constituency cannot be overemphasized. If truly functional it will breach the gap between the member and his constituents. Hence, translating into projects and good representation and the provision of dividends of democracy in line with the yearnings and aspiration of the constituents. Rabinder (2015), argued that operational constituency offices serve as a vehicle for interaction aimed at receiving their demands and acting on them toward the providing them with good governance and projects that will impact their lives.

On Community Perceptions of Governance, in general, the findings reveal an over-all discontent with the performance of the member state House of Assembly. Largely, associated with low visible projects implemented by the member, irregular visitation, and lack of adequate communication between them. An overwhelming constituents showed preferences of viable enduring projects and robust meeting between them and the member. This is in line with the argument of Omenka (2008) that grassroots governance flourishes on self-assurances, openness, as well as positive effect on the constituents.

Conclusion

Representation is the cornerstone of liberal democracy the world over, one vehicle through which representation is enhanced is through the parliaments which is basically a conglomeration of elected representative. As representation of the people, they are expected to act in line with the yearnings and aspiration of the constituents. It is in this regard that the representative of the electorates is expected to open a constituency so as to serve as a liaison between the representatives and the constituents. In ensuring that the representative provide democratic dividends, constituency projects are provided to the legislators to allocate to their constituents aimed at improving the livelihood condition of the constituents.

The paper concludes that that the Senator, Member House of Representative as well as the Member representing Dutse constituency in the Jigawa State House of Assembly have no officially designated constituency offices in their respective constituencies and that to a large extent hampered effective communication and good representation of the constituents as they are denied channels of contacting their representatives to forward their demands. Furthermore, the finding revealed that the Senator, Member House of Representative and the Member State House of Assembly provided the constituents with constituency projects like boreholes, drainages, school buildings and albeit insufficient and that most of the allocated projects are dilapidated and not sustainable.

The study recommends that:

i. The representatives be mandated to open a well-equipped and functional constituency office in their respective constituencies. This will go a long way in ensuring good representation and allocation of projects in line with the yearning and aspiration of the electorates.

ii. A unit should be established to ensure compliance that each representative opens a constituency office in his constituency as money is allocated for the provision of such offices in their respective constituency nationwide as this will further deepen democracy and the provision of democratic dividends.

iii. The community/constituents must take ownership of the allocated constituency projects by ensuring that they are deeply involved in the continuous maintenance of projects such as boreholes and desilting of the drainages to ensure long term sustainability of the projects for the overall benefit of the constituent.

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PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NIGERIA

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Abstract
The adoption and implementation of privatization policy in Nigeria has some negative impacts on Nigeria's economy. This paper examined the prinvatization of public enterprises and its implications on the political economy of Nigeria. Methodologically, the study used the qualitative method of research through the use of journals, textbooks, and monographs as means of data collection. Theoretically, the Privatization Theory was adopted as a theoretical framework for the analysis. The findings of the study showed that privatization which resulted to oil subsidy removal in Nigeria was responsible for inflation and high cost of living. It was also discovered that privatization had stifled small scale businesses while economic monopolist was on the rise exploiting the masses. Rather than having a developed economy, the study found that the economy of Nigeria was retrogressing. In the conclusion it was argued that, privatization in Nigeria turned out to be an instrument used by government to manipulate those privatized agencies and relieve itself of financial commitment to the corporations. To address this menace of privatization the study recommended that the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria should not be measured solely on the economic benefits since they were specifically established to render essential services to the people at affordable prices. Their performance should be measured on the basis of effectiveness and efficiency in rendering those services they were established.

Keywords: Privatization, Public Enterprises, Implications, Political Economy, Nigeria.

Introduction

Public enterprises came into being as a result of direct intervention measures of government in the socio-economic affairs of the citizens so as to ensure rapid economic development. The idea began immediately after the Second World War when most countries of the world felt dissatisfied with the pace at which private enterprises initiative contributed to human capital development. Successive post-independence governments in developing countries, felt it was imperative to engage public enterprises in most areas of human endeavours such as public utilities, the economy, agriculture, commerce, social service (Bello-Imam 2009). The failure of the market mechanism in the promotion of economic growth and development in Western capitalist countries resulted in the adoption of the Keynesian macro-economic model in the 1940s which advocated government intervention in the economy to reduce unemployment and

inflation rates. Keynes' thesis was conducive to State intervention in economic growth and development. The assumption of the State control of the commanding heights of the economy inevitably led to public services expansion and creation of public enterprises (Bello-Imam, 2009).

Consequently, by the mid-1970s, government intervention in the economy through the establishment of public enterprises did not meet the aspirations of economic growth and development. It is on this note that the resort to privatization/commercialization was informed by trio considerations. First, by 1985, the quantum of resources required to sustain the public enterprises had become an unbearable burden on the affected nations. Second, it was envisaged that a carefully planned privatization programme would be a required strategy for improving operational efficiency, broadening share ownership, attracting foreign investment and reducing the role of the State where the Private Sector has the capabilities to operate more effectively. Finally, since the beginning of the 1980s, privatization of public enterprises has become a major policy tool in both developed and developing countries following the apparently successful privatization programme in Britain. Privatization gained considerable momentum in developing countries given its endorsement by the multilateral financial institutions as a major plank of adjustment policies. The urge for privatization was further reinforced by the need for countries to reduce government expenditure in the face of burgeoning fiscal deficits, and was also in conformity with the resurgence of "economic liberalism" in the development literature.

Privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises is a policy meant to relief government of its numerous liabilities and leakages. It aimed at ensuring efficiency in the running of enterprises. The Protagonists were of the opinion that privatization would enlarge (expand) the scope of operations for the private sector, stressing it was an economic strategy which could reduce the role and participation of the government in economic activities. This was anchored on the belief that public enterprises consumed a large proportion of national resources without corresponding benefits from the large investment. Proponents of privatization holds that privatization is one of the best effective instruments for reforming the economy of the overburdened post-colonial State. In Nigeria as in the global community, privatization policy is seen as one of the key instruments of transforming the Nigerian economy to a full-blown capitalist market oriented system. The strong feeling for this policy therefore rest in two main grounds thus;

First, that the Policy becomes necessary when the expenditure profile of public enterprise is considered incompatible with available resources. Secondly the adoption of this policy has been on the view that a change of ownership will be associated with the superior management and high economic efficiency (Odusola, 2001). Privatization Programme which started in Nigeria in 1988 during the Babangida'smilitary regime, was intended to bring about a positive turn around in public enterprises that were at the verge of collapse, as a result of their inefficiency. Bakare (2011) noted that the nature of the public sectors in Nigeria before privatizationwas at the depressing picture of inefficiency, low productivity, loses, budgetary burden and poor productivity in the services rendered.Babagida's regime inaugurated a task-force, named the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC), which was later christened Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) on July 27, 1988, to implement Decree No. 25 of 1985 headed by late Dr. Hamza Zayyad. Since then, privatization programme has become a major policy instrument to contribute to the overall attainment of the general macroeconomic goals.

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Literature Review

The goal of every literature review is to appraise or criticize scholarly perspectives about certain concepts. This is due to the fact that in social sciences, there is no specific or universally acceptable definition of concepts as well as concentration on a perspective. Thus, this debate has led to conceptual complexity in the social sciences discipline. The goal of this chapter is also to add to the pool of existing literature on the subject matter and the complex nature and perspectives of certain significant concepts that are fundamental to this paper and such concepts include: Privatization, Public Enterprises as well as Political Economy.

Privatization

Cowan (1990), defined privatization as the transfer of function, activity, or organization from the public to private sector. To Ramandahan (1991), privatization is the marketization or submission of the public enterprises to the same conditions under which private firms operate. While Heald and steel (1986) had it that it is the dismantling of "national" state monopolies by allowing more than one enterprises in the industry, adaptation of wages and employment conditions to those of the private sector. In his own definition, Iheme (1997) cited in Atuma (2006) sees privatization as "any variety of measures adopted by government to expose a public enterprise to competition or bring in private ownership or control or management into a public enterprise and accordingly to reduce the usual weight of public ownership or control or management. When the focus is the promotion of market economies or the mutual relationship between the public and private sectors, privatization refers to both the efforts to strengthen the role of the market at the expense of the state (Standbury 1989).

According to Bienen and waterbury (1989), Privatization can be seen as one of the steps towards deregulation and the liberalization process, that is, the reduction of state's role in the economy. Thus, privatization data base has it that, it is the transfer of assets or service delivery from the government to private sector, sometimes leaving very little government involvement and other time creating partnerships between government and private service providers where government is still the dominant player. In explaining the concept of privatization, Starr (1999) defined it as a form of denationalization that is to submit domestic state firms to the participation of domestic public firms in the foreign market or to permit the take-over of state firms by foreign capital.

The above definition is further buttressed by price (1985) cited in Clark (2006) that privatization is an international phenomenon; from developed nations like the United States of America, Great Britain, France and Japan to less developed countries like, Turkey, Sri-Lanka, that states have divested of commercial enterprises and encouraged the development of competitive market economies. Thus, the UNDP guidelines on privatization (1991) defines it as the marketization of public sector activity, that is the subjection of microeconomic decision making to market forces since this is a feature of profit-oriented sector activity. In the same direction, Ezeani (2006) defined privatization as a deliberate government policy of stimulating economic growth and efficiency by reducing state interference and broadening the scope of private sector activity through one or all of the following strategies: transfer of state owned assets to private ownership through sale of shares; private control of management of state-owned assets; encouraging private sector involvement in public activity; and shifting decision making to agents operating in accordance with market conditions.

Giving further explications of privatization, Ekam (2004) cited in Anam and Antai (2005) sees privatization as an effective transfer of ownership of public enterprises to the private sector, it is a systematic and programmed withdrawal of government from those activities which private persons and/or undertakings can perform more efficiently than government enterprises. Savas (1992) unfolded three different definitions of privatization. The first definition is based on the

philosophy by calling it a process of relying more on the private institutions of society and less on government to satisfy people's needs. The second is based on the premise that privatization is the act of reducing the role of government and increasing the role of the private sector in an activity or in the ownership of assets: the third definition sees it as the act of transferring government enterprises or assets to private sector.

The privatization and commercialization Decree No 25 of 1988 define privatization as the relinquishment of part or all of the equity and other interest held by the federal government or its agency in enterprises whether wholly or partly owned by the federal government. The final report of technical committee on privatization and commercialization (TCPC) 1993) reveals that, privatization is an Umbrella term used to describe a variety of policies which encourage competition and emphasize the role of market forces in place of statutory restrictions and monopoly powers.

Objectives of Privatisation

The privatization programme in Nigeria was aimed at achieving several objectives. Specifically, PrivatisationProgramme was designed to:

1. restructure and rationalize the public sector in order to lessen the dominance of the unproductive investment in that sector;
2. re-orientate the enterprise for privatization and commercialization towards a new horizon of performance improvement, viability and overall efficiency;
3. ensure positive return in public sector investment in commercialization enterprises;
4. check the present absolute reliance of commercially oriented parastatals on the treasury for funding and to encourage their approach to the Nigerian capital market;
5. initiate the process of gradual cession to the private sector of such public enterprises by the nature of their operations and other socio-economic factors are best performed by the private sector; creating a favourable investment climate for both local and foreign investors;
6. Reduce the level of internal and external debts; and
7. provide institutional arrangement and operational guidelines that would ensure the gains of privatization and commercialization are sustained

Privatization of public enterprises came to the forefront as a major component of Nigeria's economic reform process at the behest of the World Bank and other international organizations (Jerome, 2008). During the Babangida's regime, it was done under the international economic policy of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), so as to provide a befitting solution to the economic crisis of Nigeria. Edozien and Adeoje (1994) stated that the whole essence of privatization is structural adjustment programme which involve redefining the role of the state by disengaging the state from those activities which are best performed by the private sector. Nevertheless,since then, privatization reform has been the only language every Nigeria's government seems to understand without resource to the enabling mix of the factors that stimulate private sector driven economy. Good governance, security, functional infrastructures, political stability are some of the enabling mix that can be of attraction to private driven sector. Nigerian business environment has become very hostile to businesses. In a diesel-driven economy, how does the government imagine the privatized public enterprises would do better than when it was not privatized (Omoankhanlen, Joseph &Ojiefo, 2010).

Public Enterprise

According to Lalaye (1985:33) the bewildering number and types of the organizations called public enterprises, their different contents in and the rationale for which they are set up accounts

for lack of authoritative and general acceptable definition of public enterprises. The United Nations (1974:2) summarized in their reports that it appearsnot to be any agreement among experts as to the precise definition of public enterprises. Sosna (1983:27) opined that, there are many reasons why in developed countries of the capitalists there is no single standard definition of public enterprises. Public enterprises were established at different periods and each epoch naturally brought forth the types of public enterprises most clearly matching its' own conditions.

According to Obadan and Ayodele (1998:1),Public enterprise is an organization whose primary function is the production and sale of goods and/or services and in which government or other government-controlled agencies have no ownership stake that is sufficient to ensure their control over their enterprises regardless of how that control is exercised. In his own view, Efange (1987:5) defines public enterprises or parastatals as institutions or organizations which are owned by the state of which the state holds a majority interest whose activity are of a business in nature and which provides services or produce goods and have their own distinct management. To Adamolekum (2002:28), "a public enterprise is an organization that is set up as a corporate body and as part of governmental apparatus for an entrepreneurial or entrepreneurial like objectives". In a United Nations publication (1974:2) public enterprises are defined as those enterprises "in which the government has majority interest of ownership and/or management. Another United Nations source (1981:1) defines public enterprises as "industrial, agricultural and commercial concerns which are owned and controlled by central government (in a unitary state) or central government and regional government (in a federation).

One of the major flaws of the third definition is that it undermines the issue of control. While the fourth and fifth definitions are very narrowly conceived and reflect only commercially oriented public enterprises. But to Ezeani (2006:213), public enterprises are defined here as legally constituted bodies operating services of an economic or social character or both on behalf of government. Though largely autonomous in their management, they are subjected to different types of government control, and are also characterized by different degrees of public financial support. The definition seems to be comprehensive because it encompasses the different types of public enterprises be it commercially oriented, social services oriented or both. However, a more precise definition is captured in the privatization and commercialization Decree of 1988. The Decree states that, public enterprises include any corporation, board, company or parastatal established by or under any enactment in which the federal government, or any of its departments, ministries or agencies has ownership or equity interest. It also included all partnership joint ventures and any other form of business arrangement or organization in which the government is involved.

Political Economy

The concept of Political economy has become a comprehensive interdisciplinary framework that is largely based on Marxist Social Theory (MST). It deals with the interrelationships between economics and politics and the interconnections between the various levels of social interaction, from the local through the national to the global.Political economy seeks to explain the causes of the asymmetrical relations between developed and developing nations in the international division of labor and exchange. It locates the root causes of third world underdevelopment on issues of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism on the one hand and also draws from the internal contradictions peculiar to the third world countries as fundamental causes of their underdevelopment. Interestingly, both bourgeois and Marxian political economists proffer separate approaches to emancipation and development. Finally, knowledge of political economy helps the oppressed and exploited to understand their reality and ways out of their contradictions.

The fundamental objective of political economy is to know how societies are, and can be transformed. Political economy approach makes it possible for us to develop a critical attitude towards organizing power and understanding the challenges and opportunities we face in building dynamic and democratic alternatives in an increasingly globalized world. Youngman (2000:3) asserts that the political economy approach deliberately move the focus of analysis from individual choice and behavior to a consideration of the historical and structural context within which individual action takes place. This approach entails a number of basic concepts. First, social phenomena exist within a historical and structural context shaped by the mode of production and its class relations. Second, the manner and extent of the influence of the economic foundation on particular aspects of society is a matter for specific investigation in each case. Third, the dominance of the capitalist mode of production at the world level means that country level studies must situate their analysis within the context of the global political economy. Fourth, the different classes pursue their own interests and these interests are conflictual. Fifth, although class relations are the main determinant of social phenomena, they are not the sole determinant-other inequalities such as gender, ethnicity and race have significant effects. Sixth, the conflicts in society are reflected in the state, which institutionally serves the interests of capitalist accumulation and reproduction. Seventh, intellectual and cultural lives are shaped by the capitalist mode of production and by the contestation between different classes and groups in society. And eighth, opposition to the existing capitalist socio-economic order is expressed not only by political parties but also by social movements and other organizations in civil society that articulate alternative conceptions of society and how it should develop (Youngman, 2000:29-30).

Addressing the shortcomings of political economy has kept the framework dynamic, robust, and contemporary. It has a growing relevance to interdisciplinary concepts, such as globalization and governance, and to a wide range of academic fields, including sociology, geography, and education (Summer, 2008). To date, however, it has not been used to analyse the complex connections among the rise of terms like governance, the spread of globalization, and changes in adult education. As a lens for examining society, political economy can generate new insights regarding these interrelated phenomena. It can also continue to evolve as a tool to analyse both past and present and to imagine alternative futures.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, the theory of privatization was adopted as a theoretical framework of its analysis. A privatization theory was propounded by Maxim Boycko, Andrei Shleifer and Robert W. Vishny (1996). The theorists held that public enterprises around the world have proved to be highly inefficient, primarily because they pursue strategies, such as excess employment, that satisfy the political objectives of politicians who control them. Privatization of public enterprises can raise the cost to politicians of influencing them, since subsidies to private firms necessary to force them to remain inefficient are politically harder to sustain than wasted profits of the state firms. In this way, privatization leads to efficient restructuring of firms. Moreover, privatization is more effective when combined with a tight monetary policy, and when the new owners of firms are profit maximizing investors, rather than their employees or even managers.

In the last decade, privatization of state enterprises has swept the world. Thousands of state firms from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Western and Eastern Europe have gone private (Kikeri et al. I992). A critical factor behind this move to privatization is the well-documented poor performance of public enterprises. Donahue (I989) surveys multiple studies showing the

significantly higher cost of public relative to private provision of municipal services in the United States. Lopez de Silanes (I993) documents the inferior profitability of state relative to private firms in Mexico in the I980s. Mueller (I989) and Vining and Boardman (I992) survey dozens of studies of public and private firms around the world, most of which show that private firms are more efficient. More studies have actually shown that efficiency improves after privatization (World Bank, I992; Megginson et al., I994). Therefore, this paper adopts a theory of privatization that explains the relative inefficiency of public firms and the improvements of efficiency after privatization, as well as several other empirical findings concerning privatization.

Thus, the relevance of the theory to this study is the commonplace observation that public enterprises are inefficient because they address the objectives of politicians rather than maximize efficiency. One key objective of politicians is employment: they care about votes of the people whose jobs are in danger and, in many cases, unions have significant influence on political parties. For example, Donahue (I989) describes evidence showing higher employment per unit of output in publicly provided municipal services. The British government for a long time refused to close grossly inefficient coal mines to preserve mining jobs. While excess employment is not the only politically demanded inefficiency of state firms (for example, Credit Lyonnais, the money losing French state bank, made its worst loans to the friends of the governing socialist party),it is surely the most commonly noted one.

Overview of Privatization of Public Enterprises in Nigeria

The Nigerian economy is largely private-sector based prior to colonialism. The public sector came into existence in Nigeria as a result of the need to harness rationally the scarce resources for the production of goods and services for economic development in order to improve the welfare of the citizens of Nigeria. For example, the railways were probably the first major public sector or enterprises in Nigeria. At first, conceived mainly as a colonial strategic and administrative needs, they quickly acquired spaces and built rail lines as economic utility for the purpose of transporting goods of international commerce, like cocoa, groundnut, and palm kernels to their countries (the colonialists) for the development of their lands. The colonial administration was the nucleus of necessary economic and social infrastructural facilities such as railways, roads, bridges, electricity, ports and harbours, waterworks, and telecommunications that private enterprise could not provide. While social services like education and health were substantially left in the hands of the Christian Missionaries.

However, the beginning of socioeconomic challenge could be traced to the global economic recession of the 1980s which forced the Federal Government, under President Shehu Shagari, to embark on an economic stabilization program (Aboyade, 1974). The problems of performance of the public sector enterprises in Nigeria were further complicated by the downturn in socioeconomic development of the country due to the global economic recession and the collapse of the price of crude oil in the international market. Thus, Nigeria's precarious fiscal and monetary posture could no longer sustain the requirements of its public sector enterprises, particularly due to its abysmal performance in terms of their returns on investments and quality of services. Towards the end of 1980s, the public enterprises, which had grown too large, began to suffer from fundamental problems of defective capital structures, excessive bureaucratic control and intervention, inappropriate technologies, gross incompetence, and blatant corruption.

With deep internal crises which included high rates of inflation and unemployment, external debt obligations, and foreign exchange misalignment, Nigeria and many other African countries were strongly advised by the worldwide lending agencies, particularly the IMF and World Bank, to divest their public enterprises as one of the conditions for economic assistance. With the

intensified push for economic liberalization, Nigerian and other African leaders were told that privatization as an economic reform would help cut public sector inefficiency and waste, provide greater scope to the private sector, attract more investments, bring in new technologies, and hence revive economic growth. Thus, many countries including Nigeria, embarked on privatization and other market-oriented reforms to pull them out of the structural imbalances (Nwoye, 1997).

However, it is against this background that the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) proposed a kind of reform which would affect the goals, administration, and management of most of the public sector enterprises for purposes of efficiency (FRN, 1986). One of the main objectives of SAP was therefore, to pursue deregulation and privatization leading to removal of subsidies, reduction in wage expenses, and retrenchment in the public sector ostensibly to trim the state down to size. Under the reformation scheme, public sector enterprises were expected to be classified into three broad categories: 1. fully privatized or partially privatized, 2. fully commercialized or partially commercialized, or 3. retained as public sector institutions.

Privatization in Nigeria was formally introduced by the Privatization and Commercialization Act of 1988, which later set up the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC) chaired by late Dr. Hamza Zayyad with a mandate to privatize 111 public enterprises and commercialize 34 others. In 1993, having privatized 88 out of the 111 enterprises listed in the decree, the TCPC concluded its assignment and submitted a final report. Based on the recommendations of the TCPC, the Federal Military Government promulgated the Bureau for Public Enterprises Act of 1993, which repealed the 1988 Act and set up the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) to implement the privatization program in Nigeria. In 1999, the Federal Government enacted the Public Enterprise (Privatization and Commercialization) Act, which created the National Council on Privatization chaired by the then Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. The 1999 Act also established the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) as the Secretariat of the National Council on Privatization. The functions of the bureau include the following:

- implement the council's policies on privatization and commercialization;
- prepare public enterprises approved by the council for privatization and commercialization;
- advise the council on capital restructuring needs of enterprises to be privatized;
- ensure financial discipline and accountability of commercialized enterprises;
- make recommendations to the council in the appointment of consultants, advisers, investment bankers, issuing houses, stockbrokers, solicitors, trustees, accountants, and other professionals required for the purpose of either privatization or commercialization; and
- Ensure the success of privatization and commercialization implementation through monitoring and evaluation.

The subsequent exercise brought with it controversies that are still raging on. Western countries, and in particular the IMF and World Bank have been blamed for forcing the privatization of public services and natural resources in Africa as a condition for development assistance (Nwoye, 1995). They are accused of telling the impoverished countries to turn their public services over to private owners and to sell off their oil, gas, mining, electricity, telecommunications, transportation, and water companies, which were also said to be conditions for debt relief as many African countries were neck deep in debt and begging for debt relief or forgiveness.

Implications of Privatization of Public Enterprises on Nigerian Political Economy

Based on the fact that the initial impetus for privatisation in Africa came from creditor institutions, especially the IMF and World Bank, as part of the push for Structural Adjustment, many believed that there must be a hidden agenda in the form of economic exploitation. It is principally the conditionality that was attached to privatisation, debt relief and financial assistance that provoked resentment from the public view, especially labour, which viewed privatisation as creditors' initiative. As in some of the other African countries, resentment was intensified because a good number of the larger corporations being privatised were bought by foreign interests. By implication, privatisationprogramme in Nigeria has created rise in prices of commodities, such that the private sector exploits consumers where there is monopoly or oligopoly power by raising the prices of goods and services. The issue of higher tariff is actually hurting the poor in Nigeria as a result of privatisationprogramme. With the removal of subsidy, privatised corporations are compelled to charge full cost recovery, or economic prices for their goods and services. The current instability in the prices of petroleum products in Nigeria today is as a result of the partial removal of subsidy in the downstream oil sector in Nigeria,(Obadan, 2000).

Ogundiya, Olutayo and Amzat (2011) further argue that privatisationprogramme in Nigeria has led to loss of jobs in virtually all the sectors of the economy arising from inability of some staff to fit into the new structural arrangements based on privatisation. Similarly, privatisationprogramme affects staffing in Public Corporations which has always been used as veritable instrument for political patronage and an effective tool for attaining some balancing in the national geo-polity. Right from *ab initio*, the labourunions in Nigeria have always opposed the privatization of some public enterprises which had led to incessant strike actions. Sometimes workers block or slowdown the privatisation of specific corporations such as the privatisation of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria before its eventual privatization in November, 2013. The recent partial privatization of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation by the current administration has received a lot of criticisms from the public due to its implication of job loss and other possible benefits that might be threatened or jeopardized.

In the same vein, Ezeani (2014) points to the fact that many Nigerians see privatisation process as a form of relinquishing of wealth held in trust for all Nigerians by government to few affluent individuals. At the heart of the criticism of privatisation process in Nigeria is the perception that it has not been fair to the poor and the vulnerable workforce, while benefiting the rich, the powerful, and the privileged thereby perpetrating poverty. This was the case of the privatisation of the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, NICON insurance, and privatization of telecommunication sector (NITEL) which brought about MTN and ECONET mobile networks in 2000, and later GLOBACOM among others.

However, the Bureau of Public Enterprises is weak in its skills disposition which makes the success of theprivatisation of some corporations seriously compromised. Privatisationprogramme in Nigeria is faced with a number of challenges especially that of system change. Oji, Eme and Nwachukwu (2014) posit that result from people's resistance to change because the future is unknown, and hence feared a change from public sector ownership to private sector ownership and control from highly subsidised public sector enterprise to privatized enterprises, from economic management that must reflect socio-political balancing to one that has to be guided by the interplay of market forces placed on efficient consideration.

The above position informed the withdrawal of the privatisation of Kaduna refinery by the late Yar'adua's administration in 2007. Some of the problems facing the implementation of privatisationprogramme in Nigeria are summarized by Onah (2018) as follows: (a) job losses,

exploitation of consumers through price hike and low quality of goods and services; (b) concentration of public assets in the hands of small elite groups and worsening of income health distribution; (c) subjugation of social objectives, monopoly of the privatisation process by ethnic and other interest groups with easy access to capital; and (d) lack of transparency and hence, corruption and nepotism as well as foreign domination.

Conclusion

One of the fundamental areas of concern as observed in this paper is that, privatization policy in Nigeria turned out to be an instrument used by government to manipulate those privatized agencies and relieve itself of financial commitment to the corporations. The inefficiency of Nigerian public enterprises stems from the political instability which is inherent in the history of Nigerian political economy. It should be noted that externalization of policy is one of the major problems of Nigerian public enterprises. This is done through the activities of the multinational corporations in dictating the prices of goods and services as well as supplies of equipment and spare parts used in running those corporations. Nevertheless, over dependence of these enterprises on foreign firms has generated contradictions that manifested in corruption, mismanagement and embezzlement of public funds and inflation of contract sums.

This study also found that the key reason for embarking on privatization of public enterprises in Nigeria by those who control the machinery of government is that they see it as opportunity to acquire and own their private companies. Therefore, privatization policy in Nigeriacould be said to be an avenuethrough which the privileged few in Nigeria uses to enrich themselves at the expense of the general populace and decomposition of capital,without realisingthat it will intensify their relationship with foreign firms thereby leading to further distortion of the economic and social spheres of the nation.

Recommendations

In view of the findings exposed by several scholars whose works were reviewed in this study, the following recommendations can be made:

First, the performance of public enterprises in Nigeria should not be measured solelyonthe economic benefits since they were specifically established to render essential services to the people at affordable prices. Their performance should be measured on the basis of effectiveness and efficiency in rendering those services they were established for.

There is the need for government to review the idea of wholesale privatization and to be meticulous in selecting those enterprises to be privatized according to the significance of their services to the citizens. In this regard, those enterprises that have no positive direct bearing on the lives of the people should be privatized to the public through open bidding, andensure that purchases are equally spread among interested citizens irrespective of profession, state of origin or educational qualification.

As privatization allows foreign investments in order to expand local markets, there is the need for political and economic stability in Nigeria for privatization exercise to attract foreign investors. Suffice it to say thatconducive environment be provided so as to guarantee the security of investment and even the investors for smooth operation.

Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and National Council on Privatization (NCP) should put in placepossible mechanisms to see that public enterprises marked for privatization are not deliberately and corruptly undervalued. This should be done by contracting the job to more reputable property value firms for proper value of assetsor enterprises marked for privatization. This process must also be transparent as much as possible.

Government should do away with all the failed policies advocated and imposed on her by the Bretton Woods Institutions ifprivatisationprogramme in Nigeria must yield positive results as expected. The common strand is that only public corporations which are economically viable and efficient are being privatised, while inefficient and dead corporations not sold are scheduled for future exercise.

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ASSESSING NIGERIA'S PROSPECTIVE BRICS MEMBERSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL UNITY

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Abstract

This study evaluates the potential implications of Nigeria's membership in BRICS on African development and regional unity, drawing on secondary data from scholarly literature, policy reports, and economic analyses. As Africa's largest economy, Nigeria's inclusion in BRICS could enhance trade opportunities, infrastructure financing, and geopolitical influence. The study explores how BRICS membership may impact Nigeria's economic growth, diplomatic leverage, and intra-African relations, particularly in comparison to South Africa's existing role. While BRICS presents an alternative to Western-dominated financial institutions, concerns regarding geopolitical alignments, policy harmonization, and economic dependencies remain significant. Findings indicate that Nigeria's ability to maximize BRICS benefits depends on strategic policy frameworks, institutional reforms, and diplomatic engagement. Additionally, the study highlights potential challenges, including governance inefficiencies, economic diversification constraints, and intra-African political dynamics. The research contributes to the broader discourse on Africa's engagement with emerging global powers and the prospects for collective continental development. It concludes that Nigeria's BRICS membership, if well-managed, could strengthen Africa's global standing, but requires a balanced approach to national and regional priorities.

Keywords: Nigeria, BRICS, African development, geopolitical influence, economic integration.

i. Introduction

Nigeria's potential membership in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) has sparked scholarly debates regarding its implications for African development and regional unity. BRICS, established as a coalition of emerging economies, aims to challenge Western-dominated financial institutions and foster South-South cooperation (Armijo, 2007). Since South Africa joined in 2010, discussions on expanding BRICS to include more African states have intensified, with Nigeria often cited as a key candidate due to its economic strength and geopolitical influence (Onyekwena&Ekeruche, 2019).

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, plays a critical role in continental economic and political affairs (Adebajo, 2021). Proponents argue that joining BRICS could enhance Nigeria's access to alternative development financing, boost trade partnerships, and strengthen its diplomatic standing (Adetula, 2022). The BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), which prioritizes infrastructure financing, presents an opportunity for Nigeria to reduce reliance on Western financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, which have been criticized for imposing stringent loan conditions (Wade, 2013).

However, critics caution that Nigeria's membership could deepen geopolitical fragmentation within Africa, particularly concerning its role in the African Union (AU) and its relations with Western allies (Ogunnubi& Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). Additionally, concerns about China and Russia's growing influence in Africa raise questions about whether BRICS truly fosters

equitable partnerships or merely shifts dependency from Western nations to new global powers (Hope, 2020). Nigeria's structural economic challenges, including governance inefficiencies, corruption, and overreliance on oil exports, may also limit its ability to maximize BRICS membership benefits (Sala-i-Martin & Subramanian, 2013).

This study evaluates Nigeria's possible inclusion in BRICS, assessing its economic, political, and developmental impacts on Africa. By examining trade relations, financial benefits, and geopolitical considerations, this research provides a nuanced understanding of whether BRICS membership would advance Nigeria's interests while promoting Africa's collective growth and unity.

ii. Research Questions

1. What are the potential economic, political, and social benefits of Nigeria's membership in BRICS for the country itself and for Africa as a whole?
2. How could Nigeria's inclusion in BRICS enhance African development, particularly in infrastructure, technology transfer, and trade?
3. What challenges could Nigeria face in aligning its priorities with those of BRICS, and how might these challenges affect Africa's unity and development agenda?
4. How would Nigeria's membership impact intra-African relations and the existing dynamic within BRICS, particularly in relation to South Africa?
5. What strategies can Nigeria adopt to maximize its contributions to and benefits from BRICS membership while advancing Africa's collective interests?

iii. Research Objectives

1. To assess the specific economic benefits and risks of Nigeria's BRICS membership, including trade expansion, investment inflows, and financial alternatives, in relation to African development and Nigeria's national economic goals.
2. To examine Nigeria's potential role within BRICS in shaping global governance reforms, particularly regarding Africa's bargaining power in international financial institutions, infrastructure development, and debt sustainability.
3. To analyze the geopolitical and strategic challenges Nigeria may encounter in aligning its foreign policy and economic interests with BRICS member states and their impact on African unity and regional integration.
4. To evaluate how Nigeria's membership would affect intra-African diplomatic relations, particularly in relation to South Africa's existing role in BRICS, and its implications for continental representation in global decision-making.
5. To develop policy recommendations for Nigeria to effectively navigate BRICS membership, maximizing its economic and diplomatic advantages while promoting Africa's collective development and strategic interests.

iv. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using secondary sources of data to assess Nigeria's prospective BRICS membership and its implications for African development and regional unity. Secondary data is collected from a wide range of scholarly literature, policy

documents, government reports, international organization publications, and media analyses. Academic journals, books, and working papers provide theoretical and empirical insights into Nigeria's economic, political, and diplomatic engagements within global institutions. Reports from organizations such as the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) offer data on economic trends, trade relations, and development financing.

A content analysis of these sources helps to identify recurring themes, debates, and patterns regarding Nigeria's potential benefits and challenges within BRICS. Comparative analysis is also used to examine South Africa's experience as the only African BRICS member, providing a basis for evaluating Nigeria's potential role. The study critically assesses the geopolitical and economic implications of BRICS membership, focusing on trade, investment, governance, and regional diplomacy. By relying on existing data, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of Nigeria's strategic positioning within BRICS and its broader impact on African development and unity.

v. Conceptual Framework

In the context of **"Assessing Nigeria's Prospective BRICS Membership: Implications for African Development and Regional Unity,"** the following key concepts are essential:

1. **BRICS** – BRICS refers to an intergovernmental organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, aimed at fostering economic cooperation, political dialogue, and development financing among emerging economies (Armijo, 2007). BRICS seeks to challenge Western-dominated financial institutions and promote South-South collaboration in global governance (Hope, 2020).

2. **African Development** – African development encompasses the economic, political, and social progress of African nations, often measured through indicators such as GDP growth, infrastructure expansion, poverty reduction, and governance improvements (Todaro & Smith, 2015). It includes efforts by national governments, regional organizations, and international partnerships to foster sustainable economic growth and human development across the continent (Mkandawire, 2010).

3. **Regional Unity** – Regional unity refers to the political, economic, and social cohesion among states within a specific geographical area, aimed at fostering collective development and stability (Adetula, 2016). In Africa, regional unity is often pursued through institutions like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which advocate for economic integration, conflict resolution, and diplomatic solidarity (Adebajo, 2021).

4. **Geopolitical Influence** – Geopolitical influence refers to a nation's ability to shape international policies, economic agreements, and security dynamics through diplomatic, economic, and military means (Mearsheimer, 2001). In the African context, geopolitical influence is determined by a country's strategic positioning, resource endowment, and engagement in multilateral organizations (Ogunnubi& Okeke-Uzodike, 2016).

vi. Empirical Literature

Relevance of BRICS in the 21st Century

Despite these challenges, BRICS continues to play a vital role in providing a voice for the Global South. The group's emphasis on promoting inclusivity in global governance resonates

with many developing nations, making it a critical player in fostering south-south cooperation (Vieira & Alden, 2011).

BRICS retains substantial relevance in the 21st century, particularly in addressing global inequalities and fostering a multipolar world order. Its role as a platform for representing the interests of the Global South and challenging Western-dominated global governance structures has made it an indispensable coalition for emerging economies.

BRICS has consistently advocated for reforming international financial and political institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank, to reflect the growing influence of developing nations. This advocacy aligns with its core objective of fostering a more inclusive global order where decision-making power is equitably distributed. The establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) underscores BRICS's commitment to offering alternative financial mechanisms that address the needs of emerging economies (Abdenur& Folly, 2015).

BRICS emphasizes south-south cooperation by strengthening trade, investment, and development initiatives among member states and other developing countries. Through initiatives like the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) and joint development projects, BRICS has provided a framework for mutual support and economic resilience. This focus on collaborative growth positions BRICS as a vital instrument for countering economic dependence on Western powers (Pant, 2022).

In the 21st century, BRICS has sought to address shared challenges such as climate change, public health crises, and digital transformation. The bloc's engagement in forums like COP26 and its efforts to provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic highlight its potential to influence global policy beyond economic cooperation (Stuenkel, 2020).

While BRICS's ambitions are commendable, internal divisions, such as geopolitical tensions between India and China, and disparities in economic power among member states, undermine its cohesiveness. Additionally, critics argue that BRICS lacks a unified vision and institutional capacity to implement its strategic goals effectively (Vieira & Alden, 2011). Nonetheless, its ability to adapt and remain a focal point for the Global South reflects its enduring relevance.

BRICS continues to serve as a critical forum for fostering global inclusivity and advocating for the interests of emerging economies. Its role in promoting south-south cooperation and reforming global governance structures makes it a cornerstone of 21st-century international relations. However, its relevance will depend on its ability to overcome internal challenges and maintain unity in the face of evolving global dynamics.

vii. Nigeria's Engagement with BRICS Under President Ahmed Tinubu: History and Impact

President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's tenure marks a pivotal phase in Nigeria's foreign policy, characterized by a strategic focus on emerging economies through heightened engagement with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Although Nigeria remains an observer and not a formal member of the coalition, Tinubu's administration has invigorated dialogue on Nigeria's potential inclusion.

The BRICS coalition was established to amplify the influence of major emerging economies in global governance, with South Africa joining in 2010 to represent Africa (Stuenkel, 2020). Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy and most populous nation, has long been considered a

potential member. However, previous administrations maintained a cautious engagement, focusing instead on traditional partnerships with Western powers.

President Tinubu has shifted this approach, emphasizing diversification of Nigeria's alliances to include emerging powers. His administration views BRICS as a platform for achieving equitable global economic reforms, reducing Western dependency, and enhancing south-south cooperation (Akinyemi, 2023).

Under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria's engagement with BRICS has been driven by a strategic pursuit of economic diversification, enhanced geopolitical influence, and regional integration. At the 2023 BRICS Summit in South Africa, Tinubu emphasized Nigeria's readiness to collaborate on infrastructure development, trade facilitation, and global financial reforms, reflecting an intent to align with BRICS' objectives of fostering inclusivity in global governance (Ajayi, 2023).

Economically, Tinubu's engagement with BRICS, particularly China and India, seeks to attract investments in infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology, aligning with Nigeria's efforts to reduce oil dependency and expand its economic base (Onyeiwu, 2020). Additionally, BRICS membership could provide Nigeria access to alternative financial mechanisms such as the New Development Bank, offering new avenues for development financing.

Geopolitically, Tinubu has leveraged Nigeria's BRICS engagement to strengthen its leadership role in Africa, working alongside South Africa to amplify Africa's voice in global governance reforms (Vieira & Alden, 2011). Furthermore, BRICS' emphasis on South-South cooperation complements Nigeria's commitment to regional integration through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), fostering intra-African trade and investment.

However, Nigeria faces structural challenges in fully leveraging BRICS membership, including trade imbalances, weak governance, and infrastructure deficits (Adetula, 2015). Addressing these constraints is crucial for maximizing the benefits of BRICS engagement and advancing Nigeria's broader foreign policy and development objectives.

viii. Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for evaluating Nigeria's potential membership in BRICS is grounded in the theoretical foundations of South-South Cooperation, Regional Integration, and Global Power Transition. These theories collectively provide a structured lens for analyzing Nigeria's engagement with BRICS and its implications for African development and unity.

Theoretical Foundations

1. **South-South Cooperation Theory**
   This theory emphasizes collaboration among developing nations to foster economic growth, trade, and political influence. As a coalition of emerging economies, BRICS embodies the principles of South-South Cooperation by advocating for equitable global governance and collective development efforts.
   - **Proposition**: Nigeria's alignment with BRICS could strengthen its role in promoting African development and unity through shared economic and political objectives.
   - **Basic Assumption**: Cooperation among developing nations can effectively address global inequalities and promote sustainable development.

- **Strengths**: This theory provides insights into Nigeria's potential to leverage BRICS membership for economic growth and enhanced global bargaining power.
- **Weaknesses**: South-South Cooperation often faces challenges related to power imbalances, with dominant economies such as China potentially influencing decision-making disproportionately (Vieira & Alden, 2011).
- **Relevance**: It highlights BRICS as a strategic platform through which Nigeria can enhance regional development and economic integration.

2. **Regional Integration Theory**
Regional integration theory underscores the economic and political benefits of cooperation among geographically or strategically aligned states. Nigeria's potential inclusion in BRICS could serve as a bridge between Africa and other emerging economies, fostering greater cohesion within the Global South.
   - **Proposition**: BRICS can function as a vehicle for deeper African regional integration, with Nigeria playing a leadership role in representing the continent's interests.
   - **Basic Assumption**: Regional integration fosters economic interdependence and collective security among member states.
   - **Strengths**: This theory explains Nigeria's strategic significance in advancing Africa's interests within BRICS.
   - **Weaknesses**: Diverging national priorities and infrastructural challenges may undermine the effectiveness of regional integration efforts (Adetula, 2014).
   - **Relevance**: Nigeria's engagement with BRICS aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which prioritizes continental economic and political integration.

3. **Global Power Transition Theory**
This theory examines shifts in global power dynamics, particularly the rise of emerging economies as challengers to established powers. BRICS embodies this transition, positioning itself as a counterbalance to Western-led financial and political institutions.
   - **Proposition**: Nigeria's participation in BRICS would enhance its ability to influence global governance reforms and advocate for Africa's developmental priorities.
   - **Basic Assumption**: Emerging economies can reshape the global power structure through strategic alliances and collective action.
   - **Strengths**: This theory provides a strategic perspective on how Nigeria can enhance its global standing through BRICS membership.
   - **Weaknesses**: Power transitions are often met with resistance from dominant states, creating challenges for emerging coalitions (Organski& Kugler, 1980).
   - **Relevance**: The theory underscores BRICS' potential role in amplifying Nigeria's influence on global policy decisions.

Application to the Study
The conceptual framework integrates these theories to analyze Nigeria's potential BRICS membership across three key dimensions:

1. **Economic Dimension**: South-South Cooperation explains Nigeria's potential to attract investment and improve trade relations with BRICS nations.
2. **Political Dimension**: Regional Integration Theory contextualizes Nigeria's role in promoting African unity within BRICS.
3. **Global Influence**: Power Transition Theory highlights how Nigeria could leverage BRICS membership to challenge existing global power hierarchies and advocate for African interests.

Relevance to the Study
This conceptual framework is essential for understanding Nigeria's prospective engagement with BRICS as it:

1. **Clarifies Nigeria's Role**: It situates Nigeria as a strategic bridge between Africa and the BRICS coalition.
2. **Highlights Potential Benefits**: It demonstrates how Nigeria can influence global governance and foster regional development.
3. **Identifies Challenges**: It acknowledges constraints such as power asymmetry within BRICS and conflicting national interests, providing a nuanced analysis of Nigeria's prospective engagement.

Critical Evaluation of the Framework

Strengths
- Provides a holistic approach by integrating economic, political, and global dimensions.
- Offers a structured theoretical basis for assessing Nigeria's engagement with BRICS.
- Highlights theoretical intersections crucial for understanding Nigeria's role.

Weaknesses
- Over-reliance on theoretical assumptions may not fully capture the practical challenges of Nigeria's BRICS engagement.
- Power imbalances within BRICS could limit Nigeria's influence.
- The lack of empirical data on Nigeria's specific contributions to BRICS poses challenges for robust validation.

This conceptual framework provides a comprehensive foundation for analyzing Nigeria's potential BRICS membership. By synthesizing South-South Cooperation, Regional Integration, and Global Power Transition theories, it offers a multidimensional approach to evaluating the implications for African development and unity. While the framework underscores significant opportunities for Nigeria, it also recognizes the inherent challenges, ensuring a balanced assessment of the country's prospective role in BRICS.

ix. Identification and Discussion of Findings

1. Economic Implications of Nigeria's BRICS Membership

Scholars widely agree that BRICS membership could offer Nigeria significant economic opportunities, including enhanced trade relations, access to development financing, and economic diversification. According to Oyejide and Adewuyi (2020), BRICS members, particularly China and India, have emerged as major trading partners for African nations. Nigeria, with its vast oil and gas reserves, stands to gain from increased exports and infrastructural investments. However, there are concerns about the trade imbalance, where Nigeria primarily exports raw materials while importing manufactured goods, reinforcing dependency structures (Adetula, 2014).

Key Findings:

- Nigeria's BRICS membership could improve trade opportunities and foreign direct investment (FDI).
- Increased access to BRICS-led financial institutions like the New Development Bank (NDB) could support infrastructural development (Vieira & Alden, 2011).
- The risk of reinforcing Nigeria's dependency on commodity exports remains a challenge.

2. Political Influence and Regional Leadership

Scholars debate whether Nigeria's BRICS membership would enhance its geopolitical standing or weaken its regional leadership in Africa. According to Bach (2016), Nigeria has historically positioned itself as a leading advocate for African unity within regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS. Joining BRICS could amplify Nigeria's global influence, enabling it to advocate for Africa's interests on the world stage.

However, some scholars argue that BRICS itself lacks internal cohesion, and Nigeria's role may be overshadowed by dominant players such as China and Russia (Organski& Kugler, 1980). Furthermore, Eze (2019) notes that Nigeria's domestic political instability and governance challenges might limit its ability to fully capitalize on BRICS membership.

Key Findings:

- BRICS membership could elevate Nigeria's global diplomatic influence.
- Nigeria may face difficulties asserting leadership within BRICS due to power imbalances.
- Internal political and governance issues could hinder effective participation in BRICS decision-making.

3. Impact on African Development and Regional Integration

The role of Nigeria in fostering African unity through BRICS remains a critical issue. South-South cooperation, as emphasized by Fawole and Ukeje (2016), suggests that BRICS could serve as a platform for Nigeria to push African development agendas. BRICS initiatives, such as the NDB and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), could provide alternative financial mechanisms that reduce Africa's reliance on Western financial institutions.

On the contrary, scholars such as Adetula (2014) caution that regional integration efforts within Africa may suffer if Nigeria prioritizes BRICS engagements over existing African frameworks. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is seen as a more immediate priority for

regional economic integration, and Nigeria's commitment to it may be diluted by BRICS participation.

Key Findings:

- Nigeria can leverage BRICS to advance Africa's economic development.
- BRICS financial structures provide alternative funding for African infrastructure projects.
- There is a potential risk of Nigeria shifting focus away from regional integration initiatives like AfCFTA.

4. Strategic Challenges and Policy Considerations

Several scholars argue that Nigeria must strategically navigate potential challenges associated with BRICS membership. According to Vieira & Alden (2011), one major issue is the asymmetrical power distribution within BRICS, where China and Russia hold dominant positions. Nigeria must ensure that its engagement with BRICS aligns with its national interests and does not compromise its sovereignty.

Moreover, Usman (2022) highlights the necessity of institutional and economic reforms within Nigeria before it can fully benefit from BRICS. Addressing issues such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and economic diversification is essential for Nigeria to maximize its gains from BRICS membership.

Key Findings:

- Nigeria must carefully manage power asymmetry within BRICS to avoid marginalization.
- Institutional and governance reforms are necessary for Nigeria to fully benefit from BRICS.
- Clear policy strategies should be developed to ensure that BRICS membership aligns with national and regional development priorities.

The findings indicate that Nigeria's potential BRICS membership presents both opportunities and challenges. Economically, it could enhance trade, investment, and access to alternative financial institutions. Politically, it offers Nigeria an avenue to amplify African interests in global governance. However, concerns regarding power asymmetry, regional integration trade-offs, and governance limitations must be addressed. Ultimately, Nigeria's engagement with BRICS should be carefully strategized to maximize benefits while safeguarding national and regional interests.

x. Conclusion

Under President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria's engagement with BRICS is framed as a strategic initiative to bolster its role in regional and global governance. Although not yet a formal member, Nigeria's alignment with BRICS reflects its commitment to south-south cooperation, economic diversification, and a multipolar global order. Tinubu's administration has emphasized the potential benefits of BRICS membership, including improved access to development financing, expanded trade and investment opportunities, and a stronger voice in global policymaking.

For Africa, Nigeria's inclusion in BRICS could reinforce regional unity by advancing shared economic and political objectives within the bloc, aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063. However, challenges remain, including governance weaknesses, potential power

imbalances within BRICS, and the need to reconcile national interests with broader African priorities. Addressing these concerns requires robust policy reforms to enhance Nigeria's economic competitiveness, strengthen governance structures, and deepen regional integration efforts.

In sum, Tinubu's proactive engagement with BRICS presents a strategic opportunity to reposition Nigeria as a major player in the Global South. If effectively managed, Nigeria's BRICS participation could drive both national development and Africa's collective aspirations in an increasingly multipolar world.

xi. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation of Nigeria's potential membership in BRICS under President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's administration, the following recommendations are proposed:

Short-Term Recommendations

1. **Enhancing Economic Engagement with BRICS**
   - Strengthen partnerships with the New Development Bank (NDB) to secure funding for key infrastructure and sustainable development projects.
   - Expand trade and investment ties with emerging BRICS economies, such as India and Brazil, to reduce dependency on China.
2. **Promoting African Unity in Global Governance**
   - Advocate for Africa-centric reforms in institutions like the UN and World Bank through BRICS.
   - Lead discussions on equitable trade policies, climate justice, and debt relief for African nations.
3. **Strengthening Regional Diplomacy**
   - Foster dialogue with South Africa and other African nations to ensure collaborative leadership within BRICS.
   - Address domestic governance challenges, including corruption and insecurity, to enhance Nigeria's credibility in global engagements.
4. **Boosting Multilateral Engagement**
   - Actively participate in BRICS forums and working groups to shape policies on global financial stability and South-South cooperation.

Long-Term Recommendations

1. **Sustaining Economic Diversification and Stability**
   - Develop long-term strategies to balance economic engagements across BRICS while maintaining a diversified economic portfolio.
   - Strengthen trade agreements within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to reduce external dependency.
2. **Institutionalizing Pan-Africanism within BRICS**
   - Ensure that BRICS initiatives align with the African Union's Agenda 2063, promoting an African-centered development model.
   - Strengthen Nigeria's role as a bridge between BRICS and the African continent.

3. **Balancing Power Dynamics within BRICS**
    - Engage in sustained multilateral diplomacy to ensure Nigeria has an influential role in decision-making and is not overshadowed by larger economies.
    - Advocate for fair representation in BRICS initiatives to prevent economic and political marginalization.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can maximize its potential within BRICS while ensuring that its membership serves both national interests and broader African development objectives.

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IPOB AS HYBRID CIVIL SOCIETY: FROM NON-VIOLENT ADVOCACY TO MILITANT ETHNO-NATIONALISM

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Abstract
The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has evolved from a non-violent advocacy group to a militant ethno-nationalist movement, reflecting broader socio-political challenges within the Nigerian state. This paper examines IPOB as a hybrid civil society actor, emphasising its dual role in civic engagement and resistance. Drawing on qualitative data, including an extensive literature review, desk research, and the group's public communication, the study explores IPOB's emergence, strategies, and trajectory. It situates the group within the historical and structural context of Nigeria's post-colonial state-building challenges, including systemic marginalisation and ethnic tensions. The analysis highlights IPOB's use of peaceful demonstrations, digital media, and the establishment of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) as pivotal strategies, alongside the Nigerian state's militarised and coercive responses. The paper underscores how these state responses, particularly the detention of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu, have escalated tensions, fostered radicalisation, and deepened narratives of ethnic marginalisation. The study concludes that the Nigerian state's reliance on force-based approaches exacerbates conflicts, urging a shift toward inclusive, dialogue-based strategies to address ethno-nationalist grievances and foster sustainable peace.
Keywords: *Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Hybrid Civil Society, Ethno-Nationalism, Eastern Security Network (ESN), Post-Colonial State-Building*

1 Introduction

The inability of the post-colonial Nigerian state to completely reform its ontological basis, which consists of its institutions and approach to governance, has consistently been a source of security challenges. Its continuous existence as a predatory entity ensures that it is a routine recipient of attempts from non-state actors questioning its inability to attain inclusive governance. It continues to be questioned whether the Nigerian state can transform into an entity that is representative of diverse ethnic groups, with such critical questions gathering around

advocacy that seeks to extract ethnic groups from a situation where they have "found themselves lost in the scheme of things" (Abada, Omeh, & Okoye, 2020). In recent times, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have emerged as a particularly vocal representative of grievances by the Igbo ethnic nationality, which it has channelled in the form of agitations for the revision of Nigeria's political configuration (Terhile, Edet, Undiandeye, & Edet, 2024). Conversations in literature have centred around illuminating the output of the group's agitations and the symbolism of its activities. As such, discussions have been about the economic consequences of the group's activities (Mbanusi, 2023; Asogwa & Uche, 2023; Terhile et al., 2024). Beyond that, demonstrable links have been drawn between the group's actions and the political and structural inefficiencies of the modern Nigerian structure (Henry et al., 2020; Owoeye et al., 2023). Ugorji (2017), however, has demonstrated that IPOB represents a social movement with immense socio-political significance. This paper extends this argument further and describes the IPOB as a logic of the faulty state of relations between the Nigerian state and the civil society sector, which continues to cohere to a state defined by uneasy complementarity and general antagonism. Part of the paper's arguments include the establishment of the "*civil society*" character of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), wherein the paper buttresses the point that IPOB's emergence onto the scene was not an outlier and that its actions derive an ontological basis from various factors embedded within the civil society space in southeastern Nigeria

2 Re-conceptualising civil society

Notions of civil society as a realm dominated by human associations that oppose the state and its claim to authority are, as Akande et al. (2024) note, a dominant theme within studies of civil society groups. However, it is pertinent to note that such conceptions are best contextualised, given the concept's imprecision and fluidity, which often results in the proliferation of different epistemologies around the concept (Edet et al., 2024). This imprecision connects to the concept's flexibility. This flexibility has been illustrated in and reinforced by the civil society label's encompassment of organisations of diverse identities (Neji & Edet, 2023), which occupy a broad spectrum of actors drawn from different identities within a social system, constructed based on gender, faith and ethnicity (Doyle, 2017). In elucidating further on the fluidity of the concept, Akande et al. (2024) have argued that the label also captures hybrid organisations that legitimate their activities that violent established norms of behaviour using rationalisations drawn from legitimate grievances held by a mass collective. Such organisations blur the lines between legitimate causes and violent insurgency, challenging the traditional conceptions of civil society organisations. In southeastern Nigeria, this concept of hybrid civil society becomes particularly significant when examined through the lens of groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Drawing on Akande et al. (2024)'s notion of hybrid organisations, IPOB can be seen as a unique civil society actor whose actions are shaped by a combination of legitimate grievances and a direct challenge to established state norms. The group embodies the fluidity and diversity of civil society, as its composition and goals are rooted in ethnic identity and a shared historical experience of marginalisation that traces back to the Biafra War. As Akande et al (2024) have submitted, hybrid civil society actors, such as IPOB, often are able to simultaneously function as representatives of collective grievances through their ability to instrumentalise their civil society identity for resistance mobilisation and articulation. Seen that way, IPOB exists as a space for accommodating grievances about systemic inequalities in an organised form. Such grievances are rooted in historical dynamics perpetuated in the modern epoch, specifically concerning the post-colonial state-building project of most African states, Nigeria inclusive.

3 Review of Related Literature

Nigeria's post-colonial state-building project has continuously been beleaguered by challenges that have sought to undercut its effectiveness. Such challenges have been apparent in the continuous friction between its component units and peoples, as their relations remain grounded in competitive rather than cooperative norms. As Okpaga (n.d) notes indubitably, the consequent state of tensive co-existence is representative of the continuation of fractious interactions between major and minor ethnic groups, who have continuously grappled with the question of ethnic balancing, which has been a general bane of African post-colonial systems. Within such a mix, the state has adopted the position of a participant in a state of "competitive, conflictual" relations with civil society and all associations within it (Odey, Edet, Agboh, & Ngoro, 2024). This lack of cordiality is worsened by the continued absence of a national identity reflected in statements made by past and present political elites. Indeed, the literature contains references to statements made by Tafawa Balewa that state that "…many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria" (Ekeh, Cole, & Olusanya, 1989, p. 93) and that Nigeria's unity could only be intelligently interpreted as a relic of colonial intentions (Idowu, 1999, p. 39) as well as that of Nnamdi Azikiwe which construed Nigeria to represent "…a mere geographical expression" (Ekeh, Cole, & Olusanya, 1989, p. 92) (Ekeh, 1989, p. 92). Such gaps have created spaces for the emergence of groups that channel disgruntlement with what may be discussed as integrating various ethnic groups into "an imagined nation" (Endong & Obi, 2022). The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which emerged in the late 2010s, represents a notable example of such groups. Although often perceived as an autochthonous movement, the group's origins can effectively be traced to a diasporan project initially led by two United Kingdom-based Igbos, Nnamdi Kanu and Uche Mefor(Nwonwu, 2023).

At the ideological level, the group's ontological basis in "liberation theology" is well demonstrated by its numerous exertions of claims to fight for the freedom of the people (Akpan, 2021). The literature has broad links between this "claim" and aspirations embedded within the Igbo civil society, specifically as related to the political dynamics of the modern Nigerian state described in succinct terms by Ojukwu and Nwaorgu (2016)'s observation that: "Since the return to civil rule in 1999, the Igbos have continually craved for a just society where every ethnic group can compete favourably for political power and where economic resources are equitably distributed through non-violence". Nonetheless, from the literature, it becomes clear that IPOB's claims to these issues notwithstanding, their campaign and activities are hampered by several challenges extending from social and political contexts. In the first instance, the group's non-recognition by the United Nations is discussed as a consequence of complex political dynamics and the embedded convention of territorial integrity preservation upheld by member states (Oguejiofor, 2024), while at the same time, the group's activities are seen as a continuation of the struggle for recognition and autonomy within a multinational state (Nduba, Nnamdi, & Chukwuebuka, 2020). The militaristic response of the Nigerian state and factionalisation within the group further complicates such dynamics (Okaisabor, 2023).

The general tendencies of existing literature indicate that extant scholarship has discussed the IPOB's origins, connections to Nigeria's eastern civil society space, and interactions with the Nigerian state. However, considerations of the 'dual faced' character of the operations of IPOB remains underexamined. This paper addresses this gap by discussing IPOB's hybridity, as captured in the hybrid civil society concept, which is displayed in its ability to draw on legitimate grievances and simultaneously employ confrontational resistance.

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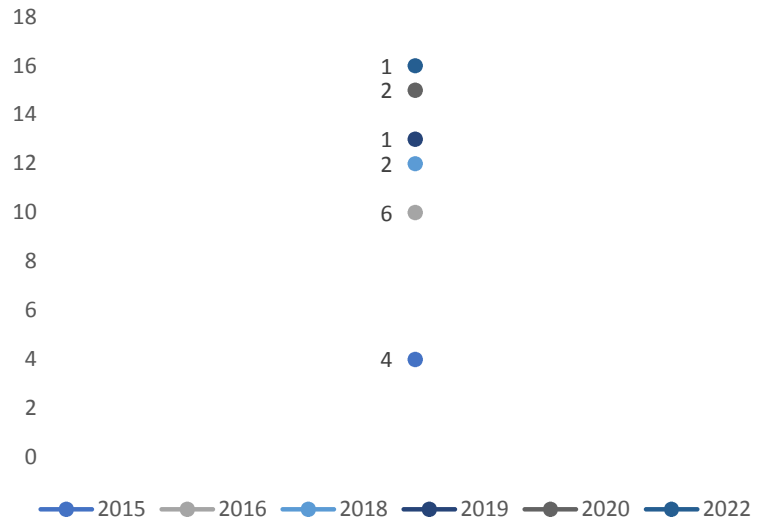
4 Methodology

This paper's arguments are based on a qualitative dataset constructed from an extensive literature review and desk research on the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Nigerian state's responses between 2015 and December 2024. The focus is on the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Nigerian state's reactions between 2015 and December 2024. The research also closely observed IPOB's public communication and information dissemination platforms from November to December 2024 to gain firsthand insights. This included monitoring their official website, social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram, and public statements from their leadership. The aim was to understand how IPOB frames its messages, mobilises support, and addresses its audience. These observations revealed recurring themes in their communication, shedding light on how they present their cause to their supporters and the broader public. The paper also draws on a publicly available dataset created by Oluwatoye (2023), which offers detailed accounts of Nigerian state responses to IPOB. Using this dataset, combined with thematic analysis of media reports, the research could better analyse how the state's strategies have influenced the trajectory of the IPOB movement, from moments of heightened tension to occasional periods of calm. To ensure the reliability of the dataset from Oluwatoye (2023), the data sources were manually vetted for accuracy, and data from the dataset was triangulated with news reports on the specified incidents published by verifiable national dailies, including Premium Times and Guardian Nigeria. This study adopts an interpretive approach to analysis, emphasising understanding the perspectives and meanings behind the actions of both IPOB and the Nigerian state.

4 IPOB as "hybrid civil society": From non-violent activism to 'militant' ethnonationalism

Functioning as a 'spear' of a grassroots civil society organisation, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has typically used an eclectic strategy that borrows civic and violent advocacy elements. Activism using non-violent forms has been a documented feature of activism by the Indigenous People of Biafra since its establishment. This pivot towards peaceful demonstrations as a particular form of activism was a key characteristic of the movement in its early days. Between 2015 and 2016, the group engaged in 10 peaceful demonstrations (Figure 1), accounting for 62.5% of such engagements before 2022.

Figure 1: IPOB peaceful demonstration data (2015-2022)



Source: Adapted from Oluwatoye (2023).

Such demonstrations were spread across the states in the southeast region, often resulting in fatal consequences due to state action. In the time between 2015 and 2016, at least 150 fatalities were recorded because of forceful responses by security forces against supporters of the group. (Amnesty International, 2016). Such dynamics, seen in the fatalities, corresponded with a general condition of 'oppositional' interactions between the state and the group, with attempts at suppressing the narrative embedded in the idea espoused by the group.

A prominent strategy of IPOB's activities has been using the media space to target and raise domestic and international bases of support. New forms of digital media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have been at the heart of IPOB's media strategy. In 2022, the Nigerian government held meetings with Facebook to advocate for stringent punitive measures designed to prevent the continued use of the social media platform for the propagation of violent and divisive rhetoric by the IPOB (BBC News Pidgin, 2022). Facebook has mainly been a fecund dissemination area, with many groups and pages. In 9 years, over a hundred public groups and pages framed around the thesis advanced by IPOB or its adjoining messaging have been created on the social media platform Facebook. As has been underscored in the literature, these information outlets have functioned as "channels" for perpetuating a language discourse that revolves around violence, protest, threat, and crime as a form of mobilising sympathy towards the group's cause (Amadi, 2022). IPOB's attempts to dominate the traditional and digital media space encounters aggressive responses from the Nigerian state which has at various times, and to a considerable extent, shut down communication channels of the group, including Radio Biafra and IPOB's related webpages.

Eastern Security Network (ESN)

The 'violent turn' could best be described as beginning with establishing the Eastern Security Network. Again, the formation of this group sufficed as an extension of the 'liberation' messaging at the fore of the group's messaging. In that sense, the ESN was a security guarantee extended to residents of the southeastern region, a culmination of deep-seated frustration with what was the failure of the conventional structures of governance at the task of securing the people and preventing their gradual elimination by criminal elements (Shibayan, 2020). Consequent messaging has consistently sought to buttress the utility of the ESN as the security vehicle and solution for a sense of security crisis embodied by the Nigerian government (Nwaiwu, 2024). Supporters of the ESN have emphasised its value as "a symbol of resistance" whose function revolves around protecting local communities from external threats, maintaining peace and security, and responding to "perceived neglect by traditional security agencies" (George, Udoudo, & Nwachukwu, 2024, p. 72). Although the ESN was projected as a facsimile of state-backed localised policing initiatives, specifically the Amotekun (Shibayan, 2020), it is entrenched in a context of consistent opposition from the Nigerian government, which is informed by broad ties to illicit activities or its virtual character as an armed wing of IPOB.

Such descriptions draw validation from the group leader's description of ESN as "IPOB's first and last line of defence" (Ishaku, 2020, p. 1). Resistance overlapped with opposition from elements of the Igbo civil society, specifically the youth wing of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, which has sought to alienate (Ishaku, 2020). To an extent, the formation of the Eastern Security Network indicates the group's attempts to contest sovereignty and state monopoly of force. The Nigerian state has persistently faced such challenges. Apart from the deployment of military assets and personnel, which often has resulted in severe clashes (Sahara Reporters, 2021), there have been raids by special task forces (Punch, 2024), some of which have included the recovery of improvised explosive devices (Abdullah, 2024).

Over time, the introduction of the ESN has increasingly brought the IPOB group within the overlap with illicit economies. The IPOB has fractured into several splinter groups that have increasingly connected with local and trans-local organised crime activities and networks in recent years. Organisational entities operating under the IPOB's name continue to be linked with activities such as extortion, incentive-based kidnapping, arms trafficking and smuggling operations.Cameroonian government and Nigerian state officials have reported that the group has participated in micro-scale transnational weapons smuggling operations (Bish, et al., 2022). There are reports of the busting of kidnapping and robbery syndicates linked to IPOB/ESN (Nwachukwu, 2024; Okolie, 2024), while the IPOB has denied participation in kidnapping for ransom (Njoku, 2024), re-echoing an earlier position that has advanced the thesis that attempts to link the group to kidnapping and robbery extends from a deliberate ploy by the Nigerian state to mischaracterise the group (Opejobi, 2021). However, such rejections of links occur at the same time as documented instances where the group has been identified as culpable in cases of targeted abductions of residents (Ojukwu, 2022).

5 Nigerian State Responses to The Indigenous People Of Biafra Advocacy And Implications

Nigerian state responses follow a general pattern which has adopted a non-permissive stand towards the actions of the IPOB group. Endong and Obi (2022) hold that the Nigerian state has adopted a rabidly intolerant and aggressive posture towards the group. This is evident in initial responses to the non-violent activism adopted by the IPOB in the early days of its activism. Initial responses focused on repression rather than engagement. Summarising the extent of the forceful response, this Amnesty International (AI) summary of its report may thus be instructive:

> "Analysis of 87 videos, 122 photographs and 146 eye witness testimonies relating to demonstrations and other gatherings between August 2015 and August 2016 consistently shows that the military fired live ammunition with little or no warning to disperse crowds. It also finds evidence of mass extrajudicial executions by security forces, including at least 60 people shot dead in the space of two days in connection with events to mark Biafra Remembrance Day." (Amnesty International, 2016, p.1).

A pivotal moment in this trajectory was the arrest and continued detention of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. Initially detained in October 2015 on charges of treasonable felony, Kanu's case has become a symbol of the state's broader approach to dissent. Although he was released on bail in 2017, his rearrest in June 2021 under circumstances described by some as extraordinary rendition reignited tensions. The Nigerian government has justified his prolonged detention as necessary for national security. From this standpoint, the detention of Nnamdi Kanu has been cited as a necessity to maintain security in the south-east (Nnochiri, 2022).

However, as Akande et al (2024)'s construct of hybrid civil society suggests, state repression of contentious non-state actors often radicalises such actors, transforming them into entities that blend civil resistance with militant action. This dynamic manifests succinctly in the IPOB's evolution from a primarily non-violent movement into a hybrid organisation with the emergence of the Eastern Security Network (ESN).

The continued detention of Kanu and his arrest have arguably contributed to the 'radicalisation' of sections of IPOB supporters, many of whom now view peaceful advocacy as ineffective. This dynamic is reflected in the emergence of the ESN and the increasing prominence of splinter factions such as the Simon Ekpa group, which has capitalised on his continued incarceration as

the basis for the declaration of several violent actions. Notably, the emergence of the ESN illustrated a reversal of the dynamics of the 'relationship of violence' between the Nigerian state and the IPOB group, such that the IPOB transitioned from a plaintive to a radical group. Between January and April 2021, at least twenty violent assaults on security personnel and structures were recorded in the southeastern region (Wodu, 2021). Such actions indicate the adoption of more confrontational postures against state security structures, which have negative implications for regional stability, disrupt economic activities in the area, and have negative consequences for local livelihoods and economic activities. Politically, the impact of state responses deepens feelings of grievance within the southeastern region, owing to Nnamdi Kanu's status as an embodiment of Igbo resistance to perceived marginalisation and his arrest is interpreted as an attack on the Igbo ethnic collective. Such ideas have been noted extensively. For instance, a press release dated March 10, 2017, published by the Sun Newspapers has argued that:

> "Each day he is held in detention is an extra day he garners more support, he grows in stature as a prisoner of conscience and as a freedom fighter. The longer he is held, the more he is seen as bearing the cross of the Igbo people, and the more the persecution perception of the Igbo takes on greater reality." (The Sun Nigeria, 2017, p. 1).

The quote above indicates that state responses only further reinforce a historical grievance trope as well as a narrative of "Igbo marginalisation", which presents Kanu's detention as a symbol of a general persecution of the Igbo nationality, which potentially deepens ethnic tensions and alienates members of the Igbo ethnic nationality from the Nigerian state. Such messages can be consolidated into robust frames for socio-political mobilisation.

6. Conclusion

State responses to ethno-nationalist challenges to its sovereignty and structure have consistently failed to foster inclusiveness. The emergence and persistence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) highlight these deep-seated issues and underscore the need to shift from coercive, force-based strategies to consensual, deliberative processes that address and accommodate grievances. The current approach has exacerbated, rather than mitigated, the challenges IPOB poses. Actions such as the detention of the group's leader, the suppression of non-violent demonstrations, and the disproportionate use of force have escalated tensions, reinforced narratives of marginalisation, and undermined peacebuilding efforts. There is an urgent need to de-securitise the Nigerian state's response to groups like IPOB. Failure to do so risks transforming these groups from purely civic organisations into hybrid entities that combine civil advocacy with violent resistance. To do so, there is need for future research to consolidate focus on the development of sustainable non-adversarial, inclusive models for managing ethno-nationalist aspirations through sustained critical inquiries, which should allow for the comprehensive interrogation of the unintended dynamics of state securitisation of responses to issues raised by the civil society and how such shapes the trajectory of hybrid organisations that operate at the intersection of civil resistance and violent militancy.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN KATSINA STATE: THE PRE AND POST HARVEST LOSSES IN VIEW

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ABSTRACT
This study assesses the impact of food insecurity in Katsina State, focusing on the critical aspects of pre- and post-harvest losses. Food insecurity remains a pressing challenge in Nigeria, with Katsina State being one of the most affected regions due to its predominantly agrarian economy and vulnerability to environmental and security challenges. The research adopts a qualitative research, thereby, employing both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data are majorly the key informant interviews while the secondary data are online articles and print books, which are relevant to the discourse. Furthermore, the research employs a descriptive and analytical methods in its presentation of facts. The research evaluates how factors such as climate variability, poor agricultural practices, inadequate storage facilities, and insecurity affect food production and distribution in the state. Pre-harvest losses are explored in the context of pest infestations, erratic rainfall, and inadequate extension services, while post-harvest losses are attributed to inefficient handling, transportation bottlenecks, and the absence of modern storage solutions. The study finds that the pre and post-harvest losses significantly contribute to food shortages, price volatility, and economic hardships for local farmers, thereby exacerbating poverty levels in rural communities. Additionally, the research highlights the compounding effect of insecurity, particularly banditry and communal clashes, which hinder farming activities and disrupt food supply chains. The implications for food security in Katsina State are far-reaching, affecting not only nutritional outcomes but also the livelihoods of agricultural-dependent households. To mitigate the impact of food insecurity, the study recommends adopting climate-smart agricultural techniques, strengthening rural infrastructure, providing modern storage technologies, and enhancing security measures to protect farming communities. The study urged policy makers to invest in public-private partnerships that will foster innovation and efficiency in food production and distribution systems. Ultimately, addressing the pre- and post-harvest losses will be crucial for enhancing food security, improving rural livelihoods, and fostering sustainable agricultural development in Katsina State.

Keywords: Pre-Harvest Loss, Post-Harvest Losses and Food Insecurity

INTRODUCTION
Food insecurity has become a significant concern in many parts of Nigeria, particularly in Katsina State, a State, highly reliant on agriculture for sustenance and economic activities. Food insecurity refers to the inability of individuals or households to access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2021). In Katsina State, the challenge of food insecurity is exacerbated by various factors, including climate variability, inadequate agricultural practices, poor infrastructure, and the prevalence of insecurity in the region. Pre- and post-harvest losses remain central to the food insecurity problem, contributing significantly to the inability of households to access adequate food supplies.

Pre and post-harvest losses are often linked to factors such as erratic rainfall patterns, pest and disease outbreaks, insufficient access to quality seeds and fertilizers, and a lack of extension

services to guide farmers on best practices. These issues result in reduced agricultural productivity, which directly affects food availability in the state. For instance, studies have shown that climate-induced droughts and flooding have significantly reduced yields of staple crops such as maize, millet, and sorghum in Katsina (Abdulkarim, Yusuf & Gambo, 2020). Additionally, the absence of adequate storage facilities and poor post-harvest handling practices, such as inefficient drying and preservation methods, lead to substantial food losses after harvest. These losses not only reduce the quantity of food available for consumption but also create economic hardships for smallholder farmers who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Insecurity in Katsina State, including banditry, kidnapping, and communal clashes, further complicates the food insecurity challenge. Insecurity disrupts farming activities, discourages farmers from cultivating larger fields, and interrupts the transportation of produce to markets (Mustapha, Bello & Mohammed, 2022). This creates a vicious cycle where food becomes scarcer, prices escalate, and vulnerable households are unable to afford sufficient food. The ripple effects of these challenges are reflected in malnutrition, stunted growth among children, and increased poverty levels, especially in rural areas.

This study attempts to examine the extent to which pre- and post-harvest losses contribute to food insecurity in Katsina State, highlighting their impacts on food availability, affordability, and accessibility. It also aims to provide recommendations for policymakers, development partners, and other stakeholders to mitigate these losses and enhance food security. Understanding the dynamics of food insecurity through this lens is essential for fostering sustainable agricultural practices, improving rural livelihoods, and achieving long-term food sufficiency in Katsina State.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Pre-Harvest Losses; Pre-harvest losses refer to the reduction in potential crop yield that occurs before the harvest process is completed. These losses are caused by a variety of factors, including climatic conditions, pest infestations, weed competition, disease outbreaks, and improper crop management practices (Singh, Kumar & Rao, 2020). Weather-related issues, such as erratic rainfall patterns, drought, and floods, significantly impact crop growth and development, leading to yield reduction. Additionally, poor agronomic practices, such as inadequate land preparation, inappropriate planting techniques, and insufficient fertilizer application, further contribute to pre-harvest losses (FAO, 2018).

Post-Harvest Losses; Post-harvest losses refer to the decrease in quantity or quality of agricultural produce that occurs after the crop has been harvested. These losses can happen during various stages, including handling, storage, transportation, processing, and distribution (Affognon, Mutungi, Sanginga &Borgemeister, 2015). Post-harvest losses not only affect food availability but also have economic implications for farmers, traders, and consumers.

Physical losses, such as spoilage and shrinkage, are common due to poor handling and inadequate storage facilities. Perishable crops like fruits, vegetables, and tubers are particularly vulnerable if not properly stored (Kitinoja&AlHassan, 2012). In developing regions, inadequate infrastructure, such as lack of cold storage and poor road networks, exacerbates post-harvest losses during transportation and distribution. Additionally, contamination by toxins, pests, and diseases during storage further reduces the market and nutritional value of the produce (Affognon et al., 2015). Quality losses, on the other hand, may not affect the physical appearance of the produce but reduce its nutritional value, taste, and shelf life. For instance, improperly dried grains may develop molds that produce aflatoxins, making them unsafe for consumption (Kitinoja&AlHassan, 2012).

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METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study that depends on both primary and secondary source of information to dissect, analyze, and synthesize the impact of pre and post-harvest losses on food security in Katsina State.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURE IN KATSINA STATE

Katsina State, which is located in the northwestern region of Nigeria, has a rich agricultural heritage that has significantly shaped its socio-economic development over time. The state's agricultural traditions date back to pre-colonial times, when subsistence farming was the primary occupation of its inhabitants. The region's fertile lands and favorable climate facilitated the cultivation of various crops, establishing Katsina as a prominent agricultural hub in the Sahelian zone. This section will be discussed through the lenses of three historical epochs. The pre-colonial period, the colonial period and the post-independence era.

The pre-colonial period; Katsina State, a Hausa Bakwai state, had agriculture central to its people's lives. Its favorable climate and fertile lands supported thriving agriculture. Subsistence farming, communal land tenure, and diverse crops were common. Agriculture was the foundation for food production and trade in the region. The social, political, and religious structures influenced farming practices.

The Colonial Period; the colonial period brought significant changes to Katsina's agriculture. British conquest in 1903 led to agricultural policies serving colonial interests. Policies focused on raw materials for British industries and revenue generation. This era saw changes in food production, land tenure, and labor dynamics. The colonial administration's economic goals reshaped Katsina's agricultural landscape.

The Post-Independence Era; the post-independence era, beginning in 1960, ushered in a period of both opportunities and challenges for agriculture in Katsina State. Nigeria’s political independence brought hopes for economic diversification, rural development, and self-sufficiency in food production. However, political instability, inconsistent agricultural policies, and environmental challenges significantly influenced the agricultural landscape of Katsina.

PRE AND POST-HARVEST LOSSES AND ITS IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY IN KATSINA STATE

Pre and post-harvest losses refer to the reduction in the quantity and quality of crops that occur during the stages leading up to harvesting and after harvest. These losses can be caused by a range of factors, including pest infestations, diseases, adverse weather conditions, and poor farm management practices (Oerke, 2006). In Katsina State, pre and psot-harvest losses have emerged as a significant threat to food security. The state's agricultural sector, dominated by small-holder farmers, faces persistent challenges that undermine crop productivity and contribute to widespread food insecurity (Ahmed & Usman, 2019). This section of the work is an attempt to understand the dynamics of pre-harvest losses and their implications on sustainable food production in the Katsina State.

In a personal communication with Professor Ibrahim, he noted that; Pre harvests losses are the losses that happen right on the farm before harvest which could be due pest infestations, diseases, theft... Post-harvest losses are the losses that happen to farm produce after harvest as a result of theft, fire outbreak etc, while food insecurity is when a person lacks adequate food in the right quantity and quality for a healthy living. It could be for a period of time may be for a day, two days, one week … At every point, one is expected to have access to food, once it is not

there, then, there is food insecurity. Not just to eat, but, it must be in the right quantity and quality (Personal Communication with, Prof Ibrahim, 2024).

In a similar vein, Dr Rimi (2024) in an interview attempted to define pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity. In his our opinion claimed that: … the concepts of pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity are relative terms, but in their simplest forms, pre and post-harvest losses connote losses of farm produce or reduction in the quantity and quality of farm produce that take place prior to harvest or after harvest along the value before it reaches the final consumer while food insecurity connotes a situation in which there is no enough food that would meet the dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life for all… (Personal Communication with Dr Rimi, 2024).

Among the factors contributing to pre-harvest losses in Katsina State are ;

Pest and Disease Infestations; Pests and plant diseases are among the primary causes of pre-harvest losses in Katsina State. Common pests such as locusts, grasshoppers, and stem borers destroy crops during their growth stages (Oerke, 2006). Additionally, fungal diseases like rust and blight affect staple crops such as millet and sorghum, leading to reduced yields (Bello, 2018).

Climate Change; Katsina State experiences erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts due to its location within the Sahel region (Ahmed & Usman, 2019). These climatic challenges negatively impact crop development, causing premature wilting and poor germination rates. Hailstorms and strong winds also damage crops, further contributing to pre-harvest losses.

Poor Farm Management Practices; the use of traditional farming techniques and inadequate knowledge of modern agricultural practices exacerbate pre-harvest losses in Katsina (Yusuf, 2017). Many farmers lack access to improved seeds, fertilizers, and pest control measures. Limited adoption of mechanized farming techniques also hampers productivity.

Soil Degradation and Desertification; Soil fertility decline and desert encroachment are significant issues affecting agricultural productivity in Katsina State (Bello, 2018). The overuse of farmland without proper soil management practices leads to nutrient depletion, making it difficult for crops to thrive.

Inadequate Agricultural Extension Services; the availability of agricultural extension services plays a crucial role in equipping farmers with the knowledge and resources needed to minimize pre-harvest losses. However, the limited reach of extension services in Katsina has left many farmers without guidance on best practices for pest management, soil conservation, and crop protection (Ahmed & Usman, 2019).

Some of the chief causes of Post-Harvest Losses in Katsina State include:

Poor Storage Facilities; one of the primary causes of post-harvest losses in Katsina State is inadequate storage infrastructure. Traditional storage methods, such as thatched granaries and mud silos, are still widely used despite their vulnerability to pest infestations, humidity, and temperature fluctuations (Yusuf, 2019). Without proper storage facilities, harvested crops deteriorate quickly, leading to significant losses.

Pest and Rodent Infestation; Pests such as weevils, grain borers, and rodents are notorious for causing post-harvest losses in Katsina. These pests attack stored grains, reducing both their quantity and quality (Ahmed & Sulaiman, 2020). The lack of effective pest control measures exacerbates this problem.

Poor Transportation Infrastructure; the poor state of rural roads in Katsina State hampers the efficient movement of agricultural produce from farms to markets (Bello, 2018). Crops often

spoil during long journeys due to rough roads and prolonged exposure to unfavorable weather conditions.

Improper Processing and Preservation Facilities; the limited availability of processing facilities for agricultural produce contributes to post-harvest losses. For instance, fruits and vegetables have short shelf lives and require immediate processing or preservation. The absence of cold storage facilities in Katsina further aggravates the situation (FAO, 2011).

Inadequate Farmer Knowledge; many farmers in Katsina State lack adequate knowledge of post-harvest handling techniques. Poor practices such as improper drying, rough handling, and mixing of crops during storage contribute to losses (Yusuf, 2019).

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRE AND POST–HARVEST LOSSES AS MAJOR DETERMINANT OF FOOD INSECURITY

The complex interplay between pre and post-harvest losses significantly influences food security, particularly in agricultural states such as Katsina. Both types of losses, though distinct in timing, are interconnected and cumulatively contribute to the reduction of food availability, economic instability, and nutritional deficiencies (Bello, 2018).

When pre-harvest losses occur, they immediately reduce the volume of harvestable produce, which sets the stage for diminished post-harvest outcomes. A smaller harvest means that farmers have less produce to store, process, and market, reducing their capacity to withstand market shocks and food supply fluctuations (Yusuf, 2019).

Furthermore, the effects of pre-harvest losses can exacerbate post-harvest losses. Crops weakened by pests or diseases during the pre-harvest stage are often more susceptible to spoilage during storage and transportation. For instance, grains affected by fungal infections before harvest are more prone to contamination by aflatoxins during storage, rendering them unsafe for consumption (FAO, 2011). Similarly, fruits and vegetables damaged during the growing phase are less durable and more likely to deteriorate quickly, leading to higher post-harvest wastage (Ahmed & Sulaiman, 2020).

The economic relationship between these losses further compounds the problem. Farmers who experience significant pre-harvest losses often lack the financial resources to invest in proper storage facilities or transportation logistics, increasing the likelihood of post-harvest losses (Bello, 2018). This financial strain not only affects immediate food availability but also undermines future farming activities, perpetuating a cycle of low productivity and food insecurity (Yusuf, 2019).

Additionally, the nutritional impact of the relationship between pre and post-harvest losses is significant. When both types of losses occur, the availability of nutritionally diverse foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich legumes, diminishes (FAO, 2011). This situation contributes to poor dietary outcomes, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children and pregnant women, leading to malnutrition and related health complications (Yusuf, 2019).

During FGD with respondents in Jibia (2024), respondents unanimously agreed that there is a strong nexus between pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity. They posited that: …of course there is a close relationship between pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity in Katsina State owing to the fact that, the state is an agrarian state where majority of us rely on agriculture as a means of livelihood. However, with the activities of bandits especially in villages where food production is high, we are discouraged to actively participate in agricultural activities owing to the losses we experience on our farm produce and our lives… They further revealed that: …we are denied access to their farmlands to harvest or we are mandated to

collectively pay fine before we can harvest small quantities of our produce which are determined by the bandits… It is so serious that, prior to the banditry in our village, we were cultivating many hectares of land. But, now we only farm on small areas. This same incidence is not happening to only us, but also a lot of farmers in this area which have caused significant effect on food security in the state… (FGD at Jibia, 2024).

These claims are in line with the views of Ladan and Matawalli, (2021) when they posited that: Bandits stop farmers from harvesting their crops particularly in the months of October/November during the harvesting period. In some villages of Batsari LGA such as Garin Labo. Garin Inu, Shekewa, Shingi Sabuwa, Shingi Tsohuwa and Yar Larba bandits inspect farms to identify those where beans and guinea corn have grown well, they then come later to drive their cattle to eat up the crops and then move to other farms. In some villages of Faskari LGA, bandits impose taxes on farmers in order to be allowed to harvest their crops" (Ladan and Matawalli, 2021:21).

The opinion also corroborate with the work of Bozzoli and Brück, (2009); Hecht, Kandel, Gomes, Cuellar and Rosa (2006); Ordway, (2015); Kah, (2017) that: food security sustainability does not only suffer economic challenges but also social problems related to political and societal issues. For instance, the most detrimental shock to the land under cultivation in most developing economies is the prevalence of armed conflict. The fact is that conflicts compel significant changes in the utilization of land in various ways, such as abandoning the agricultural land due to internal displacement. The underutilization of land, loss of labour, and other inputs reduce investments into infrastructure because of doubts about the potential loss of capital in the conflict-affected regions. Despite laws enacted by the government to conserve forests, forest conservation is further forfeited because of occupation by non-state actors.

On the relationship between pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity, Prof Ibrahim, (2024) in an interview posited thus:… the relationship is that when a farmer plants crops and if any of the losses occur on his farm produce, it would definitely affect availability… once, food is not available, it invariably affects affordability and utilisation… when food is not available, demand and supply will come in and the prices of commodities will rise… so there is a significant relationship between pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity… (Personal communication with Prof Ibrahim, 2024).

The report of FAO (2014), re-enforced the above opinion when it reported that: … if food losses could be halved, the required increase of available food to feed the world population by 2050 would only need to be 25% and not 60% as currently projected, thus, reducing food loss can be part of broader systematic changes towards more sustainable food systems and global food security (FAO, 2014:31).

The above views clearly showed the nexus between pre and post-harvest losses and food insecurity; that is, the higher the pre and post-harvest losses, the lower the probability of a people being food secure.

RECOMMENDATION

From the above analysis, this study recommends the following points in order to mitigate the effect of pre and post-harvest losses in Katsina state.

a. Promote climate-resilient farming practices, such as drought-resistant crop varieties and water-efficient irrigation systems, to mitigate pre-harvest losses caused by erratic weather conditions.
b. Provide farmers with access to effective pest control measures, biological solutions, and early disease detection systems to reduce crop damage before harvest.
c. Organize training programs on modern agricultural techniques on pre and post-harvest handling, and storage practices to enhance farmers' skills and reduce losses.

d. Establish community-based storage facilities equipped with modern preservation technologies to minimize post-harvest losses.
e. Facilitate better access to markets for farmers through the development of rural road networks and digital marketing platforms to reduce post-harvest losses during transportation and distribution.
f. Provide farmers with access to affordable credit facilities to invest in improved farming technologies and storage solutions.

CONCLUSION

Food insecurity in Katsina State remains a critical challenge largely influenced by pre- and post-harvest losses. These losses, driven by factors such as pest infestations, plant diseases, poor agricultural practices, and inadequate storage and processing facilities, significantly impact agricultural productivity, food availability, and economic stability. Pre-harvest losses reduce the quantity and quality of harvestable crops, setting the stage for further deterioration during post-harvest stages. The consequences of these losses go beyond reduced food availability; they threaten the livelihoods of farmers, who form the backbone of Katsina's agricultural economy.

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LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT KIDNAPPING IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA: INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract
The persistent rise of kidnapping for ransom in Northwest Nigeria has escalated to a national security concern, with devastating socio-economic impacts. While traditional law enforcement approaches have proven inadequate in curbing the menace, technology presents innovative solutions to combat these crimes. This paper explores the role of technology in addressing the challenges of kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria. The study highlights various technological tools such as surveillance systems, mobile technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain, discussing their potential applications in preventing, detecting, and responding to kidnapping incidents. Additionally, the paper examines the challenges related to infrastructure limitations, privacy concerns, and the need for collaboration between government agencies and private tech companies. The findings suggest that while technology holds significant promise, effective implementation requires strategic partnerships, capacity building, and overcoming existing barriers in the region. This paper concludes by offering recommendations for integrating technology into the broader anti-kidnapping strategy in Northwest Nigeria.

Keywords:*Technology, Kidnapping, Northwest Nigeria, Surveillance, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Mobile Technology*.

Introduction

The issue of kidnapping for ransom has reached a critical and alarming level in NorthwestNigeria, affecting the lives of thousands of individuals and severely disrupting local economies (Adamu, 2023). The frequency and severity of kidnappings in this region have escalated in recent years, prompting widespread concern among citizens, government officials, and international stakeholders. Several interrelated factors have contributed to the rise of this crime, including widespread economic hardship, rampant insecurity, and the insufficient presence of law enforcement agencies in rural areas (Ibrahim & Musa, 2022). These factors have created a fertile environment for criminals to thrive, often exploiting vulnerable communities for financial gain.

One of the key challenges in addressing the kidnapping crisis is the inability of law enforcement agencies to effectively respond to these crimes. Traditional methods of policing have proven inadequate due to logistical constraints, limited resources, and an overall lack of coordination in the response to such crimes (Bello, 2021). Moreover, the lack of real-time intelligence sharing between agencies and communities has further exacerbated the problem, allowing kidnappers to operate with relative impunity. This has resulted in a loss of public trust in the ability of law enforcement to protect citizens, deepening the sense of insecurity in affected areas.

However, the rapid development of technology in recent years has created new possibilities for tackling crime in innovative ways. Technological solutions, such as surveillance systems, data

analytics, and improved communication networks, have the potential to address many of the logistical challenges faced by law enforcement agencies (Oluwadare, 2023). For instance, the use of drones and satellite imagery can help monitor remote areas where kidnappings often take place, while data-driven policing could improve the ability to track patterns and predict where future kidnappings are likely to occur. Furthermore, mobile technology can enhance communication between law enforcement, local communities, and citizens, allowing for faster response times and greater coordination in rescue operations.

While these technological innovations offer promising solutions to the kidnapping crisis, there are several challenges that must be addressed to maximize their effectiveness. One of the major obstacles is the inadequate infrastructure in rural areas, which limits access to digital tools and technology. Additionally, there are concerns about data privacy and the potential misuse of surveillance technologies, which could further undermine public trust in law enforcement (Adebayo, 2024). Furthermore, the lack of digital literacy among some law enforcement personnel and local communities may hinder the effective use of these technologies. Therefore, a comprehensive approach, which includes investing in both technological and human resources, is essential to combat the growing menace of kidnapping for ransom. This paper explores how technology can be used to address the kidnapping crisis in Northwest Nigeria, focusing on both the opportunities and challenges associated with its use.

Conceptual Clarification

Technology: Technology is commonly defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, particularly in industry, engineering, and communication. It involves the creation, development, and utilization of tools, machines, techniques, and systems that enhance human capabilities, solve problems, and improve efficiency. The concept of technology encompasses both the tangible and intangible products or systems that arise from innovation, including hardware, software, and methodologies that transform ideas into functional solutions (Mokyr, 1990).

In its broadest sense, technology is often described as a means to meet human needs and desires. This includes a wide range of applications, from medical advances and information technology to communication devices and transportation systems. In this context, technology is not merely about the tools themselves but also the processes through which they are used to solve specific challenges or create value (Bertalanffy, 1968).

While technology traditionally referred to mechanical and industrial innovations, in contemporary discussions, it also includes digital and informational technologies such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation systems. The conceptual understanding of technology thus continues to evolve, reflecting the ever-expanding boundaries of innovation and its integration into daily life (Castells, 1996).

Kidnapping: Kidnapping is the unlawful abduction, transportation, or confinement of an individual against their will, often for the purpose of demanding ransom, exerting control, or committing other criminal acts. It is considered a serious criminal offense across various legal systems and is defined by its elements: the forced or deceptive taking of a person, the intent to deprive the individual of their liberty, and the potential for physical or psychological harm (Finkelhor, 2009). Kidnapping can involve multiple perpetrators and may occur in various contexts, including domestic, criminal, and political settings, each with different motivations and consequences (Bachman, 2003).

In the broader conceptual framework, kidnapping is seen not only as a violent crime but also as a form of coercion, where the victim is held captive for a period of time, often in isolated or secure locations. The act can be driven by a range of motives, including financial gain, political leverage, personal vendettas, or organized criminal activity. Kidnapping is considered a felony under the criminal law of most jurisdictions, and its severity often results in severe legal penalties for offenders (Mandel, 2001).

Methodology

By employing secondary sources of data, the paper not only highlights the potential of leveraging technology but also provides a data-driven analysis of existing gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for enhancing security efforts against kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria. This approach ensures that the research is both comprehensive and grounded in factual evidence.

Theoretical Underpinning

The **Routine Activity Theory (RAT),** developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), provides a conceptual framework for understanding how everyday activities contribute to crime, including kidnapping. This theory posits that criminal events occur when three key elements converge: (1) a motivated offender, (2) a suitable target, and (3) the absence of capable guardianship. The theory suggests that reducing the opportunities for crime requires either eliminating one of these elements or strengthening the others, particularly the presence of capable guardianship, which can be facilitated by the use of technology.

In the context of kidnapping, technology can be applied to disrupt the convergence of these three elements, thereby reducing the likelihood of abductions. For instance, surveillance technologies, such as CCTV cameras and drones, act as a form of "capable guardianship" by increasing the visibility of public spaces, deterring offenders from attempting kidnappings due to the increased risk of detection. By monitoring high-risk areas, these technologies help eliminate the "absence of guardianship," making it more difficult for kidnappers to target victims undetected.

Additionally, **mobile technologies**and**GPS tracking systems** contribute to the "suitable target" element of RAT. Mobile phones, equipped with location-tracking capabilities, allow for real-time monitoring of individuals, particularly vulnerable groups such as children or high-profile persons, thereby reducing their suitability as targets for kidnapping. In cases where a kidnapping does occur, GPS technology can help law enforcement quickly locate and rescue victims, effectively shortening the opportunity window for the crime.

Moreover, **predictive policing technologies**, which use data analytics and machine learning, help law enforcement agencies identify patterns in criminal activity and predict potential hotspots for kidnappings. By proactively deploying resources in areas where kidnappings are likely to occur, these technologies address the "motivated offender" by disrupting the conditions that enable the crime to happen in the first place. Predictive models, fuelled by big data, help to predict where kidnappings are most likely to take place, enabling timely interventions that can prevent potential incidents.

The **Routine Activity Theory** highlights the importance of situational crime prevention and the role that technology can play in enhancing guardianship and reducing the suitability of targets. By using technology to increase surveillance, track individuals, and predict criminal behavior,

law enforcement can reduce the likelihood of kidnapping, aligning with the theoretical premise that crime occurs when the opportunity for it arises.

The Role of Technology in Combating Kidnapping

Surveillance Technologies

Technological advancements have become indispensable in the fight against kidnapping, as they significantly enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to monitor, track, and respond to criminal activities in real-time. One of the primary technological solutions employed to combat kidnapping is the use of surveillance technologies, which includes tools such as drones, closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, and facial recognition systems. These technologies have proven effective in monitoring high-risk areas, tracking suspects, and aiding in the quick identification of criminal activities, thus playing a pivotal role in mitigating the risks of kidnapping.

Drones, in particular, offer a significant advantage in aerial surveillance, especially in remote regions that are otherwise difficult for ground forces to access (Onyema, 2022). Drones can be deployed swiftly to monitor large areas in real-time, gathering intelligence that can be used to locate kidnapped victims or identify suspects. Their ability to cover vast terrains quickly and efficiently allows law enforcement agencies to deploy resources in a more targeted and timely manner. This capability is particularly critical when kidnappers operate in rural or isolated areas, where traditional forms of surveillance are less effective.

Similarly, CCTV cameras serve as an effective tool in monitoring key locations, such as highways, markets, and border areas, which are frequently the sites of abductions or criminal activity. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) with CCTV systems takes surveillance a step further, enabling the system to analyse and detect suspicious behavior in real-time (Ogundele & Adegbite, 2023). For example, AI can identify when an individual is being forcefully abducted or when known criminals are gathering in a specific area. This integration creates a comprehensive network of real-time monitoring, allowing for quicker detection and response to potential kidnapping events. The use of facial recognition systems, integrated with CCTV cameras, further enhances this capability by enabling the identification of suspects based on their facial features, which can significantly reduce the time it takes to track down perpetrators.

Mobile technology has also emerged as one of the most powerful tools in the fight against kidnapping. Mobile phones are essential for tracking the location of kidnapped victims, as they can transmit real-time GPS data that helps law enforcement pinpoint the victim's whereabouts. Additionally, mobile phone tracking can help investigators identify perpetrators and track their movements, which can lead to the discovery of patterns or networks involved in kidnapping activities. The development of mobile applications, such as SOS or emergency alert systems, provides a critical tool for victims. These apps enable individuals to send distress signals along with their location to local authorities, which can facilitate a faster response and increase the likelihood of a successful rescue operation.

Moreover, data analytics plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of these technological solutions. Analysing large datasets from various sources, including social media, mobile apps, and law enforcement reports, data analytics can identify trends and patterns of kidnapping incidents. Predictive models powered by artificial intelligence (AI) can forecast

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where kidnappings are likely to occur, enabling authorities to take proactive measures and allocate resources more efficiently (Gaya & Adeboye, 2021). These models allow law enforcement agencies to predict hotspots of criminal activity, preventing kidnappings before they happen and improving response times when incidents do occur. By utilizing data analytics, law enforcement can also develop targeted interventions in areas where the likelihood of kidnapping is high, making the entire system more strategic and effective.

Technological solutions such as surveillance technologies, mobile tracking, and data analytics are crucial tools in the fight against kidnapping. They provide law enforcement agencies with real-time intelligence, enhance the ability to track and identify perpetrators, and enable faster responses to incidents. As these technologies continue to evolve, their integration into law enforcement strategies will play an increasingly important role in preventing and addressing kidnappings, leading to greater safety for potential victims and more successful criminal apprehensions.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have emerged as transformative tools in the fight against kidnapping, offering innovative solutions to some of the most complex challenges in this domain. These technologies are capable of analysing vast amounts of data from multiple sources, such as surveillance footage, mobile phone records, and social media activity, to detect potential kidnapping threats. AI-powered systems can process this data at an unparalleled speed and accuracy, identifying patterns and anomalies that might otherwise go unnoticed. This capability allows law enforcement agencies to gain valuable insights into criminal activities, facilitating faster responses and more targeted interventions.

One of the most powerful applications of AI in combating kidnapping is its ability to track communication patterns between kidnappers and their victims. By analysing data from phone calls, messages, and even social media posts, AI systems can detect signs of coercion, threats, or unusual communication that may indicate a kidnapping in progress. These systems can also identify the locations of both the perpetrators and victims through metadata embedded in communications, such as GPS coordinates or other location-based data (Adegbola & Yusuf, 2023). This real-time intelligence allows authorities to act quickly, improving their chances of rescuing victims and apprehending criminals before the situation escalates.

In addition to its reactive capabilities, AI can also play a proactive role in preventing kidnappings through predictive modelling. By analysing historical data on kidnapping incidents, as well as factors such as socio-economic conditions, geographical trends, and patterns of criminal behavior, AI algorithms can predict where kidnappings are most likely to occur. This predictive capability is invaluable in preparing law enforcement agencies for potential threats, allowing them to allocate resources and deploy personnel more effectively in high-risk areas. For example, AI models can identify regions with a higher likelihood of kidnapping activity based on historical trends or socio-economic indicators such as poverty, unemployment, or political instability. Such anticipatory measures can significantly reduce the number of successful kidnapping attempts by allowing law enforcement to intervene before a crime takes place.

Machine learning, a subset of AI, further enhances the effectiveness of these predictive models by continuously learning from new data. As law enforcement agencies collect more data on kidnapping incidents, ML algorithms can refine their predictions and improve the accuracy of

their forecasts. This ongoing learning process enables the systems to adapt to changing patterns in criminal behavior and refine their ability to predict future threats. Moreover, ML can assist in identifying emerging trends or tactics used by kidnappers, allowing law enforcement to adjust their strategies accordingly.

The combination of AI and machine learning in combating kidnapping represents a significant shift toward a more data-driven, proactive approach to criminal justice. These technologies not only enhance the ability to respond to incidents in real-time but also provide a strategic advantage by anticipating and preventing future crimes. By integrating AI and ML into law enforcement practices, agencies can improve their effectiveness in addressing kidnapping, leading to better outcomes for victims and more successful interventions.

Blockchain and Payment Solutions

The integration of blockchain technology into the fight against kidnapping for ransom represents a promising and innovative solution that can significantly disrupt the operations of criminal networks involved in this crime. Blockchain, by design, offers a decentralized, transparent, and secure way to track financial transactions, which presents a challenge for criminals who rely on opaque methods to launder ransom money. Traditional financial systems, such as banks, can be exploited by criminals to hide the origins and destinations of illicit funds, making it difficult for law enforcement to trace ransom payments. However, blockchain technology, with its immutable ledger and transparent record of transactions, allows for the monitoring and tracking of ransom payments in real-time, which can hinder criminals' ability to operate with anonymity.

Blockchain's decentralized nature ensures that transactions are recorded on a public ledger that is accessible to authorized parties, such as law enforcement agencies, without compromising the security or privacy of users. Once a ransom payment is made, it is recorded on the blockchain and cannot be altered, ensuring the integrity of the transaction history. This makes it difficult for kidnappers to conceal their financial activities and facilitates the tracking of money as it flows across the network. Authorities can follow the digital trail of ransom payments to trace connections between various criminals, uncover hidden networks, and identify individuals involved in kidnapping operations (Omotayo &Akinlade, 2022). The ability to trace such transactions provides a powerful tool for law enforcement to disrupt the financial infrastructure of kidnapping syndicates, ultimately making it harder for them to receive and utilize ransom payments.

In addition to its potential in disrupting the financial aspects of kidnapping, blockchain technology could also pave the way for the development of secure, traceable digital currencies. These digital currencies, when coupled with blockchain, offer a unique opportunity for governments to regulate and control ransom payments. By creating legal frameworks that support the use of secure payment systems and digital currencies, the Nigerian government, for example, can take proactive steps to prevent kidnappers from easily accessing and transferring ransom payments. Such regulations could mandate that all ransom payments be made through authorized, traceable digital platforms, which would give law enforcement the tools to track and monitor these transactions in real-time. This would not only make it difficult for criminals to move money undetected but also provide law enforcement with the necessary evidence to investigate and prosecute criminal networks involved in kidnapping for ransom.

The Nigerian government could further enhance the effectiveness of blockchain and digital currency solutions by establishing legal frameworks that require all ransom payments to be

conducted through government-approved platforms that leverage blockchain technology for transparency and accountability. This would discourage kidnappers from using untraceable, off-the-record payment methods such as cash or informal money transfer systems, which have traditionally been difficult to monitor. By formalizing the use of secure and transparent payment systems, the government can make it more difficult for kidnappers to profit from their criminal activities, thereby reducing the incentives for kidnapping for ransom.

The use of blockchain technology in monitoring ransom payments offers a significant opportunity to disrupt the financial operations of kidnapping syndicates. By leveraging blockchain's transparent, secure, and immutable transaction records, authorities can track ransom payments and identify criminal networks involved in kidnappings. Furthermore, the development of digital currencies and the establishment of legal frameworks that regulate ransom payments can further strengthen efforts to combat kidnapping for ransom, providing law enforcement with the tools to prevent and investigate such crimes more effectively.

Challenges in Leveraging Technology

While technology offers a promising solution to combat kidnapping, several challenges remain in its implementation.

Infrastructure Limitations

The successful implementation of technological solutions to combat kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria faces significant challenges, with the lack of adequate infrastructure being one of the primary barriers. Technological advancements such as surveillance systems, mobile applications, and AI-based tools offer immense potential in addressing issues such as kidnapping, but their effectiveness is greatly hindered by infrastructural deficiencies that persist in many regions of Northwest Nigeria. These challenges include poor internet connectivity, limited access to electricity, and inadequate transportation networks, all of which severely impact the deployment and functionality of technology-driven solutions (Amid & Bolarinwa, 2023).

One of the major hurdles is the poor internet connectivity that plagues many parts of Northwest Nigeria. In rural and remote areas, the absence of reliable high-speed internet makes it difficult for surveillance systems, mobile applications, and AI tools to function in real-time. Surveillance systems such as CCTV cameras and drones rely on a stable internet connection to transmit live data to law enforcement agencies, allowing for immediate responses to potential kidnappings. In areas with poor connectivity, these systems may not be able to send crucial footage or alerts promptly, thereby delaying interventions that could prevent or resolve kidnapping incidents. The lack of reliable mobile networks also impedes the ability of mobile applications, such as emergency alert systems, to send distress signals or locate victims in real-time, further compromising efforts to combat crime (Amid & Bolarinwa, 2023).

In addition to the lack of internet connectivity, limited access to electricity poses another major challenge. Many regions in Northwest Nigeria experience frequent power outages or lack access to a consistent electricity supply. This makes it difficult to maintain and operate essential technological tools that rely on a steady power source. For example, surveillance cameras and drones, which are crucial for monitoring high-risk areas, require continuous power to function effectively. Without reliable electricity, these devices may fail to operate during critical moments, rendering them ineffective in preventing or responding to kidnapping incidents. Furthermore, the implementation of AI-based tools, which require significant computational

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power and storage, becomes nearly impossible in areas where the infrastructure to support such technologies is lacking.

Inadequate transportation networks also contribute to the barriers faced in the deployment of technology-driven solutions. Even when technology is available, the ability to deploy resources such as drones, law enforcement teams, or vehicles to respond to kidnapping incidents is often hindered by poor roads and lack of access to remote areas. In regions where road networks are underdeveloped, or transportation is unreliable, law enforcement may face delays in reaching the site of an incident, making it harder to act swiftly in preventing or resolving kidnapping situations.

These infrastructural challenges create a vicious cycle, as the lack of adequate infrastructure not only limits the effectiveness of technological solutions but also exacerbates the broader security issues in the region. Without robust infrastructure, the promise of using advanced technologies to combat kidnapping remains constrained, leaving law enforcement agencies and communities vulnerable to criminal activities.

To address these issues, it is essential that efforts to implement technological solutions in Northwest Nigeria are accompanied by significant investments in infrastructure development. Improving internet connectivity, providing reliable electricity, and upgrading transportation networks are crucial steps toward ensuring that technology can be fully leveraged to combat kidnapping. Additionally, public-private partnerships could play a vital role in bridging the infrastructure gap, with private companies investing in the development of critical technologies and services in underserved areas.

The lack of adequate infrastructure in Northwest Nigeria presents a major barrier to the effective use of technological solutions in addressing kidnapping. The poor state of internet connectivity, electricity supply, and transportation networks undermines the potential of surveillance systems, mobile applications, and AI-based tools to function effectively. Overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes infrastructure investment and collaboration between government and private sectors to create an environment where technology can truly contribute to tackling the complex issue of kidnapping.

Privacy Concerns

The increasing use of surveillance technology, mobile phone tracking, and AI systems to address criminal activities, such as kidnapping, has sparked significant privacy concerns. While these technologies offer substantial benefits in enhancing public safety and law enforcement efforts, they also raise questions about the potential invasion of personal privacy. Citizens may feel that their movements, communications, and personal information are being constantly monitored, which can lead to resistance or distrust towards the adoption of these technologies. This resistance stems from concerns about how data is collected, who has access to it, and how it is used, particularly in regions where privacy protections may be weak or unclear (Adeyemi & Bamidele, 2023).

The use of surveillance technologies, such as CCTV cameras and drones, often leads to concerns about constant monitoring in public spaces. While these systems can be effective in preventing or solving crimes, they also capture a vast amount of personal data, such as the location, identity, and activities of individuals. Citizens may feel uncomfortable knowing that their every movement is being recorded, even in public areas, leading to fears of surveillance

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overreach and the erosion of their right to privacy. This sense of being watched, even without being directly involved in criminal activities, can create a chilling effect on individual freedoms and civil liberties.

Similarly, mobile phone tracking, while invaluable in locating kidnapped victims or identifying perpetrators, also poses privacy risks. Mobile phones constantly transmit data, including GPS coordinates, phone calls, messages, and browsing activities. The ability to track a person's real-time location through mobile phone data raises concerns about unauthorized surveillance and data misuse. Many people fear that, without proper safeguards, such tracking could extend beyond the realm of criminal investigations and be used for broader forms of social control or corporate surveillance. The potential for government agencies or private companies to access and misuse this data without sufficient accountability or oversight adds to the unease surrounding these technologies.

AI systems, which can analyze vast amounts of data and detect suspicious patterns, also present privacy challenges. While AI can help identify criminal behavior or predict potential risks, it can also unintentionally infringe on personal privacy by profiling individuals or drawing conclusions from incomplete or inaccurate data. For instance, AI-based facial recognition systems, which can identify individuals based on their facial features, have been criticized for their potential to misidentify people, leading to wrongful surveillance and accusations. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in AI algorithms and their decision-making processes can raise concerns about bias, discrimination, and accountability.

Addressing these privacy concerns requires a careful balance between the need for public safety and the protection of individual rights. One of the most effective ways to mitigate privacy risks is through the establishment of robust regulatory frameworks that govern the use of surveillance technologies, mobile tracking, and AI systems. These regulations should set clear boundaries on how data is collected, stored, and used, ensuring that individuals' privacy rights are protected while still enabling law enforcement to effectively address criminal activities like kidnapping. For example, regulations should mandate that surveillance footage or mobile phone data be accessed only with a warrant or in response to a legitimate security concern, and that data is anonymized or encrypted to prevent unauthorized access (Adeyemi & Bamidele, 2023).

In addition to regulatory frameworks, transparency is crucial in fostering trust between the public and law enforcement agencies. Governments and agencies must communicate clearly about how technologies are being used, what data is being collected, and how it will be safeguarded. Public consultations and dialogue on the ethical use of technology can also play an essential role in gaining public support for these technologies. Involving citizens in the decision-making process can help ensure that their privacy concerns are addressed and that technology is used responsibly and ethically.

The use of surveillance technology, mobile phone tracking, and AI systems can significantly enhance efforts to combat crime, including kidnapping, however, it is essential to address the privacy concerns associated with these technologies. A careful balance must be struck between ensuring public safety and protecting individual privacy rights. This balance can be achieved through the implementation of strong regulatory frameworks, clear data protection measures, and increased transparency in the use of these technologies. By doing so, governments can foster public trust while ensuring that technological solutions contribute to a safer society without compromising personal freedoms.

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Collaboration between Stakeholders

The successful implementation of technological solutions to combat kidnapping depends heavily on cooperation and coordination between various stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, private technology companies, and civil society organizations. Each of these groups plays a critical role in the development, deployment, and oversight of technology-driven initiatives aimed at preventing and responding to kidnappings. However, a lack of collaboration and coordination among these parties can lead to fragmented efforts, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for maximizing the impact of available resources (Olawale & Shittu, 2022).

Government agencies and law enforcement agencies are at the forefront of combating kidnapping and ensuring public safety. Their primary role is to implement and enforce laws, conduct investigations, and respond to incidents of kidnapping. However, these entities often lack the technical expertise and resources necessary to fully leverage advanced technologies such as surveillance systems, artificial intelligence, or data analytics tools. This is where private tech companies come in. These companies provide the technological innovations, infrastructure, and expertise needed to develop and deploy systems capable of addressing the challenges of kidnapping. Whether it's through the development of AI algorithms for predicting kidnapping hotspots or the provision of high-tech surveillance equipment, private companies are essential partners in the effort to combat kidnapping.

For example, private companies can offer critical support by designing secure mobile applications that allow citizens to send distress signals, tracking systems for kidnapped victims, or tools to assist law enforcement in real-time surveillance. The collaboration between law enforcement and technology providers is key to ensuring that the tools being used meet the specific needs of crime prevention and are adaptable to local contexts. Without close collaboration, law enforcement may struggle to integrate these technologies into their operations, and private companies may not be aware of the unique challenges faced by law enforcement in certain regions (Olawale & Shittu, 2022).

Moreover, civil society organizations play an essential role in bridging the gap between technology, government action, and the public. These organizations can provide valuable insights into the concerns and needs of the community, which is crucial when designing and implementing technology solutions. They can also advocate for policies that protect individual privacy and ensure that technology is used ethically and transparently. Civil society groups are often instrumental in raising awareness about new technologies and ensuring that the public is informed about how these technologies will impact their daily lives. Furthermore, they can help build trust between the government and the public by ensuring that technological solutions do not infringe on citizens' rights and that these solutions are deployed in a manner that respects the rule of law.

The lack of collaboration and coordination among these diverse groups can lead to fragmented efforts that result in ineffective use of resources. For instance, if law enforcement agencies use outdated technologies while private companies develop cutting-edge solutions that are not integrated into the broader security strategy, the overall impact on combating kidnapping will be diminished. Similarly, without input from civil society organizations, technologies could be developed or deployed in ways that raise concerns about privacy violations or inequitable access to justice, further alienating the public from these efforts.

Establishing clear lines of communication and creating collaborative platforms where stakeholders can share knowledge, resources, and strategies is crucial for the success of technology-driven anti-kidnapping initiatives. Regular coordination meetings between law enforcement, government officials, tech companies, and civil society representatives can foster a deeper understanding of each group's needs and challenges, as well as promote the alignment of efforts toward common objectives. Public-private partnerships, for example, could facilitate joint efforts to develop, test, and deploy technological solutions in a way that maximizes the benefits for all stakeholders involved. Moreover, such collaborations can ensure that technological solutions are continually updated, refined, and adapted to the evolving nature of criminal activities like kidnapping (Olawale & Shittu, 2022).

Additionally, establishing clear regulatory frameworks and protocols for the use of technology in crime prevention can help reduce potential conflicts between stakeholders. These frameworks should include guidelines for the ethical use of data, ensuring that privacy rights are respected and that technologies are used transparently. Government agencies can play a critical role in developing these regulations, with input from all stakeholders, including tech companies and civil society, to ensure that they are balanced and effective.

The successful implementation of technological solutions to combat kidnapping hinges on strong cooperation and coordination among government agencies, law enforcement, private tech companies, and civil society organizations. By establishing clear lines of communication, fostering collaboration, and aligning efforts across these diverse groups, technology-driven initiatives can be more effective in preventing and addressing kidnappings. Fragmented efforts, on the other hand, risk wasting valuable resources and undermining the potential impact of these technologies. Therefore, building strong partnerships and creating effective governance structures is essential for the success of anti-kidnapping initiatives.

Recommendations

To effectively leverage technology in combating kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria, several steps should be taken by both federal and state governments:

a. **Investment in Infrastructure**: The Nigerian government must prioritize infrastructure development in rural areas, including improving internet access and electricity supply, to support the adoption of technological solutions.
b. **Regulatory Framework**: Clear policies and regulations should be established to address privacy concerns while promoting the use of technology for public safety.
c. **Public Awareness and Engagement**: Communities should be educated about the benefits of technology-driven solutions to ensure acceptance and cooperation.
d. **Strategic Partnerships**: Collaborations between government agencies, tech companies, and civil society organizations should be fostered to ensure the effective deployment of technologies.

Conclusion

leveraging technology to combat kidnapping in Northwest Nigeria presents an enormous opportunity to address a pressing security issue that has plagued the region for years. The integration of advanced technological tools, including surveillance technologies, mobile solutions, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain, offers significant promise in both preventing and responding to kidnapping incidents. These technologies enable law enforcement agencies to monitor high-risk areas, track criminal activities, predict potential hotspots, and ensure that ransom payments are tracked, all of which can lead to more effective and timely

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interventions in kidnapping cases. Surveillance systems, such as drones and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, can provide real-time monitoring of crime-prone areas, allowing law enforcement to act quickly and increase the likelihood of rescuing victims. Mobile technologies, like GPS tracking and emergency alert systems, can help locate victims, identify perpetrators, and streamline rescue efforts. Meanwhile, AI and machine learning can help predict kidnapping patterns based on historical data and behavioral analysis, enabling proactive crime prevention strategies. Blockchain, with its secure and transparent ledger, can be used to track ransom payments, making it more difficult for criminals to launder money and allowing authorities to trace the flow of payments back to criminal networks.

Despite the potential of these technologies, there are significant challenges that must be addressed to maximize their effectiveness in combating kidnapping. Chief among these challenges are issues related to infrastructure, privacy concerns, and the need for collaboration among various stakeholders. Rural areas in Northwestern Nigeria, where kidnapping is particularly rampant, often lack the necessary infrastructure—such as stable electricity, internet connectivity, and reliable transportation networks—that is required to support these advanced technologies. Without robust infrastructure, many of these tools would be ineffective or difficult to deploy in remote areas where kidnappers frequently operate.

Moreover, the use of surveillance technologies and mobile tracking raises legitimate privacy concerns. Citizens may fear the erosion of their privacy rights as they are subjected to increased monitoring and data collection. Striking a balance between using these technologies for public safety and protecting individual privacy is a critical challenge that requires careful consideration of ethical implications and the establishment of strong regulatory frameworks. Privacy protections must be put in place to ensure that data is used responsibly, and citizens' rights are not infringed upon in the pursuit of security.

Furthermore, the success of these technology-driven solutions relies on the cooperation and coordination of various stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, private technology companies, and civil society organizations. A fragmented approach or lack of collaboration between these groups could result in wasted resources, inefficiencies, or even conflict over data usage and privacy concerns. Therefore, it is essential that these stakeholders work together, share knowledge and resources, and establish clear lines of communication to ensure that technological solutions are effectively implemented. By fostering public-private partnerships and engaging with civil society, the Nigerian government can help create a more unified and strategic approach to combating kidnapping.

Addressing these barriers will require a coordinated and sustained effort from all levels of government, law enforcement, the private sector, and civil society. By making strategic investments in infrastructure, implementing robust privacy protections, and promoting collaboration, Nigeria can fully leverage the potential of technology to create a safer environment for its citizens. Technologies such as AI, blockchain, and mobile solutions offer powerful tools in the fight against kidnapping, but they must be deployed in a context that considers the specific challenges of Northwest Nigeria. Ultimately, with the right infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder cooperation in place, Nigeria can harness the power of technology to reduce the devastating impact of kidnapping and improve public safety across the nation.

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THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP FAILURE AND ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND INEQUALITY IN NIGERIA (1999–2023)

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Abstract
Since the inception of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, successive administrations have struggled with profound economic challenges, primarily driven by leadership deficits and governance inefficiencies. This study critically examines the intricate relationship between leadership failures and economic mismanagement in Nigeria, with a particular focus on unemployment and socio-economic inequality from 1999 to 2023. Grounded in Good Governance Theory, the research explores systemic governance failures that have hindered Nigeria's economic progress. The theory underscores the significance of effective leadership, sound economic management, and accountable governance as essential pillars of sustainable development. It further illustrates how governance deficiencies-manifested in corruption, institutional weakness, and resource mismanagement-aggravate socio-economic issues such as unemployment and inequality. This study is based on an extensive review of secondary sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journals, and credible web-based materials, providing a strong foundation for analyzing the factors shaping Nigeria's economic trajectory. The findings indicate that inconsistent policy frameworks, pervasive corruption, and a persistent lack of visionary leadership have obstructed efforts to achieve inclusive growth and equitable development. The study concludes by advocating for targeted reforms in Nigeria's economic governance structures, emphasizing the urgent need for transformative leadership and institutional restructuring. Without these reforms, the deep-seated socio-economic challenges impeding sustainable development will persist, reinforcing the nation's cycle of underdevelopment.

Key Words: Corruption, Governance, Inequality, Leadership, and Unemployment.

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Introduction

Nigeria, endowed with abundant natural resources and a youthful population, stands as Africa's most populous nation and a major economy. However, beneath this promising facade lies a troubling reality. Despite its vast potential, Nigeria faces persistent challenges, including rising unemployment and deep socio-economic inequalities, which significantly hinder its development. Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, economic growth has been largely driven by oil revenues. Yet, this growth has been uneven, benefiting a privileged few while leaving the majority in economic hardship. This paradox-a resource-rich nation struggling with widespread economic discontent-necessitates a critical assessment of leadership, governance structures, and economic management throughout Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

At the core of Nigeria's developmental struggles are leadership failures and economic mismanagement. Scholars such as Akeem and Olayemi (2020) argue that governance inefficiencies, policy instability, and entrenched rent-seeking practices have weakened the state's ability to promote inclusive economic growth, reduce inequalities, and create sustainable employment opportunities. Leadership deficiencies, particularly the inability to implement effective economic reforms, have contributed to corruption and inefficiencies in critical sectors like agriculture and manufacturing. This deterioration has intensified socio-economic vulnerabilities (Ogunbiyi, 2021; Yusufu, Idrees, &Ogaji, 2022). Additionally, Ekhator (2019) highlights Nigeria's over-reliance on oil exports, fiscal mismanagement, and lack of economic diversification as key factors driving the country's uneven growth and structural imbalances.

The consequences of oil dependency are extensive. Dike (2014) argues that the dominance of oil has led to the neglect of education, poor leadership, corruption, and flawed economic policies. He stresses the need for investment in human capital, infrastructure, and institutional reforms as essential drivers of national progress. Despite repeated political promises to address these areas, inadequate funding and weak implementation continue to hinder meaningful reforms. Nigeria's long-term industrialization prospects, Dike asserts, depend on sustained investments in education, health, governance, and technological advancement.

Compounding these challenges is a historical pattern of moral and ethical deficits among Nigeria's political elite, as noted by Okoli and Igbini (2020). These deficiencies have obstructed economic progress, exacerbated unemployment and deepening socio-economic divides. Corruption has further weakened governance, diverting public resources from infrastructure and social programs, widening the gap between the wealthy and the economically marginalized (Obi & Olumide, 2021). The top 10% of the population now controls over half of the nation's wealth, amplifying economic exclusion (NBS, 2023).

This study critically examines the extent to which leadership failures and economic mismanagement have fueled unemployment and inequality in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023. Using Good Governance Theory, it explores governance failures, corruption, and policy inefficiencies, analyzing their socio-economic consequences and the enduring cycles of exclusion that define Nigeria's political economy.

Literature Review

This section is divided into two subsections: the conceptual review and the empirical review.

Conceptual Review

Leadership failure: Leadership failure in Nigeria reflects the inability of political leaders to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. It manifests in a lack of accountability, transparency, and ethical governance, often resulting in corruption, nepotism, and inefficiency in public service delivery. These governance deficits have eroded public trust, weakened policy implementation, and intensified socio-economic challenges. Okoli and Igbini (2020) trace Nigeria's leadership crisis to dysfunctional governance patterns inherited from prolonged military rule. Many leaders exhibit apathy, self-interest, incompetence, and a disregard for national development. This absence of visionary leadership has stifled economic progress and hindered sustainable development.

Economic mismanagement: Economic mismanagement in Nigeria is marked by flawed economic policies, poor resource allocation, and a failure to implement sustainable development strategies. Over-reliance on oil revenues has diverted investment from critical sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, creating economic vulnerabilities. Mismanagement has led to inflation, unemployment, and economic stagnation, as public funds are often misallocated or lost to corruption. Ugoani (2017) notes that widespread mismanagement and corruption contributed to Nigeria's economic recession in the 1980s, marked by high unemployment and economic instability. The failure of 85% of major reform programs between 1960 and 2000 underscores the detrimental impact of governance deficits. Sustainable economic progress remains unattainable in an environment lacking integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Unemployment: Unemployment in Nigeria remains a persistent challenge, particularly among the youth, due to leadership failures and ineffective job creation strategies. It is categorized into cyclical, structural, and frictional unemployment, all of which negatively impact economic stability and social cohesion. Bello, Yahaya, and Adamu (2024) reference the International Labor Organization (ILO), defining unemployment based on three criteria: being without work, being available for work, and actively seeking employment. Despite Nigeria's large workforce, job opportunities remain insufficient, further deepening economic hardship and social unrest.

Inequality: Inequality in Nigeria is driven by disparities in wealth distribution, access to education, and employment opportunities. Leadership and governance failures have concentrated wealth within the political elite while marginalizing large segments of the population. This unequal distribution of resources hampers social stability and economic growth. Adekunle (2023) argues that rising socio-economic inequality threatens national development, fostering frustration and social fragmentation. The prevalence of deprivation and malnutrition among the lower classes undermines nation-building efforts, obstructing sustainable progress.

Empirical Review

Okoli and Igbini (2020) examine the link between leadership failure and youth unemployment in Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional design, they surveyed 300 respondents from the South-South geopolitical zone, employing a non-probability sampling technique. Data analysis, conducted through correlation and linear regression using SPSS version 21, revealed a significant relationship between governance inefficiencies and youth unemployment. The study concludes that ineffective leadership exacerbates unemployment and calls for comprehensive youth empowerment initiatives. The authors recommend that government agencies implement programs fostering self-employment and entrepreneurship while revitalizing agricultural

initiatives to generate job opportunities. Additionally, they stress that meaningful youth empowerment requires a strong commitment to anti-corruption efforts.

Nweke (2018) highlights the paradox of Nigeria's abundant resources coexisting with widespread poverty decades after independence. This quantitative study assesses leadership effectiveness in fostering development and good governance. Utilizing primary data from Afrobarometer surveys (1999–2016) alongside secondary sources from institutions such as Transparency International and the World Bank, the study applies descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings indicate that self-serving leadership, ineffective governance, economic mismanagement, and corruption have eroded public trust. The study suggests reforming leadership recruitment processes to address corruption and enhance developmental outcomes. Ultimately, it provides policymakers with strategies for strengthening leadership capabilities in Nigeria.

Okorie and Anowor (2017) explore the intricate relationship between unemployment and poverty, contributing to the empirical discourse in development economics. Drawing from secondary data spanning 1980–2015, they analyze key socio-economic indicators using trend graph analysis, correlation coefficients, and Granger causality tests. Results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between unemployment and poverty, with causality tests confirming that unemployment drives poverty in Nigeria. The study's Error Correction Mechanism (ECM) analysis suggests that while short-term economic imbalances persist, long-term equilibrium is attainable, albeit with a slow adjustment rate of 6%. Given these findings, the authors advocate for targeted policy interventions to reduce unemployment, thereby alleviating poverty.

Okolie, Onyema, and Bassey (2019) investigate the correlation between poverty and insecurity in Nigeria, employing a descriptive research design with data from 600 respondents selected through non-probabilistic sampling. Grounded in frustration-aggression theory, the study applies correlation and linear regression analysis using SPSS version 21. Findings reveal a strong positive correlation between poverty and insecurity ($r = 0.783$), with poverty exerting a statistically significant impact on insecurity ($R^2 = 0.716$). Based on these results, the authors recommend that Nigerian authorities at all levels prioritize citizens' welfare by addressing fundamental socio-economic needs.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Good Governance Theory (GGT) as its analytical framework. The theory emerged through the concerted efforts of international organizations, scholars, and policymakers in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The World Bank's seminal 1989 report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, played a pivotal role in mainstreaming the concept by underscoring the imperative of transparency, accountability, and effective governance as foundational to sustainable development. Subsequent contributions from institutions such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), alongside scholarship in development studies and political science, have further refined the theoretical construct, particularly within the context of the Global South. GGT thus serves as a critical lens for examining the intricate nexus between governance practices, economic development, and societal well-being.

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Theoretical Application

The key principles of GGT-accountability, rule of law, transparency, participation, responsiveness, equity, efficiency, and consensus orientation-highlight governance failures that have contributed to Nigeria's socio-economic challenges.

Accountability: Nigerian leadership has consistently demonstrated a lack of accountability, fostering corruption, impunity, and self-serving governance. Since 1999, successive administrations have mismanaged public resources, leading to inadequate service delivery, rent-seeking behavior, and ineffective economic reforms.

Rule of Law: Weak enforcement of legal frameworks has allowed corruption and economic crimes to thrive, disproportionately benefiting elites while exacerbating socio-economic disparities. The failure to uphold justice and curb illicit financial practices has deepened structural inequalities.

Transparency: Governance in Nigeria has been characterized by opacity, with restricted access to public financial data and decision-making processes. This lack of transparency has contributed to economic mismanagement, inefficient resource allocation, and widening inequality.

Participation: Effective governance necessitates inclusive participation, yet Nigerian policymaking remains centralized among elites. The exclusion of marginalized populations from decision-making has intensified unemployment and economic disparities, limiting opportunities for social and economic advancement.

Responsiveness: Nigerian governments have struggled to address socio-economic challenges effectively. Policy disconnects, weak implementation, and inefficiencies have contributed to rising unemployment and growing economic inequalities, highlighting governance failures in meeting public needs.

Equity and Inclusiveness: Public resources and economic opportunities are disproportionately allocated to political elites and influential groups, reinforcing systemic inequalities. Marginalized communities remain excluded from economic benefits, perpetuating socio-economic imbalances.

Effectiveness and Efficiency: Economic mismanagement is evident in Nigeria's inefficient resource allocation, excessive government spending on unproductive projects, and weak fiscal discipline. These inefficiencies have stifled economic growth and contributed to rising unemployment.

Consensus Orientation: The absence of broad-based consensus in Nigerian policymaking has resulted in fragmented policies and governance conflicts. Political rivalries and vested interests obstruct cohesive economic strategies, undermining sustainable development.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative methodology, utilizing secondary data from academic books, peer-reviewed journals, and reliable online sources to investigate economic governance in Nigeria. Through systematic content analysis, it explores leadership practices, economic

management, and governance structures in the Fourth Republic (1999–2023), focusing on their impact on unemployment and inequality**.**

Results and Discussion

Impacts of Leadership Failure and Economic Mismanagement on Unemployment in Nigeria (1999–2023)

The relationship between leadership failure and economic mismanagement has critically influenced unemployment rates in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023. Research indicates that ineffective governance and policy inconsistencies have obstructed economic growth, thereby limiting job creation. Achebe (1983) identifies leadership as Nigeria's "primary challenge," asserting that self-serving governance has continually undermined national development. Ogundiya (2010) supports this view, highlighting the detrimental effects of corruption and nepotism on sustainable employment opportunities.

Economic mismanagement, particularly the reliance on oil revenue and insufficient economic diversification, has exacerbated the unemployment crisis. Nigeria's extensive natural resources have not translated into widespread job creation due to the misallocation of oil revenues, which has hindered investment in vital sectors like agriculture and manufacturing (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012). This over-dependence on oil has made Nigeria vulnerable to global economic fluctuations, evident during the oil price collapses of 2008 and 2015, which led to significant job losses (Omotola, 2008). Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reveals that unemployment rates surged to approximately 40% in 2023, reflecting the ongoing challenges associated with economic mismanagement.

Additionally, inadequate infrastructure development-a direct consequence of poor fiscal discipline-has stifled job creation. Salami (2018) notes that Nigeria's budget prioritizes recurrent expenditures over capital projects, limiting investments necessary for economic growth. This underfunding has resulted in low productivity and competitiveness, further restricting job opportunities. Furthermore, a report by the World Bank (2021) indicates that Nigeria's infrastructure deficits have cost the economy an estimated $2.3 trillion, underscoring the urgent need for investment in critical infrastructure to facilitate job creation.

The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of the 1980s exemplifies the impact of economic mismanagement on employment. Obadan (2003) argues that SAP-driven neoliberal reforms, including subsidy cuts and privatization, resulted in layoffs and job insecurity. Dismantling protective policies exposed local industries to international competition, leading to further job losses (Ogun, 2010). Recent studies have shown that similar patterns of economic liberalization continue to challenge employment stability, with many local businesses unable to compete effectively.

Corruption exacerbates the link between leadership failure, economic mismanagement, and unemployment. Transparency International (2021) ranks Nigeria among the most corrupt countries, indicating the diversion of public funds meant for development. Rotberg (2007) argues that systemic leadership failures facilitate this corruption, undermining initiatives aimed at skill development and industrial expansion, both essential for reducing unemployment. Moreover, the education sector's mismanagement has created a "skills gap," where graduates lack the skills needed for available jobs (Olayiwola &Okodua, 2015). This underfunding

contributes to high youth unemployment rates, which reached approximately 53.4% in 2023 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Policy inconsistency resulting from leadership changes complicates efforts to reduce unemployment. Programs like the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) were often abandoned before achieving their goals (Edo et al., 2019), eroding investor confidence and limiting sustainable job creation. Nigeria's high unemployment rate is intricately linked to leadership and economic mismanagement.

Impacts of Leadership Failure and Economic Mismanagement on Inequality in Nigeria (1999–2023)

The persistence of inequality in Nigeria since 1999 can be largely attributed to failures in leadership and economic mismanagement. Scholars such as Achebe (1983) and Ogundiya (2010) argue that Nigerian leadership has historically been characterized by policies favouring personal and elite interests over inclusive growth. This approach has fostered systemic inequalities in access to resources, education, and employment. Weak governance structures have enabled resource misallocation, concentrating wealth among the political elite rather than benefiting the broader society (Obadan, 2003; Rotberg, 2007).

Economic mismanagement, particularly fiscal indiscipline and an over-reliance on oil revenue, exacerbates inequality. Despite Nigeria's significant oil wealth, poor economic governance limits equitable resource distribution, disproportionately benefiting the elite while exacerbating poverty and income disparity among the wider population (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012; Ogun, 2010). For instance, Nigeria's budget has been heavily skewed toward recurrent expenditures, which accounted for over 70% of total spending in recent years, hindering investments in critical sectors like education, healthcare, and infrastructure, leaving rural and impoverished communities underserved (Salami, 2018; Akinyele, 2020).

Corruption, a by-product of both leadership failures and economic mismanagement, has significantly deepened inequality. According to Transparency International (2021), Nigeria ranks among the most corrupt countries, with corruption siphoning funds away from essential public services. This misallocation impacts sectors such as education, where resources are often diverted, resulting in inadequate facilities for lower-income communities and perpetuating intergenerational privilege for those who can afford private education (Ebi & Egbe, 2021). Furthermore, regional and gender disparities are exacerbated by these governance failures; the northern regions lag behind the south in development indicators, while women face restricted economic opportunities due to insufficient policy support (World Bank, 2023; Ojo & Akanbi, 2020).

Findings

Leadership Failures and Governance Issues: Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, leadership failures characterized by corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability have severely hindered economic development. Achebe (1983) and Ogundiya (2010) emphasize that these governance issues have led to resource mismanagement, weakened institutions, and ineffective development programs. Prioritizing elite interests over inclusive growth has deepened socio-economic inequalities and restricted public service access for the majority.

Economic Mismanagement and Policy Challenges: Economic mismanagement, particularly through policies like the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), has exacerbated unemployment

and inequality, as austerity measures increased joblessness (Obadan, 2003). Reliance on oil revenues without diversification has also limited job creation, making Nigeria vulnerable to global market fluctuations, as seen during the 2008 and 2015 oil price crashes (Omotola, 2008). Additionally, the focus on recurrent spending over capital investment has resulted in inadequate funding for infrastructure and stunted economic growth (Salami, 2018).

Corruption and Resource Misallocation: Corruption remains a significant barrier to socio-economic progress. Nigeria consistently ranks low on the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2022), with public funds intended for development misallocated, impacting critical sectors like education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Rotberg (2007) argues that systemic corruption hampers the government's ability to deliver essential services, further entrenching unemployment and inequality.

Unemployment and the Skills Gap: The misallocation of resources and underinvestment in human capital has resulted in high unemployment, particularly among youth, with rates exceeding 50% in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Inadequate funding of the education sector has created a skills gap, misaligning graduates' abilities with market demands, exacerbating youth unemployment (Olayiwola &Okodua, 2015). Inconsistent policies and economic mismanagement have hindered sustainable job creation, with initiatives like the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) often abandoned before achieving their goals (Edo *et al.,* 2019).

Persistent Inequality and Regional Disparities: Leadership failures and economic mismanagement have contributed to systemic inequality, with policies that favor elites and concentrate wealth, widening the gap between regions and social classes. Budget allocations favoring recurrent expenditures over investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure have entrenched inequality, especially in northern Nigeria, where development indicators lag and regional disparities persist (World Bank, 2023). Additionally, gender-based inequality is exacerbated by limited policy support for women's economic opportunities, restricting upward mobility.

Lack of Effective Social Safety Nets: The absence of strong social protection policies further compounds socio-economic challenges. Despite attempts to implement social investment programs, execution problems and corruption have limited their effectiveness, leaving low-income households vulnerable (Olayiwola &Okodua, 2015). Without effective safety nets, disadvantaged groups face greater difficulties overcoming economic hardships, perpetuating social inequality.

Conclusion

This study examines the relationship between leadership failure, economic mismanagement, and their adverse effects on unemployment and inequality in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023. Using Good Governance Theory, the research reveals that Nigeria’s ongoing socio-economic challenges stem from poor leadership, weak institutions, and corruption. These governance issues have stalled economic progress and exacerbated social disparities. Ineffective leadership and inconsistent policy implementation have eroded public trust and led to systemic corruption and resource misallocation. As a result, unemployment has surged, and inequality has intensified, hindering equitable growth. The findings highlight the urgent need for structural reforms in Nigeria’s leadership and governance systems. Without transformative leadership and institutional reforms, Nigeria faces the risk of prolonged economic stagnation and increasing

social fragmentation. The study underscores that effective governance-marked by transparency, accountability, and sound economic management-is crucial to reversing these negative trends and achieving sustainable development. Addressing these governance challenges is vital for improving the livelihoods of Nigeria's citizens and breaking the cycle of underdevelopment that has defined the country's post-1999 trajectory.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the persistent leadership failures and economic mismanagement that have contributed to unemployment and socio-economic inequality in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023:

1. **Institutional Reform and Strengthening**: It is crucial to reform and strengthen Nigeria's institutions to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Stronger institutions are necessary to combat corruption, improve policy implementation, and manage public resources effectively.
2. **Enhancing Leadership Accountability**: Nigeria's political leadership must be held accountable for their actions through adherence to constitutional provisions and enhanced monitoring mechanisms. Strengthening anti-corruption agencies and ensuring judicial independence will improve accountability at all levels of government.
3. **Policy Consistency and Long-Term Planning**: The government should prioritize developing consistent, long-term economic policies. Frequent policy shifts hinder sustainable growth. Evidence-based policies should address structural challenges, particularly related to unemployment and inequality.
4. **Promotion of Inclusive Economic Growth**: The Nigerian government should implement policies that foster inclusive economic growth, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). These sectors have the potential to create jobs. Investments should focus on infrastructure development, access to finance, and entrepreneurship.
5. **Improvement in Public Financial Management**: Transparent and efficient public financial management is critical. The government should adopt fiscal discipline, improve revenue collection systems, and eliminate wasteful expenditures. Effective public fund management will address social and economic challenges.
6. **Capacity Building and Leadership Development**: Efforts should be made to develop future leaders through capacity-building programs, focusing on ethical leadership, strategic management, and policymaking to create a new generation of leaders committed to national development.
7. **Civic Participation and Engagement**: Enhancing civic participation in governance processes is essential. Encouraging citizens' involvement in decision-making will improve accountability and ensure that policies reflect the needs of the population. Strengthening civil society organizations and providing platforms for public discourse will foster more responsive governance.

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THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES: TWENTY YEARS AFTER AND THE LESSONS FOR THE WORLD

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Abstract
The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States marked a defining moment in global history, resulting in the loss of nearly 3,000 lives and reshaping the world order. This study examines the lasting impact of the 9/11 attacks, twenty years later, and reflects on the key lessons learned from the event. It explores the origins and execution of the attacks, the immediate responses by the U.S. government, and the profound changes in both national and international security policies. The study delves into the aftermath, including the global War on Terror, the rise of counterterrorism strategies, and the evolution of the international security landscape. It further assesses the socio-political implications, such as the rise of Islamophobia, the expansion of surveillance systems, and the shifting dynamics of Middle Eastern geopolitics. A qualitative research methodology is adopted, utilizing primary data from expert interviews and secondary data from academic publications, reports, and government documents. Thematic analysis is employed to explore the data, focusing on key themes such as the militarization of counterterrorism, human rights violations, and shifts in global governance. The lessons derived from 9/11 encompass the necessity of international cooperation, the importance of addressing root causes of extremism, the ethical dilemmas associated with surveillance and civil liberties, and the broader challenge of balancing security and freedom. Ultimately, the study underscores the enduring relevance of 9/11 in shaping contemporary global challenges and highlights the need for vigilance, cooperation, and a deeper understanding of the factors driving modern terrorism. Through reflection on the past two decades, the study offers insights into how the world can better prepare for future threats while ensuring a commitment to peace, human rights, and sustainable security practices.

Keywords:9/11 Attacks, Global Security, Terrorism, U.S. Foreign Policy, Resilience and Unity

Introduction

The September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States, orchestrated by al-Qaeda, forever changed the world, catalyzing major shifts in global politics, security policies, and international relations. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the failed attempt that led to the crash of United Airlines Flight 93, resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths and massive destruction (Cullen, Hendex and Jin, 2019; Fiona, 2020; Astrid, 2017). In the years following, the U.S. launched the War on Terror, invading Afghanistan and Iraq, leading to complex geopolitical consequences. Now, more than two decades later, the world reflects on the lasting impact of these events, which continue to shape the global security landscape, national identity, and the nature of international conflict. This study examines the September 11 attacks twenty years after their occurrence and explores the lessons that can be drawn from the event for the world, with a focus on security, counterterrorism strategies, and political ramifications. The study also seeks to critically analyze how the world, including the U.S., has adapted to or failed to adapt to the lessons of 9/11, the evolving nature of terrorism, and the societal implications of heightened surveillance and security measures. The primary objective of this research is to

analyze the long-term consequences of the September 11 attacks, emphasizing the lessons learned by the U.S. and the world at large. It will focus on the evolution of counterterrorism policies, the transformation in global diplomatic relations, and the shift in how governments approach national security, intelligence gathering, and public trust. Furthermore, it aims to assess the broader cultural, economic, and societal shifts that the 9/11 attacks triggered, particularly in areas such as civil liberties, human rights, and intergovernmental cooperation. The research will also scrutinize how these lessons have influenced global policies regarding the treatment of refugees, extremism, and international conflict resolution.

While extensive literature such as (Bein, 2021; Burke, 2004; Fawaz, 2018; Jenknis, 2006) exists on the 9/11 attacks and their immediate aftermath, there is a lack of comprehensive studies focusing on the lessons learned from the event twenty years later. Much of the existing research has concentrated on the initial security responses, the military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the immediate social consequences. However, there is a gap in understanding how the global community, over the long term, has integrated or failed to integrate these lessons into evolving counterterrorism strategies, diplomatic frameworks, and humanitarian efforts. Additionally, there is insufficient exploration into how the world has adapted (or not) to the changing nature of terrorism, such as the rise of cyber terrorism and lone-wolf attacks, and how these newer threats challenge existing security paradigms. While some scholars such as (Lynch, 2002; Wilson, 2004; Robert, 2003; Lewis, 2003; Krengner and Molner, 2018) have critiqued U.S. policies in the post-9/11 era, there remains a need for more holistic research that investigates the interplay between international cooperation, national sovereignty, and global counterterrorism practices. This study aims to bridge this gap by offering a thorough examination of the evolving global response to terrorism and security, providing insights into how countries can build on the lessons of 9/11 to better confront contemporary challenges in terrorism and international security.

Methodology

The study will adopt a qualitative research design to examine the long-term impact of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States and their global consequences over the past two decades. This study employ a case study approach, focusing on the political, social, and security implications. Data collected through a combination of primary and secondary sources. Primary data include in-depth interviews with experts in international relations, security studies, and policy analysis. Secondary data is drawn from government reports, academic journals, news articles, and books related to the aftermath of the attacks. The study include experts who have researched or worked on topics related to terrorism, security policies, and international relations, as well as documents published after the 9/11 attacks up to the present day. Data sources that are not peer-reviewed or from non-reliable publications is excluded. Experts whose primary focus is unrelated to terrorism or international security are not considered for interviews. Thematic analysis is used to analyze the collected data. This will involve identifying key themes related to the lessons learned from the September 11 attacks, focusing on changes in global security, terrorism, and international relations policies over the past twenty years.

Overview of the September 11, 2001 Attacks

The September 11 attacks were not the first time that al-Qaeda or radical Islamist groups targeted the U.S. These earlier attacks provide context for the growing threat posed by al-Qaeda.

On **February 26, 1993**, a truck bomb exploded beneath the **North Tower** of the **World Trade Center**in New York City, killing six people and injuring over a thousand (Jones, 2002; Fawaz, 2018; Greges, 2016). This attack, carried out by a group of Islamist militants linked to al-Qaeda, was the first major assault on the World Trade Center (Sarah, 2016; Harmonie, 2017). Though it did not cause the collapse of the tower, it marked the beginning of al-Qaeda's desire to strike at symbols of American power. On **August 7, 1998,** al-Qaeda carried out simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in **Kenya**and **Tanzania,** killing over 200 people, including 12 Americans, and injuring thousands (Wilson, 2004; Hurgan, 2005). This attack significantly raised al-Qaeda's profile and prompted the U.S. to take a more aggressive stance in dealing with the group. In **October 2000,** a suicide bombing of the U.S. Navy destroyer **USS Cole**in the port of Aden, Yemen, killed 17 American sailors and injured 39 others (Jenkins, 2006; Wilson, 2014, Robert, 2003). This attack was carried out by al-Qaeda operatives and demonstrated their growing capacity to strike at U.S. military assets overseas (Maria, 2020; Tobias, Carla and Jared, 2017). Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. government, under President **Bill Clinton,** was aware of the rising threat posed by al-Qaeda but struggled to formulate a coherent strategy for addressing it. The Clinton administration took steps to address the growing terrorist threat, including increasing funding for counterterrorism programs, improving intelligence-sharing, and conducting airstrikes against terrorist targets. In 1998, the U.S. launched missile strikes against al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan in retaliation for the embassy bombings (Riedel, 2011; Lynch, 2012).

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, **global terrorism** was becoming more organized and widespread. Al-Qaeda's ideology had resonated with other extremist groups across the Muslim world, and the group expanded its network beyond Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden’s rhetoric and his call for jihad against the West, particularly the United States, gained traction with radicalized Muslims who felt aggrieved by the political, social, and economic conditions in their own countries. Bin Laden framed his jihad as a religious duty to defend Islam from Western influence and interference. In the years leading up to 9/11, al-Qaeda established a vast network of training camps, cells, and operatives in various countries, including Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, and others. The group’s global ambition was to attack U.S. interests and allies worldwide, culminating in the 9/11 attacks (Uchenna and Simplice, 2016).

The September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks were a series of coordinated terrorist attacks carried out by the extremist group al-Qaeda against the United States. The events of that day, widely regarded as one of the most devastating and significant terrorist acts in modern history, not only caused significant loss of life but also had far-reaching implications for global politics, security, and foreign policy. The attacks were meticulously planned and executed by 19 al-Qaeda operatives, led by Osama bin Laden. The attackers hijacked four commercial airplanes in mid-flight, each with a specific target. The first plane took off from Boston, Massachusetts, and crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 a.m. The second plane, also departing from Boston, crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03 a.m. The third plane took off from Washington Dulles International Airport and crashed into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense, at 9:37 a.m. The fourth plane was en route to a target in Washington, D.C., possibly the White House or the U.S. Capitol, but passengers fought back against the hijackers. The plane ultimately crashed into a field in Shanks ville, Pennsylvania, at 10:03 a.m., killing everyone onboard but preventing further destruction. The attacks resulted in the deaths of nearly 3,000 people from over 90 countries, making it the deadliest terrorist attack in history (Lynch, 2012; Ben-Meir, 2021; Riedel, 2011). The destruction of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, the damage to the

Pentagon, and the terror that gripped the nation sent shockwaves across the globe (Richard, 2018; Mavazu and Dalu, 2018).

The group responsible for the attacks, al-Qaeda, was led by Osama bin Laden, who had declared a jihad (holy war) against the United States and its allies. Al-Qaeda's motivation was deeply rooted in ideological, religious, and political grievances, including opposition to U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, the presence of U.S. military forces in Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. support for Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bin Laden's strategy was to provoke a military response from the U.S. and its allies, knowing that such a reaction would galvanize support among extremists and create further chaos in the Middle East (Clarke, 2004; Ranstorp, 2006; Robert, 2003). The 9/11 attacks were intended to symbolize a direct strike against the U.S. as a global superpower, its economic heart (New York), its military might (the Pentagon), and its political influence.

Immediate Aftermath and Response

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the United States was left in shock and disbelief. The collapse of the Twin Towers and the unprecedented scale of the destruction forced the government and the American public to confront the vulnerabilities in national security that had been exposed. President George W. Bush addressed the nation shortly after the attacks, vowing to bring the perpetrators to justice. The U.S. launched a multifaceted response that included military, intelligence, and diplomatic efforts. The U.S. declared a global "War on Terror" and began military operations aimed at dismantling al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. The U.S. led an international coalition in invading Afghanistan in October 2001, targeting the Taliban regime that had harbored al-Qaeda operatives. This marked the beginning of the longest-running conflict in U.S. history. Domestically, the U.S. government established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003 to coordinate efforts to prevent future attacks. The USA PATRIOT Act was passed to enhance intelligence and law enforcement agencies' abilities to combat terrorism, leading to significant changes in U.S. civil liberties and surveillance policies.

The 9/11 attacks marked the beginning of a new era in global counterterrorism and security policies. In the immediate aftermath, governments worldwide recognized the need to adapt their security frameworks to address the evolving threat posed by international terrorism. **International Counterterrorism Cooperation** where countries around the world increased collaboration in intelligence-sharing, security measures, and counterterrorism efforts. Muhammad (2016) argues that, the U.S. led efforts to build a global coalition against terrorism, resulting in increased cooperation between intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and military organizations across borders. Initiatives like the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)** aimed to establish a coordinated global approach. In response to the vulnerabilities exposed by the attacks, many countries enhanced their border security and implemented stricter regulations at airports. The U.S. passed the **Homeland Security Act (2002),** which led to the creation of the**Department of Homeland Security (DHS).** The introduction of the **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**and widespread adoption of similar measures in other nations made airport security procedures significantly more stringent. The U.S. launched military campaigns in Afghanistan and later in Iraq as part of the War on Terror. This shift in U.S. foreign policy had a profound effect on global security. The invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 aimed to dismantle al-Qaeda's operational base and topple the Taliban regime. The Iraq War, which began in 2003, was justified by the U.S. government on

the grounds of eliminating weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and combating terrorism, although no WMDs were found (Maria, 2020).

The 9/11 attacks significantly altered U.S. foreign policy and its role in global geopolitics. The U.S. response to 9/11, particularly its military interventions and the development of the **Bush Doctrine,** had profound implications for international relations. Jenkins (2006) argues, in the wake of 9/11, U.S. President George W. Bush articulated a policy of **preemptive war,** emphasizing the use of force to prevent future terrorist attacks and eliminate regimes that supported terrorism. This marked a shift away from traditional policies of deterrence and containment. The Bush Doctrine led to the **invasion of Afghanistan** in 2001 and the **Iraq War**in 2003, reshaping the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East. The Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq, particularly without explicit United Nations Security Council approval, led to tensions with traditional allies and sparked debate over the U.S.'s unilateral approach to foreign policy (Cavanagh, 2013; Gerges, 2016; Lynch, 2012). Critics, including **Noam Chomsky** and others, argued that the Iraq War undermined international law and was driven by geopolitical and economic interests rather than legitimate security concerns. The 9/11 attacks also highlighted the growing threat posed by **non-state actors** like al-Qaeda, shifting global security strategies away from traditional state-centric models. Terrorist groups, operating transnationally and outside the control of any single nation, presented new challenges for international diplomacy and military action.

The economic impact of the 9/11 attacks was felt across the globe, triggering immediate and long-term consequences for international markets and the global economy. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, global financial markets experienced significant disruptions. The stock market crash, the temporary closure of the New York Stock Exchange, and the grounding of all commercial flights caused a temporary economic downturn. The U.S. economy contracted, and global trade was temporarily slowed by heightened security measures and the uncertainty surrounding the geopolitical situation (Fawaz, 2018; Clarke, 2004; Bein-Meir, 2021; Nurain&Abdulyakeen, 2024). In the wake of 9/11, the U.S. significantly increased its military spending, particularly for the War on Terror. The cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with the expansion of homeland security and counterterrorism initiatives, resulted in huge financial outlays. The wars placed a significant burden on the U.S. economy and contributed to increasing national debt. The aftermath of 9/11 also brought about changes in global trade and investment patterns. The threat of terrorism and heightened security concerns led to increased costs for transportation, logistics, and international commerce. Some regions, especially the Middle East and parts of Asia, became more vulnerable to political instability and economic disruption (Khucry and Todd, 2019). The global cultural and social impacts of the 9/11 attacks were significant, particularly in terms of the social climate in Western countries and the rise of Islamophobia. In the aftermath of 9/11, there was a significant rise in **anti-Muslim sentiment** worldwide, particularly in the United States and Europe (Richard, 2018). Many Muslims and people of Arab descent faced discrimination, hate crimes, and stereotyping as a result of the attacks.In 2002, Ahmed Sayed, an Afghan immigrant, was killed in a hate crime in California due to his Arab descent, symbolizing the growing backlash against Middle Eastern communities (Robert, 2003). A group of Arab American men in New York was targeted by a group of teenagers who shot them with paintballs, accusing them of being terrorists. Following 9/11, nearly 5,000 Muslim and Arab men were detained by the U.S. government for immigration violations without evidence of terrorism ties (Fawaz, 2018). A Pakistani American man, Balbir Singh Sodhi, was murdered by a shooter who mistook him for an Arab, highlighting the targeting of South Asians as well (George, 2016). In 2001, a Lebanese American in Texas was

beaten and taunted with anti-Arab slurs following the attacks. While in 2002, the Islamic Center of America in Texas was burned down, with evidence suggesting it was an act of hate due to the mosque's Muslim and Arab affiliation (Clark, 2004). A Lebanese American man was stabbed in Jersey City by attackers who screamed "Osama bin Laden" before assaulting him. Arab American communities were frequently depicted as "terrorists" in the media, with negative stereotypes becoming more widespread after the attacks. Many Arab Americans faced discriminatory treatment at airports, being detained or questioned longer than other passengers due to their appearance or surname. Some Arab-owned businesses, including restaurants, faced backlash and closures because of the mistaken belief that they were linked to terrorism (Ben-Meir, 2021; Gerges, 2016; Wilson, 2014).

The portrayal of Muslims as potential terrorists or threats to national security created a climate of fear and suspicion. Studies have shown that incidents of **hate crimes** targeting Muslims and Arabs rose dramatically after 9/11. Governments around the world, led by the U.S., introduced sweeping measures to combat terrorism, many of which had implications for civil liberties and privacy. In the U.S., the passage of the **USA PATRIOT Act** and the expansion of surveillance programs by the **National Security Agency (NSA)** led to debates over the balance between security and individual freedoms. Critics argued that these measures infringed on privacy rights and disproportionately targeted Muslim communities. The 9/11 attacks also prompted reevaluations of national identity and multiculturalism in many Western nations. In countries such as the U.S., the U.K., and Canada, there was an increased focus on integrating immigrant populations and addressing the root causes of extremism, which included factors such as poverty, marginalization, and political alienation (Sarah, 2016).

The Emergence of New Terrorist Threats and the Evolving Nature of Global Terrorism:
One of the most lasting global impacts of 9/11 was the evolution of terrorism itself and the rise of new extremist groups. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 created a power vacuum that contributed to the rise of **ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)**, a more radical and territorial jihadist group. ISIS's brutality, territorial expansion, and use of social media for propaganda represented a new phase in global terrorism. ISIS posed a significant challenge to international security and led to new counterterrorism strategies. In addition to traditional forms of terrorism, 9/11 spurred the development of **cyberterrorism** and **lone-wolf attacks**. Asymmetric warfare, where smaller, less organized groups challenge powerful states using unconventional tactics, became a hallmark of post-9/11 terrorism. The rise of the **dark web**, social media platforms, and encrypted communications further complicated efforts to track and prevent terrorist activities. The rise of global radicalization, fueled in part by grievances related to U.S. foreign policy, the wars in the Middle East, and the portrayal of the West in extremist narratives, has led to an increase in foreign fighters joining terrorist organizations. Many of these fighters have returned to their home countries, spreading extremist ideologies and conducting attacks in their own communities.

The Legacy of 9/11: Lessons Learned and Continuing Challenges
The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States were a defining moment in modern history, not only for the U.S. but for the entire world. Nearly two decades later, the legacy of 9/11 continues to shape global security, foreign policy, international relations, and social dynamics. The attacks fundamentally altered the trajectory of the 21st century, leading to new strategies for combating terrorism, evolving security frameworks, and reflecting on the trade-offs between liberty and security. While much has been learned from the catastrophic events of 9/11, challenges persist in combating terrorism, maintaining civil liberties, and navigating the

complexities of international relations in the post-9/11 world. Here, we explore the lessons learned from the attacks and the ongoing challenges that countries, organizations, and individuals face as they contend with the evolving threat of extremism.

One of the most significant lessons learned from 9/11 is the critical need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The transnational nature of terrorism, exemplified by al-Qaeda's coordinated attacks, revealed that threats to security could no longer be managed by individual nations alone. In response, the international community intensified collaboration in intelligence sharing, military operations, and counterterrorism measures. The establishment of the **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** in 2006 highlighted the importance of multilateral efforts to combat terrorism. Countries worked together on the prevention of terrorist financing, strengthening border security, and the prosecution of terrorist suspects. Governments across the world recognized the necessity of sharing intelligence to prevent future attacks. Agencies like the Central Intelligence Agency (**CIA),** Federal Bureau of Investigation (**FBI),** and Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) **MI6**engaged in more extensive cooperation with their international counterparts. Interpol's role in counterterrorism efforts expanded significantly in the years following 9/11.

The attacks exposed vulnerabilities in U.S. national security, especially regarding aviation and border control. In the aftermath, numerous measures were introduced to enhance security. In the U.S., the creation of the **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**and the implementation of rigorous airport screening processes became the norm, and many countries adopted similar measures **(Harmonie, 2017).**The**Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** was established to unify national security efforts and prevent terrorist activities. Its role has evolved over time to include efforts to address cybersecurity threats, bioterrorism, and domestic extremism. The **USA PATRIOT Act**authorized expanded surveillance powers for law enforcement agencies, which included wiretaps and intelligence gathering on communications. While these measures were effective in identifying potential threats, they also raised concerns about privacy and civil liberties. The global focus on counterterrorism revealed the importance of addressing the root causes of radicalization. Many experts argued that the War on Terror, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq, often ignored the social, political, and economic factors that contribute to extremism. Efforts to address the ideological narratives that fuel terrorism became a central aspect of counterterrorism strategies. The focus on military action needed to be complemented by initiatives aimed at countering radical ideologies, addressing poverty, and promoting education and social inclusion in vulnerable regions. Criticism of U.S. foreign policy such as its support for authoritarian regimes and the invasion of Iraq suggested that such policies could fuel resentment and breed extremism. The rise of groups like **ISIS** demonstrated how military interventions could inadvertently lead to more instability and radicalization.

Continuing Challenges Post-9/11

While al-Qaeda was initially the focal point of global counterterrorism efforts, the 9/11 attacks revealed that terrorist threats are constantly evolving. New forms of extremism, both organized and unorganized, continue to pose challenges to security. Decentralized Terrorist Networks: After the fall of al-Qaeda's stronghold in Afghanistan and the killing of Osama bin Laden, other groups, such as ISIS, took its place. ISIS, for example, shifted its focus to territorial control and state-building, a strategy that posed different challenges than al-Qaeda's methods of decentralized attacks. In addition to large, organized groups, the global threat landscape has seen a rise in lone-wolf terrorism attacks carried out by individuals inspired by extremist ideologies. This new trend has complicated intelligence-gathering and threat identification, as these

attackers are harder to predict and prevent. Terrorist groups have increasingly adopted digital platforms for propaganda, recruitment, and fundraising. The dark web and encrypted communication technologies have made it more difficult for authorities to track and disrupt terrorist activities. Cyberterrorism targeting critical infrastructure, data systems, and social media has become a new frontier in the fight against global terrorism (Abdulyakeen, 2021; Jessica, 2008; Maria, 2020).

A significant challenge in the post-9/11 world has been the tension between maintaining national security and protecting civil liberties. While security measures are necessary to prevent terrorism, concerns over government overreach, surveillance, and the erosion of individual freedoms have been at the forefront of debates in democratic societies. The expansion of surveillance powers, including mass data collection by the **National Security Agency (NSA),** raised alarms about privacy violationssuch as Patriot Act (2001**)** law that expanded government surveillance powers, raising concerns about privacy violations and the potential abuse of civil liberties. The National Security Agency's bulk data collection on phone and internet communications sparked debates on privacy vs. national security. Many individuals were placed on no-fly lists or monitored without due process, leading to accusations of racial profiling and discrimination. The indefinite detention of suspects without trial at Guantanamo Bay raised human rights concerns and questions about due process. The use of torture on suspected terrorists, like waterboarding, drew criticism for violating international human rights laws. Heightened screening processes led to racial and religious profiling, particularly targeting Muslim and Arab individuals (Ben-Meir, 2021; Abdulyakeen, 2021; Nurain and Abdulyakeen, 2024; George, 2016; Lynch, 2012). Many citizens and human rights organizations argued that such practices infringed on the fundamental rights to privacy and free expression. The aftermath of 9/11 saw an increase in racial profiling and discrimination, particularly against Muslims and people of Arab descent. Anti-Muslim sentiment (Islamophobia) became widespread, leading to hate crimes, unjust detention, and societal marginalization of Muslim communities worldwide. In the U.S., the **PATRIOT Act** and other post-9/11 policies sparked debates about the erosion of constitutional protections. The **Guantanamo Bay detention camp**, where detainees were held without trial, became a symbol of the tension between national security and human rights. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq created long-lasting geopolitical instability in the Middle East and beyond. The U.S.-led interventions aimed to dismantle terrorist networks, but they also contributed to regional power shifts, ongoing conflicts, and the rise of new extremist groups. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, based on the false premise of WMDs, led to a long and costly conflict that contributed to the rise of ISIS. The dismantling of Saddam Hussein's regime created a power vacuum that fostered sectarian violence and instability in Iraq and the broader region. The U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan led to the eventual removal of the Taliban from power, but the inability to fully stabilize the country meant that the Taliban gradually regained influence. After 20 years of military engagement, the U.S. withdrew in 2021, leaving Afghanistan in the hands of the Taliban once more. This resurgence underscores the challenges of combating extremist ideologies in the face of entrenched local political dynamics.

The War on Terror had a profound humanitarian impact, particularly in the countries where military interventions occurred. Civilian casualties, displacement, and infrastructure destruction in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria have had long-term consequences. The instability in the Middle East has led to large-scale refugee movements, straining neighboring countries and Europe. The global response to the refugee crisis has been fraught with political tensions, with debates over borders, immigration policy, and the integration of refugees. Military operations, airstrikes, and drone warfare led to significant civilian casualties. The question of how to minimize harm to non-combatants while targeting terrorist groups remains a major ethical and operational dilemma.

The legacy of 9/11 is marked by both important lessons and continuing challenges. While the world has made significant strides in counterterrorism, security, and international cooperation, the evolving nature of global terrorism, the ongoing tension between security and individual rights, and the geopolitical instability in the Middle East remind us that the fight against extremism is far from over. The key takeaway is that addressing terrorism requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond military force. Efforts must include diplomatic engagement, addressing the root causes of radicalization, promoting inclusive societies, and ensuring that counterterrorism measures do not undermine the very freedoms they seek to protect. As the world moves forward, it is critical that the mistakes of the past are acknowledged, that international cooperation continues, and that the balance between national security and civil liberties remains a cornerstone of democratic values. The lessons learned from 9/11 must guide future efforts to build a safer and more just world.

Major Findings

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States marked a pivotal moment in global history, with far-reaching consequences for security, geopolitics, and society. Twenty years later, several key findings highlight the lessons learned from these attacks and the continuing challenges that have emerged in their aftermath.

The attacks underscored the need for countries to collaborate on counterterrorism efforts. Increased intelligence sharing, multilateral cooperation, and global strategies, such as the **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**, became essential in combating transnational terrorism. Following 9/11, countries implemented stringent security measures, particularly in aviation and border control. The creation of agencies like the **Department of Homeland Security**in the U.S. exemplified the global focus on tightening security and countering potential threats.

The 9/11 attacks led the U.S. to adopt a more interventionist foreign policy, resulting in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These interventions reshaped global relations, but also fueled regional instability and contributed to the rise of new extremist groups like **ISIS**. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq strained U.S. relations with allies and highlighted the limitations of military power in achieving long-term peace and stability. The 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban's resurgence emphasized the difficulties in nation-building and stabilizing conflict-ridden regions.

The immediate aftermath of 9/11 saw economic disruptions, including market volatility and recession. The War on Terror placed a significant financial burden on the U.S. and its allies, with military spending and security measures adding to national deficits. Increased security measures, such as stricter airport protocols, led to disruptions in international trade and logistics. These changes affected global supply chains and raised transportation costs.

The 9/11 attacks led to a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, particularly in the West. Muslims and people of Arab descent faced discrimination, hate crimes, and profiling, creating social divides and fueling debates about multiculturalism and integration. Efforts to enhance security often came at the expense of civil liberties. The **USA PATRIOT Act** and other surveillance measures raised concerns about the erosion of privacy and personal freedoms. The challenge of balancing security with civil rights remains a significant issue in democratic societies. The 9/11 attacks highlighted the evolving nature of terrorism, with groups like **ISIS**adopting new strategies, including territorial control. The rise of **lone-wolf terrorism** and **cyberterrorism**introduced new challenges for intelligence agencies and global security. Counterterrorism efforts continue to evolve as terrorist organizations adapt to changing circumstances. The shift from centralized groups like al-Qaeda to more decentralized, ideologically-driven actors requires new approaches to prevention and security.

The War on Terror had significant humanitarian impacts, including civilian casualties and displacement. Countries like Afghanistan and Iraq continue to face the consequences of conflict, contributing to long-term instability and refugee crises. The use of drone strikes, torture, and indefinite detention (e.g., at *Guantanamo Bay****) raised ethical questions about the means employed in the fight against terrorism. Balancing effective counterterrorism tactics with respect for human rights remains a central challenge.***

Lessons for the Future: Reflections on the September 11, 2001 Attacks and Their Aftermath

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States marked a defining moment in history, transforming the global security landscape and reshaping international relations. While significant progress has been made in countering terrorism and adapting to new threats, the aftermath of 9/11 offers several important lessons that remain relevant for the future. These lessons highlight the need for more comprehensive, balanced, and forward-thinking strategies to address the evolving nature of global challenges.

Military force alone cannot defeat terrorism. The experience of the past two decades shows that counterterrorism must go beyond military action. While military interventions may be necessary in certain cases, they cannot be the sole solution. A multifaceted approach is required, combining diplomacy, intelligence-sharing, economic development, and efforts to address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, political marginalization, and lack of education. Addressing ideological extremism is essential. Efforts should focus on preventing radicalization by promoting inclusivity, social cohesion, and education. Governments, civil society, and religious institutions must work together to offer alternative narratives to violent extremism and provide opportunities for disengagement from radical ideologies. Global security threats require global responses. The 9/11 attacks highlighted that terrorism is a transnational threat that cannot be addressed by any single country acting alone. Moving forward, countries must continue to work together to share intelligence, coordinate military and diplomatic efforts, and combat global extremism. Multilateral organizations like the **United Nations** and **Interpol** will continue to play critical roles in fostering cooperation and harmonizing counterterrorism strategies. As terrorist tactics evolve, so too must international cooperation. New forms of terrorism, such as **cyberterrorism, lone-wolf attacks,** and**bio-terrorism**, require cross-border collaboration and coordinated responses. In particular, addressing the rise of digital platforms used for extremist propaganda and recruitment will require shared efforts to regulate and monitor online spaces.

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Ensuring security must not come at the expense of fundamental freedoms. The post-9/11 era saw an expansion of surveillance powers, detention without trial, and other measures that raised concerns about the erosion of civil liberties. While security is essential, it should not infringe upon basic human rights and freedoms. Future counterterrorism policies must find ways to protect citizens from terrorism without undermining the very democratic values they seek to safeguard. Governments must be transparent in their actions and be held accountable for violations of civil rights. Public debate and oversight are crucial in ensuring that counterterrorism efforts remain in line with constitutional and international human rights standards. Preventing terrorism requires addressing the underlying conditions that foster extremism: Economic inequality, political exclusion, and lack of access to education are often driving factors behind radicalization. Investing in education, job opportunities, and economic development, particularly in vulnerable regions, can help prevent the growth of extremist ideologies. Societies must promote social inclusion, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution to reduce the appeal of violent extremism. Strong, cohesive societies are better equipped to resist extremist ideologies. Efforts should focus on building resilience in communities, empowering individuals to reject violence, and fostering a culture of tolerance and understanding. Governments must engage in community-building efforts to reduce divisions and prevent the isolation of vulnerable groups.

Terrorism evolves, and security measures must be flexible and adaptive. The evolving nature of terrorism, including the rise of decentralized groups like ISIS and the growing threat of cyberterrorism, highlights the need for adaptive security strategies. Intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and security experts must continually update their tools, tactics, and technologies to respond to new and emerging threats. As terrorist groups increasingly use digital platforms for recruitment, propaganda, and coordination, cybersecurity will be an essential focus for governments and businesses alike. The threat of **cyberterrorism** including attacks on critical infrastructure requires investment in robust cybersecurity measures and the development of global norms for cyber warfare. Counterterrorism strategies must prioritize ethics and human dignity. The use of torture, indefinite detention, and extrajudicial killings during the War on Terror raised serious ethical and legal concerns. Future counterterrorism measures must adhere to international law, particularly the Geneva Conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Efforts to combat terrorism must respect the dignity of all individuals, even when dealing with suspected terrorists. Policies that target entire communities or religious groups in the name of security can lead to alienation and further radicalization. Future strategies must focus on precision, ensuring that security measures do not harm innocent individuals or communities. Diplomacy and conflict resolution must be prioritized alongside military actions. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq highlighted the risks of military intervention and the unintended consequences it can have on regional stability. Diplomacy, conflict prevention, and the promotion of peace must remain central in international relations. The root causes of violent extremism, such as political disenfranchisement and territorial disputes, need to be addressed through diplomatic means rather than through force. Diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts must include dialogue and reconciliation between different ethnic, religious, and political groups. A focus on post-conflict reconstruction, justice, and reconciliation is crucial for preventing the recurrence of violence and terrorism.

Long-term security should not solely rely on military power but also on soft power and diplomacy. In the future, national security strategies should balance military readiness with investments in diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian initiatives. Soft power tools such as cultural exchange, international development, and public diplomacy play an important role in building long-term peace and security. Governments must engage with non-state actors, including civil society organizations, human rights groups, and private sector stakeholders, to address global threats. These actors often play a critical role in local peacebuilding efforts and in countering extremist ideologies.

Conclusion: Shaping the Future of Global Security

The September 11 attacks not only marked a tragic day in American history but also catalyzed significant changes in global security, geopolitics, and international relations. The U.S.'s response to the attacks led to two decades of military engagements, heightened security measures, and redefined foreign policies. While significant progress has been made in combating terrorism and enhancing global security, the lessons learned from 9/11 continue to influence discussions about the balance between security and freedom, the nature of international cooperation, and the evolving threats of terrorism in the 21st century. The world is still grappling with the long-term consequences of those events, with debates about the effectiveness of the War on Terror and the shifting nature of global threats remaining central to contemporary discourse. The lessons learned from the September 11 attacks highlight the complexity of global security challenges and the need for a nuanced approach to counterterrorism. Moving forward, it is crucial that countries balance military action with diplomacy, prioritize human rights alongside security, and focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism. By adopting comprehensive strategies that emphasize resilience, cooperation, and ethical considerations, the world can better navigate the evolving threats of the 21st century while safeguarding the values of peace, freedom, and justice.

Recommendations

The September 11, 2001 attacks were a pivotal moment in global history, and their repercussions are still felt today. As we reflect on the lessons learned, future research must continue to explore the evolving nature of terrorism, the ethical considerations of counterterrorism policies, and the impact of 9/11 on global geopolitics, society, and security. By expanding our understanding of these issues, we can better prepare for future challenges, while ensuring that security measures respect human rights and foster international cooperation. The legacy of 9/11 underscores the need for vigilance, adaptability, and ongoing reflection to safeguard peace and security in an increasingly complex world.

i. **Strengthening International Cooperation on Counterterrorism:** The September 11 attacks revealed the critical importance of global cooperation in combating terrorism. While progress has been made, more efforts are needed to create a unified, multilateral counterterrorism framework. Nations must prioritize sharing intelligence, improving joint operations, and addressing the financing of terrorism. Strengthening international agreements, such as those within the **United Nations** and **Interpol,** can enhance the global capacity to respond to emerging threats, such as cyberterrorism or bioterrorism.
ii. **Addressing Root Causes of Extremism:** One of the key lessons from the 9/11 attacks is the need to tackle the root causes of terrorism, including political, economic, and social instability. Future efforts should focus on addressing the underlying factors that contribute to radicalization, such as poverty, lack of education, political repression, and sectarian violence. Providing support for good governance, promoting economic

development, and fostering interfaith dialogue in conflict-prone regions could help prevent the rise of extremist ideologies.

iii. **Balancing Security and Civil Liberties:** In response to 9/11, many countries, especially the United States, implemented expansive surveillance measures and enhanced security protocols. While these measures were crucial in preventing subsequent attacks, they also raised concerns about individual freedoms and privacy rights. Future policy should emphasize a balanced approach, ensuring that counterterrorism efforts do not unduly infringe on civil liberties. This includes transparent oversight mechanisms and maintaining accountability to prevent abuses of power in the name of security.

iv. **Reform of National Security Structures:** The 9/11 attacks highlighted the failure of U.S. intelligence agencies to detect and prevent the attacks despite having some prior knowledge of al-Qaeda's plans. Moving forward, governments should focus on reforming national security structures to enhance inter-agency cooperation, improve data sharing, and address intelligence gaps. Creating specialized units for counterterrorism operations and ensuring that all intelligence agencies work collaboratively could reduce the risk of future attacks.

v. **Combatting Islamophobia and Promoting Social Cohesion:** In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Muslims and individuals perceived to be Muslim faced widespread discrimination and violence. Future efforts should focus on combating **Islamophobia**and fostering inclusivity, tolerance, and understanding in societies. Education campaigns, interfaith dialogue, and community-building initiatives can help bridge divides and create more cohesive societies, reducing the chances of radicalization and fostering peaceful coexistence.

vi. **Adapting to Emerging Forms of Terrorism:** The nature of terrorism has evolved significantly since 9/11, with new threats emerging in cyberspace, through lone-wolf attacks, and from decentralized, digital radicalization. Governments and security agencies must continually adapt their strategies and capabilities to counter these new forms of terrorism. Investments in cybersecurity, the use of artificial intelligence for threat detection, and public-private partnerships will be crucial in protecting against evolving threats.

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MULTINATIONAL OIL COMPANIES AND THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT IN NIGERIA: STUDY OF SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

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Abstract
Multinational oil companies in Nigeria have longstanding record of oil explorations within the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta region. Hence the general objective of this paper is examined the operation of Shell Petroleum Development Company and conflict in the Niger Delta region. The study adopted qualitative method of data collection by analyzing related historical data collection on the operation of the Multinational oil companies within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The article findings revealed that conflicts between Shell Petroleum Development Company and host communities have led to economic underdevelopment, loss of human life and environmental degradation of the Niger Delta region. In conclusion therefore, the paper recommended that to eradicate conflict between SPDC and its host communities of the Niger Delta region, company they should provide infrastructure development, technology transfer, improvement on their community relations strategies in order to impress the community and most importantly, they should introduce grassroots approach to the implementation of their strategies, particularly the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU), for optimum results.
Key Words: Conflict, Multinational Oil Companies, SPDC, Niger Delta, Oil producing Communities.

Introduction
Oil mineral is undoubtedly, the main source of the Nigerian economy. Oil accounts for over 80% of the nation's 95% of the national budget and 80% of the nation's Gross Domestic product (GDP), 90% of foreign exchange earnings, 95% of the national budget and 80% of the nation's wealth. Between 2002-2005, Nigeria, according to SPDC Report (2006) earned at least N1300 billion from oil export. The vanguard newspaper puts the figure for the 1980-2002 periods at $177.3 billion. In fact, in the 1990's, Nigeria earned so much from its oil mineral resources that a top government official was quoted as saying that money was not Nigerian's problem but how to spend it. Also, during the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states' negotiations with the European Economic Community (EEC) for the first lone convention, Nigeria even contemplated contributing to the European Development Fund (EDF), instead of being a recipient. With its oil dependent wealth Gowon and the subsequent military and civilian regimes undertook various development projects especially highways, road, industries etc, which enriched the military and the bureaucratic elites and their contractor friends (SPDC Report, 2006).

The wealth also enhanced Nigeria's leadership aspiration. It was able to extend assistance to the need African States, contribute generously to African Liberation movements and to the liberation fund of the A.U, etc on one occasion Nigeria even paid the salaries of civil servants in faraway Granada (Rowell, 1994). The state of the art architecturally designed mansions erected my public officers, top military men, contractors etc, the huge amount of dollars sunk into the ECOMOG venture in the Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the huge number of various currencies recently revealed as stolen by top public office holders came largely from foil revenue. But oil which brought so much wealth to the nation and to many corrupt individuals also brought to the people of the Niger Delta such poverty, diseases, strange ailments, persistent pollution and degrading of their environment. But despite this high cost of hosting the oil multinational companies (MNC's), the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta are developmentally neglected and their demands for basic amenities and for adequate compensation for damages were treated with levity and sometimes cavalierly dismissed as irritants and unsatisfied Oliver Twists. It is against this background of the above facts that necessitated this academic study.

The frequent conflict between the multinational oil companies and their Niger Delta host communities forms the problems of this study. The Niger Delta often accuses the multinational oil companies of total neglect non provision of basic amenities and lack of development even after the oil exploration activities has denied them their lakes, farmlands, drinking water, fishponds and general air pollution through gas flaring etc. To this end various Nigerian Government since the first republic have had to contend with the problem of fishing out a workable and effective formula in the form of commission to cater for the developmental needs of the Niger Delta people. In this regard, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) and now the Niger Delta Development Commission were all set-up. All these commissions have come to contend with the problem of lack of development in the Niger Delta, seemingly to no avail as the state of underdevelopment in the region still cast a gory scenario of its original form vis-a-visa the enormous amount of oil wealth it contributes to the national income of Nigeria.

The most of the questions on the oil multinational companies and the Niger Delta, concentrates entirely on a roll-call of the lack of development, the effects of the oil exploitation and exploration activities on the human ecosystem, human rights abuses, criminal execution of departure, this research have under taken to fill a vacuum existing in the numerous studies relating to the development of the Niger Delta and empowerment of her youths can never come solely from the Nigerian state and the oil MNC'S feeling in the oil communities.

Research Questions

From the statement of problem, this article provide answer to the following research questions.

i. What is the historical background of oil in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria?
ii. What is the background of SPDC operation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria?
iii. What is the role of SPDC to the conflict within the oil producing communities of the Niger Delta Region?

Research Objectives

i. Examine the historical background of oil in Niger Delta of Nigeria.
ii. Analize the of SPDC operation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.
iv. Evaluate the activities of SPDC and conflict within oil producing communities of the Niger Delta Region.

Conceptual Analysis: The Concept of Conflict.

The definition conflict like peace is also contentious. However, most scholars are of the opinion that conflict usually reflects a class of interest or goal between parties, which may be individuals or group of individuals, or ethnic groups or states. Conflict according to most scholars occurs "when two or more people engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. He further explained that conflict emerges whenever one party perceives that one or more goals or purposes or means of achieving a good or preference is being threatened or hindered by the activities of one or more parties." Put together, in conflict parties perceive or treat each other as a stumbling block that results in frustrating the other in attaining a set of goals, or even furthering one's interest through their attitudes, behaviours or actions (Akpuru-Aja, 1997). Generally, the conflict has been considered an obstacle to progress, political stability, economic prosperity and overall socio-economic development of any society because of its destructive impact. This therefore means that conflict must be timely averted or managed properly as failure to do so will reflect a determined action or struggle over a goal, which may be overt or subtle; manifest or imaginary.

The Concept of Multinational Oil Corporations

Scholars and eminent statesmen have over the years conducted articulate investigations into the activities of multinational corporations in the growth and development of the Niger Delta region. This has in no small measure constituted a foundation for controversy. Many of these scholars have come to agree that these terms, "transnational corporation and multinational corporations are often used interchangeably to mean the same thing. In his attempt to define multinational corporations. Offiong (1980) posits that "a corporation is a business structure whose principal aim is not to serve but to earn and maximize profit from its operations" He also stressed that "such corporation must be national or foreign, multinational or transnational". He continues by defining MNC's as, "firms that own and control income-generating acting in more than one country. Ikein (1990) states that, "a multinational corporation is a company which has its parent headquarters located in a developed country and subsidiary operations in a number of other countries" Nwankwo's view are nothing short of the truth. The parent headquarters of the multinational corporations are where the funds they extract from their subsidiary are siphoned.

Theoretical Framework: Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, developed by Karl Marx, emphasizes how power struggles and economic disparities create social conflicts. It argues that society is divided into groups with differing interests, often leading to confrontations over resources, wealth, and political influence. This framework is useful for analyzing the conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is rich in oil, which accounts for most of Nigeria's revenue. However, the wealth generated from oil production is largely controlled by multinational corporations and the Nigerian government, while local communities suffer from poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. This reflects the classic conflict theory dynamic, where the elite (government and corporations) exploit the resources at the expense of marginalized groups (local communities). Exploitation and Marginalization. The indigenous communities in the Niger Delta experience environmental destruction due to oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation, which harm their livelihoods in fishing and farming. Meanwhile, they receive little compensation or infrastructural development. This marginalization aligns with conflict theory's argument that those in power will continue to exploit weaker groups to maintain their dominance.

The various militant groups, such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), have emerged to fight against perceived oppression. Their activities ranging from pipeline vandalism to kidnapping oil workers are efforts to challenge the existing power imbalance. This resistance mirrors conflict theory's assertion that oppressed groups will eventually rise against their exploiters. The Nigerian government has responded with military force, repression, and at times, amnesty programs to neutralize resistance. This reflects how elites use both coercion and selective concessions to maintain control, another key aspect of conflict theory. While the broader conflict is between the Niger Delta communities and the government/corporations, there are also internal conflicts among local elites, political figures, and militant groups. Some local leaders benefit from oil-related corruption, further deepening class struggles within the region. The Niger Delta conflict is a clear example of conflict theory in action. It highlights how economic inequality, exploitation, and resistance shape societal struggles. Until the structural inequalities in resource distribution and political representation are addressed, tensions in the Niger Delta will likely persist.

Review of Shell Petroleum Development Company Operation in the Niger Delta Region

Shell companies collectively form one of the world's largest corporations. They are involved in oil and gas exploration and production (upstream activities) as well as refining, transportation and marketing (downstream activities). Shell companies are exploring for and production in oil and gas in almost 50 countries of the world. In Africa, shell companies have major production interests in Nigeria, Gabon and Egypt. Following a long period of a dual holding companies that is shell petroleum NV of the Netherlands and the shell United States of America called shelled petroleum incorporated. Oronta (1999), the shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, is the Pioneer and the largest oil exploration and production company in Nigeria. Tamuno, (1999:53), the company started geological reconnaissance operations in 1937 and it was granted an oil exploration license on November 4, 1938. Yehudi (1998) shell in 1956 discovered the first commercial oil field in Nigerian at Oloibiri, Bayelsa State after the company must have drilled several unsuccessful wells. Akinsanya (1997: 91 - 94), from a production of 6,000 barrels of crude oil per day in 1958, when the shipment was made, the rate of daily production by the company has increased to more than one million barrels. The name of the company operating the Joint Venture was then changed to the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited. Adebayo A.G. (1988: 26 - 28), NNPC and Shell signed an agreement meant to consolidate the venture in 1984.

In 1989, the Federal Government rationalized its interest in the NNPC – Shell Joint Venture from 80% to 60% while shell increased its participation to 30% thus allowing Elf Nigeria Ltd and Nigeria Agip oil company acquires 55 respectively. However, in July 1993, Elf increased its interest by acquiring an extra 55 from the Nigeria government. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Nigerian government and oil companies and the NNPC / Shell / Elf/ Agip Joint Venture were signed on Thursday July 11th, 1991. (SPDC, 1992: 15-17), under the present terms of agreement as fixed margin provided the oil prices remain between $12.50 and $23 a barrel. Walter Rodney (1974: 5), any rise in price within this range therefore boosts government revenues. Yehudi Davide D. (1998: 15-17) apart from the company's role, responsibilities and commitment to environmental protection and to building increased community relations shell has staff strength of about 4,928 regular employee and over 11,000 employees retained via contracts and about 300 expatriates.

Multinational Oil Companies (Shell Petroleum Development Company) and Conflict in the Niger Delta Region

Nzimiro (1977) view multinational corporation as creating economic problems and conflict within the Niger Delta. He equally believes the theory here in Africa, created a neo-colonial economy which for decades will remain a trading economy, by so doing many African countries have remained an export-oriented economy whose industrial units are vertically integrated with the parent industries in the metropolis with no or very little integration with other industries or sectors of neo-colonial state itself. He also believes that the existence makes it impossible to develop indigenous enterprises by native mono polities. The MNC's are also seen as being capable of shifting to lucrative sectors of the economy at any point in time, when such a sector becomes more prosperous and by so doing can regulate industries and agriculture, thus distorting the patterns of economic development of the given country. Nzimiro (1977) further asserts that MNC's help to create a parasitic class within the society a class that is essentially committed to the doctrine of capitalism through so many means they can use these means created according, to their own images and likeness to ensure the preservation of the economic manifesting of the multinational oil corporations.

The maxizim scholars often see the multinational oil corporations as causing structural distortions with respect to sectoral and regional imbalance, income wealth and other structural imbalances and warped industrialization programme. In their obsession with fast and much profit, multinational oil corporations concentrated their investment in such lucrative sectors as commence, mining finance, export agriculture, manufacturing and construction while neglecting other sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, resulting in the collapse of the rural economy and food crisis all over Africa. In line with this, Nwankwo (1981:35-45) argued with substantial facts that multinationals investments in underdeveloped countries like Nigeria is usually in viable productive venture in like into agricultural or related sectors, to them this offer less opportunity to maximize or accumulate profits in the shortest possible time frame. Rather, they invest mostly in extractive and exploitative activities of crude oil, manufacturing commences, banking etc, which do not really contribute to a substantial permanent development of a country like Nigeria, but rather renders such country as a rental state for the selfish interest of the multinationals in alliance with its agents to perpetuate more exploitation from such country.

Akinsanga (1984:30) maintained that in the area of transfer of technology benefits to host developed countries, there is little technology transferred by multinational oil corporations. This is not only because research and development afford are concentrated in the home countries of the multinational oil corporations but also because MNC's attempt to retain monopoly over technology. Another reason is because of the capital intensity of the multinational oil corporation's method of production and because consistent adaption of production process has not taken place. This group of scholars further argued that the technology so transferred by MNC's to their host countries is inappropriate, absolute, overprices and in consisted with the factor endowment of the less developed countries. Ake (1981) pointed out that more than often the transfer of technology invariably inappropriate encourages the production of goods which are irrelevant to the needs, of the needs of most of the people. The essence of the postulation made by Ake (19981:105-114) was to show an attempt by these multinational oil corporations to frustrate the impact of indigenous technology development in order to boost an efficient dependent manpower skill by third world states like Nigeria.

Multinational oil corporations have also been accused of developing vertical integrations with the control of the dependent country's support supply of raw materials, transportation etc. All these are reinforced with the control of technology by the multinational oil corporations. The development of this vertical integrations is to aid the further disarticulation of the national economy of host countries, thus making it impossible for such countries to develop technologically and otherwise, to exploited both her raw materials and natural resources independently. In the area of employment, Marian scholars have shown in their respective studies that multinational oil corporations use more capital per employee and because of this phenomenon, the MNC's are enabled to employ many the labour force in their host countries in which there exist abundant labour. Onimode (1986:17-19) accused the multinational oil corporations of contributing to the unemployment crisis in Africa especially at the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The four major sources of unemployment created by the MNC's are the initial proletarianization of African peasantry by the colonial state through forced labour, oppressive taxes and land alienation, inappropriate capital-intensive technology and the import of labour into Niger Delta through the expatriate quota. Other charges against multinational corporations' centers on its effects on local indigenous enterprises. Akeredolu (1978:35-41) for example, maintain that the expansion of private foreign investment (MNC's) and the development of indigenous entrepreneurship many naturally reinforce each other in the early stages of their extranets but tend to become competitive of process at letter stages.

And the more expensive multinational corporations become in such letter stages, the less room for indigenous industries to develop. He is of the opinion that one of the roots of the economic backwardness of most host countries of MNC's is the over prolonged sojourn of private foreign investment. He also argues that the failure to stimulate indigenous entrepreneurship in Nigeria can be attributed to capital shortages in accurate managerial skills and negative socio-cultural and motivations characteristics of the world of private indigenous entrepreneur. It can also be attributed to the activities of private foreign investors in the economy, the foreign owned commercial banks which dominated the credit system and demonstrated a strong unwillingness to help indigenous firms to rise. The above assertion was further corroborated by Luck (1997) who indicated multinational oil corporations for harassing and eventually out competing and eliminating nascent local infant industries gradually "but infallibly making the national economy fall prey to such giant multinational firms which transforms it confidently into their exclusive preserve profit making. This tendency Kojo observed is already observed in Nigeria in the combined form of the horizontal and vertical integration of the major and relevant economic activities under the hegemony of multinationals.

Hitherto, experience and observation in the past had shown that some of these activities by these MNC's operating in Niger Delta show are usually geared towards sub margin or underdevelopment in a bid to frustrate any economic progress of Niger Delta and to make them more dependent on multinational oil companies as a source of development. For instance, Offiong (1980) rightly observed that the backward region assumes dependence status in relationship to metropolitan powers and domination because they were indebted to them. Therefore, in such relationship that exist between the less developed and developed nations are that of debtor and creator. The efficiency of this climaxed to dependence and domination of the former that were indebted to the letter. In concurrence to this position Ake (1987:79-42) with respect to the interview he granted News-watch magazine in 1987, contended that multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta shore, to the extent are supposed to help in the development of the country's economy. But paradoxically they play the purported role of development expected of them. But in actual reality as he contends, they only help to keep the national economy to be dependent and underdeveloped in the country.

The conception of Ake Claude (1985:110-116) about the role of multinational oil companies as regard development of the national economy of Nigeria or its environs could be perceived as nail. In other worlds, his perception about MNC's could be deduced as an agent in collaboration of both the ruling elites and the bourgeois, in the country, to attain their selfish interests, thereby perpetuating deeper dependence and disarticulation of socio-economic of Nigeria and other African States. In view of the foregoing the Marxism scholars in their divergent views have shown how MNC's had underdeveloped the different parts of the Nigeria national economy. It is in realization of this predicament that attempts were made to reverse such imbalance that existed in the past. In the Nigeria context for instance, attempts at regulating the activities of multinational oil corporations includes the introduction of the General Town led military administration in 1977 under the General Olusengun Obasanjo led military administration. However, this indigenization policy could not regulate effectively the conducts and operations of such MNC's Onimode (1983:15-28), in this regard, contends that: the indigenization policy that was introduced failed woefully as result of the symbiotic collaboration mechanism that exists between the bourgeois or agents in alliance with the ruling elites of Nigeria who served selfishly and fought for their sole personal interest in alliance with multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta.

Ake Claude (1985:110-116) posited that Nigerian ruling class in partnership and in alliance with its foreign patrons (the international capitalist interests) embark upon the said purported policy of indigenization in a bid to accommodate each other interest of confliction strains of relationship. Thus, these spheres of operations are clearly stipulated and serve as a demarcation. The advent of shell petroleum development company (SPDC) in Nigeria according to shell bulletin dates to 1956 when the company pioneered the oil industry in the country drilling the first sources of oil well the same year followed simultaneously with the first oil export two years later. Onimode (1988) the Nigeria- shell partnership started in 1938 at the down of Nigeria's oil industry. The shell-BP, a reconstructed shell Darchy carried out the earliest and longest search for crude oil in the country, which yielded result in 1956. Since 1938 till date shell has been involved in the exploration of crude oil in Nigeria. More so, the adoption of the leading-edge exploration method by the company, has enabled it to discover and explore more oil fields in the both on-shore and offshore oil drilling in the country.

Oil exploration activities of shell are in the mangrove forests of the Niger Delta, which includes Delta, Imo, Bayelsa, Abia, Ebonyi and Rivers State. this is the primary focus of the company in Nigeria. Today as operators of the NNPC/shell Joint venture, SPDC produces more than half of Nigeria's oil on behalf of its partners (NNPC, EIF and AGIP). According to the Journal of Shell Petroleum Development company, the company has to use its wealth to contribute to Nigeria development in various ways. In community development in Nigeria, shell in 1997 expected more than $36 million (SDPC, 1997). Another $94 Million was invested in projects with environmental benefits. On the health care facet, the company has built multiple hospitals, donated much equipment and has donated drugs as well. The company has helped in alleviating the problem of unemployment and has opened vocational training schools in the Niger Delta areas for the acquisition of skills by the youths in that area. Shell Petroleum Company has contributed immensely in Nigeria educational scheme. The company has been involved in the awarding of scholarship of various kinds to students in both secondary and tertiary institutions of higher learning. In addition to this, the company has built classroom blocks and laboratories in many schools and colleges, mostly in the Niger Delta areas.

Okwara (2024), the company also has a network of 24 agricultural extension officers, who work in the communities, providing advice to the farmers and the existing corporative. Three training

workshops were held for 65 farmers in 1997, teaching them the technique in growing rice. Shell has also helped in alleviating water supply palaver in the rural areas. The company predominately in the rural areas commissioned water system. The company has given support to the Nigeria government's national immunizing campaigns. It has also been involved in the construction at roads and markets. Regrettable, Shell's activities have simultaneously ushered in some agonizing periods of social and environmental degradation over the years. This has brought about great runs and devastated aquatic and agricultural life of the people of the Niger Delta areas. Tamuno (1999) directed attention of the world to the hazards caused by oil exploration. He analyzed how the activities of the oil companies have divested the agricultural, recreational and wild life activities of the people in the Niger Delta areas. He cited an example with the Bonny Oil Spillages of July 1975.

Barnet, Muller and Ronald all agree that oil pollution destroys food sources particularly, aquatic food chains that includes fisheries resources. Evidence of environmental degradation ad abuse of human rights is most prominent in the Ogoni Enclave, a distinct ethnic minority group in the South-Eastern part of the Niger Delta. The people of Ogoni started protesting of the ecological devastation caused by Shell and Chevron Nigeria Limited. Tell magazine, an authoritative news magazine writes that the chiefs and leaders of Ogoni, during the 1991 protest submitted a document entitled "Ogoni Bill of Rights" to the Nigeria government. Their demands among other things included the right to protect Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation. A series of demonstrations and violent protesters led to the killing of four prominent sons of Ogoni Land, who were believed to be in favor of the various oil firms, particularly Shell and the Nigeria government. This ugly development led to the arrest and the subsequent hanging of world-famous writer and environmental list Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others. This event led to reactions from individuals from all works of life and the international community, all which condemned the governmental action of hanging.

Alagoa (1972) Laments on the problems caused by the activities of these foreign oil corporations in Africa, especially in their nefarious role in overthrowing of government that the, finds unfriendly to their activities. He also posits that these corporations exploit human and natural resources in the Third World Countries where they indulge in the destabilization and overthrowing of host governments. In Africa, the government of General Mutual Mohammed was toppled with the aid of these MNC's. Dissidents sponsored by multinational oil corporations and killed Anwar Suda, the former Egyptian President who died in Cario in 1981. The Uganda, these MNC's aided the installation of President Yaweri Muser also the Cameroon, ELF oil company has dominated to country's political arena, discouraging the government to insist on claiming the oil rich Bakassi Peninsular, thereby fuelling border conflict with Nigeria the rightful owner of the Peninsular. (SDDS, :1980:15-17). All these activities of the various multinational oil companies do not augur well for the development of Nigeria and Africa in general. These activities have helped to undermine the country and plunging the African continent further into the path of underdevelopment. Going through the pages of this work, one has little or no choice but to accept that the activities of the multinational oil corporations has done more harm than good to the development of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The fabrics of the political, socio cultural wounded by these agents of imperialism. Ake Claude (1987:39-42), Shell the case study of this research work, despite its huge profits, has only helped to development of an insignificant and minute fraction of Nigeria developmental projects. Nzimiro (1976:88-100), In contrast, the environmental and ecological harm it's oil prospecting ventures have done to the Niger Delta in region of the country is to say the least enormous, inhuman, outrageous and beyond financial compensation. Akinsanya (2001) the unending presence of the powerful multinational corporations in the oil industries of Nigeria ushers in a

ceaseless plague of dependency and underdevelopment, with an alarming proportion each passing day.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In recommendations of our findings, it is obvious that the Niger Delta defines wealth and poverty simultaneously. We therefore recommend the following to eradicate the Niger Delta conflict and bring about the much-needed development in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria in generally.

i) The oil and gas sector in Niger Delta are generally known to have attracted the most interest in investors in the Nigerian economy. This is because of the huge profit that oil and gas companies make in the international market.

ii) The SPDC operating in the Niger Delta region should encourage and assist the oil producing communities by embarking on the effective developments of infrastructural facilities such as good reads, portable drinking water, electricity and building of such schools with necessary educational materials that will enhance learning and human capacity development.

iii) SPDC should ensure the widest possible consultation of the people who will be affected by oil installations in their planning and the greatest possible transparency in what is planned, to ensure that oil operation have the consent of these who suffer their negative consequences.

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IMPACT OF NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE PLATEAU STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION

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Abstract
This study explores the impact of non-financial rewards on employee performance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (LGSC). Recognizing that employee performance is crucial for organizational success, the research investigates how various non-financial rewards—such as recognition, and work-life balance affect employees' motivation and performance. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from a sample of 273 employees through structured questionnaires. Using a chi-square statistical method, the research tests hypotheses regarding the effect of recognition and awards on employee performance, and the influence of work-life balance on employee motivation and retention. The findings reveal that both recognition and awards, as well as work-life balance, have a significant impact on employee performance. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission should enhance its recognition and award systems to further motivate employees. A structured and regular program of recognition, both monetary and non-monetary, is suggested to boost employee morale and performance. Second, promoting work-life balance initiatives is essential to improving employee motivation and retention. The Commission is encouraged to introduce flexible work options, such as remote work or adjustable hours, to support employees in balancing their personal and professional lives. These measures are expected to foster higher job satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and contribute to a more productive workforce.
Keywords: Non-financial rewards, Employee performance, Job satisfaction, Local government, Motivation theory

Introduction

Non-financial rewards, which encompass recognition, career development opportunities, job enrichment, and work-life balance, are essential motivators that fulfill employees' psychological needs, contributing to satisfaction and productivity. Unlike financial incentives, non-financial rewards emphasize intrinsic motivation, which Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory suggests is vital

for long-term engagement and job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). Non-financial rewards often address higher-level needs such as esteem and self-actualization, as illustrated in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). For example, recognition for a job well done or opportunities for professional growth can instill a sense of achievement and purpose, leading to higher morale and a stronger connection to organizational goals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Research highlights that non-financial rewards can positively affect employee retention and loyalty. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of commitment supports this, demonstrating that such rewards increase affective commitment, fostering a willingness to stay within the organization. This is especially pertinent in sectors with budget constraints where financial rewards are limited; non-financial rewards offer cost-effective ways to boost motivation and performance (Shields et al., 2016).

The Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (PLGSC) plays a central role in managing human resources across local governments within Plateau State, Nigeria. Its mandate includes recruiting, training, promoting, and retaining employees to ensure effective service delivery at the grassroots level. As a regulatory body, the PLGSC faces challenges related to limited financial resources and high employee turnover which are common issues in Nigeria's public sector (Akume& Abdullahi, 2021). Due to these constraints, there is a growing emphasis on non-financial rewards—such as recognition, career development opportunities, and job enrichment—to motivate employees and enhance performance.

Non-financial rewards in the PLGSC are particularly significant because they can boost morale, improve job satisfaction, and foster loyalty without necessitating large budgetary allocations (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2022). Given the socio-economic pressures faced by public servants, particularly in regions with high inflation and limited private sector alternatives, effective non-financial reward programs can play a pivotal role in retaining skilled personnel (Agbo, 2023).

The context of PLGSC reflects a structured, albeit resource-constrained, environment where non-financial rewards are essential to addressing employee motivation and retention challenges, impacting local government efficacy throughout Plateau State.

The impact of non-financial rewards on employee performance is an increasingly relevant area of study in the Nigerian public sector, especially in resource-constrained institutions such as the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (PLGSC). As a central body managing human resources for local governments across Plateau State, The Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (PLGSC) faces challenges such as high employee turnover, low motivation, and reduced productivity due to limited non-financial rewards and recognition for staff performance. Traditional monetary rewards may be limited by budgetary constraints, necessitating the exploration of alternative motivational strategies to enhance employee productivity and commitment (Agbo, 2023). On the other hand, non-financial rewards—such as a collaborative work environment, recognition and awards, job security, and work-life balance—offer significant potential to improve employee satisfaction and performance within such limitations (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2022).

Despite the acknowledged benefits of non-financial rewards, the PLGSC continues to grapple with issues of employee disengagement, low morale and increased turnover which negatively impact overall performance and service delivery (Oladipo & Adebayo, 2020). Agbo, (2023) and Ogunrotifa, (2021) shows that non-financial rewards such as recognision, job security and work life balance can significantly impact employee motivation and performance in the public sector (. However, there is a paucity of empirical research examining how these specific non-financial rewards affect employee performance within the PLGSC. Without a structured approach to understanding the impact of these rewards, the Commission may be missing out on opportunities to optimize employee engagement and effectiveness.

Deci & Ryan, (2008) study has indicated that inconsistent and poorly aligned reward programs fail to address employees' intrinsic motivations, leading to diminished effectiveness in enhancing sustained productivity. There is also limited awareness among PLGSC management about the strategic importance of non-financial rewards, as most incentive programs in the Nigerian public sector focus on financial compensations, leaving gaps in non-monetary motivational strategies (Akume& Abdullahi, 2021). This oversight potentially exacerbates turnover issues and diminishes employee morale, as non-financial incentives that promote collaboration, recognize achievements, ensure security, and balance personal well-being are overlooked.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the role of non-financial rewards on employee performance within the PLGSC. Specifically, it will examine the effectiveness of a recognition and awards, and work-life balance on enhancing employees' commitment and productivity. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for the PLGSC to formulate targeted strategies that not only boost performance but also foster an engaged and satisfied workforce capable of driving public sector efficiency across Plateau State.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of non-financial rewards on staff performance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission, other specific objectives are to;

i. Assess the impact of recognition, and awards on employee performance in the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission and
ii. Determine the extent to which work-life balance influence employee motivation within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission. The study was guided by the following hypothesis;

$H0_1$: Recognition, and awards have no significant impact on employee performance in the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

$H0_2$: Work-life balance have no significant influence on employee motivation and retention within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

Literature Review

Concept of Non - Financial Incentives

Non-financial incentives are rewards given to employees that do not involve direct monetary compensation but are aimed at enhancing motivation, satisfaction, and performance within an organization. These incentives include various forms of recognition, job security, opportunities for personal development, and the promotion of a positive work environment. Unlike financial incentives, which rely on salaries, bonuses, and cash-based rewards, non-financial incentives focus on fulfilling employees' psychological and emotional needs, making them feel valued and appreciated in their roles (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

A prominent form of non-financial incentive is recognition, which involves acknowledging employees' achievements publicly or privately. Recognition can be as simple as verbal praise or as formal as employee-of-the-month awards, both of which reinforce positive behavior and commitment to organizational goals (Jiang et al., 2022). Job security is another significant non-financial incentive, particularly relevant in the public sector, where employees may place a high value on long-term stability. Job security enhances loyalty and reduces turnover intentions, creating a stable workforce essential for institutional knowledge retention (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2022)

Other non-financial incentives include work-life balance provisions, such as flexible hours and support for personal well-being, which help employees manage both professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. Such initiatives reduce stress, enhance job satisfaction, and improve employee retention (Aguinis et al., 2021). Additionally, opportunities for career

development, such as training and advancement possibilities, empower employees to enhance their skills and grow within the organization.

Non-financial incentives are thus integral to an organization's reward system, particularly where budget constraints limit financial rewards. They leverage intrinsic motivation by fulfilling higher-order needs, encouraging employees to invest in their roles, and aligning their personal and professional goals with organizational objectives (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020)

A gap in the review is the lack of specific discussion on how non-financial incentives are implemented and their effectiveness within resource-constrained public sector organizations, particularly in local government bodies like the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (PLGSC). While the review highlights various forms of non-financial rewards and their general benefits, it does not address the challenges and contextual factors that may hinder the successful application of these incentives in such settings.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is a multifaceted concept that reflects how well an employee fulfills their job roles and contributes to organizational goals. It encompasses both the quality and quantity of work, adherence to organizational standards, and the achievement of set objectives (Dessler, 2020). High performance typically includes efficiency, effectiveness, and a commitment to the job, while underperformance often results in decreased productivity and morale within the organization. Employee performance is influenced by various factors, including motivation, job satisfaction, and the overall work environment (Armstrong, 2021).

Kuvaas (2016) emphasize that employee performance is not just task completion but also involves behaviors that contribute to organizational effectiveness. For instance, extra-role behaviors—commonly referred to as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) such as helping colleagues, staying committed, and showing initiative, can significantly enhance overall productivity (Robbins & Judge, 2022). These behaviors are often driven by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with non-financial rewards like recognition and work-life balance contributing positively to such extra-role engagement (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2022).

The relationship between employee performance and organizational success has made performance management a key focus in human resources. Performance management strategies, which may include setting clear objectives, providing feedback, and recognizing achievements, are designed to improve both individual and organizational outcomes (Torrington et al., 2021). In the public sector, where financial resources may be constrained, non-financial rewards become crucial for maintaining employee motivation and enhancing performance (Agbo, 2023).

Thus, employee performance is a comprehensive concept involving multiple factors that contribute to both individual and organizational success. Non-financial rewards, a supportive work environment, and recognition are essential in fostering high employee performance, particularly in resource-constrained environments like the public sector.

Recognition and Awards

Recognition and awards are essential non-financial motivators within organizational settings, driving employee engagement, productivity, and retention. Recognition refers to the acknowledgment of an individual's achievements, efforts, or contributions in the workplace, which can positively impact self-esteem, job satisfaction, and morale (Baskar & Rajkumar, 2015). Awards, on the other hand, are tangible or symbolic rewards, such as certificates, trophies, or special titles, given as a formal token of appreciation for outstanding performance. Together, recognition and awards serve as powerful tools in aligning individual objectives with organizational goals, fostering a sense of belonging, and reinforcing desirable behaviors (Shields et al., 2016)

The impact of recognition and awards on performance has been widely documented. Research indicates that employees who feel valued are more likely to engage fully in their roles, show loyalty, and exhibit enhanced performance (Nelson, 2012). This positive response stems from the intrinsic motivation that recognition triggers, as employees feel their contributions matter and are integral to the organization's success (Tessema, Ready, & Embaye, 2013). In public sector settings, where financial incentives may be limited, effective recognition and awards programs can bridge motivational gaps, contributing to overall organizational efficacy (Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2022).

Work-Life Balance.

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between an individual's work responsibilities and personal life, aiming to ensure neither aspect suffers due to the demands of the other (Kalliath& Brough, 2008). The concept has gained prominence as organizations recognize that employee well-being is directly linked to productivity and job satisfaction. A balanced approach allows employees to manage their roles effectively at work while fulfilling personal responsibilities, leading to reduced stress, higher job satisfaction, and improved mental health (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Work-life balance can be influenced by organizational policies, such as flexible work schedules, remote work options, and reasonable workload management, which help employees to meet both professional and personal obligations (Kossek&Lautsch, 2018). In the public sector, where work-life balance challenges may be exacerbated by bureaucratic structures and fixed schedules, organizations that support flexibility can enhance employee motivation and retention (Mordi et al., 2020). Ultimately, achieving work-life balance is beneficial for employees and employers alike, fostering a healthier, more motivated workforce and enhancing organizational performance.

Plateau State Local Government Service Commission

The Plateau State Local Government Service Commission plays a pivotal role in the governance framework of Plateau State, Nigeria. Established to enhance local governance, it operates under the constitutional mandate to manage appointments, promotions, and the overall administration of the local government workforce. Its mission is to create a proficient civil service characterized by professionalism, transparency, and effective service delivery.

Recently, under the leadership of Chairman Simon Tangni, the Commission has undertaken significant reforms aimed at improving operational efficiency and employee welfare. The emphasis on creating a positive work culture and fostering cooperation among staff reflects a commitment to modernizing local government practices. Initiatives such as e-governance and digitization of personnel records have been implemented to streamline processes and enhance accountability (PSLGSC, Journal 2023)

Moreover, the Commission prioritizes training and capacity-building programs to equip local government employees with necessary skills, ensuring a responsive workforce ready to tackle contemporary challenges. The recent approval for enhanced allowances for senior officers exemplifies the government's focus on boosting staff morale and overall job satisfaction.

Overall, the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission is integral to ensuring effective governance at the grassroots level, enhancing the delivery of services to the public, and responding to the dynamic needs of the local government landscape.

Non - Financial Rewards and Staff Performance

Non-financial rewards, encompassing incentives such as recognition, career development opportunities, and flexible work conditions, have a substantial influence on employee

performance, particularly in contexts where financial compensation may be limited (Aktar et al., 2012). These rewards cater to intrinsic motivations by fulfilling psychological needs, enhancing job satisfaction, and encouraging employee commitment to organizational goals. In public sector organizations, where budgetary constraints often restrict the extent of financial rewards, non-financial rewards become essential for sustaining employee morale and productivity (De Gieter& Hofmans, 2015).

Recognition is a key non-financial reward, reinforcing positive behaviors and achievements, and fostering an environment where employees feel valued. Studies have shown that when employees are acknowledged for their efforts, their engagement and loyalty increase, leading to improved performance outcomes (Ali & Ahmed, 2009). Career development opportunities, another significant non-financial incentive, provide employees with pathways for growth and skill acquisition, enhancing their sense of purpose and aligning personal goals with organizational objectives (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Flexibility in work arrangements also supports performance by allowing employees to better manage their work-life balance, reducing burnout and increasing focus on job tasks (Kossek&Lautsch, 2018).

Overall, non-financial rewards can be an effective strategy for enhancing performance by addressing the deeper motivational needs of employees, thereby promoting sustained commitment and productivity.

Influence of recognition and awards, on employee performance

Yang and Kim (2019) examines the effects of recognition on job satisfaction and job performance within nonprofit organizations. Recognizing the importance of non-monetary incentives in motivating employees, the research focuses on understanding how both formal and informal recognition practices impact employees' attitudes and performance in nonprofit settings. A survey was conducted with employees from various nonprofit organizations, and the findings reveal that recognition significantly influences job satisfaction and enhances job performance. The study differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of recognition, noting that both are effective but intrinsic recognition (such as verbal appreciation or personal acknowledgment) plays a particularly strong role in fostering a sense of purpose and belonging among employees. Employees who received regular recognition reported higher levels of motivation, engagement, and commitment to organizational goals, which in turn led to improved performance outcomes. Additionally, the study highlights that recognition not only boosts job satisfaction but also fosters a supportive and positive organizational culture, which is critical for employee retention in the nonprofit sector. The research suggests that nonprofit organizations should develop formal recognition programs that complement informal practices to maximize their impact on job satisfaction and performance. Overall, the study provides valuable insights for nonprofit leaders seeking to improve employee motivation and productivity through recognition strategies. The findings underscore the importance of recognition in enhancing the work environment, supporting employee well-being, and contributing to organizational success in nonprofit organizations.

Sarker, Sarker and Chakraborty (2018) investigates the impact of collaborative work environments on employee performance within public sector organizations. As public sector organizations strive for enhanced efficiency and service delivery, understanding the factors that contribute to improved employee performance becomes crucial. The authors explore how collaborative work environments—characterized by open communication, teamwork, shared resources, and collective decision-making—can positively influence job performance among employees. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed employees across several public sector organizations and analyzed qualitative interviews to capture their perspectives on collaboration at work. The findings reveal that employees working in a collaborative

environment tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. The study highlights that when employees have opportunities to work together, share knowledge, and engage in decision-making processes, they are more likely to be innovative, solve problems effectively, and contribute to achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, the research identifies the role of leadership and organizational culture in fostering collaboration, noting that supportive management practices and a culture of trust are essential to building a successful collaborative environment. Additionally, the study discusses the challenges public sector organizations face in implementing collaborative work practices, such as bureaucratic structures, resistance to change, and limited resources. Despite these challenges, the authors conclude that collaborative environments have significant potential to improve employee performance in the public sector, particularly in terms of efficiency and innovation. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers and public sector managers seeking to enhance organizational effectiveness through the promotion of collaboration and teamwork.

Effect of work-life balance on employee motivation and performance

Okeke and Eze (2021) investigates the role of job security and work-life balance in employee retention within the Nigerian banking sector. Employee retention has become a significant concern for organizations globally, especially in highly competitive sectors like banking, where talent management is crucial for sustained organizational success. Using a quantitative research design, the study surveyed employees across several commercial banks in Nigeria to understand the impact of job security and work-life balance on their decision to stay with their current employers. The results reveal that both job security and work-life balance significantly influence employee retention. Specifically, employees who perceived high levels of job security and favorable work-life balance were more likely to remain with their employers, demonstrating higher levels of commitment and job satisfaction. The study also found that a supportive work environment that prioritizes employees' well-being enhances retention by reducing job stress and burnout. Furthermore, the research highlights that while financial incentives play a role in employee satisfaction, non-financial factors, particularly job security and work-life balance, are more critical in fostering long-term commitment. The authors recommend that Nigerian banks implement policies that ensure job stability and offer flexible work arrangements to improve employee retention rates. This study contributes to the literature on human resource management in the Nigerian context, providing practical insights for organizational leaders to adopt retention strategies that go beyond financial rewards. The findings are particularly relevant in emerging markets, where organizational resources are often limited, and non-financial rewards can make a significant impact on employee retention.

Zhao, Seibert, and Lumpkin (2019) investigates the relationship between job security and employee motivation within state-owned enterprises (SOEs). As the public sector plays a significant role in economic development, understanding how job security influences employee behavior is crucial for improving performance in these organizations. The research explores how perceived job security affects intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and its subsequent impact on employee performance. Using a survey-based approach, data were collected from employees working in multiple state-owned enterprises across China. The study applied structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the proposed relationships among job security, employee motivation, and job performance. The results reveal that job security is positively related to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with intrinsic motivation showing a stronger correlation to job satisfaction and long-term commitment. Employees who perceive high job security report greater organizational loyalty, higher engagement in their work, and a willingness to exert extra effort to achieve organizational goals. Furthermore, the study highlights that job security reduces stress and anxiety, allowing employees to focus on performance without fear of job loss.

However, the study also suggests that excessive job security, particularly in rigid and bureaucratic environments, may lead to complacency, thereby diminishing overall motivation. The study contributes to the understanding of motivational theories in the public sector, providing evidence that job security is an essential factor in fostering a motivated and productive workforce in state-owned enterprises. The study calls for policy adjustments that balance job security with performance incentives to optimize employee motivation and organizational efficiency.

Theoretical Framework

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that influence employee motivation and performance. According to Herzberg (1959), there are two categories of factors that affect job satisfaction and motivation: motivators and hygiene factors.

Motivators, also referred to as "satisfiers," are factors that contribute directly to job satisfaction and enhanced motivation. These include aspects like achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for advancement. Motivators are intrinsic to the job and result in higher levels of motivation when present. In the context of this study, recognition and awards can be categorized as motivators, as they provide employees with a sense of achievement and acknowledgment, leading to improved performance. Similarly, a collaborative work environment can serve as a motivator by fostering teamwork, responsibility, and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to greater intrinsic motivation.

On the other hand, hygiene factors, also known as "dissatisfiers," are elements that, when inadequate, can lead to dissatisfaction but do not necessarily motivate employees if improved. These include job security, salary, working conditions, and company policies. While hygiene factors like job security and work-life balance do not directly drive motivation, their absence can cause dissatisfaction and hinder performance. This aligns with the study's focus on job security, which, when perceived as stable, prevents dissatisfaction and allows employees to focus on their work.

By applying Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study aims to explore the influence of both motivators and hygiene factors on employee performance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission (PLGSC). Herzberg's theory posits that factors contributing to motivation can be divided into two distinct categories: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators are intrinsic factors that directly enhance job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. These include elements such as recognition, responsibility, personal growth, and achievement. In the context of this study, recognition (formal or informal acknowledgment of achievements) and a collaborative work environment (fostering teamwork and shared goals) are key motivators. When these factors are present in the workplace, they are likely to elevate employee engagement, increase job satisfaction, and consequently improve performance. Employees who feel appreciated and valued are more likely to invest their efforts in their roles, which leads to higher productivity and job satisfaction.

On the other hand, hygiene factors are extrinsic elements that do not necessarily lead to higher levels of motivation but can cause dissatisfaction if they are inadequate. These factors include job security, work-life balance, company policies, and working conditions. Although these factors do not directly motivate employees, their absence or inadequacy can lead to dissatisfaction, stress, and disengagement, which negatively affects performance. In the PLGSC, job security (a stable position within the organization) and work-life balance (adequate time for personal life and flexibility) are vital hygiene factors. If these factors are not properly managed, employees may experience burnout or stress, hindering their performance despite being motivated by other intrinsic rewards.

Therefore, by integrating Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory into this study, the research will assess how both categories—motivators (recognition, collaborative work environment) and hygiene factors (job security, work-life balance)—interact to influence employee performance within the PLGSC. Understanding this relationship can help design strategies that balance both motivators and hygiene factors, leading to improved employee satisfaction, performance, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Methodology

The study employs a survey research design to examine the impact of non-financial incentives on staff performance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission. This approach is suitable as it allows for the collection of numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between non-financial incentives and employee performance.

A survey designas utilized, enabling the researcher to gather information from a diverse range of respondents across various departments within the commission at a particular point in time. The research involved the use of structured questionnaires, which include closed-ended questions to quantify perceptions of non-financial incentives, such as recognition, collaborative work environment, and work-life balance, and their impact on performance metrics.

The target population for this study comprises all employees of the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission. As at 2024 record the employee of the commission consists of approximately 1200 employees working across different administrative and operational roles. The study aims to capture a representative sample of this population to ensure the findings are generalizable and reflective of the broader employee experience.

The Slovian formula with the assumption of a 5 percent expected margin of error and a 95 percent confidence interval was adopted,

The formula was given as:

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

n is the sample size without bearing in mind the finite population correction factor; e = 0.05; and N is the total number of observations.

Tables presenting the data were subsequently used. Results were reached after doing a comparative analysis with a simple percentage approach. The percentage is defined as x/N X 100, where X represents the frequency of responses and N represents the total number of responses (Adefila, 2008).

Data Presentation

Analysiswas based on 273 returned questionnaire from the respondents.

Table 1: Recognition and award in workplace encourages the sharing of ideas and knowledge, which improves employee performance.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	32	11.7
Agree	107	39.2
Strongly Disagree	34	12.5
Disagree	80	29.3
Undecided	20	7.3
Total	**273**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2024

The data indicates that the majority of respondents believe recognition and awards in the workplace encourage the sharing of ideas and knowledge, which in turn improves employee

performance. A significant 39.2% of participants agree with the statement, while 11.7% strongly agree. Together, these positive responses suggest that recognition and awards play a substantial role in fostering a collaborative environment. However, 29.3% of respondents disagree, and 12.5% strongly disagree, which may indicate that a portion of the workforce perceives limited impact of recognition and awards on performance. A small group, 7.3%, remained undecided. These mixed responses imply that while recognition and awards may have a positive influence, their effectiveness may vary depending on individual perspectives and workplace dynamics.

Table 2: The awards or recognition received make employee valued and improve performance

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Strongly Agree	58	21.2
Agree	100	36.6
Strongly Disagree	30	11
Disagree	66	24.2
Undecided	19	6.2
Total	**273**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2024

The survey results reveal that a majority of respondents believe awards and recognition make employees feel valued and improve their performance. Specifically, 21.2% strongly agree, and 36.6% agree with the statement, reflecting a positive association between recognition and perceived employee value. However, 24.2% of respondents disagree, and 11% strongly disagree, indicating that a significant portion of employees does not feel that recognition or awards significantly impact their sense of value or performance. Additionally, 6.2% of respondents remained undecided, suggesting some uncertainty or mixed views. Overall, the data suggests that while many employees perceive recognition as enhancing their value and performance, others may not experience the same impact, highlighting potential variations in workplace culture or individual expectations.

Table 3: Work life balance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission has a impact on employee performance.

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Strongly Agree	61	22.3
Agree	102	37.3
Strongly Disagree	43	15.8
Disagree	49	17.9
Undecided	18	6.6
Total	**273**	**100**

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The survey results indicate a strong perception of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission. A combined total of 59.6% (22.3% strongly agree, 37.3% agree) of respondents acknowledge that work-life balance positively influences their performance. On the other hand, 15.8% of respondents strongly disagree, and 17.9% disagree with the statement, suggesting a portion of the workforce does not see a direct correlation between work-life balance and performance. Only 6.6% remain undecided, pointing to

Table 4: Employee's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance significantly contributes motivation to perform effectively at work

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	51	18.7
Satisfied	113	41.4
Very dissatisfied	22	8.1

Dissatisfied	72	26.4
Undecided	15	5.5
Total	**273**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2024

The analysis of the data on work-life balance and its impact on employee motivation reveals a predominantly positive outlook. A total of 41.4% of respondents are satisfied with their work-life balance, and 18.7% are very satisfied, indicating that a significant portion of employees feel they have achieved a balance that contributes to their motivation to perform effectively. Together, these percentages show that 60.1% of employees are content with their work-life balance, suggesting that it plays a key role in enhancing motivation.

Conversely, 26.4% of respondents are dissatisfied, and 8.1% are very dissatisfied, indicating that a portion of employees may face challenges in balancing work and personal life, which could negatively impact their motivation. Additionally, 5.5% of employees were undecided, reflecting some uncertainty or lack of clarity on the importance of work-life balance. Overall, the data suggests that work-life balance is an important factor in employee motivation, with a majority of employees recognizing its positive influence on their performance. However, addressing the concerns of the dissatisfied group could further enhance motivation across the workforce.

Test of Hypothesis

$H0_1$: Recognition, and awards have no significant impact on employee performance in the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

$$\frac{£ (0i - Ei)^2}{1 = 1 \; Ei}$$

Where 0i = The Observed Frequency
Ei = The Expected Frequency

Responses	O	E	O – E	$(O – E)^2$	$(O – E)^2/E$
Strongly Agreed	32	54.6	-22.6	-510.76	-9.4
Agreed	107	54.6	52.4	2,745.76	50.3
Strongly Disagreed	34	54.6	-20.6	- 424.36	-7.7
Disagreed	80	54.6	25.4	645.16	11.8
Undecided	20	54.6	-34.6	-1,197.16	-21.9
Total	273	273			23.1

To determine the tabulated chi-square (X^2) tab. Using the degree of freedom DF= n-l and level of significance of 0.05.

Where n = number of different values observed in row

X^2 Tabulated = 5.991

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if x^2 Cal < x^2 tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if x^2 call >x^2 tab.

Decision Rule

From the computation above it is seen that x^2 Cal is greater than x^2 tab (23.1 > 5.991) the null Hypothesis (H0) is therefore rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Hi) is accepted which state that Recognition, and awards has significant impact on employee performance in the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

Hypothesis II

$H0_2$: Work-life balance have no significant influence on employee motivation and retention within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

Responses	O	E	O – E	$(O – E)^2$	$(O – E)^2/E$
Strongly Agreed	61	54.6	6.4	40.96	0.75
Agreed	102	54.6	47.4	2,246.76	41.1
Strongly Disagreed	43	54.6	-11.6	- 134.56	-2.5
Disagreed	49	54.6	-5.6	-31.36	-0.6
Undecided	18	54.6	-36.6	-1,339.56	-24.5
Total	273	273			**14.25**

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if x^2 call < x^2 tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if x^2 Cal >x^2 tab.

Decision Rule

From the computation above it is seen that x^2 Cal. is greater than x^2 Tab (14.25 > 5.991) the null Hypothesis (H0) is therefore rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Hi) is accepted which state that work-life balance have significant influence on employee motivation and retention within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the statistical tests conducted on the study reveal that both recognition and awards, as well as work-life balance, have significant impacts on employee performance, motivation, and retention within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission.

This suggests that when employees feel recognized and rewarded for their efforts, their performance improves, which is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the motivating role of recognition. These results align with the empirical review by Sattar et al. (2021), which emphasized the importance of a collaborative work environment in boosting employee motivation and performance through shared knowledge and teamwork. Additionally, findings by Gupta and Kumar (2020) indicate that recognition and awards contribute to a sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction, which further enhances performance.

Secondly, for work-life balance, the computed chi-square value (x^2 Cal = 14.25) also exceeds the critical value (x^2 Tab = 5.991), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This finding indicates that a healthy work-life balance significantly influences employee motivation and retention. Employees who can balance their personal and professional lives are more likely to remain motivated, perform well, and stay with the organization, thus enhancing retention rates. Furthermore, these results align (Kaur & Sharma, 2021) whose study revealed that work-life balance was identified as a key motivator in improving employee satisfaction and productivity

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant roles of recognition and awards, as well as work-life balance, in enhancing employee performance and retention within the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission. Recognition and awards serve as powerful motivators, fostering a sense of appreciation and value among employees. When employees are recognized for their contributions, they are more likely to exhibit improved performance and increased commitment to their roles. Similarly, a favorable work-life balance is crucial for maintaining employee well-being. When employees can effectively manage their personal and professional lives, they experience lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, and are more likely to remain

with the organization. This balance enhances both motivation and retention by promoting a supportive work environment. Together, these factors contribute to a more productive, satisfied, and loyal workforce, ultimately driving organizational success and reducing turnover within the commission.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following two recommendations are made:

i. Given that recognition and awards have a significant impact on employee performance, the Plateau State Local Government Service Commission should implement a more structured and frequent recognition program to boost employee morale and productivity. This could involve establishing clear criteria for awards and offering both monetary and non-monetary rewards.
ii. Since work-life balance significantly influences employee motivation and retention, the Commission should introduce flexible work policies, such as remote work options or flexible hours, to help employees balance personal and professional responsibilities. This would likely improve job satisfaction and overall retention within the organization.

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ELECTORAL PROCESS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC, 1999-2023.

By

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Abstract
The main thrust of this paper is to interrogate the historical trajectory of the electoral process and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic between 1999 and 2023. The paper argues that despite the various general elections that had been conducted during the Fourth Republic in Nigeria has been characterized by violence, democracy has successfully consolidated in Nigeria within this period of study. The methodology of research adopted in this paper is historical and qualitative, utilizing materials from secondary sources of data collection. It explains that the conduct of successive elections during the first twenty-four years of the birth of the Fourth Republic witnessed major transformations, most especially with respect to the 2015, 2019, and 2023 General Elections, which helped to minimize the high rate of electoral violence, irregularities, fraud and malpractices in the country. This development was facilitated by the introduction of new electoral reforms as well as the adoption of technology in the electoral process by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The paper, therefore, submits that the survival and consolidation of Nigeria's growing democracy hinged on strict adherence to the ideals and principles of the electoral process by all major stakeholders (namely the electoral umpire, politicians, political parties, media, the electorate, and security agencies). This paper provides some recommendations that can be utilized to strengthen Nigeria's growing democracy to sustain and strengthen its democratic consolidation
Keywords: Democratization, Democratic Consolidation, Election, Electoral Process, Fourth Republic.

Introduction

The democratic process in countries like the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, etc. serves as the foundation for governance in many advanced democracies worldwide. It ensures that the power to make decisions is vested in the people, either directly or through elected representatives. While each democracy may adapt its principles according to its cultural, historical, and political context, several tenets are commonly upheld across advanced democratic systems. These principles ensure the protection of individual rights, fair representation, and accountability of the government.

Thus, when political actors recognize the validity of democracy and no one attempts to operate outside of democratic institutions for both normative and self-interested motives, a democracy becomes consolidated, that is, it is anticipated to last. In other words, democracy is strengthened when it is, to borrow a familiar expression of Jessica Elgot, "the only game in

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town." This concept of consolidation, which is based on the attitudes and actions of political actors, is both logical and problematic. On the other hand, when democracy becomes institutionalized, routine, and normalized, acting against or outside of democratic standards is both unattractive and harmful for politicians and other political players.

Democracy, a political system and model of organizing society, is assessed based on the pattern of recruitment of political leadership. On the other hand, political leadership, as a dependent of democracy, is assessed on the quality of governance it produces. According to Posner and Young (2007), institutionalized rule is increasingly becoming relevant in regulating the behaviors of political actors across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Historically, Democracy is not a new form of government in Africa. It was a system of government that existed in the pre-colonial period, especially in non-centralized societies such as Iteso, Ibo, Chagga, and Masai. However, the form of democracy that was introduced into Africa by the Europeans in the colonial period was a representative democracy. With the attainment of political independence, efforts were made towards consolidating the inherited democratic form of government by the African political leaders. Rather than consolidating or deepening the inherited political form of government, the majority of African states lost it due to lack of adherence to democratic procedure, process, and principles, which has manifested in different forms such as political intolerance, ethnic jingoism, and electoral irregularities, amongst others. The result and effect of this development was the emergence of military interference in the politics of African states between the 1960s and 1980s. The majority of African states have been under successive military regimes from one time to the other like Nigeria (1966), Ghana (1966), Togo (1963), Burkina Faso (1966), Congo (1963) etc. However, by the 1990s, which was generally referred to as the third wave of democracy by S Huntington (1991), there was the gradual restoration of democratic governance in some African states such as Nigeria and Ghana. This trend continued with the birth of the new millennium in 2000.

Since the birth of the new millennium, several African states have taken pragmatic steps towards the consolidation of their growing and fragile democracy. This could be seen in the regular and periodic conduct of both legislative/parliamentary and presidential elections. Notable among the countries are Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Nigeria, Rwanda, and so on. In Ghana, for example, there has been evidence of successful and periodic general elections leading to the transition from one political party to another. In other words, the transfer of democratic government was not confined to intra-party affairs but inter-party affairs, which existed between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The role of the Electoral Commission of Ghana as well as the electoral process toward the consolidation of democracy in the country cannot be overemphasized.

Although there were cases of electoral disputes in some African countries such as the Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Senegal amongst others, which threatened democratic stability, the electoral commissions in some of these countries maintained their neutrality in the electoral process. It is against this background that this study interrogates the Electoral process and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria in the fourth republic between 1999 and 2023. During this period, one major electoral commission; Independent National Electoral Commission was set up by General Abdusalam Abubakar in 1998. The success and failures of the Electoral Commission and the adherence to the electoral process as regards the consolidation of democracy in the country during this period will be examined critically.

Clarification of Key Concepts

Election

This facilitates and shapes democracy. Democracy is regarded as the best form of government because its ideology promotes people's will. The people have a political right to decide who should govern them in a free and fair conduct called an 'election'. Therefore, elections constitute an essential principle in liberal democracy. Election in a democracy is very important because it is through which the expression of the people is shown via legitimacy and leadership succession. According to Dickerson, M.et al 1990) election is defined as a post-mortem that investigates the record of officeholders whose actual performance may have little to do with promises made when they were previously elected. This is a way of censuring, reposting functions in a ruler that is popularly accepted, and ejecting an unpopular leader. This method shuns mutiny and chaos in a system hence it reflects a peaceful hand-over from one administration to the other so long as the process is devoid of election rigging.

Electoral Process

The electoral process is the method through which a country's citizens choose their leaders and representatives in government. It encompasses a range of activities from voter registration to candidate nomination to campaign to casting ballots, to the counting and certification of results, and finally to court litigations. The process varies significantly between countries and even within different jurisdictions of a country. Also, Electoral process according to Elekwa (2008), relates to the entire cycle ranging from the provision of voter education to the dissolution of the National Assembly.

Democratic Consolidation

Even though there is no accepted definition or concept of democratic consolidation, it is safe to conclude that only democracies may consolidate themselves. When "a complex system of institutions, rules, and patterned incentives and disincentives has become the only game in town," according to Linz and Stepan (1996), democracy is said to have undergone consolidation. Similarly, Przeworski asserts that democracy is consolidated when a specific system of institutions becomes the only option available under a given set of political and economic circumstances. In other words, when no one can imagine acting outside of democratic institution and when losers only want to try again within the same institutions under which they have just lost, democracy is solidified.

The authors of "Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation" Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) identify three basic prerequisites for democratic consolidation. First, they note that there must be an existing state structure because neither order nor democracy has any chance of developing in the absence of a state. The second prerequisite is the conclusion of the process leading to a genuinely democratic state. A democratic transition is complete when there is sufficient agreement on political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government is directly elected by the people in a free and fair election when this government de facto has the power to create new policies, and when the executive, legislative, and judicial power created by the new democracy do not need to share power with other. The necessity for elites who are dedicated to leading democratically and constitutionally is the third requirement.

From the above perspective, in the study, democratic consolidation is seen as the ability of an electoral body to conduct free, fair, credible, and successive elections in which civilian-to-civilian transition occurred without military welcome back. Nigeria has experimented with four major republics. Among these republics, it is only in the Fourth Republic that the country witnessed successive civilian-to-civilian (both inter and intraparty) transitions which is evidence of democratic consolidation.

Literature Review

The relationship between the electoral process and democratic consolidation is a critical theme in political science, particularly in emerging democracies like Nigeria. Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which began in 1999, has been shaped by its electoral processes and the challenges inherent in its path toward democratic consolidation. This review explores existing literature on the subject, electoral practices, and the role of institutional reforms, civil society, and external influences in Nigeria's democratic journey.

For Linz and Stepan (1996), their multidimensional approach to democratic consolidation stresses the need for effective political institutions, a functioning civil society, a rule-based economy, and civilian control over the military. Scholars such as Omotola (2010) have used this model to evaluate Nigeria's progress, suggesting that although significant strides have been made, weaknesses in institutions and endemic corruption continue to challenge consolidation.

Nigeria's electoral management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has been pivotal in managing the electoral process since 1999. Studies like those by Suberu (2007) and Nwangwu (2015) focus on the role of INEC in election organization and the reforms undertaken over the years, including biometric voter registration and the introduction of electronic transmission of results, aimed at enhancing credibility and reducing fraud.

The works of scholars like Collier (2009) and Onapajo (2014) examine the intersection of electoral violence and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Post-election violence in 2007, 2011, and 2019 have been extensively analyzed for their destabilizing effects on Nigeria's political landscape. Onapajo's research particularly emphasizes how the threat or reality of violence undermines the legitimacy of elections and hinders democratic deepening.

Political scientists like Omilusi (2016) discuss the phenomenon of political defections as a major issue undermining the credibility of the party system. The frequent movement of politicians between parties, driven by personal ambition rather than policy or ideology, is seen as a major obstacle to the entrenchment of democratic norms.

Ebirim (2020) also notes the establishment of special electoral tribunals to handle election-related cases, which have had a mixed record. While tribunals have invalidated fraudulent elections in some cases, their slow pace and susceptibility to external influence have often frustrated the electorate's faith in the democratic process.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have played a crucial role in election monitoring and advocating for electoral reforms. Egwu (2016) notes that CSOs have been instrumental in voter education, election observation, and post-election audits. However, their effectiveness has sometimes been curtailed by funding challenges and political interference.

Studies by Adebayo (2020) examine the introduction of technological innovations like biometric voter accreditation and electronic result transmission (BVAS). These reforms, often supported by foreign donors, have improved the transparency of elections but have been met with resistance from political elites in some cases.

ELECTORAL PROCESS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

The electoral process is a critical pillar of democracy, serving as a mechanism through which citizens choose their representatives and leaders. In Nigeria, the Fourth Republic, which began in 1999, marked a return to democratic rule after several years of military dictatorship. Since then, Nigeria has conducted several General Elections that have shaped the nation's

political landscape. This section seeks to critically examine the electoral process and its role in democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, considering both progress and challenges.

Nigeria's journey to the Fourth Republic came after a prolonged period of military rule, political instability, and flawed democratic experiments. The transition to democracy in 1999 was significant, as it signaled the end of decades of military dominance in the country's governance. The first democratic election in the Fourth Republic saw the emergence of President Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military leader turned civilian president, under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This transition was seen as a beacon of hope for Democratic Consolidation, but it also came with deep-rooted challenges in the electoral process like election rigging, electoral violence, imposition of candidates, etc.

- **Electoral Process in the Fourth Republic**

The electoral process in Nigeria is managed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), a body responsible for conducting free and fair elections. The key components of the electoral process in Nigeria include:

1. **Voter Registration:** Voter registration is a critical aspect of the electoral process. Since 1999, INEC has conducted periodic Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercises to ensure citizens of voting age are enrolled. However, issues such as disenfranchisement, voter apathy, and logistical challenges have plagued voter registration processes.
2. **Political Parties and Candidate Nomination:** Nigeria operates a multi-party system, though two major political parties, the PDP and the All Progressives Congress (APC), have dominated the political landscape. The nomination of candidates within these parties has often been fraught with internal disputes, lack of transparency, and imposition of candidates, leading to a lack of internal party democracy.
3. **Election Campaigns:** Campaign periods in Nigeria are characterized by intense political activity. However, they have also been marred by violence, ethnic and religious polarization, hate speech, and the misuse of state resources. While there are regulations aimed at ensuring peaceful campaigns, enforcement remains weak.
4. **Election Day Conduct:** Election Day activities include voting, sorting, counting, and announcement of results. Despite INEC's efforts to ensure credible elections, several issues, such as late arrival of materials, malfunctioning of voting equipment, voter intimidation, and violence, have continued to undermine the credibility of the process.

Election Dispute Resolution: The judiciary plays a significant role in resolving electoral disputes. Nigeria has seen a significant number of post-election petitions, some of which have led to the annulment of election results (inconclusive election). While the judiciary has been praised for its role in upholding the rule of law, concerns over the politicization of the courts remain.

Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

While Nigeria has maintained a semblance of democratic governance since 1999, the electoral process has faced several challenges that threaten democratic consolidation:

1. **Electoral Violence:** Violence before, during, and after elections has remained a recurring challenge. This has created an atmosphere of fear, preventing citizens from

fully participating in the democratic process, hence leading to Political Apathy. Political thuggery, ballot snatching, and attacks on electoral officials are common.

2. **Corruption and Vote Buying:** The Nigerian electoral process is often compromised by corruption, with politicians using financial inducements to sway voters. Vote buying has become an entrenched practice, weakening the integrity of elections and undermining the will of the people leading to misrepresentation sometimes. Vote buying can be seen evidently in the Governorship elections in Ekiti in 2018, and 2022, the Governorship election in Osun in 2022.
3. **Ethnic and Religious Divisions:** Nigeria's political landscape is deeply fragmented along ethnic and religious lines, with political elites often exploiting these divisions for electoral gain. This has contributed to the politicization of identity and a lack of national cohesion. This scenario was so evident in the just concluded 2023 General Elections, especially the presidential election. In the 2023 presidential elections, the three leading candidates from the three major political parties were propelled the ethnic sentiments; the All Progressive Congress was more of a Westerner agenda, the People's Democratic Party was more of the Northern agenda while the Labor Party supported the Easterners agenda.
4. **INEC's Operational Challenges:** INEC has faced numerous challenges, ranging from logistical issues, lack of funding, inadequate personnel training, breakdown of servers, malfunction of BVAS in some Polling Units, and interference by political actors. These challenges have led to the disenfranchisement of voters and questions about the credibility of elections in some polling units.
5. **Judiciary and Electoral Integrity:** While the judiciary plays a role in electoral dispute resolution, concerns have been raised over judicial independence and impartiality. Political interference in the judicial process, particularly in cases involving high-profile political figures, has eroded public confidence in the institution.
6. **Low Voter Turnout and Apathy:** A significant challenge in Nigeria's electoral process is voter apathy. Over time, the electorate has grown disillusioned with the process, largely due to a lack of trust in political actors and the electoral management body. Voter turnout has declined in subsequent elections, raising concerns about the health of democracy.

- **<u>Progress and Prospects for Democratic Consolidation</u>**

Despite the challenges, there have been notable strides toward maintaining and sustaining democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic:

1. **Electoral Reforms:** Successive governments have introduced reforms aimed at improving the electoral process. The Electoral Act (amended several times) with the latest amendment in 2022 has strengthened the legal framework for elections, particularly in areas such as campaign financing, the use of technology, and the autonomy of INEC.
2. **Introduction of Technology:** The use of technology, such as the INEC Voter Enrolment Device (IVED) during voter registration and the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) against the forthcoming 2023 General Election in Nigeria, has helped mitigate some challenges in the electoral process. While challenges remain, technology has been crucial in reducing fraud and enhancing transparency.
3. **Emergence of Opposition Parties:** Nigeria's Fourth Republic has witnessed the rise of opposition parties, with the APC unseating the PDP in the 2015 presidential election.

Notably, in 2015 General Elections marked the first time an incumbent president was defeated, signaling a milestone in Nigeria's democratic development and the importance of competitive elections. Also, The Labor Party became the surprise package in the 2023 General Election.

4. **Civil Society and Electoral Observation:** Civil society organizations have played a pivotal role in electoral observation, advocacy, and voter education. Their efforts have contributed to increased transparency and accountability in the electoral process.

Conclusion

The electoral process in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been instrumental in the country's democratic consolidation. While significant progress has been made, persistent challenges such as electoral violence, corruption, and logistical issues continue to undermine the credibility of elections. Sustained efforts towards electoral reforms, strengthening democratic institutions, and promoting political participation are essential for the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. The journey towards a fully consolidated democracy is ongoing, requiring the collective efforts of the government, civil society, citizens, relevant stakeholders, and the international community

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OVERVIEW OF CROSS-CONTINENT RISING POPULISM AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TWO SELECTED AFRICAN STATES

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Abstract
This study examines the implications of rising populism cross-continent, especially in Europe and America on two selected African states, Nigeria and Kenya. Populism, marked with distinct characteristics such as anti-elitist rhetoric and a focus on the people has significant traction globally, far beyond its traditional Western strongholds. The research explores how these global populist trends affect Nigeria and Kenya.The study employs a qualitative approach, relying on secondary data sources to analyze such effects of populism on democratic institutions, economic policies, foreign policy and international relations of Nigeria and Kenya. Findings indicate that populism in Nigeria and Kenya has both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, it mobilized significant portions of the population, attracting attention to corruption, economic inequality, and political disenfranchisement. On the other hand, it has contributed to increased political polarization, weakened democratic institutions, and challenged traditional governance structures. The research highlights the complexity of populism as a political phenomenon. It can serve as a catalyst for reforms, but poses risks to the stability of emerging democracies. The study further identifies the need for effectively managing the influence of populism. Overall, study broadens discourse on populism by providing insights into local manifestations, particularly in the African context. The findings offer valuable implications for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners interested in understanding and navigating the complex dynamics of populism in Nigeria, Kenya, and beyond.

Keywords: Populism, Nigeria, Kenya, Democracy, Governance, International Relations

Introduction

Somehow unexpectedly, populism has become a significant political force across Europe and America in recent years. Consequently, populism comes and trends with many questions profusely begging answers: Is populism a new form of democracy? Is populism a replacement for democracy? Is populism just a populism a complement or an antagonist of democracy? Is populism some subtle extremism? More importantly, is it a threat to global polity and politics, a mere placebo, or an antidote to global political crisis? Leaders and movements advocating populist ideologies have gained sudden recognition and great following, as they emphasise nationalism, zero-globalization, and scepticism toward traditional political institutions. Populism attracts more and more scholarship, including in Africa, and in Nigeria, specifically, as populism contacts old and new states, existing democracies and emerging ones, small and large states, developed and underdeveloped countries alike. This surge and upsurge in populism is noticeably driven by multifarious factors where it exists across the globe, of which economic inequality, migration crises, and dissatisfaction with existing political structures are most prominent (Firi, Febriani, &Qurroti, 2023). This paper seeks to answer some of the not-yet-fully-answered questions concerning populism in relation to the international system. In particular, what populism does to, for or against Nigeria's polity, politics, and democracy, as well as those of Kenya is the primary concern of this paper.

The paper ultimately wants to look at the outcomes of populism contacting structures in the named countries. Does it harm or promote people and relevant structures in these independent

states? Understanding the implications of this phenomenon on African states is crucial, particularly in the context of governance, international relations, and development. Rooted in this background, this study seeks to explore how the rise of populism in Europe and America has influenced, affected or infected Nigeria and Kenya. It will examine the ways in which these African states are navigating the shifting geopolitical landscape, focusing on the implications for governance, economic policy, and international relations.

Nigeria in West Africa, and Kenya in East, both prominent in their respective regions, have faced significant political, economic, and social challenges in recent years that are examined in this paper. These challenges are compounded by the influence of external factors, including the changing dynamics of global politics.

Statement of the Problem

While much scholarlyattention has been given to the rise of populism in the West, there is a noticeable gap in cognate literature regarding how this phenomenon manifests in African states like Nigeria and Kenya. Precisely, the gap this work fills is the evaluation of the nature of populism within these countries, particularly in the context of their most recent political history. The paper examines how populist Nigeria and Kenya are, while addressing this gap by analysing the extent to which populist rhetoric and policies have influenced the political trajectories of both countries. It will explore the nature of populism in these states, the factors driving its rise, and the potential consequences for their political and economic futures. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to the broader discourse on populism, offering insights into how this global trend is playing out in the African context.

In Nigeria, the political landscape has been marked by a growing disconnect between the government and the populace. Similarly, Kenya has witnessed a rise in political movements that echo populist sentiments, particularly around issues of corruption, electoral integrity, and ethnic representation. The paper fills the gap of limited understanding of these developments.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at providing incisive review, and specific assessment of the subject matter, using two major objectives and corresponding research questions, as follows.

1. Examine the possibility of populism promoting or impeding democracy and its tenets in Africa.
2. Identify and rationally analyse notable effects, both positive and negative, of populism on Africa; that is, examine the aftermath of populism on African politics, especially Nigeria and Kenya.

Research Questions

1. How much possibility of populism exists at promoting democracy and its tenets in the two selected African states?
2. What is the degree of effect or damage populism has done on African politics?

Scope of the Paper

The study focuses on Nigeria and Kenya on account of their significant geopolitical roles within Africa and their distinct political histories that provide valuable insights into the manifestation of populism on the continent. Furthermore, the study is confined largely to the last twenty years, a period that marks the rising visibility of populist ideologies, especially within the context of the blossoming era of globalisation. This time frame allows for a focused examination of how recent global political shifts have influenced domestic politics in Nigeria and Kenya, and how these states have responded to the challenges and opportunities presented by populism.

Methodology

The paper used secondary data sources, particular attention is given with a view to ensuring only cognate literature was researched and analysed to arrive at some valid and reliable outcomes, justifying the adoption of the research instruments. The research design adopted is descriptive and analytical, utilizing secondary data sources to explore the impact of rising populism in Europe and America on Nigeria and Kenya. This design is suitable as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of existing information, enabling a comprehensive examination of the research problem. The task involves a critical examination of these sources, using content analysis to identify patterns, trends, and correlations that shed light on the influence of populism in the selected African states.

Review of Literature

Description and Emergence of Populism

The term "populism" originates from the Latin word populus, meaning "people." Populism underlies the concerns, emotions and interests of the general populace, or so-called ordinary people, while it sets “the people" against "the elite," by constructing politics as a battle between "us" (the people) and "them" (the elite), (Firi et al., 2023).

It is a multifaceted phenomenon that mobilises the masses through charismatic leadership, simplistic rhetoric, and the narrative of representing the "voice of the people" against entrenched power structures. This dynamic is often exploited by populists, who rally support by exploiting and exploring grievances and fears for an advantage.

As noted by Lazar, populism frequently manifests as movements or leaders who depict a stark divide between a virtuous, unified populace and a corrupt, homogeneous elite (Institut Montaigne, 2021). Populists assert that the sovereignty of the people must be expressed through direct democracy, often positioning this as superior to liberal and representative democratic systems.

Within the social sciences, populism is often considered ideational, defined as an ideology that contrasts the morally good "people" with the corrupt "elite." The definition of "the people" varies across different populist movements, ranging from class-based, ethnic, or national identities. Populists generally portray elites - including political, economic, cultural, and media establishments - as a monolithic group that prioritizes its own interests, often at the expense of the broader population.

Populist movements are typically led by charismatic figures who present themselves as the true "voice of the people" (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). These leaders often blend populism with other ideologies, such as nationalism, liberalism, or socialism, leading to both left-wing and right-wing populism. Further, populists not only define who the "real people" are but also exclude those who do not conform to their narrative, regardless of nationality or citizenship (Mueller, 2019).

Some Basic Distinguishing Features of Populism

First of, populism, as a political approach, is characterised by several distinct features that marks it out from other political ideologies. These features often manifest across various populist movements worldwide, despite differences in context and leadership styles. Some of such points are highlighted and briefly discussed hereunder (Karlson, 2024).

Secondly, there is simplification of the Society: Populism often advances a dual-angular perspective and simplistic understanding of society, by categorizing it into two opposing groups: "the people" and "the elite." This deliberate dichotomy promotes populist rhetoric, such that it portrays the populace as united, while portraying the elite as otherwise, disconnected and corrupt. The simplicity of this division allows populists to appeal to a broad base by compounding socioeconomic issues between both groups.

It promotes and thrives on opposition to the elites in society: Following the divisive line already established, criticism of the elite is fundamental to a populist discourse, as populists accuse elites, whether they are politicians, business leaders, or intellectuals, of being out of touch with ordinary people and serving their interests at the expense of the public. This antagonism helps populists mobilise support against the stigmatised public enemy.

Furthermore, populism lays claims to being the custodian to the truth about the will of the People: Populists assert that they have a unique ability to understand and articulate the true will of the people, thus, positioning them as the only legitimate representatives of the populace, disregarding opposition as being incapable of representation, in order to legitimise their leadership and policies.

Stemming from the last-mentioned point, populism underlines the centrality of the people in the society: In populist ideology, the people, reflecting the will of the majority, are portrayed as the rightful holders of power and sovereignty. This majoritarian approach can lead to tensions within democratic systems, where pluralism and institutional safeguards are valued.

Further, it perceives the people as a homogeneous entity: Populists often view the people as a monolithic group with shared interests and values, with no regards for internal differences such as class, ethnicity, or ideology, which promotes a strong sense of collective identity among supporters, notwithstanding the disadvantages of marginalization of minority groups and the suppression of dissent.

It usually declares a serious crisis as tool or anchor of its own emergence: Populism, like populists, often declares that society is facing an existential crisis, which only populists can resolve. This sense of urgency is used to justify radical measures and to rally support for their cause, by creating a narrative of imminent danger.

It deploys anti-establishment rhetoric or discourse to gain sympathy of the people targetted: Populists frequently employ anti-establishment rhetoric, positioning themselves as outsiders challenging the status quo. This discourse appeals to voters who feel disillusioned with traditional political parties and institutions, and it helps to cultivate an image of authenticity and rebellion against a corrupt system.

It is further characterised by Anti-Intellectualism: Anti-intellectualism is another common feature of populism, where populists reject expert opinion and complex analysis in favour of simple, emotive appeals. This stance resonates with segments of the population that feel alienated or dismissed by intellectual elites, and it reinforces the populist narrative of the elite being out of touch with the realities faced by ordinary people.

In all these fundamental features are instrumentalised by appealing to the emotions, fears, and aspirations of the populace.

A Cursory Look at Populism across Countries

Populism, though often viewed as a modern phenomenon, has deep historical roots stretching back to ancient civilizations (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2024). The seeds of populist sentiment can be traced to leaders like Pericles in Athens and Julius Caesar in Rome, who sought to align themselves with the broader populace rather than just the elite. These early instances, however, did not fully develop into a distinct populist ideology as we understand it today. Different countries have diverse populism experiences as follows.

Ancient Rome

Beyond the United States, the roots of populism can be identified in various historical contexts. In ancient Rome, the Gracchi brothers -- Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus -- advocated for land reforms to address economic inequality and empower the common people (U.S. Department of

State, 2024). Their populist rhetoric and policies were aimed at challenging the entrenched power of the Roman elite, although their efforts ultimately led to their downfall.

The United States of America

The first formally recognised populist movements emerged in the late 19th century. In the United States, the Populist Party -- also known as the People's Party -- was established in 1892 in response to the economic and social crises affecting farmers and labourers, particularly during the Great Depression· (Northern Illinois University, 2016). The party's populists demanded greater governmental control over the economy, using the creation of a national bank and the regulation of rail-roads, alongside political reforms like the direct election of U.S. Senators and the establishment of a graduated income tax. The Populist Party's rhetoric often framed politics as a struggle between the "people" and the "powerful," positioning the populists as the defenders of the common man against the corrupt and privileged elite (Hawkins & Kaltwasser, 2017). In the 19th century, Andrew Jackson's presidency in the United States reflected a populist approach, with policies, such as the expansion of suffrage and opposition to banks and corporations. The goal was to dismantle the influence of political elites and promote the interests of ordinary citizens (U.S. Department of State, 2024).

Argentina

In Latin America, Juan Perón's rise to power in Argentina during the mid-20th century marked a significant chapter in the history of populism (McGann, 2024). Perón's movement, which combined elements of nationalism, authoritarianism, and welfare-state policies, resonated with the working class and rural poor while challenging the traditional power structures of the Argentine elite. Perón's populism was characterized by a strong, charismatic leadership style and a direct appeal to the masses, which became a model for subsequent populist leaders in the region.

Spain: The emergence of Vox in Spain adequately represented growing influence of populism within democratic processes. Vox's roots lie in a faction of disillusioned members of the Popular Party (PP), driven by dissatisfaction with the leadership of Mariano Rajoy (Barrio et al., 2021). By positioning itself as the "voice" of conservative voters who felt overlooked by mainstream parties, Vox effectively tapped into this sentiment.

Vox's political agenda, emphasises traditional values, economic conservatism, and a strong Spanish identity, and showcases how populist parties can shift the political discourse to the right, particularly by compelling the PP to adopt more hard-line stances on moral, fiscal, and national identity issues.

Germany: In Germany, AfD was founded by former Christian Democratic Union (CDU) members. The populist party AfDcapitalised on growing dissatisfaction with Germany's political establishment, particularly on issues such as immigration and national sovereignty. The AfD's success illustrates the principle of political pluralism, offering a platform for those disillusioned with mainstream politics, exemplified by the party's ability to secure 12.6% of the vote in the 2017 elections, resulting in representation in the Bundestag, is a testament to its appeal among voters who feel alienated by traditional political parties (Vanguard Think Tank, 2014).

Portugal: Chega's, led by André Ventura, emerged in Portuguese politics, and exemplified populism capacity to disrupt established political norms. Ventura, a former member of the

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Social Democratic Party (PSD), leveraged populist rhetoric to gain traction among voters who felt disconnected from mainstream politics (ECPS, 2024).

Chega's focus on issues such as immigration and national security resonated with segments of the population who perceived the political elite as indifferent to their concerns. Chega's success in rapidly gaining parliamentary representation and increasing its influence in subsequent elections partly stemmed from its appeal to themes of national identity and anti-establishment sentiment.

France: Under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen and later his daughter Marine Le Pen, the Rassemblement National (RN), formerly called the Front National, was formed, and provided a compelling case of populism's enduring appeal. The party has consistently pushed a populist agenda centred on nationalism, anti-immigration policies, and protectionism (Stockemer &Barisione, 2016). The success of Rassemblement National (RN) in the 2002 presidential elections, marked a significant shift in French politics. Jean-Marie Le Pen advanced to the second round, signalling the growing resonance of far-right populism. This strategy has solidified RN's place as a major player in French politics, reflecting the deepening of populist currents in Europe.

Greece: Greek Solution was founded in 2016. It tapped into nationalist sentiments, particularly opposition to the Prespa Agreement, to build a strong electoral base in Northern Greece. The party's platform, which emphasises national sovereignty and critiques of the political establishment, aligns closely with the broader agenda of populist radical right. Greek Solution's success in securing parliamentary representation and influencing political discourse highlights the resilience of populist movements, particularly in countries facing economic and social challenges.

Italy: Fratelli d'Italia (FdI), led by Giorgia Meloni, represents another significant example of populism's rise in Europe. Emerging from a split within Silvio Berlusconi's Popolo della Libertà, FdI initially struggled to gain traction. However, the party's fortunes changed with the 2019 European elections, where it secured 6.5% of the vote, signalling a shift in Italian politics. FdI's populist rhetoric, which focuses on national identity, sovereignty, and opposition to the political establishment, resonates with voters disillusioned by Italy's traditional parties. Meloni's leadership and the party's consistent opposition to mainstream coalitions have solidified FdI's position as a major force in Italian politics, reflecting broader trends of populist surges across Europe.

Sweden: The Sweden Democrats (SD) presents a unique case of populism within the democratic framework. It was founded in 1988 from the ethno-nationalist and white supremacist movement, and has evolved into a significant political force by appealing to voters dissatisfied with mainstream parties' handling of immigration and integration. SD's growth, from 3% in 2006 to 17.5% in 2018, highlights the effectiveness of its populist message. Despite attempts by establishment parties to isolate SD through a cordon sanitaire, the party's resilience and growing influence have forced a shift in Swedish politics. The collaboration between SD and other right-wing parties in passing a joint budget marks a significant moment, indicating the increasing impact of populism on governance in Sweden.

France:
In Europe, the rise of populist parties like France's National Rally, Italy's Lega Nord, and the United Kingdom's BREXIT campaign has not only redefined but reshaped the political landscape, challenging the foundations of liberal democracy (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017). Similarly, in the United States, the election of Donald Trump as president in 2016 marked a significant shift towards populist rhetoric, with his "America First" agenda resonating with large segments of the population who felt left behind by globalisation and economic change.

Contrasting Democracy and Populism
Both democracy and populism are rooted in the need to please the people. Democracy is a political system that centres on the empowerment of the populace. It operates on the fundamental principle that the authority to govern, shape policies, and enact laws resides with the people. Democracy is characterised by key elements such as popular sovereignty, political equality, civil liberties, and the rule of law (United Nations, 2015). **While popular sovereignty** promotes the notion of the people being the real source of authority, **political equality** guarantees equal opportunities to engage in the political process. Such sovereignty is seen in how citizens elect representatives to govern on their behalf, as practised in the US, whereas in Switzerland, referendums is used to allow direct citizen participation in decision-making. As an indication of political equality, elections are inclusive of all adults, in India, and in New Zealand, where citizens have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of their financial capacity. **Civil liberties** provide protection for individual inalienable rights, while **rule of law** is deployed to prevent abuses of power, by ensuring all persons regardless of status are subject to the law.

Populist movements may emerge when these concerns are ignored, or undersized. These movements often emerge when there is a perceived disconnect between the interests of the elite and the broader population. Populism, fundamentally, is a democratic impulse that highlights the grievances and needs of the populace that have been overlooked by established political institutions. It serves as a corrective force, urging political elites to address the concerns of the broader population. ….

Right-Wing and Left-Wing Populism
Populism in European countries manifests primarily through right-wing and left-wing ideologies. In both Western and Northern Europe, where right-wing is deeply rooted, it is the most prominent form of populism and basically characterized by nativism, which views "the people" from ethnic or cultural lens. The so-called 'virtuous natives' are believed to be threatened by immigration and its elitist proponents cum supporters. A great number of the right-wing movements trace their origins to post-fascist parties (Chatham House, 2021). Some of these parties or movements include France's the Rassemblement National (RN), formerly named the Front National, led by Jean-Marie and Marine Le Pen, Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ), Belgium's VlaamsBelang, the Freedom Party (PVV) in the Netherlands, Italy's Lega, and more recently, the Alternative for Germany (AfD). However, while these parties share a common ideology, their foreign policy positions have varied over time. During the 1980s, the RN and FPÖ supported the United States as part of their anti-communist stance during the Cold War, after the Cold War ended, these parties shifted to an anti-American position, viewing the U.S. as a global hegemon threatening their countries' economic, political, and cultural sovereignty. As a result of their new position, they opposed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisations and U.S.-led military interventions. This opposition to American power is somewhat similar to the left-wing populist stance, though right-wing populists generally frame

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their opposition within a narrowly defined national interest rather than the internationalism typical of the left.

Yet, the stance of right-wing populists across Europe is not uniform. For instance, in the 2000s, the Danish People's Party and the Dutch populist right both prioritized concerns about Islamic influence in Europe and therefore supported the U.S.-led "war on terror," whereas, Right-wing populism, which gained significant traction after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, typically emphasises nativism, nationalism, and conservative values. An anti-elitist stance combined with strong nationalist sentiments forms the core of right-wing populism, often resulting in exclusionary policies against immigrants and minority groups.

On the other hand, left-wing populism, contrasts sharply, as it adopts and absorbs traditional concerns such as class struggle, opposition to capitalist elites, and resistance to globalisation. Although both left and right wings have an anti-elitist stance in common, left-wing populism focuses on inclusive civic nationalism rather than ethnic nationalism. The struggle is primarily against economic elites rather than foreign populations, emphasising the need for social and economic reforms to address inequality. In Germany, left-wing populism emerged strongly after the unification of East and West Germany, where dissatisfaction with the unification process led to the rise of parties like Die Linke, representing the former East German left. For example, the RN in France maintained its anti-interventionist, anti-U.S., and anti-NATO stance, opposing Western intervention in Libya in 2011. Some right-wing populists in France and Austria also expressed support for Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, (which just collapsed in December of 2024, making him flee Syria for Russia, where Putin offered him asylum).

The election of Donald Trump as U.S. president further complicated the relationship between right-wing populists in Europe and the U.S. Trump was seen as an ideological ally by many, with leaders like Geert Wilders and Marine Le Pen hailing his victory as the start of a global "patriotic spring." Despite this, Trump's presidency presented a dilemma for far-right parties that had historically opposed American power, such as the RN. Following Trump's defeat in 2020, these parties may revert to their traditional anti-U.S. stance, while adopting Trump's rhetoric about elite hostility and election integrity issues.

Another critical aspect of right-wing populism in Europe is the close relationship many of these parties have developed with Russia, especially after 2010. For instance, the AfD in Germany has established strong ties with Russia, including cooperation agreements with Putin's United Russia party and engagement in pro-Russian policy positions, such as advocating for a new Reinsurance Treaty between Germany and Russia and opposing sanctions against Russia.

In summary, while right-wing populism in Europe is united by a shared 'nativist' ideology, its positions on foreign policy, particularly concerning the U.S. and Russia, are diverse and have evolved significantly over time.

In opposing American power, some left-wing populists in Europe, similar to some of the right-wing, have expressed sympathy towards Russia, perceiving it as a counterbalance to US influence. For instance, Die Linke in Germany advocates for a 'collective security system in Europe' that includes Russia, opposing German military deployments abroad and calling for Germany's withdrawal from NATO, which it argues has 'outlived' its purpose.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Questions 1: How much or well does populism promote democracy and its tenets in the two selected African states?

This rising populism in Western democracies has not only influenced domestic policies but also has far-reaching implications for global politics. The impact of populism extends beyond the borders of Europe and America, affecting diplomatic relations, trade policies, and international development aid.

Populism in Nigeria

From the most recent instance of populism to the remotest, Nigeria has experienced notable instances of populism in its politics in the last one decade.

On the positive side, populism has some historical capacity for activating and enhancing desired reforms in the polity. Even in the course of Nigeria's relatively stable democracy, the military interregnum masterminds appealed to populism sentiments to kick out civilian administration that they labelled 'corrupt, whether real or perceived notwithstanding. The December 31st 1983 coup in Nigeria, which terminated the Second Republic did cast the president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and his administration as being corrupt. The Buhari-Idiagbon military regime lived on the anti-corruption populism narrative and goodwill from the people until it was toppled by an insider, the Chief of Staff, Major-General Ibrahim Babangida.

Secondly, it is capable of breaking entrenched or institutionalised monopolies, thereby contributing to economic and institutional changes. Recently, populism challenged godfatherism, personality cultism, and the well-established political power of incumbency in Lagos state, Nigeria's most populous and economically viable state, in the 2023 presidential election, when the so-called 'third force', and a dark horse in that election, Labour Party beat the All Progressives Congress.

In some way, populism serves as a catalyst for addressing and redressing injustices, besides redistributing power as well as income. Further, populism promotes grassroots political engagement. Populism straightens democratic processes by bringing new `energy and perspectives, especially in moments of stagnation and/or dissatisfaction with traditional politics.

Research Question 2: What is the degree of effect or damage populism has on Nigeria and Kenya politics?

African states like Nigeria and Kenya, with their historical ties to the West, are particularly vulnerable to the shifts in foreign policy driven by populist governments.

Populism does not pose the same threat to democracy as extremism did in the early 20th century, and is doing now. However, it fundamentally challenges key institutions and values of liberal democracy, particularly minority rights, pluralism, and the separation of powers (The Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy, 2023).

Populism has considerably significant positive and negative effects on Nigerian and Kenyan politics, and polities.

It often drives increased political engagement and mobilisation; it breeds conflict and political instability, thus promoting polarisation of the polities; it deepens societal polarisation ultimately which undermines national cohesion and stability.

Populism weakens democratic institutions, such as the electoral umpire.

Practical populism disregards the rule of law by sometimes bypassing legal norms and processes to achieve set objectives, such as populist politician's (attempt at) extension of term in office.
Economic disruption is another consequence of populismwhich is capable of undermining investor's confidence. Populism, even if inadvertently prioritises short-term gains over long-term economic stability.
Considering tax as an extension of economic disadvantage, populism led togovernment's losing revenue, arising from tax policies, which is not economically viable or sustainable, and compelling national indebtedness. This is the experience with Kenyans' rejection of a proposed tax policy.
The effect of populism on governance and its accountability is also asserted from the study,in promoting politicization of anti-corruption efforts and undermine genuine reform, against or despite its noble goal of championing anti-corruption and accountability reforms.

Further, populism also poses significant risks, as it often undermines democratic norms by concentrating power in the hands of a single leader or movement, marginalising dissenting voices, and eroding institutional checks and balances. In Nigeria, the rise of populist figures like Peter Obi and Muhammadu Buhari highlights these dynamics.

Table 1: Effects of Populism on Democratic Processes in Nigeria

Populist Event/Movement	Year	Key Populist Strategy	Striking Events	Effects on Democratic Processes
#EndBadGovernance Protest	2024	Right to Protest	Protest-turned-crime in the North; peaceful in the South	System now tolerant of peaceful protest; law enforcement agent friendlier, central government became sympathetic with teenage suspects, granted amnesty
General Election	2023	Appeal to economic freedom, and security	Upset of two leading parties, especially in Lagos state and Abuja	Underdog and dark horse in politics had a fair chance
#ENDSARS	2020	Appeal to demography and rights protection	Peaceful initially, state-terrorism inflicted, extra-judicial killing, and state denial of such.	Dignifying and improvement in culture and act of legitimate protest
Gubernatorial Election	2015	Appeal to the people as genuine godfathers	Upset of deeply rooted godfatherism	Godfatherism was tamed, incumbency bent to adventurism

			in Nigerian politics	
Occupy Nigeria Movement	2012	Socioeconomic right to halt fuel subsidy	Peaceful; led by activities (now in government today) government compelled to comply	Organised mass protest improves domestic policy, central government arm-twisted, so will of the people prevailed., as Jonathan rescind decision to remove subsidy on petrol, PMS
General Election	2011	Appeal to poverty and grassroots neglect	Candidates without parental influence, with qualification in education won presidential election	Grassroots improvement, and importance of unknown factors in politics

Researcher's Compilation and Content Analysis, 2024

Populist Influence on Democratic Processes in Kenya

Populism in Kenya has also played a crucial role in shaping the country's political landscape and democratic processes. These notable instances of populism are represented in the table below.

Table 2: Notable Effects of Populism on Democratic Processes in Kenya

Populism Figure/Indications	**Year**	**Major Strategy Adopted**	**Immediate Outcome of Strategy**	**Effects on Democratic Processes**
Raila Odinga's campaign	2007	Mobilisation of ethnic groups; anti-corruption stance and **emphasis on electoral justice,**	Nine million votes (69.26% votes) garnered from huge voter turnout	Significant turnout among youths and ethnic communities resulted from ethnic mobilisation
	2013	**In 2013 and 2017 elections, Odinga focused on land reforms and socio-economic inequality, emphasising**	5.3 million votes representing 43.7% obtained	Increased engagement leading to constitutional reforms

		grassroots mobilization and public accountability.		
	2017		15.6 million votes , that is, 78.91% from remarkable voter turnout	High turnout in opposition strongholds showing huge regional political impact
Uhuru Kenyatta's campaign	2013	Appeal to unity	12.3 million votes, 86%	Coalition of ethnic groups which strengthened Kikuyu-Kalenjin relations and high turnout
	2017		40% of votes cast by electorates aged from 18-34 showing improved youth engagement	Ethnic Coalition and Consolidation of political base and high voter turnout resulted
William Ruto's campaign	2022	Dignifying decent labour using 'Hustler nation' narrative	65.4% Voter turnout, 14.2 million votes in number	Increasing youth involvement producing 7 million new entrants
			7.1 million votes 50.49%	AShift of focus to class-based politics
Tax reform protests	2024	Opposition to tax hikes, and soliciting economic justice	Increasing rights demand with thousands participating in protest nationwide; 97 riots recorded	Government was forced to respond with policy concessions, besides increasing protests and violence
'Maandamano' protests	2023	Electoral justice	Extensive international attention attracted	Widespread protest in major cities and significant youth involvement
Constitutional referendum	2010	Push for constitutional reform	12.7 million votes (71.15% turnout)	Referendum result: 67% in favor of new constitution
Saba Saba movement	1990	**Populist-driven** pro-democracy protests	Large-scale mobilization leading to political liberalization or	Democratic gains: Introduction of multi-party politics

			reform, advocating multi-party democracy and political	
Anti-tax protests (2024)	June-July	Anti-tax bill, demands for broader change	Demonstrations spread in 43 of 47 counties; 28% increase in violence	Policy revisions, cabinet reshuffle,
Violence and repression	June-July	Violent responses to protests	Casualties: 13 killed, 120 injured on June 25; riots: 97 incidents	Impact:Increased scrutiny on government response and allegations of human rights abuses

Researcher's Compilation and Content Analysis, 2024

Summary of Research Findings

The study revealed that the rise of populism in Europe and America has significantly influenced political dynamics in Nigeria and Kenya. The political landscape in these African states has experienced increased polarisation and challenges to democratic norms, as populist rhetoric and strategies have been adopted by various political movements. Populism, while effective in mobilising large segments of the population and addressing issues such as corruption and economic inequality, has also contributed to political instability and the weakening of democratic institutions in both countries.

Additionally, the research highlighted how the global populist wave has impacted the foreign policies of Nigeria and Kenya. There has been a noticeable shift towards more assertive and nationalist foreign policies, influenced by the populist movements in Western countries. This shift has affected Nigeria's and Kenya's interactions with Western nations, particularly in terms of trade and international aid. The economic consequences of populism are also evident, as populist leaders often prioritize national interests over global cooperation, which can have implications for the economies of Nigeria and Kenya. Overall, these findings underscore the complex and multifaceted impact of global populism on African states, particularly in the realms of governance, political stability, and international relations.

Recommendations

Policymakers in Nigeria and Kenya should strengthen democratic institutions in order to manage the influence of populism. This includes ensuring judicial independence, safeguarding electoral processes, and promoting transparency.

There is need to promote civic education which is crucial to helping citizens understand both the positive and negative aspects of populism, in order to critically engage with populist movements.

Further, there is need for the governments to focus on reducing economic inequalities and creating opportunities for economic growth, as populism often thrives on economic discontent, so addressing these root causes is germane to curtail it.

In addition, fostering inclusive and open dialogue between political groups, including populist movements, can lead to more inclusive policy making.

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ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMESON WOMEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
The paper assessed the effect of economic empowerment programmes on women in rural communitieswithinthestudyarea. It explored the effect of economic empowerment programmeson women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The study revealed that economicempowermenthasaneffectonwomeninrural communities of Osun State, Nigeria (chi-square (X^2) table at 0.05 or 5% level of significance is 0.816.). The paper highlighted some recommendations and concluded that one of the most important steps in promoting inclusive and sustainable development in Osun State, particularly in economic development is the empowerment of women, especially in rural areas.

Keywords: Women, Economic Empowerment, Rural Development, Osun State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Women's empowerment is a key objective in development efforts. The term women empowerment was coined by the third-world feminist and women organization in 1970 to establish a framework for women's empowerment and advance the struggle for social justice and gender equality by transforming social, political, and economic institutions on a global level as well as national level (Huis, Hansen, Otten, and Lensink, 2017). The notion that women can contribute to socio-economic growth in society facilitates the need to empower women. Women encounter an array of barriers in society that undermine them, women are constrained by their reproductive obligations as well as cultural standards, principles, and convictions that society uses to distinguish between women and men (Lawless, Cohen, McDougall, Orirana, Siota& Doyle, 2019).

Empowering women is a prerequisite for ensuring a better society in Nigeria, this is a result of the crucial role that women play in sustainable development. Igbolekwu, Arusukwu, Nwogu, Rasak, Asamu, &Osueke (2021) asserts that the absence of gender equality in Nigeria has resulted in the marginalisation of women's contributions to the development process. Nigerian society suffers when women are denied the opportunity to grow up and become responsible members of society (Badejo, 2013). There have been several efforts to empower women. These efforts are initiated by the government and non-governmental actors to improve the status of women in the country. These efforts include providing women access to education, encouraging women to participate in economic activities, motivating women to get involved in politics, and examining legislation on the roles of women in economic development (Okeke, 2015).

In Nigeria, women population constitute almost half of the entire country's population. In 2023, the female population was reported at 49.44 (Trading Economics, 2023). It is observable that these numerical advantages have not translated into equality in society. Women have enormous potential to create a new economic system, aiding the acceleration of social and

political advancement, and ultimately improving society (UN Women, 2023). In terms of involvement in economic activity, rural women outperform males, rural women are at a disadvantage because of the industry's persistent gender imbalance, which lowers their productivity (Agu, 2007). Challenges that hinder women's empowerment include low levels of education and income, poor economic conditions for Nigerian women, unequal access to education, limited access to land, lack of self-confidence among women, lack of data on women's ownership, control, and management of land, and men's perceptions of the importance of women's participation in development in Nigeria generally and Osun State in particular. This has made it challenging to identify the areas in which women need adequate support. This makes it more difficult to develop policies that would address the disadvantages that women face now and in the future (Food Policy Research Institute, 2014).

In pursuance of empowering women, Studies have identified various gender development-based interventions as a precondition for securing a better society in Nigeria. Although some economic empowerment initiatives such as micro-credit programmes, and skill training centers exist in Osun State, Nigeria, the impact of these initiatives on women's empowerment has not been adequately examined. Previous studies have highlighted the variations in how these women's empowerment and development programmes are outlined, the micro and macro levels are frequently outlined, but the intermediate levels particularly at the community level have received less empirical attention, hence this study on the impact of economic empowerment programs on women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaires, while secondary data were collected from the publication of relevant books, journals, and newspapers. A multistage sampling technique was employed for the study. In the first stage, Osun State was purposively selected because of the vast number of women's economic empowerment programmes in the state. At the second stage, all local governments in Osun State were grouped into three senatorial districts, namely; Osun East, Osun West, and Osun Central. In the third stage, Krejcie and Morgan's sample size table was used to obtain 384 respondents. In the fourth stage, proportionate sampling was used to administer the questionnaire to respondents. The distribution is as follows: Osun East: Ife South Local Government (Omi Fifun and Araromi) (121); Osun Central: Ifedayo (Okeila and Ora) (121); Osun West: Aiyedaade (Wakajaye and Ode Omu) (122). The validity of this instrument was affirmed by the researcher supervisors, experts, and other senior academic researchers in the area of behavioral sciences as well as tests and measurement.

Literature Review

Women Empowerment

Women's empowerment has gained momentum in the context of women's growth since the mid-1980s. Empowerment has historically been described by a variety of names, such as welfare, civic engagement, upliftment, and poverty alleviation. Empowerment is seen to be a solution for a variety of societal issues, including overpopulation, environmental degradation, and the poor status or condition of women (Adesanya, 2011). Empowerment is a tool for poverty eradication, low political participation, and improved literacy rate. The process of giving women the physical and mental abilities, strength, or skills they require to function effectively in their social environments is referred to as women's empowerment (Akomolafe, 2006). Women empowerment is an approach through which women who have traditionally been the most discriminated against attain gender equity,

The concept of women's empowerment emerged from the feminist movement, which advocated for women to be granted the freedom to direct their own lives and establish their own goals for what to do and how to accomplish the goals including activities that influence them (Okpoko, 2010). Hossain, (2015) posits that empowerment is not just a mental shift, it manifests as a change in behavior that the outside world must recognize, react to, and try to accommodate. Empowerment is a gradual process that should begin and entail exploring different aspects of oneself as well as learning to use one's mental and emotional faculties to accomplish goals. Women's empowerment is initially envisioned as raising awareness with an emphasis on enhancing gender equality, followed by the development of capacities and skills to ensure that women can participate effectively in present and future decision-making, as well as the organization of women into groups that take action to enact desired changes (Batliwala, 2013). Women's empowerment is the process of providing women with greater access to stable employment and other forms of financial stability.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Women's economic empowerment is essential to achieving women's rights and other development goals including economic growth, poverty alleviation, health, education, and welfare. (Golla, Malhotra, Nanda, & Mehra, 2018). A woman is considered to be economically empowered when she can decide and carry out financial decisions, as well as has the potential for economic development and growth. Women's economic empowerment is the ability of both men and women to participate, contribute, and benefit from the economic development process in a way that acknowledges the significance of their work, their notable contributions, and their dignity as well as facilitates negotiations for a more equitable distribution of the rewards of economic growth and development (Eyben, Kabeer, and Cornwall, 2008). Women's economic empowerment promotes the economic growth of the nation, women's access to financial services, jobs, real estate, other productive assets, skill development opportunities, and market knowledge.

Women's economic empowerment and participation are essential to promoting women's rights, granting them control over their lives, and influencing society. Women's economic empowerment aims to establish societies that are just and fair, to achieve inclusive and fair economic growth, women must be economically empowered. Women are strong and innovative economic agents who consistently overcome constraints based on gender discrimination to improve the health, education, and financial security of their families (Okereke, 2010). The full economic engagement of women promotes national development and sets wider development objectives for economic progress.

Women's economic empowerment is the process that allows women and girls to transition from having little control over their lives and economies to having the information, resources, and opportunities needed to compete fairly in markets as well as the authority to manage and benefit from economic gain (Ekesionye and Okolo, 2012). Women's economic empowerment is an effective catalyst for change, it could result in gender equality and other advantages that benefit women, their families, communities, and nations as a whole (SDG, 2015). Women's economic empowerment consists of three key components, which are; access to resources like income and assets, control over, and benefits from economic growth, and decision-making authority. When women have a source of income, the ability to choose where, when, and how to spend their money, and the capability to take intentional action and pursue goals without the danger of violence or punishment, they are firmly on the path to being a powerful independent economic participant (Danjuma, Muhammad, and Alkali, 2013).

Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes in Osun State

In Osun State, there have been various empowerment and economic empowerment programmes to alleviate women from poverty. The ministry that is charged with matters relating to women and children in Osun State is the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Development. This ministry is charged with rural economic empowerment of women at the grassroots level. Some of the areas of work include managing all issues about women, women's empowerment through the creation and development of women's cooperative groups, women's education (the establishment and management of vocational training facilities), promotion and provision of small-scale industries and commercial operations among women's groups in collaboration with the Ministry of Cooperatives and Empowerment (Osunstate.gov.ng).

The various economic empowerment programmes in Osun State are centered on eliminating women's discrimination in society, alleviating women from poverty, and improving their standard of living. Some of these programmes are explained below:

i. **AFEEDi:** This is a non-profit organization in Nigeria, with the mission of maintaining and encouraging peace and prosperity in Africa, AFEEDi empowered hundreds of women through its program dubbed AFEEDi Women for Economic Freedom. The objective of the program according to the organizers was to advance economic freedom among the most severely underrepresented and economically disadvantaged gender at the local level. The goal of the initiative was to empower women to become economically valuable members of their communities and self-sufficient individuals. The objectives of this programme were accomplished by exposing women to economic freedom ideas and increasing their competence in practical skills. The Osun State Ministry of Women recommended a large number of participants (AFEEDi, 2021).

ii. **The National Center for Women Development (NCWD):** In collaboration with the Osun State Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the National Center for Women's Development (NCWD), held a 5-days training on ICT infrastructure and empowerment training for women, girls, and youth. The objective of the initiative was to reduce the problem of unemployment in society and also give the participants the chance to care for their families whenever the need arises. One of the skills needed by women to stop them from pursuing white-collar jobs and becoming independent is ICT infrastructure and empowerment programmes. The National Center for Women's Development focuses on educating women in fields where males predominate to improve their status in society (Adereti, 2022).

iii. **Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES):**Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola fulfilled a manifesto promise to the people by introducing the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme on December 17, 2010, less than 100 days after taking office as governor. The program is a rotating 2-year volunteer program open to both males and females in Osun State. At the start, 20,000 volunteers are empowered by the OYES programme throughout the state's 31 Local Government Areas, including Ife East Area Office. In addition, the empowerment scheme is a purposeful effort to revive the State's stagnant economy, the empowerment program also takes a bold and ground-breaking stance against young restiveness, unemployment, and possible criminal inclinations (Osunstate.gov.ng).

iv. **Osun Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Programme (OREAP):** The Osun Rural Enterprise and Agriculture Program, also referred to as O-REAP, was created and is being implemented by the State of Osun to aid agricultural growth. The main economic driver in Osun State is agriculture, however very little has been accomplished throughout the years to build on this foundation to transform and improve the State's economy by using agriculture as a catalyst. The State's O-REAP initiative aims to modernize agriculture and promote economic development (Osunstate.gov.ng).

v. Life Above Poverty Organization (LAPO): LAPO is a nonprofit community development organization that is non-governmental, with an emphasis on empowering those who are economically disadvantaged and vulnerable (lapo-ngo.org).

Findings of the Study

Table 1 revealed the socio-demographic features of the respondents. It shows that the respondents are mature, knowledgeable, and well-positioned to assess the effect of economic empowerment programmes on women in rural communities of the study area.

Table 1:Socio-demographic characteristics

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
Below20	69	19.27
21-30	156	41.92
31-40	100	27.34
41-50	39	11.45
Total	**364**	**100**
Sex		
Male	173	47.7
Female	191	52.3
Total	**364**	100
Marital status		
Single	83	22.91
Married	216	57.55
Divorced	30	9.12
Widow	35	10.42
Total	**364**	**100**
Educationalstatus		
WASSCE/SSCE/GCE	166	45.1
OND/DIP	69	19.5
B.SC/HND	129	35.4
M.A/M.sc	0	0.0
Ph.D	0	0.0
Total	**364**	**100**
LGAofResidence		
Aiyedaade	122	33.8
Ifedayo	121	33.1
IfeSouth	121	33.1
Total	**364**	**100**
Occupation		
Trader	73	20.1
Tailor	66	18.2
Barber	72	19.8
Civil servant	39	11.2
Farmer	114	30.7
Total	**364**	**100**

Table 2 Assess the Effect of Economic Empowerment Programmes on Women in Rural Communities of the Study Area

Assertion	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Remarks
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
Economic empowerment programs haveincreasedwomen'saccesstocredit and financial services in rural communities in the study area	74 (20.5)	148 (39.9)	78 (21.6)	64 (18.0)	Agreed
Economic empowerment programs led to increased participation of womenindecision-makingprocesses intheirhouseholdsandcommunities In the studyarea.	106 (28.9)	113 (30.7)	43 (12.5)	102 (27.9)	Agreed
Economic empowerment programs havebeenincreasingwomen'sincome levelsinruralcommunitiesinthe Studyarea.	110 (29.9)	159 (42.7)	67 (18.8)	28 (8.6)	Agreed
Economic empowerment programs have been implemented in rural Communities in thestudy area.	24 (7.6)	188 (50.2)	120 (32.6)	32 (9.6)	Agreed
Culturalandsocialnormshaveshaped women'sparticipationineconomic empowerment programs in rural Communities in thestudy area.	80 (22.2)	108 (29.4)	133 (35.9)	43 (12.5)	Disagreed
Economic empowerment programs haveaffectedwomen'soverallwell-being, including their health, education,andsocialstatusinrural communities in thestudy area	114 (31.4)	139 (37.8)	110 (30.5)	1 (0.3)	Agreed

Table 2 presents the effect result of the economic empowerment programme on women in rural communities of the study area. In an attempt to achieve this objective, the respondent was asked to either agree or disagree. From Table 2, it was revealed that 74 (20.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that economic empowerment programs have increased women's access to credit and financial services in rural communities in the study area. A supporting trend of 148 (39.9%) of the respondents ordinarily agreed with this claim. However, 78 (21.6%) of the respondents disagreed, while 64 (18.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the claim. The implication of this is that women's access to lending and monetary services has grown in rural communities within the study area as a result of economic empowerment programmes. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have shown that access to credit and financial services is essential for women's economic empowerment, particularly in rural areas. Economic empowerment programs often provide women with

access to credit and financial services, which enable them to invest in their businesses, expand their operations, and improve their livelihoods (Asian Development Bank, 2022).

More so, 106 (28.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that economic empowerment programs led to increased participation of women in decision-making processes in their households and communities in the study area. This was complemented by 113 (30.7%) of the respondents who ordinarily agreed. However, 43 (12.5%) of the respondents disagreed, while 102(27.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. The majority of the respondents agreed that economic empowerment programs led to increased participation of women in decision-making processes in their households and communities in the study area. This affirms with Sariyev, Loos, Zeller, & Gurung, (2020) that women who have access to income-generating activities and financial resources are more likely to have a say in important household decisions, such as spending on children's education and healthcare, and investment in household assets. Additionally, these women are also more likely to participate in community decision-making processes.

Concerning the assertion that the economic empowerment programs have been increasing women's income levels in rural communities in the study area, it was discovered that those who strongly agreed with this claim were 110 (29.9%) of the respondents. This was supported by 159 (42.7%) of the respondents who agreed to it. However, 67 (18.8%) of the respondents ordinarily disagreed, while 28 (8.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. This shows that economic empowerment programs have been successful in increasing women's income levels in rural communities. This affirms Raghupathi, & Raghupathi (2020) that economic empowerment programmes provide women with access to training, financial resources, and market opportunities to start or grow their businesses. As a result, women have been able to generate income and contribute to the economic growth of their households and communities. The increase in income levels has also improved the standard of living for these women and their families, allowing them to afford better food, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, the economic independence gained through these programs has given women greater decision-making power within their households and increased their social status in their communities (Soetan, &Obiyan, 2019).

Table 2 showed that a few of the respondents 24 (7.6%) strongly agreed that economic empowerment programs have been implemented in rural communities in the study area. This claim was complemented by 188 (50.02%) of the respondents who ordinarily agreed. However, 120 (32.6%) of the respondents disagreed, while 32 (9.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with this claim. The significance of this distribution to the assertion is that economic empowerment programs have been implemented in rural communities in the study area. Economically, the Osun State government has implemented various programs aimed at supporting women in entrepreneurship and small business development. This includes access to credit facilities, business training, and mentorship programs. The state also provides support to women-owned cooperatives and associations, which provide opportunities for collective economic empowerment.

Presented in Table 2, showed that 80 (22.2%) of the respondents agreed that cultural and social norms have shaped women's participation in economic empowerment programs in rural communities in the study area, and 108 (29.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this assertion. However, 133 (35.9%) of the respondents disagreed while 43 (12.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the claim. The implication of this is that cultural and social norms have not shaped women's participation in economic empowerment programs in rural communities in the study area. This contradicts the findings of Hyun, (2022) that

societal and cultural norms have an enormous effect on how women participate in economic initiatives empowerment. Societal and cultural norms can be both a barrier and a facilitator, influencing how they access opportunities, resources, and agency.

Table 2 showed that 114 (31.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that economic empowerment programs have affected women's overall well-being, including their health, education, and social status in rural communities in the study area. This was supported by 139 (37.8%) of the respondents who ordinarily agreed to the claim. However, 110 (30.5%) of the respondents disagreed, while 01 (0.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The analysis showed that economic empowerment programs have affected women's overall well-being, including their health, education, and social status in rural communities in the study area. This affirms the findings of Wei, Sarker, Żukiewicz-Sobczak, Roy, Alam, Rabbany, and Aziz (2021) that women's empowerment has a great influence on health, nutrition, education, and the overall well-being of societies as well as on the children and households.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis tested for this study is expressly stated as:

$H_{o:}$economic empowerment programmes has no effect on women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria.

Table 3 Economic empowerment programmeshas no effect on women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria

Chi-Square Test			
	Value	**Df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
PersonChi-Square	5.204[a]	9	.816
LikelihoodRatio	6.180	9	.722
Linear-by-LinearAssociation	.071	1	.790
NofValid Cases	384		
a.8cells(50.0%)have an expectedcount of lessthan5.Theminimumexpected count is .18.			

A chi-square test of independent was performed to determine whether the economic empowerment programmes has no effect on women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria. The study claims economic empowerment programmes significantly affect women in rural communities of Osun State Nigeria, X^2 (9, N = 384) = 5.204, p = .816. It can be observed that the p-value of the chi-square test is statistically significant at 1. To this end, the null hypothesis (H_0) would be rejected.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Empowering women in Osun State, particularly in rural areas, is a crucial step towards promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the state, especially, in the economic development which will bring about gender equality. However, women in Osun State face significant challenges that limit their ability to participate fully in the economic empowerment

processes. These challenges include Gender imbalance, cultural and societal attitudes, limited access to education and skills development opportunities, economic marginalization, political underrepresentation, Government empowerment policy, and Citizen bad attitude towards sustaining empowerment. In conclusion despite the challenges, economic empowerment has an impact on women in rural communities of Osun State, Nigeria.Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations below were deduced from the research:

- Access to loans should be improved through micro loan disbursement and these loans should be made available for women to economically empower them more
- The implementation of economic empowerment programmes should be structured to fashion out gender imbalances and religious differences.
- Government empowerment policies should be adequately implemented and evaluated to achieve the set goals of empowerment programmmes.
- There should be strategic monitoring of the loan given to the women as an economic empowerment scheme to make sure the loan serves its intended purpose.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The limitation of this study was the inaccessibility to reach the total number of all women empowered by the women's economic empowerment programme. Therefore, the study relied on the perception of different stakeholders and the available assessed empowered women in the communities selected under the study. Future studies can be conducted on the role of women in participation in governance in the Nigerian Fourth Republic to explore the role of women's participation in economic development in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

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THE DYNAMICS OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: TRENDS, DRIVERS, AND REPERCUSSIONS

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Absract
The paper examines the evolving trends, drivers, and multifaceted repercussions of terrorism in Nigeria. This study adopts a two-pronged approach, combining quantitative insights from the global terrorism datasets with qualitative findings from the literature review. The study finds that, currently, Nigeria continues to face significant terrorist threats, including intensified religious violence in the northeast, persistent bandit attacks in the northwest, rising Fulani militants activities in the north-central region, and a resurgence of separatist unrest by the IPOB in the southeast. Terrorist activities in Nigeria showed a concerning shift toward higher lethality despite a reduction in the number of incidents. In addition, the evolving use of tactics, including reliance on shootings and kidnappings, combined with a growing preference for light weaponry, highlights a strategic adaptation by these terrorist groups to maximize their impact. Political corruption, poor governance, economic instability, ecological threats, and religious and ethnic conflicts are the driving factors behind the prevalence of terrorist activities. These have resulted in severe humanitarian and economic impacts.Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach, focusing on governance reforms, economic stabilization, and enhanced security measures to mitigate the underlying drivers of terrorism and restore societal resilience.

Key Words: Nigeria, Terrorism, Religious extremism, Weak governance, Ecological threat

Introduction

Terrorism has emerged as one of the most pressing global security challenge, exerting profound social, political, and economic consequences. In Africa, Nigeria has been a focal point of concern due to the persistent and evolving nature of its terrorist threats. Groups such as Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa Province (ISWAP), and other extremist actors have not only destabilized Nigeria but have also impacted the broader West African region, highlighting the need for comprehensive studies on this issue.

From 2007 to 2016, the total economic cost of terrorism in Africa is at a minimum US$119 billion with Nigeria's economy losing up to $97 billion, the total economic impact of refugees and IDPs to Nigeria, was US$75 billion over the ten year period, an average of 0.73% of GDP（United Nations Development Program, 2019）.

In recent years, terrorism in Nigeria has entered a new phase characterized by significant shifts in tactics and geographic reach. According to Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC) (GTTAC, 2024), in 2023, 3,270 casualties caused by terrorist incidents in Nigeria. The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) (IEP, 2024) reports that Nigeria is ranked 8th out of 163 countries in 2023, three of the 20 most fatal terrorist attacks have occurred in Nigeria, accounting for 15%. Moreover, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (IDMC, 2025), as of 2023, there are about 3.34 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to conflict and violence in Nigeria.

These new dynamics include the increasing sophistication of attacks, and the intersection of terrorism with issues such as banditry and communal violence. Understanding the drivers of these changes, ranging from socioeconomic inequalities and weak governance to ideological motivations and ecological threats, is critical to grasping the full scope of the problem.

This paper aims to explore the trends, drivers, and repercussions of terrorism in Nigeria, with a special focus on the new dynamics shaping the country's security landscape in recent years. By examining the evolution of terrorist activities and the underlying factors contributing to their persistence, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. The findings of this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on counterterrorism, offering insights for policymakers and stakeholders seeking to address this multifaceted challenge effectively.

Methodology

This study adopts a two-pronged approach to investigate the trends, causes, and consequences of terrorism in Nigeria.

The first component involves summarizing the new terrorism trends in the country, drawing on data and reports from theGTTACand The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED).ACLED collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of armed conflict around the world, which is crucial for understanding detailed spatial patterns of terrorism-related events in Nigeria. GTTAC, on the other hand, offers granular event-based data that tracks incidents of Terrorism, allowing for detailed spatial and temporal analysis of terrorism activities, including perpetrators, weapons, targeted facilities/locations, and tactics. This enables a more localized and context-specific understanding of terrorism in Nigeria. By triangulating these datasets, the study cross-validates trends and offers a more robust analysis of the causes and consequences of terrorism in Nigeria.

The second component involves a critical review of existing scholarly works, policy reports, and case studies to analyze the root causes and broader impacts of terrorism in Nigeria. This review synthesizes recent literature on a variety of factors that contribute to terrorism, including economic disparities, governance failures, religious extremism,andcological stress. The literature review also explores the social and economic consequences of terrorism, such as the displacement of populations, disruption of local economies, polarization of communities, and regional instability. This review is based on the most recent and relevant publications, with a preference for studies from the last 5-10 years. Only peer-reviewed articles and credible reports from reputable institutions are included to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

The methodology integrates quantitative insights from the GTTAC and ACLED datasets with qualitative findings from the literature review.This combination allows for a holistic understanding of terrorism in Nigeria:

The quantitative analysis provides empirical evidence of the trends, tactics, and dynamics of terrorist activity in Nigeria, highlighting patterns such as the rise or decline of specific groups, shifts in attack locations, and the correlation between terrorist activity and broader socio-political factors.

The qualitative analysis from the literature review complements the data by offering a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of terrorism and the socio-economic and political consequences of violent extremism in Nigeria. This synthesis helps to link empirical data with broader theoretical and policy discussions on terrorism.

Together, these two components form a comprehensive framework for analyzing terrorism in Nigeria, ensuring a nuanced and evidence-based perspective. By combining both empirical data and theoretical insights, the study is able to not only describe the trends of terrorism but also identify the root causes and long-term impacts on Nigerian society.

Trends in Terrorist Activities in Nigeria

In 2023, Nigeria recorded 435 terrorist incidents resulting in 2,797 deaths, accounting for 13% of global terrorism deaths (21,615) and 23% of terrorism deaths in Africa (12,051) for the year(GTTAC, 2025). This indicates, compared to 2019 a 5% decrease in terrorist incidents but a 1% increase in fatalities; when contrasted with Nigeria's 2022 data, terrorist incidents dropped substantially by 31%, yet fatalities rose by 4%. (GTTAC, 2025).

Nigeria remains threatened by various terrorist groups, including the ISIS-West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram in the North East (NE),militant groupsin the North West (NW), Fulani militants in the North Central (NC), and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East (SE). Furthermore, according to Table 1, 22% of the terrorist incidents in 2023 could not be attributed to any specific organization. Most incidents occurred in Borno and Yobe of the NE, Zamfara and Kaduna of the NW, Niger, Benue, and Plateau of the NC, and Anambra of the SE. The NE, NC, and NW experienced the highest death tolls (ACLED, 2024).

Table 1: Activity Statistics of Major Terrorist Group in Nigeria, 2023

Terrorist Group	Number of Attacks	Percentage of Total Incidents
Zamfara Militants	110	25
Fulani Militants	106	24
ISWAP	56	13
Boko Haram	48	11
IPOB	25	6
Ansaru	1	<1%
Unknown	96	22
Total	435 incidents resulting in 2,797 fatalities.[1]	

Source: Authors compilation (2025).

Compiled from: GTTAC Data Portal (2025).

The types of tactics, weapons, and targets used in terrorist incidents have evolved, as shown in Tables 2 and 4.

Specifically, common types of tactics used in terrorist attacks in 2023 include shootings (60%), kidnapping (31%), and ambush (5%).It is worth noting that sometimes these tactics are used in a mix (ACLED, 2024). In terms of weapons commonly used in attacks, Firearm has been the main weapon from 2019 to 2023, but in 2022 and 2023, the frequency ranking of light weapons (such as small arms and swords) rises, while the frequency ranking of heavy weaponry falls (see Table 2).

[1]According to GTTAC methodology, an incident may involve multiple perpetrators, therefore, the total number of attacks by all perpetrators does not necessarily equal the total number of incidents (GTTAC, 2025). Please refer to GTTAC Codebook, https://gttac.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023_GRID_Codebook_V2.pdf

Table 2: Trends in Weapons Used in Terrorist Incidents, 2019–2023

Year	Top 5 Frequently-used Weapons
2019	1. Unclear Firearm, 2. Unclear Incendiary, 3. Small Arms, 4. Blades/Swords, 5. Non-Suicide IED
2020	1. Unclear Firearm, 2. Unknown Weapon, 3. Heavy Weaponry, 4. Full- Automatic, 5. Blades/Swords
2021	1. Unclear Firearm, 2. Unknown Weapon, 3. Heavy Weaponry, 4. Full- Automatic, 5. Blades/Swords
2022	1. Unclear Firearm, 2. Small arms, 3. Unknown Weapon, 4. Non-Suicide IED, 5. Heavy Weaponry
2023	1. Unclear Firearm, 2. Blades/Swords, 3. Unknown Weapon, 4. Unclear Incendiary, 5. Non-Suicide IED

Source: Authors compilation (2024).

Compiled from: GTTAC Data Portal (2024).

In terms of targeted facilities/locations of terrorist incidents, nearly half of the incidents in 2023 targeted private property. Other frequently targeted targets included Agriculture-Food (9%), Law Enforcement (4%), and other unknown targets (9%). In addition, Private Property, National, Public Places, and Land Transport have been the main targets in the past five years, but in the past two years, especially in 2023, among the top five targets for terrorist incidents, Agriculture-Food and attacks without specific targets are increasingly ranked high (see Table 3). This suggests that people may face heightened food security and broader, unknown security threats.

Table 3: Trends in Targeted Facilities/Locations in Terrorist Incidents, 2019–2023

Year	Top 5 Targeted Facilities/Locations
2019	1. Unknown, 2. Private Property, 3. National, 4. Land Transport, 5. Public Places
2020	1. Private Property, 2. National, 3. Public Places, 4. Land Transport, 5. Unknown
2021	1. Private Property, 2. National, 3. Land Transport, 4. Unknown, 5. Law Enforcement
2022	1. Private Property, 2. Unknown, 3. Public Places, 4. Land Transport, 5. National
2023	1. Private Property, 2. Agriculture-Food, 3. Unknown, 4. Public Places, 5. Land Transport

Source: Authors compilation (2024).

Compiled from: GTTAC Data Portal (2024).

Regional Patterns of Violence and Conflict in Nigeria

Terrorist activities in Nigeria exhibit distinct regional characteristics, including intensified religious violence in the NE, persistent bandit violence in the NW, widespread Fulani militant activities in the NC, and a resurgence of separatist unrest in the SE.

ⅰ. Intensified Religious Violence in the North East

The NE remains the most affected region, with ISWAP and Boko Haram being the main perpetrators, with the former now being the dominant terrorist group in Borno State. ISWAP

ranked fourth in 2023 for terrorist incidents, with 56 attacks (GTTAC, 2025). The top three perpetrators were Zamfara militants, Fulani militants, and unidentified groups. While terrorist incidents linked to ISWAP declined by 45% compared to 2022, fatalities increased sharply. ISWAP accounted for 13% of all incidents but caused 909 deaths, representing 32% of the year's total fatalities, making it Nigeria's deadliest terrorist organization(GTTAC, 2024). The group has also expanded its operational range, launching its first attack in the northwestern Jigawa State in April 2023 (Meir AmitIntelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2023). Regarding its targets, private property, national, and public places remained the primary focus.Tactically, shootings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and kidnappings continued to be ISWAP's main methods. However, property damage decreased while bombing incidents rose (GTTAC, 2024).

Boko Haram, on the other hand, has faced significant setbacks due to itsconflict with the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP), which has weakened its operational capacity and leadership. However, after two years of relative silence, Boko Haram's attacks and kidnappings surged in 2023. The group ranked fifth in terrorist incidents, with 48 attacks, a slight increase from 2022. However, Boko Haram caused 722 deaths in 2023, accounting for 11% of all incidents, making it the second deadliest group after ISWAP (GTTAC, 2025). Its primary targets are civilians and rival armed groups (non-state actors), with new targets in Agriculture-Food, and Public Places. In terms of tactics, shootings, kidnappings, and IEDs remained dominant, but there was an increase in executions and a decrease in ambushes and bombings (GTTAC, 2024).

Despite claims by the Nigerian government that Boko Haram has been almost degraded, and significant progress made by the African Union-led Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in combating Boko Haram, civilians still face terrorist attacks and violence based on religious identity—both between different religious groups and within the same religious community.(Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P) , 2024).

ii. Persistent Bandit Violence in the North West

Zamfara militants, locally referred to as "bandits", have emerged as the dominant force behind terrorist activities in the NW, driven by structural socio-economic disparities, economic incentives tied to illegal gold mining operations, and security vulnerabilities exacerbated by governance deficits (Pulse, 2016 ;Ojewale, 2024). The group has consolidated its power through control over mineral resources and transnational criminal networks, with its operations evolving from traditional banditry to systematic violence exhibiting distinct terrorist characteristics (Okoli & Ngom, 2023). Their insurgent activities date back to Nigeria's colonial period, and they are now deeply entrenched in northern Nigeria. Analysts estimate that Zamfara militants may number as many as 100 loosely connected groups, with sizes ranging from 10 fighters to over 1,000, totaling more than 30,000 fighters, most of whom are based in Zamfara state (Healy& Anastasio, 2023). In Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina States, where these "bandits" are active, terrorism incidents such as robbery (targeting agriculture-food), kidnapping, disappearances, and localized attacks are common.

In 2023, Zamfara militants were responsible for 110 terrorist incidents, accounting for 25% of the total, resulting in 349 deaths (GTTAC, 2024). While the Zamfara militants remained one of the primary perpetrators of terrorist incidents in 2023, there was a significant decline in both the number of attacks and fatalities compared to 2022 (GTTAC, 2024). Their primary targets were private property, but Agriculture-Food, Education, and Religious Sites emerged as new targets. Tactically, kidnappings and shootings remained prevalent, with a decline in IED use and an

increase in extortion (GTTAC, 2024). The group has also expanded its operations from the NW to the NC, including Niger, Benue, Plateau States, and the Federal Capital Territory. In line with this, the Federal Government of Nigeria has officially declared bandit groups operating in any parts of the country as Terrorists (Federal Ministry of Justice of Nigeria, 2022).

iii. Rising Fulani Militant Activities in the North Central

In NC of Nigeria, farmer-herder conflicts have escalated into broader clashes and crimes, complicated by the combination of militant herders and jihadist-style banditry, showing clear signs of terrorism. In recent years, jihadist Fulani herders have killed thousands of Christians. The desertification of land has further exacerbated the crisis (Kunle & Murtala, 2022)\.In 2023, Fulani militants were responsible for 106 incidents, ranking second among terrorist perpetrators, accounting for 24% of the total incidents and causing 602 deaths, which represented 19% of the year's fatalities. Compared to 2022, the number of incidents rose by 80%, and deaths increased by 68%.Their main targets remained private property, agriculture-food, and land transport, with new targets including religious sites and educational institutions. Shootings and kidnappings remained their primary tactics (GTTAC, 2024).

iv. Resurgence of Separatist Unrest in the South East[2]

The IPOB, led by Nnamdi Kanu, has been calling for southeastern independence. The group has incited separatist violence, leading to deaths and economic paralysis in southeastern regions such as the major trading hub of Onitsha in Anambra State (Asadu, 2022). In 2015, Kanu was arrested by the Nigerian government on charges including terrorism and incitement. After being acquitted by a local appellate court in October 2022, the Nigerian Supreme Court overturned this decision in October 2023, reinstating terrorism charges against Kanu, with his trial expected to resume in 2024. In 2023, at least 25 incidents related to IPOB resulted in 51 deaths (GTTAC, 2024). Separatist terrorism in the SE has become increasingly complex, with "unknown gunmen" often posing as Biafran separatists to commit gang violence, including kidnappings for ransom and armed robbery (Okoli, 2022).

Drivers of Frequent Terrorism in Nigeria

The drivers of frequent terrorism in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted. This phenomenon stems not only from Nigeria's longstanding issues of political corruption, economic instability, and poverty but also from deep-rooted religious, ethnic, and political conflicts. Weak governance and inadequate security forces have created opportunities for extremist groups and local militants to thrive. Furthermore, ecological threats have intensified resource conflicts. The interplay of these factors has made Nigeria's terrorism problem more challenging to resolve.

i. Political Corruption and Governance Deficiencies Hinder Counterterrorism Efforts

Political corruption, characterized by the abuse of power for personal gain, bribery, and mismanagement of public resources, has severely weakened counterterrorism efforts.According to Transparency International's 2023 report, Nigeria's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scored only 25 points, ranking 145th out of 180 countries, below the Sub-Saharan African average of 33 points (Transparency International, 2024). Corruption permeates the government and security sectors, leading to inequitable resource distribution and ineffective enforcement, which undermines counterterrorism measures. Mismanagement and embezzlement of resources

[2]This article discusses the separatist movement led by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as a terrorist activity based on the following reasons: First, in 2017, the Nigerian government designated it as a terrorist organization under the *Nigeria Terrorism Act*; second, its activities employ terrorist methods; and third, its actions pose threats to civilians.

result in insufficient funding and equipment for anti-terrorism operations, limiting the ability of police and military forces to combat terrorist activities effectively. Vice President Kashim Shettima and the governor of Borno State have stated that corruption is closely tied to insecurity in northern Nigeria and the nation as a whole(Matazu 2024). The Igbo socio-cultural organization Ọhanaeze Ndigbo, has criticized the federal government for failing to restructure Nigeria and introduce a state policing system, which hampers efforts to combat growing attacks (Ugwu, 2023). Distrust between local and federal governments further impairs counterterrorism operations. Some local governments accuse the federal government of compromising with terrorists and therefore refuse to implement or deliberately undermine federal actions. Conversely, the federal government accuses local governments of politicizing security issues for political gain. Additionally, corruption and governance failures erode public trust in the government, reducing popular support and participation in counterterrorism efforts (Oguntola,2023).

ⅱ. Economic Instability Fuels Fertile Ground for Terrorism

According to a 2023 World Bank report, while reforms in Nigeria's real sector offer hope for growth, inflation continues to rise to historic levels due to price and monetary policy adjustments.Inflation has historicallybeen high and persistent in Nigeria—in 13 out ofthe past 15 years, inflation was higher than 9 percent,the ceiling of the CBN's target range—reflecting thecombination of loose fiscal and monetary policies,structural supply constraints, and external shocks. Butthe inflation rate rose to 27.3 percentinflation rose to reach 27.3 percent(yoy) in October 2023. This has hindered access to food, energy and other necessities, exacerbating multidimensional poverty and economic inequality (World Bank, 2023). These conditions increase public dissatisfaction and disappointment, making people more susceptible to the influence and recruitment of extremist groups.

a) Poverty and Unemployment: Economic instability has led to higher poverty and unemployment rates. In 2023, the nationalunemployment rate was 5.4% or 4,792,296 persons (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), leaving many young people without access to quality education or job opportunities. This creates a recruitment pool for extremist organizations.

b) Regional Inequalities: Economic instability has exacerbated regional disparities and deepened divisions.While some areas are rich in resources, others remain impoverished. However, even in resource-rich regions, residents continue to face severe poverty. For instance, the Niger Delta, a major oil-producing region in the country, holds approximately 90% of Nigeria's oil reserves. Despite contributing 80% of government revenue, around 70% of the population in this region lives on less than one dollar per day (Global Maritime Crime Programme of UNODC, 2021). The oil industry's prosperity has attracted foreign investment and labor, but this concentration of resources has led to a significant underinvestment in the northern agricultural regions. Furthermore Meanwhile, while oil-producing states contribute substantial revenue to the federal government, they only receive 13% of the resource revenue (Nwankwo, 2015). In contrast, the impoverished northern states, which lack natural resources, depend heavily on federal transfers. Additionally, the Niger Delta bears the severe consequences of oil pollution, but funds allocated for environmental remediation have been misappropriated, resulting in limited progress (Obi, 2023). These disparities intensify social tensions, particularly among disaffected youth who feel a sense of relative deprivation and political frustration, leading to unrest and conflict that extremist groups exploit (Meagher & Mustapha, 2020).

c) Impact of Corruption: Corruption and governance failures have hindered Nigeria's economic potential. Corruption undermines economic growth and public trust, creating a

perception of social injustice (Alonge, 2012). This provides opportunities for extremists to promote their ideologies, claiming they can offer better governance and social order (Botha, 2021).

iii. Ecological Threats Intensify Resource Conflicts

The IEP(IEP,2023) reports that Nigeria faces multiple catastrophic ecological threats, including food insecurity, population growth, and water scarcity. Nigeria is one of the countries most affected by terrorism and ecological threats, underscoring the link between environmental degradation and conflict.

In the NE of Nigeria, Lake Chad once provided abundant resources to local communities. However, the influence of extremist groups such as ISWAP and Boko Haram has exacerbated resource conflicts in the region. These groups occupy villages and impose taxes, further escalating tensions. The continued shrinkage of Lake Chad has worsened the situation. Although the MNJTF has attempted to combat terrorism in the region, the situation remains dire.

In the NW and NC regions, farmer-herder conflicts are also closely linked to ecological threats. Climate change and desertification have intensified disputes over land and water resources, as well as disagreements over grazing routes, resulting in thousands of deaths. In the South-South (SS) region, environmental degradation from oil extraction has damaged livelihoods, increasing social unrest.

Ecological threats have heightened resource conflicts in Nigeria, and in the context of economic instability, these conflicts have become more frequent and intense, posing severe threats to social stability and economic development. Poor governance further exacerbates resource conflicts.

iv. Religious and Ethnic Tensions Threaten Social Stability

Nigeria's religious and ethnic diversity is often the "subtext" of terrorist incidents. Religious divisions and ethnic conflicts, intertwined with extremist infiltration, political corruption, and economic instability, exacerbate the complexity and severity of terrorism in Nigeria.

In 2023, a Muslim butcher was beaten to death by religious extremists for alleged blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (Abdulsamad, 2023), exposing violence within religious communities. Simultaneously, Boko Haram and ISWAP carried out dozens of attacks targeting Christians in the east and northeast, highlighting severe interfaith violence.

One significant incident in 2023 was the Plateau State Massacre, where at least 140 Christians were killed in a terrorist attack linked to disputes over resources. "Fulani jihadists" were blamed for the attack (Casper, 2023). Analysts suggest that the presence of Fulani jihadists reflects the government's long-term neglect, land seizures, and lack of economic opportunities (Clarke, 2024). These incidents illustrate how religious and ethnic factors influence acts of violence and terrorism in Nigeria, revealing the interplay of political corruption, economic instability, and social grievances.

The Repercussions of Intensified Terrorism on Nigeria

Terrorism poses a severe threat to fundamental human rights, political stability, and economic development in Nigeria. It disrupts social order, undermines public safety and trust, and weakens the legitimacy and capacity of the government. Consequently, combating terrorism has become one of Nigeria's top priorities to maintain political stability, foster economic growth, and ensure social security.

ⅰ. Exacerbation of Humanitarian Crises

The problem of terrorism in Nigeria has aggravated humanitarian crises and led to dual violations of human rights. Terrorist groups and armed factions continuously attack civilians across the country, causing massive casualties and displacement. Between 2019 and 2023 alone, Nigeria experienced at least 2,526 terrorist incidents, resulting in at least 14,672 deaths nationally (GTTAC, 2024), counterterrorism efforts by the government and military have also led to further human rights abuses. For example, drone strikes by the military have caused civilian casualties, and there have been reports of mistreatment of detainees by security forces. Notably, security forces have been accused of conducting secret forced abortion programs, though the government has vehemently denied these claims (Reuters, 2022). They highlight the complex and dire humanitarian and human rights challenges that Nigeria faces.

ⅱ. Disruption of Political Stability

Terrorism undermines political stability in Nigeria in many ways.

Firstly, it threatens democratic processes and the legitimacy of government. Terrorist organizations frequently attack electoral infrastructure, materials, and officials during elections. Such actions hinder voter registration and participation and spread disinformation on social media to incite violence, reducing voter turnout. In the run-up to the 2023 general elections, 109 election-related deaths were reported, with election violence concentrated in key battleground states such as Lagos (Omolaoye, 2023). Terrorist exploit controversies surrounding election results to incite violent protests, challenge government legitimacy, and expand their influence, threatening regional peace and stability.

Secondly, terrorism exacerbates religious, ethnic, and regional divisions and rivalries. Groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP target Christians and certain Muslim sects, leveraging religious extremism to further their political agendas. Meanwhile, in the NW and NC regions, terrorism disguised as banditry targets farmers and ethnic minorities, exacerbating social tensions and eroding community cohesion.

Additionally, the IPOB, originally a legitimate self-determination movement, has evolved into an armed separatist campaign. By capitalizing on nationalist sentiment, it poses a threat to political stability. These challenges reveal the extent to which terrorism disrupts Nigeria's political stability, necessitating comprehensive and strategic responses.

ⅲ. Constraints on Economic Development

Terrorism has a detrimental impact on Nigeria's economic growth. Between 2007 and 2019, the economic cost of terrorism in Nigeria amounted to $142 billion, with losses in 2019 alone accounting for 2.4% of the country's GDP (Sasu, 2023). Terrorism directly causes damage to private property and public infrastructure, affecting infrastructure construction and economic operations, such as transportation, communication, and electricity supplies.

In addition, terrorism indirectly affects economic development by reducing foreign direct investment, raising unemployment, increasing food insecurity, etc., affecting the development of various industries in Nigeria, especially agriculture, trade, and tourism. This economic instability has also contributed to social unrest and political unrest, creating a vicious circle that has limited Nigeria's overall development.

Conclusion

Terrorist activities in Nigeria showed a concerning shift toward higher lethality despite a reduction in the number of incidents. Groups like the Zamfara militants, Fulani militants, ISWAP, and Boko Haram dominated the threat landscape, targeting civilians and critical sectors such as agriculture and food security. The evolving use of tactics, including a reliance on shootings and kidnappings, combined with a growing preference for light weaponry, highlights a strategic adaptation by these groups to maximize their impact. Regions such as the NE, NW, and NC zones remain the epicenters of violence.

The proliferation of terrorism in Nigeria stems from multiple interwoven factors, including political corruption, economic instability, ecological threats, and religious and ethnic divisions.

Terrorism in Nigeria poses a severe and multifaceted challenge that impacts the country's humanitarian situation, political stability, and economic development. The persistent violence by extremist groups and armed factions exacerbates human rights abuses, as seen in large-scale civilian casualties, displacement, and alleged military misconduct. Counterterrorism efforts have often fallen short due to governance issues and have, at times, resulted in additional violations of human rights.

Recommendation

Addressing terrorism in Nigeria requires a holistic and coordinated approach that goes beyond military action. Combating corruption and improving governance are essential to restoring public trust and enabling effective resource allocation for counterterrorism. Strengthening economic stability through investment in education, job creation, and poverty alleviation will help reduce the socioeconomic conditions that make individuals vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups.

Furthermore, addressing religious, ethnic, and regional divides through dialogue and inclusive policies is vital to fostering unity and preventing terrorist groups from exploiting societal divisions. A comprehensive strategy combining political reforms, economic growth, and community-based interventions is imperative to break the cycle of terrorism and build a more stable and prosperous Nigeria.

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ASSESSMENT OF MAINSTREAM THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS TOOLS TO JUSTIFY INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO

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ABSTRACT

The discipline of international relations examines the intricate dynamics of state interactions, geopolitical movements, and the evolving architecture of global governance. Over time, various theoretical paradigms have been developed to elucidate these complexities and rationalize international order. This paper critically evaluates mainstream theories of international relation; realism, liberalism, Marxism, and constructivism as instruments for legitimizing international order and perpetuating the status quo. By engaging with an extensive body of scholarly literature, the study delves into the conceptual underpinnings of these theories, the historical trajectories of international order, and the interplay between theoretical constructs and state behavior. The study elucidates that, realism grounded in power politics and national self-interest, conceptualizes global affairs as an unceasing struggle for dominance, as exemplified by the geopolitical maneuvers of the United States, Russia, and North Korea. Conversely, liberalism champions democratic governance, multilateral cooperation, and the primacy of human rights, shaping the foreign policies of nations such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Constructivism underscores the significance of ideational factors, social norms, and international institutions such as the United Nations in shaping global diplomatic engagements. Through a meticulous examination of secondary sources, including academic treatises, peer-reviewed articles, this study concludes that these theoretical frameworks not only deconstruct the complexities of global interactions but also serve as foundational tools for states to justify their actions, fortify existing power structures, and maintain international stability.

Keywords: Mainstream Theories; Realism; Liberalism; Constructivism; Marxism; International Order;

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of international relations emerged as an intellectual pursuit aimed at deciphering the intricate dynamics of war and peace among nations. Early scholars endeavored to address fundamental inquiries: What precipitates armed conflict between states? What underlying imperatives drive warfare? Under what conditions can peaceful coexistence be sustained? These questions gained heightened significance in the twentieth century, particularly in the aftermath of two devastating world wars. However, while the study of war and peace remains central, the scope of international relations has expanded to encompass a broader spectrum of global phenomena, including the functions of international institutions, the structural underpinnings of the global economic order, and the role of gender in political systems.

A pivotal instrument for analyzing these multifaceted global dynamics is the application of international relations theories, which construct analytical frameworks to explicate and anticipate state behavior, strategic interests, and diplomatic engagements. As Walt (1998) asserts, Theories of international relations help us understand the forces that shape state behavior and the broader patterns that define global politics. This paper rigorously interrogates mainstream theories of international relations; realism, liberalism, and constructivism as mechanisms for legitimizing international order and perpetuating the status quo. These intellectual approaches elucidate contemporary geopolitical architectures, such as China and Russia's strategic positioning in global affairs, the influence of regional organizations like the European Union, and the role of supranational institutions such as the United Nations Security Council and NATO in sustaining international stability. Moreover, these theories provide insights into the manner in which global political actors rationalize their decisions to fortify existing power asymmetries.

By critically engaging with these theoretical constructs, this study furnishes a robust epistemological foundation for dissecting contemporary geopolitical events, global conflicts, and diplomatic interactions. As Keohane (2019) posits, International institutions and theoretical frameworks not only shape global interactions but also sustain existing power hierarchies. Each theoretical lens presents a unique perspective through which the behavior of states and the structure of global governance can be scrutinized, ultimately underscoring the premise that mainstream approaches seek to elucidate the empirical realities of the international system rather than construct idealistic prescriptions for world order.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES ON ORDER

International order was distinguished from the international system, or the comprehensive global context in which states operate. The international system reflects all aspects of economic, political, social, cultural, ecological, and other forms of interaction that exist among states. The neorealist school of international relations theory, for example, suggests that two characteristics of the international system, its anarchic nature and the distribution of power across states (also called the polarity of the system) place constraints on states behaviors and push them to interact in certain ways (see for example Waltz, 1979). These factors can shape behavior, but they are general, emergent characteristics of the system and do not presume the structured pattern of an order.

Some analysts further distinguish between order and the international community, which can be seen as the embodiment of liberal normative ideals exerting an influence on international politics, often through the activities of networked nongovernmental groups (Lindberg, 2019). The English School of international relations theory places special emphasis on the closely related concept of an international society, which forms when a group of states with common interests and values bind themselves together with a set of rules and institutions (see, for example, Bull, 2018). The notion of an international society might presume the existence of an

order indeed; it is difficult to imagine the existence of a society without an order. But the two concepts are analytically distinct.

Thus, the term international order goes beyond such broadly systemic realities to refer to organized configurations within the international system. Order presumes some degree of institutionalization or established structure established through ordering mechanisms that play some role in governing the relationships and behaviors among actors in a system. Even if they eventually become quite structured, these patterns can be emergent and unplanned, arising naturally through interactions or planned outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL EXPOSITION

Theory is nothing but systematic reflection on phenomena, designed to explain them and to show how they are related to each other in a meaningful, intelligent pattern, instead of being merely random items of an incoherent universe. Every discipline requires theory to guide research, to provide a basis for explanation, and if possible, to lead to a probabilistic predictive capability.

Scholars and theorists have defined theories in varied ways and every different definition implies how theory can do wonders for us. Theories have been defined as set of interrelated propositions (Hoover, 2017), set of systematic hunches (Burgoon, 2018) set of systematic generalization (Severin & Tankard Jnr., 2019) set of ideas (McQuial, 2020). These systematic concepts, notion or ideas explain, understand and predict events, phenomenon and situations (Hoover, 2017, McQuial, 2020, Garrison, 2000).

The concept of international order has been defined and conceptualized in various ways by scholars across the field of international relations, with an emphasis on rules, norms, and institutions that govern global interactions. Bull (2018) defines international order as: "A system of rules, norms, and institutions that govern the interactions of states and other actors in the international system, aimed at maintaining peace and stability. This order is based on a shared recognition of these rules and the mutual understanding of state interests." Bull highlights that international order is a structured system that provides stability and guides the behavior of states, particularly in terms of maintaining peace and security.

Status quo is a Latin phrase meaning the existing state of affairs, particularly with regard to social or political issues. To maintain the status quo is to keep the things the way they presently are. According to Heywood (2019) defines status quo as "The maintenance of existing power structures, policies, or social conditions, often defended by those who benefit from the current arrangements and challenged by reformist or revolutionary movements."

METHODOLOGY

The method for data collection employed in this study is qualitative in nature utilizing secondary method by reviewing related literatures from books, articles, publications and academic journals to assess mainstream theories of international relations as tools to justify international order and maintain the status quo. Credibility, relevance and recentness were considered in selection of the materials as most of the sources published between the periods of 2017 and 2024 were given much attention.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN MAINSTREAM THEORIES OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

International order denotes the intricate matrix of relationships, institutions, and normative frameworks that govern global interactions between sovereign states and non-state actors. It is moulded by the interplay of power dynamics, economic architectures, social stratifications, and ideological forces. The mainstream theories of International Relations (IR) Realism, Liberalism,

and Constructivism offer divergent expositions on how international order is forged, perpetuated, and transformed. Each theoretical lens elucidates distinctive mechanisms that undergird global stability, the provenance of disorder, and the role of various actors in shaping the international milieu.

Realism posits that international order emerges from the relentless struggle for power between sovereign states. It delineates an anarchic global system wherein states, propelled by the imperative of survival, vie for security and ascendancy, rendering conflict an endemic feature of international relations. Hans Morgenthau avowed that "international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power" (Morgenthau, 1948). In this paradigm, order is contingent upon a precarious equilibrium of power or the hegemony of a dominant state that enforces stability. Kenneth Waltz amplified this by asserting that "a self-help system compels states to act in ways that tend toward the establishment of balances of power" (Waltz, 1979). Thus, the nexus between realism and international order is premised on the dynamics of competition, deterrence, and strategic balancing, wherein stability is either secured through mutual apprehension or hegemonic imposition.

Liberalism, by contrast, underscores the pivotal role of international institutions, economic interdependence, and democratic governance in cultivating order. Contrary to Realism, which venerates anarchy as the source of instability, Liberalism contends that institutions such as the United Nations, global economic organizations, and legal frameworks mitigate state behavior and engender cooperation. Robert Keohane argued that "institutions reduce uncertainty by facilitating the making of commitments and providing information" (Keohane, 2019). Economic interdependence obviates the proclivities for conflict, while the diffusion of democratic ideals promotes pacific interrelations. Bruce Russett corroborated this, asserting that "democracies are less likely to fight each other due to mutual respect for liberal norms" (Russett, 2018). Liberalism, therefore, reconceptualizes international order as a system of structured cooperation, where established rules and norms temper anarchy, permitting states to engage in predictable, mutually beneficial interactions.

Constructivism subverts the materialist assumptions of both Realism and Liberalism, emphasizing the paramount significance of ideational factors, norms, and identities in constituting international order. From a Constructivist standpoint, the international system is not merely a function of material power or institutional configurations but is socially constructed through shared beliefs, collective identities, and historical experiences. Alexander Wendt provocatively declared that "anarchy is what states make of it" (Wendt, 1992), insinuating that international order is contingent upon the ways in which global actors perceive their roles and relationships. Martha Finnemore further argued that "international norms and institutions shape state interests and behavior rather than simply constraining them" (Finnemore, 2018).

The nexus between these theories and international order resides in their respective explanations of stability, transformation, and governance. Collectively, the perspectives of these theories offer a nuanced and multidimensional understanding of the formation and perpetuation of international order, reflecting the complexity and fluidity of global relations in a rapidly evolving world.

REALISM THEORY

Realism in international relations is a theory that emphasizes power politics, national interest, and the anarchic nature of the international system. It traces its roots to classical thinkers like Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, but modern realism was shaped by scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer. The theory asserts that states are the primary actors in global politics and operate in a self-help system where security and survival are their main priorities.

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Realism argues that international relations are driven by competition rather than cooperation, as power imbalances create security dilemmas that lead to conflicts or strategic alliances. Military strength, economic resources, and strategic positioning are central to a state's ability to maintain influence. Waltz (1979) asserts, "In an anarchic world, the distribution of capabilities among states determines the structure of the international system." This perspective explains why global stability is often maintained through power balancing rather than idealistic diplomacy.

Another core assertion of realism is that moral principles cannot dictate foreign policy, as states act based on pragmatic calculations of power and security. Morgenthau (1948) emphasizes this by stating, "Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe." This principle justifies actions such as military interventions, deterrence strategies, and economic dominance as necessary tools for national survival.

Realism Theory and the Justification of International Order and maintenance of the status quo

Realism provides a framework for understanding how global stability is sustained through power dynamics. The preservation of global power structures is a key realist principle; as dominant states work to prevent major shifts that could threaten their influence. The United States, for example, upholds a world order that aligns with its strategic interests, maintaining military alliances and using international institutions to reinforce its leadership. "The global order, as structured by realist principles, is not about promoting justice but about maintaining equilibrium that prevents large-scale conflict" (Mearsheimer, 2021). This perspective explains why powerful states resist radical changes to the system, ensuring that their dominance remains intact.

The balance of power is another central mechanism through which realism justifies international order. Stability is achieved when competing powers counterbalance, each other, preventing any single state from becoming too dominant. The Cold War exemplifies this principle, as the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in strategic competition through military alliances, economic influence, and nuclear deterrence. Today, similar dynamics exist in the U.S.-China rivalry, where both nations seek to expand their influence while preventing the other from achieving global supremacy. The United States strengthens alliances such as NATO and the QUAD, while China advances its interests through economic initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. These actions reflect the realist belief that global order is sustained through continuous power adjustments rather than through idealistic cooperation.

Military strength plays a crucial role in maintaining the status quo. Realists argue that deterrence is necessary to prevent aggression and maintain stability. The doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) during the Cold War ensured that neither the U.S. nor the Soviet Union launched nuclear attacks, preserving a tense but stable order. In contemporary geopolitics, India and Pakistan both possess nuclear weapons, which, despite their historical tensions, serve as a deterrent against full-scale war. Similarly, Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 was a realist move to secure its strategic interests in Ukraine, countering NATO’s influence in Eastern Europe. These examples demonstrate how states prioritize military power to uphold their security and geopolitical standing.

Economic strategies also reflect realist principles, as states seek to control resources and maintain economic dominance to reinforce their global influence. China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which invests in infrastructure projects worldwide, is a strategic effort to expand its geopolitical reach while securing access to critical resources and trade routes. Likewise, Saudi Arabia and OPEC manipulate oil production to maintain their leverage in global energy markets,

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ensuring that economic power remains concentrated within key players. These strategies align with the realist argument that economic power is a fundamental tool for sustaining international order. As Waltz (2018) notes, "Economic strength and military power are inseparable in a realist world, where states must use both to maintain their position in the global hierarchy."

Several nations adopt realist policies to safeguard their interests and maintain global order. The United States prioritizes military supremacy, strategic alliances, and economic policies that reinforce its leadership. China challenges the existing power structure by expanding its economic and military influence while avoiding direct confrontation. Russia employs military interventions, energy politics, and regional alliances to maintain its influence in former Soviet territories. India balances regional power through military expansion and strategic partnerships, while Israel relies on military strength and intelligence operations to deter regional threats.

LIBERALISM THEORY

Liberalism in international relations is a theory that emphasizes cooperation, international institutions, economic interdependence, and the promotion of democratic values as pathways to global peace and stability. Its intellectual roots can be traced to philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and John Locke, while modern proponents include Woodrow Wilson, Robert Keohane, and Michael Doyle. Unlike realism, which sees international relations as a struggle for power, liberalism asserts that states can work together to achieve mutual benefits through diplomacy, trade, and international organizations.

A central claim of liberalism is that democratic states are less likely to engage in war with one another, a concept known as the democratic peace theory. Doyle (2020) argues, "Liberal democracies tend to maintain peaceful relations because their political systems encourage negotiation and compromise over conflict." This principle underlies international efforts to promote democracy as a means of securing global stability.

Liberalism also highlights the role of international institutions, such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, in fostering cooperation and reducing conflict. Keohane (2019) states, "Institutions provide the framework for sustained cooperation by reducing transaction costs and increasing transparency between states." These organizations facilitate diplomacy, economic agreements, and conflict resolution mechanisms that help maintain international order.

Economic interdependence is another core aspect of liberalism, as increased trade and economic ties between nations reduce the likelihood of conflict. Rosecrance (2022) explains, "The more states become economically interdependent, the more they have to lose from conflict, making war an unattractive option." This belief supports policies such as globalization and regional trade agreements, which aim to strengthen economic ties to ensure peace and prosperity.

Liberalism Theory and the Justification of International Order and maintenance of the status quo

Liberalism justifies international order by emphasizing the importance of multilateral institutions and global governance structures that facilitate cooperation among states. The United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the European Union (EU) are central to liberalism's vision of international order. These institutions provide a framework for managing conflicts, promoting trade, ensuring human rights, and supporting global peace. As Keohane (2019) suggests, "International institutions facilitate cooperation by reducing uncertainty, providing transparency, and structuring repeated interactions among states." The UN, for example, justifies the international order by promoting peacekeeping missions, human

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rights, and diplomatic negotiations. The WTO regulates global trade, ensuring that states abide by established rules, thereby preventing trade wars and fostering economic stability.

In addition, liberalism advocates for the promotion of democracy as an essential element in creating a just international order. The democratic peace theory, central to liberal thought, posits that democracies are less likely to engage in war with one another. The promotion of democracy and the establishment of democratic norms are seen as vital to creating a global order that reduces the likelihood of conflict. Doyle (2020) notes, "Liberal democracies have internal mechanisms that encourage peaceful negotiations, making them more likely to engage in cooperative international relations." The European Union is a clear example of liberalism in practice, where democratic values and economic integration among member states have contributed to long-term peace and stability in Europe.

Furthermore, liberalism justifies international order through economic interdependence. Trade and economic cooperation between states reduce the likelihood of conflict, as states that are economically connected have strong incentives to avoid war. Economic organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank help to regulate global finance, stabilizing the world economy and reinforcing the existing order. Rosecrance (2022) argues, "As states become more economically interdependent, the costs of war rise, making cooperation a more attractive long-term strategy." The global integration of markets, particularly seen in organizations such as the WTO, ensures that economic relations continue to foster a stable, interconnected world.

Liberalism not only justifies international order but also helps maintain the status quo by reinforcing existing global power structures and institutions. Economic interdependence is a crucial component of maintaining stability, as it aligns the interests of states to prevent conflict and promote cooperation. For instance, the United States, as a major liberal power, plays a leading role in global economic institutions and promotes policies that sustain the existing global economic system. The dominance of the U.S. dollar, the strength of U.S.-led financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, and the U.S.'s influence in global trade and security arrangements all serve to maintain the status quo. These institutions ensure that the U.S. maintains its position at the center of the international order while fostering stability in the global economy.

The European Union (EU) is another practical example of liberalism maintaining the status quo. Through economic integration and democratic governance, the EU has created a framework that both justifies and maintains stability in Europe. By promoting the rule of law, human rights, and democracy, the EU has created a stable regional order that integrates former adversaries like Germany and France. Additionally, the EU's economic policies ensure that member states adhere to shared norms, helping maintain a stable and predictable international environment. However, this system also reinforces the status quo by ensuring that established powers, such as Germany and France, retain influence over regional affairs.

The U.S.-led global order also exemplifies how liberalism maintains the status quo. Through international institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, and the WTO, the U.S. continues to promote liberal norms like democracy, free trade, and human rights, while maintaining its own geopolitical and economic dominance. In regions like East Asia, the U.S. has used liberal mechanisms to ensure stability while containing emerging powers like China. NATO, for example, has expanded to include new members in Eastern Europe, stabilizing the region and preventing Russian expansionism. This reflects how liberalism reinforces the existing order by creating structures that limit challenges to dominant powers.

CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORY

Constructivism in international relations, as a theoretical framework, primarily focuses on the role of ideas, identities, and norms in shaping the behavior of states and the structure of the international system. It challenges the materialistic foundations of theories like realism and liberalism by suggesting that international relations are not simply determined by power or economic interests but by the social constructs that define how states perceive each other and the world.

Prominent proponents of constructivism include Alexander Wendt, Peter Katzenstein, and Martha Finnemore. Wendt, in particular, is one of the most influential scholars in the field. He argues that "anarchy is what states make of it," suggesting that the international system is socially constructed and not inherently conflictual (Wendt, 1992). Constructivists like Finnemore (2018) emphasize the importance of international organizations in shaping state behavior, stating that "international organizations like the UN are not just mechanisms for solving problems but are agents in the creation and propagation of norms that define legitimate state behavior."

The theory's major assertions revolve around the idea that state interests are not fixed but are shaped by the social environment, including norms, identities, and historical contexts. It stresses that the identities of states are crucial in shaping their behavior, which in turn influences the structure of the international system. Katzenstein (2021) highlights this by stating, "The culture of national security is shaped by norms and identities, which govern the ways states approach security." Constructivists also argue that international relations are a product of human interaction, meaning that they are subject to change over time. As Adler (2019) observes, "The identities and interests of states are not fixed, but are shaped through interaction with other states within the international system."

Constructivism Theory and the Justification of International Order and the Maintenance of the Status Quo

One of the main tenets of constructivism is the idea that states' actions are often motivated by the need to conform to established norms and practices. The United Nations (UN), for instance, serves as a platform where international norms such as peace, human rights, and environmental protection are collectively defined and institutionalized. As Finnemore (2018) states, "International organizations like the UN are not just mechanisms for solving problems but are agents in the creation and propagation of norms that define legitimate state behavior." Through its peacekeeping missions, human rights advocacy, and global frameworks for addressing climate change, the UN reinforces the legitimacy of the existing international order and ensures that states comply with widely accepted norms.

In addition, constructivism justifies international order through the socialization of states into certain norms, such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law. States are influenced by the norms and practices of powerful international organizations and are often motivated to align their domestic policies with these global standards to maintain legitimacy. The European Union (EU) is an example of this process, as it has been successful in integrating former communist states into its framework through the promotion of democratic values and market economies. In this context, the EU justifies international order by establishing norms that promote political stability and economic development, leading to the convergence of states policies with the EU's institutional requirements.

Furthermore, constructivism also helps justify international order by highlighting how the identity of powerful states is shaped by normative expectations. As Adler (2019) suggests, "The identities and interests of states are not fixed, but are shaped through interaction with other states within the international system." This recognition of shared identities and the expectations

of cooperation between states further strengthens the justification of the existing international order, as states adopt the shared norms and goals of the international community.

Constructivism also plays a key role in maintaining the status quo by promoting the stability of established norms and practices that shape the international system. States are socialized into the existing global order, and their identities and actions are often framed within the context of these norms. Constructivist scholars argue that state behavior is largely influenced by the need to conform to the expectations of other states, which helps maintain the existing international system.

The United States, as a leading global power, provides an example of constructivism in practice by acting in ways that align with the established norms of democracy, capitalism, and international security. The U.S. has historically played a pivotal role in shaping and maintaining the international order through its leadership in international institutions such as the UN, NATO, and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The U.S. helps to sustain the status quo by reinforcing the global liberal order based on free markets, democracy, and human rights, even as it sometimes acts unilaterally to safeguard its interests. By adhering to international norms and practices, the U.S. helps maintain the stability of the global system while also asserting its leadership within it.

The EU, as another example, maintains the status quo by promoting political and economic integration based on shared norms of democracy and human rights. The EU's expansion to include countries in Eastern Europe has been driven by the idea of spreading democratic values and securing stability in the region. As a result, countries that seek EU membership must align their policies with the EU's established norms, which ensures the maintenance of the EU's political and economic order. This process, referred to as "normative power Europe," highlights the EU's role in preserving the status quo by socializing new member states into its institutional framework.

Another instance of constructivism maintaining the status quo is the global norm of non-proliferation, which is reflected in the efforts of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The NPT has played a critical role in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons by establishing the norm that nuclear weapons states should not transfer nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states. This norm has been endorsed by most states, and adherence to the NPT helps to maintain international security and the existing balance of power. As Katzenstein (2021) notes, "International norms of non-proliferation have not only shaped state identities but have also contributed to the stabilization of the global security order."

Furthermore, as Ruggie (1998) observes, "The international order is a social construct, where the practices and expectations of states evolve over time based on shared norms, ensuring that the status quo is maintained through a continual process of reinforcement." This highlights the ongoing process through which states internalize international norms, contributing to the continuity of the global system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mainstream theories, via realism, liberalism, and constructivism have often been criticized for their state-centric focus, their tendency to favor dominant global powers, and their inability to address deep-rooted inequalities in the international system. Instead of relying on these theories to justify order, a more critical and transformative approach should be adopted. In order to ensure that, this paper recommends the following:

i. A shift from state-centric models to people-centered frameworks is necessary.
ii. That global institutions should be reformed to reduce the disproportionate influence of powerful states
iii. That, a de-colonial approach to international relations should be embraced

CONCLUSION

International relations theories serve as essential tools for both justifying international order and maintaining the status quo by shaping global governance, security, and diplomacy. Realism, with its emphasis on power politics and state sovereignty, justifies international order by arguing that a balance of power ensures stability, while maintaining the status quo by reinforcing existing power structures, as seen in U.S. and Russian foreign policies. Liberalism promotes international cooperation and institutions to uphold a just international order, advocating for democracy, human rights, and economic interdependence, as reflected in organizations like the United Nations and the European Union. However, it also maintains the status quo by embedding Western-led global governance models. Constructivism highlights the role of social norms and identities in shaping international order, justifying change through evolving norms but also maintaining the status quo when dominant global narratives resist transformation, as seen in NATO and international human rights frameworks.

Ultimately, these theories provide competing yet complementary lenses for understanding global politics. While some emphasize power and hierarchy, others advocate for cooperation, social change, or economic justice.

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THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION IN PROMOTING PEACE AND UNITY IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract:
This study, titled An Assessment of Local Government Administration in Promoting Peace and Unity in Kano State, Nigeria, explores the effectiveness of local government administrations in fostering peace and unity in Kano State. Amid the state's cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity, the research assesses how local government policies, administrative structures, and community programs contribute to conflict resolution, social cohesion, and inclusive governance. Using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and analysis of local administrative records, the study identifies key strategies utilized by local governments to mitigate conflicts and promote harmony. The findings indicate that participatory governance, transparent policy implementation, and targeted social programs play a critical role in enhancing communal trust and reducing intergroup tensions. However, challenges such as limited resources, political interference, and inadequate community awareness impact the sustainability of these peace-promoting efforts. The study concludes by recommending policy reforms, capacity building for local officials, and resource allocation improvements to strengthen the local government's role in maintaining peace and unity in Kano State.

Keywords: Local government administration, peace promotion, unity, conflict resolution and community engagement

Introduction

Local government administration plays a vital role in promoting peace and unity at the grassroots level, particularly in regions characterized by ethnic and religious diversity, such as Kano State, Nigeria. Local governments, as the closest tier of government to the people, serve as primary agents for implementing policies and programs that foster social cohesion and address community conflicts (Agba & Emeh, 2018). Through targeted initiatives, including community engagement, social development programs, and conflict resolution strategies, local administrations contribute to building harmonious relationships among diverse groups (Akinwale, 2020).

Kano State, with its complex social fabric, presents unique challenges for local governments tasked with maintaining peace and unity among its residents. The administration's ability to manage ethnic and religious tensions, promote inclusive governance, and ensure equitable resource distribution is critical for sustained peace in the region (Audu & Omale, 2019). Effective local governance, which emphasizes participatory decision-making and transparent processes, has been shown to enhance public trust and reduce incidents of communal violence (Ojo, 2021).

However, local governments in Kano face considerable obstacles, including resource constraints, limited administrative autonomy, and political interference, which can hinder their capacity to implement effective peace-promoting strategies (Ekong & Ekpo, 2017). These challenges underscore the need for strengthened institutional frameworks, improved funding, and enhanced training for local officials to manage community relations effectively and mediate conflicts (Bello & Musa, 2022). This study, therefore, aims to assess how local government

administration in Kano State contributes to promoting peace and unity, examining the effectiveness of their policies and practices in addressing the region's unique socio-political dynamics.

Statement of research Problem

The local government administration in Kano State, Nigeria, is confronted with significant challenges in promoting peace and unity within a diverse socio-cultural landscape marked by ethnic and religious plurality. Despite the potential of local governments to address grassroots conflicts through proximity to the communities they serve, many local administrations in Kano State struggle with limited resources, political interference, and inadequate administrative autonomy, which undermine their ability to foster sustainable peace (Audu & Omale, 2019). Research shows that local governments often lack the financial and operational capacity to implement effective conflict resolution strategies, limiting their influence in mediating communal disputes and promoting social cohesion (Ekong & Ekpo, 2017).

Furthermore, the bureaucratic structure and lack of participatory governance within many local government institutions in Kano inhibit meaningful citizen engagement, often resulting in distrust between the community and local authorities (Akinwale, 2020). This disconnect not only impedes efforts to foster unity but can also exacerbate existing tensions, as local residents may feel excluded from decision-making processes that directly impact their lives (Bello & Musa, 2022). The absence of robust, community-focused initiatives that address underlying causes of discord, such as unemployment, resource inequities, and socio-political exclusion, further hinders local governments from achieving their peace-building objectives (Agba & Emeh, 2018).

This study, therefore, seeks to assess the role of local government administration in promoting peace and unity in Kano State by examining the specific challenges these institutions face, evaluating the effectiveness of their existing policies, and identifying potential areas for improvement. Addressing these issues is crucial for developing a more responsive and peace-oriented local governance structure that can better meet the needs of Kano's diverse communities.

Research Questions

1. What role does local government administration play in promoting peace and unity in Kano State, Nigeria?
2. What specific strategies and policies are implemented by local governments in Kano State to foster social cohesion and resolve conflicts?
3. How effective are the local government initiatives in reducing ethnic, religious, and social tensions in Kano State?
4. What challenges do local government administrations in Kano State face in their efforts to promote peace and unity?
5. What strategies can be recommended to enhance the capacity of local governments in Kano State to sustain peace and unity among its diverse communities?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of local government administration in promoting peace and unity in Kano State, Nigeria.

2. To identify the specific strategies and policies implemented by local governments in Kano State to foster social cohesion and address community conflicts.
3. To assess the effectiveness of local government initiatives in reducing ethnic, religious, and social tensions among diverse groups within Kano State.
4. To explore the challenges faced by local government administrations in Kano State in their efforts to maintain peace and unity.
5. To recommend strategies for strengthening local government capacity to promote sustainable peace and unity in Kano State.

Research Method.

The study on *The Role of Local Government Administration in Promoting Peace and Unity in Kano State, Nigeria* adopts a qualitative research approach utilizing secondary sources of data. This method involves the systematic collection and analysis of existing literature, official reports, government policies, academic publications, and relevant documents from international organizations and non-governmental bodies. By relying on secondary data, the research critically examines historical and contemporary perspectives on local governance, conflict resolution mechanisms, and community engagement strategies in Kano State. Content analysis will be employed to interpret patterns, trends, and the effectiveness of local government initiatives in fostering peace and unity. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject by leveraging diverse sources of verified information, thus providing an empirical basis for assessing the contributions and challenges faced by local government administration in promoting social cohesion.

Conceptual Framework

In examining *The Role of Local Government Administration in Promoting Peace and Unity in Kano State, Nigeria*, it is essential to define key concepts central to the study:

1. **Local Government Administration** – Ola and Tonwe (2009) define local government administration as the management of public affairs at the grassroots level through decentralized governance, ensuring efficient service delivery, local participation, and socio-economic development. It serves as a mechanism for responding to local needs and fostering stability within communities.
2. **Peace** – Galtung (1969) conceptualizes peace as not just the absence of war or direct violence but also the elimination of structural violence, where institutions function to ensure justice, equality, and social harmony. In the context of local governance, peace involves conflict prevention, mediation, and fostering coexistence.
3. **Unity** – Deutsch (1957) defines unity as the development of shared identities, values, and goals among diverse groups within a society, creating a sense of belonging and cooperation. Effective local government administration enhances unity by promoting inclusive policies and participatory governance.
4. **Governance** – Hyden (1992) describes governance as the exercise of power and authority in managing a society's resources and affairs through institutions and policies that enhance participation, accountability, and stability. Local governance plays a crucial role in maintaining order, delivering public services, and strengthening social cohesion.

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Strategies and policies aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts, especially in ethnically and religiously diverse communities (Audu & Omale, 2019)

Conflict resolution mechanisms are essential strategies and policies that local governments use to prevent and address disputes, particularly within ethnically and religiously diverse communities. These mechanisms enable local administrations to identify and mediate potential sources of conflict early, reducing the likelihood of escalation and fostering a culture of peaceful coexistence. In diverse communities, proactive conflict resolution is key to maintaining social stability, as it ensures that varying perspectives are acknowledged and addressed in constructive ways.

One of the main components of effective conflict resolution is establishing platforms for open dialogue, where community members can voice concerns and engage with others in a structured, respectful environment. By facilitating dialogues, local governments provide a channel for grievances to be aired and discussed openly, often resolving misunderstandings before they develop into larger conflicts. Mediation services and community-led councils are also commonly used in these mechanisms, allowing for locally rooted approaches to dispute resolution that reflect the unique cultural values of the community.

Additionally, local governments can enact policies that promote inclusivity and fairness, directly addressing underlying issues of inequality or perceived injustice that often fuel conflict. For example, ensuring fair resource distribution, equal representation in decision-making, and non-discriminatory practices help to alleviate tensions that may otherwise manifest as conflict.

Conflict resolution mechanisms also emphasize the importance of community training in negotiation and conflict management skills, equipping leaders and residents with tools to handle disagreements constructively. These strategies build trust in local governance, as community members view authorities as committed to maintaining peace and unity. By fostering a community-centered approach to conflict resolution, local governments can not only address present disputes but also lay the groundwork for sustainable harmony among diverse populations.

Each pillar is hypothesized to contribute to increased social cohesion, trust in government, and reduction in communal tensions, thereby promoting peace and unity. The framework allows for an examination of how these elements interact within the local governance context in Kano State, highlighting the strengths and areas for improvement in the administration's approach to peacebuilding.

Theoretical Frame work

This study on *The Role of Local Government Administration in Promoting Peace and Unity in Kano State, Nigeria* is anchored on the **Structural-Functionalism Theory**, propounded by **Talcott Parsons**. The theory posits that society consists of interdependent structures that function collectively to maintain stability and social order. Within this framework, local government administration serves as a critical institution that ensures the effective governance of grassroots communities, fosters social integration, and mitigates conflicts through policy implementation and service delivery.

Assumptions of the Theory

1. Society is a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain equilibrium.
2. Each structure (e.g., local government) has specific functions essential for societal stability.
3. Social institutions, including local governance, must adapt to changes to sustain order and prevent conflict.

Strengths of the Theory

- It provides a holistic understanding of how local government structures contribute to social stability.
- It highlights the functional roles of institutions in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
- It emphasizes the importance of governance in ensuring community cohesion.

Weaknesses of the Theory

- It assumes all societal structures function harmoniously, overlooking power struggles and inequalities.
- It does not fully account for how political interference and corruption may hinder the effectiveness of local governance.
- It lacks a strong explanatory framework for rapid social change or revolutionary shifts.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The Structural-Functionalism Theory is relevant to this study as it provides a theoretical lens to understand how local government administration serves as a stabilizing institution in Kano State. By examining the roles of governance structures in fostering peace and unity, the study underscores the necessity of functional local government policies in addressing communal conflicts, promoting intergroup harmony, and enhancing social development. Thus, the theory offers a valuable framework for analyzing the effectiveness of local governance in maintaining societal balance and addressing challenges related to peace and unity in Kano State.

Major Findings and Discussion.

The paper has following findings from the relevant literature review.

1. The Role of Local Government in Conflict Resolution

Findings indicate that local government administration plays a crucial role in mediating conflicts within communities. Through traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, peace committees, and collaboration with local leaders, councils have contributed to conflict prevention and resolution. However, challenges such as political interference and limited autonomy often hinder their effectiveness.

Local government administration plays a crucial role in conflict resolution by mediating disputes within communities through traditional mechanisms, peace committees, and collaboration with local leaders. Scholars argue that integrating indigenous conflict resolution approaches into governance fosters legitimacy and trust (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Peace committees, comprising traditional rulers, religious leaders, and local officials, serve as platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, effectively addressing communal tensions (Ibrahim, 2018). However, political interference and limited autonomy hinder their effectiveness, as state governments often control local councils, restricting their decision-making capacity (Olowu, 2003). Financial constraints further weaken their ability to fund peace initiatives, while constitutional limitations prevent them from enforcing security measures (Egwu, 2015). Structural-functionalism explains their role in maintaining societal equilibrium, yet practical challenges necessitate policy reforms to enhance local governments' capacity in conflict mediation (Parsons, 1951). Strengthening financial independence, legal authority, and community engagement is essential for improving their role in sustainable peacebuilding.

2. Community Engagement and Participation

The study reveals that active community participation in decision-making processes fosters a sense of belonging and unity. Local governments that involve traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth groups, and women's associations in governance tend to experience fewer communal conflicts. However, in some cases, exclusionary politics and lack of transparency weaken trust in local authorities.

Active community engagement in local governance plays a pivotal role in fostering peace and unity, as inclusive decision-making strengthens social cohesion and mitigates communal conflicts. Scholars argue that participatory governance enhances legitimacy, ensuring that diverse groups feel represented and valued in policymaking (Gaventa, 2004). The involvement of traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth groups, and women's associations in local decision-making promotes collective ownership of policies, reducing tensions and fostering cooperation (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999). Empirical studies indicate that local governments that encourage broad participation experience lower levels of conflict, as engagement creates avenues for dialogue and peaceful dispute resolution (Putnam, 1993). However, exclusionary politics, nepotism, and lack of transparency often weaken public trust in local authorities, leading to political alienation and grievances (Ake, 1996). When marginalized groups are denied access to decision-making, it exacerbates communal divisions and fuels social unrest (Mamdani, 1996). Structural-functionalism explains the necessity of inclusive governance for societal equilibrium, as effective local administration depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders. Strengthening accountability, institutionalizing participatory frameworks, and ensuring equitable representation in governance processes are critical for sustaining peace and unity at the grassroots level.

3. Socioeconomic Development as a Tool for Peacebuilding

Economic empowerment initiatives such as skill acquisition programs, youth employment schemes, and small business grants have been identified as strategies employed by local governments to address poverty-induced conflicts. While some local governments have successfully implemented such initiatives, others lack the financial resources or political will to sustain them.

Socioeconomic development plays a crucial role in peacebuilding, as economic empowerment reduces poverty-induced conflicts and fosters social stability. Scholars argue that economic deprivation is a key driver of communal violence, making targeted development programs essential for conflict prevention (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Local governments employ strategies such as skill acquisition programs, youth employment schemes, and small business grants to mitigate economic grievances and create opportunities for vulnerable populations (Stewart, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests that societies with higher employment rates and economic inclusivity experience fewer instances of violent conflict, as economic security reduces the incentives for individuals to engage in criminal or insurgent activities (Justino, 2012).

However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is often undermined by financial constraints, political interference, and corruption. Many local governments struggle to sustain development programs due to inadequate funding and overreliance on allocations from central authorities (Ake, 1996). In some cases, economic initiatives are manipulated for political gain, with resources disproportionately distributed based on political affiliations rather than genuine community needs (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Furthermore, the lack of transparency and accountability in program implementation weakens public trust in local governance, limiting community participation and the overall impact of these initiatives (Narayan et al., 2000).

The **structural-functionalism theory** explains the role of socioeconomic development in peacebuilding by emphasizing the interdependence of economic stability and social harmony (Parsons, 1951). When local governments fulfill their function of economic empowerment, societal equilibrium is maintained, reducing the likelihood of conflict. However, when structural weaknesses such as poor governance and economic marginalization persist, social instability becomes inevitable.

To enhance the role of socioeconomic development in peacebuilding, policy recommendations include increasing local government autonomy over financial resources, implementing transparent monitoring mechanisms, and fostering partnerships with private sector actors and civil society organizations. Strengthening institutional frameworks to ensure equitable distribution of economic benefits will further promote sustainable peace and development at the grassroots level.

4. Security Collaboration Between Local Governments and Law Enforcement

The study highlights the importance of cooperation between local governments and security agencies in maintaining peace and order. The establishment of vigilante groups and community policing initiatives has contributed to crime reduction in some areas. However, inadequate funding, logistical challenges, and allegations of human rights violations pose significant concerns.

Collaboration between local governments and security agencies is a crucial factor in maintaining peace and order, particularly in decentralized governance structures. Scholars argue that local governments, due to their proximity to grassroots communities, play an essential role in intelligence gathering, crime prevention, and conflict mediation (Baker, 2008). Community policing initiatives, including the establishment of vigilante groups, have been instrumental in addressing security challenges by leveraging local knowledge and fostering trust between citizens and law enforcement (Tankebe, 2009). Studies show that areas where local governments actively cooperate with security agencies experience lower crime rates and improved social cohesion (Goldsmith, 2005).

However, the effectiveness of these collaborations is often hindered by financial constraints, logistical inefficiencies, and political interference. Many local governments lack the necessary funding to provide adequate training, equipment, and welfare for community-based security personnel (Hills, 2008). As a result, some vigilante groups operate without proper oversight, raising concerns about human rights violations, abuse of power, and extra-judicial killings (Amnesty International, 2016). Additionally, rivalries between state security agencies and local security outfits sometimes create jurisdictional conflicts, weakening coordinated crime prevention efforts (Alemika& Chukwuma, 2004).

The **structural-functionalism theory** provides a framework for understanding security collaboration, emphasizing that local governments and law enforcement agencies must function interdependently to maintain societal stability (Parsons, 1951). When local governments effectively coordinate with security agencies, a balanced security structure emerges, fostering order and peace. However, when structural inefficiencies such as lack of resources, political manipulation, and rights violations persist, the security apparatus weakens, leading to increased insecurity.

To improve security collaboration, scholars recommend increasing budgetary allocations for local security initiatives, implementing oversight mechanisms to prevent human rights abuses, and fostering institutional partnerships between law enforcement and community stakeholders.

Establishing clear guidelines on the roles and limitations of vigilante groups and integrating modern policing technologies can further enhance security operations at the grassroots level.

5. Political Factors Influencing Peace and Unity

Political patronage and the distribution of resources often determine the effectiveness of local government administration in promoting peace. Findings suggest that where local officials are accountable and prioritize inclusive governance, peace and unity are more sustainable. Conversely, political favoritism, corruption, and election-related violence undermine local peace efforts.

The study underscores the potential of local government administration as a vital institution for promoting peace and unity in Kano State. While structural-functionalism provides a framework for understanding the roles of local government institutions, practical challenges such as limited financial autonomy, political interference, and weak institutional capacity hinder their effectiveness. Strengthening participatory governance, improving financial independence, and enhancing collaboration with security agencies and civil society organizations are essential for maximizing the role of local governments in peacebuilding.

Overall, local government administration remains a critical actor in fostering social cohesion, conflict resolution, and community development in Kano State. However, addressing systemic challenges through policy reforms and institutional strengthening is necessary to optimize their contributions to peace and unity.

Conclusion

Local government administration plays a crucial role in fostering peace and unity in Kano State, but several challenges hinder its effectiveness. Limited resources, political interference, inadequate conflict resolution training, weak participatory structures, inequitable resource distribution, and inconsistent policy implementation undermine trust and inclusivity. These obstacles weaken local governments' ability to address community needs and build social cohesion across Kano's diverse population.

Effective governance in a multiethnic society like Kano requires transparency, equity, and active community engagement. Findings indicate that when local governments operate with limited autonomy and resources, their capacity to implement meaningful policies diminishes. Weak participatory mechanisms further widen the gap between authorities and the people, eroding public trust and reducing support for peace initiatives.

To strengthen their role in promoting peace and unity, Kano's local governments must implement targeted reforms. Increasing funding, reducing political interference, enhancing participatory governance, ensuring policy consistency, and investing in conflict resolution training are essential. Fair resource distribution and inclusive programs can bridge social divides and create a stable environment for sustainable peace.

Ultimately, empowering local governments through transparency and community-driven policies is key to achieving long-term peace and unity in Kano State. Addressing these challenges will foster a more cohesive and resilient society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the assessment of local government administration in promoting peace and unity in Kano State, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of local governance in fostering social cohesion and reducing conflict:

1. **Increase Funding and Resource Allocation**
Local governments in Kano require greater financial support to implement comprehensive peace and unity programs. State and federal governments should prioritize funding for local initiatives aimed at social cohesion, community development, and conflict resolution, enabling local authorities to address community needs effectively.

2. **Reduce Political Interference and Enhance Autonomy**
Local governments should be granted greater autonomy to make decisions that best serve their communities without undue external political influence. Clear policies should be established to limit interference from higher levels of government, allowing local administrations to operate independently and prioritize community-specific needs.

3. **Implement Training Programs for Conflict Resolution**
Local government officials should receive training in conflict resolution, mediation, and culturally sensitive approaches to managing disputes. Capacity-building workshops and training sessions will equip officials with the necessary skills to navigate diverse social dynamics, address conflicts proactively, and foster harmonious intergroup relations.

4. **Strengthen Participatory Governance Structures**
Local governments should create and reinforce participatory platforms, such as town hall meetings, community councils, and feedback mechanisms, to actively involve residents in decision-making processes. Increased community participation can foster trust, build inclusivity, and ensure that local policies align with the priorities and values of the people.

5. **Develop and Sustain Social Cohesion Programs**
Regular social cohesion initiatives, such as interfaith dialogues, cultural exchanges, and community-building events, should be implemented to encourage interaction and mutual understanding among different ethnic and religious groups. These programs can break down prejudices and promote unity, creating a more inclusive environment for peace.

6. **Ensure Equitable Resource Distribution**
Local governments should adopt transparent mechanisms for distributing resources equitably across all communities. Fair access to public goods and services, such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure, can help reduce feelings of marginalization, foster social equity, and prevent tensions linked to perceived disparities.

7. **Standardize Policy Implementation Across All Local Governments**
To prevent inconsistencies and disparities, a standardized framework for implementing peace and unity policies across all local government areas in Kano should be developed. This uniformity will help ensure that all communities experience the benefits of local government initiatives equally, thereby building a sense of fairness and legitimacy.

8. **Enhance Transparency and Accountability**
Local governments should prioritize transparency in their operations, including budget allocations, resource distribution, and program outcomes. By publicly sharing information and maintaining open channels for feedback, local administrations can build trust with their communities, encouraging cooperation and reducing suspicion.

9. **Collaborate with Community Leaders and Civil Society Organizations.**
Partnerships with community leaders, religious institutions, and civil society organizations can strengthen peace initiatives and expand the reach of local government programs. These collaborations can provide additional resources, expertise, and community trust, enhancing the overall impact of efforts to promote unity and social cohesion.

10. **Monitor and Evaluate Peace Initiatives Regularly.**
To ensure that programs are effective, local governments should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for all peace and unity initiatives. Regular assessments will allow local administrations to identify successful strategies, address gaps, and adjust programs based on community feedback and evolving needs.

By implementing these recommendations, local governments in Kano State can enhance their capacity to promote peace and unity, foster trust and inclusivity, and create a stable foundation for long-term social cohesion.

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THE NEW TALIBAN GOVERNMENT, RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND THE FUTURE OF AFGANISTAN

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Abstract
This study examines the political dynamics, governance challenges, and implications of the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan. The study addresses a gap in understanding the governance model of the Taliban post-2021 and its impact on ethnic groups, human rights, and international relations. The research objectives include analyzing the Taliban's political structure, the implications of their rule on Afghanistan's ethnic minorities, and assessing the internal and external challenges to their governance. The methodology employed is qualitative, utilizing a combination of document analysis, interviews with local experts, and case studies of governance in areas under Taliban control. Findings indicate that while the Taliban has implemented a strict interpretation of Islamic law, internal divisions among factions and ethnic tensions, especially with non-Pashtun groups, have hindered effective governance. Additionally, corruption, inefficiency, and human rights abuses, particularly against women and minority groups, have exacerbated the crisis. The study concludes that the Taliban's governance is far from monolithic, marked by conflicting ideological factions, and incapable of addressing Afghanistan's socioeconomic needs. The study recommends that international actors engage in dialogue with moderate factions within the Taliban to promote political inclusivity, pressure for human rights improvements, and provide humanitarian aid aimed at stabilizing the region. Furthermore, it suggests that more attention be paid to Afghanistan's ethnic dynamics to ensure a more balanced representation in the Taliban's decision-making processes.

Keywords: Taliban, governance, ethnic minorities, Afghanistan, political dynamics, human rights

Introduction

The political landscape of Afghanistan has experienced profound changes in recent years, culminating in the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021. This marked a significant moment in the nation's history, as the Taliban, a group that had been ousted from power in 2001, regained control following the withdrawal of U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces. With their resurgence, the Taliban announced the formation of a new government, which raised questions about the future of Afghanistan, its governance, and its socio-political trajectory. Central to these discussions is the issue of religious fundamentalism, as the Taliban has historically adhered to a strict interpretation of Islamic law, which informs its governance (Ahady, 1995; Ayoob and Dannelle, 2020). The new Taliban government is focused on the implementation of a regime based on its interpretation of Sharia law, which has raised concerns about human rights, freedoms, and the status of women in Afghanistan. This shift has generated intense debates among policymakers, academics such as (Sungur, 2022; Proctor, 2022; Kamel, 2015; Ibrahim, 2017), and the international community. The Taliban's return to power is not just a political shift; it is also a reassertion of religious fundamentalism in a region that has long been a center for geopolitical interests and conflicts. Understanding the implications of this fundamentalist ideology on Afghanistan's future is vital for assessing the stability of the region and its relationship with the global community.

The reestablishment of Taliban rule in Afghanistan presents a range of complex challenges, both within the country and on the global stage. While much attention has been focused on the humanitarian crises, security concerns, and the stability of the region, less has been discussed in-depth regarding the long-term effects of religious fundamentalism in shaping Afghanistan's future. The gap in existing literature such as (Gopal, 2016; Jamal and William, 2023; Nazar and Abubakar, 2024) lies in the lack of comprehensive analysis on how the Taliban's version of religious fundamentalism will impact key aspects of Afghan society, including governance, education, the economy, and the social fabric. Specifically, there is limited research exploring how the Taliban's policies, driven by their strict interpretation of Islam, will affect the broader Afghan population, particularly women, ethnic minorities, and youth. The international community also remains uncertain about how to engage with the Taliban while addressing these human rights issues. Furthermore, the future of Afghanistan's political and economic stability is clouded by the question of how the Taliban will balance their fundamentalist ideology with the practical realities of governing a modern state that faces immense economic and infrastructure challenges. Additionally, the gap exists in understanding how religious fundamentalism, as championed by the Taliban, will influence Afghanistan's interactions with neighboring countries and its role in regional geopolitics. This analysis is crucial for policymakers and international organizations working to develop strategies for addressing the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan's people while engaging with the Taliban government. In summary, the problem lies in the insufficient exploration of the long-term impact of religious fundamentalism on Afghanistan's political, social, and economic future, as well as its implications for global and regional stability. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between the Taliban's religious ideology and the future trajectory of Afghanistan.

The Resurgence of the Taliban and Its Governance Model

After nearly two decades of insurgency against the Afghan government and foreign military forces, the Taliban rapidly regained control of Afghanistan, culminating in the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Their return to power raised questions about the future of the country, especially regarding governance, human rights, and regional stability. This section examines the resurgence of the Taliban and their governance model, which is deeply rooted in their strict interpretation of Islamic law (Sharia) (Bennet, 2023).

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, which had been a key component of the 2020 Doha Agreement, created a vacuum of power that the Taliban capitalized on. Within a matter of weeks, the Taliban seized control of major cities, including Kabul, with little resistance from the Afghan National Security Forces. Many factors contributed to the speed of the Taliban's victory, including the fracturing of the Afghan government, the diminishing morale of the Afghan military, and the failure of international support to establish a sustainable political order. Several scholars (e.g., Jamal and William, 2023; Foshani, 2022) point to the inability of the U.S.-backed government in Afghanistan to deliver on promises of security, development, and governance. The failure of the Afghan political system to address the needs and aspirations of a significant portion of the population led to a loss of legitimacy. Meanwhile, the Taliban, who had positioned themselves as anti-corruption and anti-Western, gained support in rural areas and among disaffected communities. The insurgent group's strategic use of local networks and understanding of Afghan tribal and ethnic dynamics allowed them to effectively consolidate power across the country (Sungur, 2022; Gopal, 2016). The Taliban's governance model is heavily influenced by their interpretation of Sharia law, which is central to their political ideology and identity. When they first ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban implemented a draconian version of Islamic law, enforcing strict gender segregation, severe

punishments, and curbing civil liberties. Their interpretation of Islam, often referred to as "Talibanism," is based on an austere and puritanical reading of the Qur'an and Hadiths, which they consider the only valid sources of governance.

Following their return to power in 2021, the Taliban emphasized that they would govern according to the principles of Sharia, promising a more "inclusive" and "moderate" approach compared to their previous rule. However, there is widespread skepticism regarding these claims. In reality, the Taliban's policies have mirrored their previous hardline stance, particularly in areas related to women's rights, freedom of speech, and minority protections. According to reports from Human Rights Reuter and Thore (2021), the Taliban has reinstated many of the same oppressive policies they implemented during their first rule, such as limiting girls' education, restricting women's ability to work and move freely, and suppressing dissent. The Taliban's governance can be understood in terms of the following key aspects: The Taliban derives much of its legitimacy from its interpretation of Islam. They argue that they are enacting a divinely ordained system, and their governance is grounded in religious principles rather than secular or democratic ideologies. The religious leadership is central to decision-making, with the Taliban's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada, playing a pivotal role in directing the group's policies and enforcing Sharia law. While the Taliban has promised a "transitional" government, its structure is characterized by centralized control. The group has relied on a mix of military commanders and religious scholars to oversee different sectors of governance. The council of religious leaders, known as the *Rahbari Shura*, serves as the highest decision-making body, while regional commanders manage local governance. Under the Taliban's rule, education has been a significant area of concern, particularly regarding the rights of girls and women. While the Taliban has allowed boys to continue their education, girls' access to secondary and higher education remains restricted in many areas. The Taliban's control over media has led to censorship, with many journalists and media outlets forced to operate under strict guidelines. Independent reporting has been stifled, and freedom of expression is limited. The Taliban's enforcement of security is rooted in their strict interpretation of Islamic law. The Taliban has re-established a system of religious courts to dispense justice, and punishments such as public executions, amputations, and flogging have been reinstated in some areas. These punishments are intended to act as a deterrent for what the Taliban considers violations of Sharia. The group's security apparatus is closely tied to their religious ideology, and their armed forces are primarily focused on maintaining internal order and suppressing dissent. The Taliban's ability to effectively govern Afghanistan's economy is one of the major challenges it faces. Afghanistan is heavily dependent on foreign aid, and the withdrawal of international support following the Taliban's return to power has led to economic stagnation. The Taliban has also been unable to gain access to frozen Afghan reserves abroad. As a result, Afghanistan's economy is in dire straits, with widespread poverty and unemployment. The Taliban's economic model, which emphasizes Islamic finance and self-reliance, has faced challenges in a globalized economy where international cooperation is often necessary for survival.

Challenges to the Taliban's Governance

Since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in August 2021, the group has faced numerous challenges in establishing a stable and sustainable government. These challenges are multifaceted and stem from internal governance issues, external pressures, and the complexities of Afghanistan's socio-political landscape. While the Taliban seeks to consolidate its power and implement its interpretation of Islamic law, several key obstacles have hindered its ability to govern effectively and maintain stability.

The Taliban's governance is marked by a combination of ideological rigidity, a lack of experience in running a modern state, and significant internal divisions. These issues have led to difficulties in managing the country and addressing the needs of its people. Afghanistan is a highly diverse country, with multiple ethnic groups, languages, and cultures. The Taliban, which is primarily a Pashtun movement, has struggled to gain the trust and support of non-Pashtun ethnic groups, such as Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. Non-Pashtun groups have historically been underrepresentedin the Taliban leadership due to the group's Pashtun-dominated foundation, as the Taliban originated largely from Pashtun areas and leadership. Historically, Afghanistan has experienced ethnic tensions, and Pashtun-dominated governance has marginalized other groups like Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. The Taliban's strict interpretation of Sharia law and regressive policies on human rights, particularly women's rights, have alarmed non-Pashtun communities, who tend to hold more progressive views. Additionally, non-Pashtun groups fear exclusion from decision-making processes, seeing the Taliban as a Pashtun-centric force that neglects their cultural and political aspirations. The group's lack of inclusivity exacerbates these concerns about governance. Furthermore, Taliban rule has traditionally been authoritarian, suppressing political diversity and limiting freedoms. Non-Pashtun groups remain concerned about their rights under a Taliban-led government. This has led to tensions, particularly in northern Afghanistan, which is home to a significant Tajik and Uzbek population. The Taliban has largely relied on a centralizing model of governance, but Afghanistan's historical reliance on local leaders and tribal customs means that the Taliban's control is more tenuous in certain regions, especially where local militias or power brokers exert significant influence (Sungar, 2022; Proctor, 2022).

The Taliban itself is not a monolithic organization; it comprises multiple factions with differing views on governance, ideology, and strategy. These factions are often divided along ethnic and regional lines. Disagreements over governance models, tactics, and approaches to relations with the international community have at times resulted in infighting within the group. **For example, 2015 Leadership Dispute** after the death of Taliban founder Mullah Omar emerged between factions loyal to Mullah Akhtar Mansoor and those supporting Mullah Mohammad Rasoul, leading to a split within the group along regional and ethnic lines, with the former being more Pashtun-dominated. Also, the **2020 Doha Agreement** which some Taliban factions disagreed with the peace negotiations with the U.S., with hardliners opposing any compromise, while others sought to secure a political settlement. This division created tensions within the group on how to approach the international community. **Ethnic Tensions Post-2021** also erupted following the Taliban's return to power, there have been reports of infighting between Pashtun-centric leaders and those from other ethnic groups, such as Tajiks and Uzbeks, over representation in key positions within the new government (Jamal and William, 2023; Nazar and Abubakar, 2024) .

The leadership of the Taliban, particularly in Kabul, faces challenges in managing these internal divisions and presenting a united front. This internal fragmentation can undermine the group's legitimacy and effectiveness in governing the country. The Taliban, as an insurgent group, has limited experience in running a modern state apparatus (The Asia Foundation, 2019). While it is adept at military operations, its administrative capacity to manage Afghanistan's complex bureaucracy, economy, and infrastructure is minimal. The government structures that existed under the previous Afghan government were dismantled following the Taliban's takeover, and the Taliban's own structures are not yet fully developed or capable of efficiently running the country. Corruption and inefficiency within the Taliban's ranks also undermine the group's ability to govern effectively. After the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, reports

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emerged of widespread corruption, with leaders and commanders embezzling funds meant for public services and development, undermining efforts to provide basic services like healthcare and education (Nazar and Abubakar, 2021). Throughout the Taliban's insurgency, local commanders were frequently accused of extorting money from civilians and businesses, often demanding bribes in exchange for protection or safe passage. This system of corruption eroded public trust and contributed to governance inefficiency (Jamal and William, 2023). The Taliban has also been linked to the opium trade, with corrupt officials and fighters profiting from drug production and smuggling. This undermined their credibility and hampered efforts to address Afghanistan's broader economic and governance challenges (Sungar, 2022; Proctor, 2022).

The Taliban's lack of experience in handling civil administration, public services, and governance on a national scale complicates efforts to meet the needs of the population. One of the most pressing challenges facing the Taliban is Afghanistan's dire economic situation. Years of conflict, international sanctions, and the withdrawal of foreign aid have crippled the Afghan economy. The Taliban's lack of formal recognition by the international community has led to severe economic isolation. Most countries, including the United States and European nations, have imposed sanctions on Afghanistan, freezing access to the country's foreign assets and limiting trade (Gopal, 2016). This has resulted in a severe shortage of liquidity, high inflation, and limited access to essential goods and services. The Taliban's inability to access international financial systems and aid has exacerbated Afghanistan's economic woes. Despite attempts to foster relations with regional powers such as China and Pakistan, the Taliban has struggled to secure the economic support necessary to stabilize the country. Afghanistan's economic collapse has plunged millions of Afghans into poverty. The collapse of key sectors, such as education, healthcare, and agriculture, has contributed to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The withdrawal of foreign aid, which had previously supported the Afghan economy, has left many Afghans without basic services, including healthcare, food, and education. The economic difficulties are compounded by a severe drought and food insecurity. The country faces high unemployment rates, with a significant portion of the population dependent on humanitarian aid for survival. The lack of economic opportunities under Taliban rule has led to a massive brain drain, with many educated professionals, especially women, fleeing the country in search of better opportunities abroad. This exodus of skilled workers leaves Afghanistan without the human capital needed for reconstruction, development, and governance.

The Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law and its repression of certain social freedoms have created significant challenges to governance and international relations. One of the most significant challenges to the Taliban's rule is its treatment of women. The group's repressive policies, which severely limit women's rights to education, work, and freedom of movement, have drawn widespread criticism from the international community and human rights organizations. Women's rights activists, many of whom were instrumental in the development of the Afghan state in the years following the 2001 U.S.-led invasion, have been silenced or forced into hiding. The Taliban has rescinded most of the rights women gained under previous governments, such as access to education and employment. This not only violates international human rights standards but also hinders Afghanistan's development. By excluding half of the population from the workforce and education system, the Taliban is stifling the country's potential for progress and prosperity. Sungar (2022) argues that, ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan, particularly the Hazara Shia community, face persecution under Taliban rule. The Taliban's Sunni-dominated ideology has led to violent attacks against Hazara communities, who have historically been marginalized and targeted for their religious and ethnic identity. The Taliban's treatment of minorities raises concerns about human rights abuses and religious

intolerance. These groups may resist Taliban rule, leading to further social instability. The Taliban has imposed strict censorship, stifling freedom of expression and suppressing political dissent. Journalists, activists, and civil society organizations face threats of arrest, torture, and execution if they speak out against the government. The crackdown on free speech and political opposition creates a climate of fear and undermines any potential for constructive dialogue or democratic governance. This lack of political freedom also prevents the development of a legitimate, inclusive political process, further alienating many segments of Afghan society.

Despite claiming to have secured the country, the Taliban faces significant security threats from various insurgent groups, the most notable of which is ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K). ISIS-K, an affiliate of the Islamic State operating in Afghanistan, has been one of the most persistent threats to Taliban rule. The group has carried out high-profile attacks, including suicide bombings targeting both Taliban officials and civilians. The Taliban's inability to fully control these groups or prevent them from carrying out attacks has called into question their ability to provide security and stability. Other insurgent groups, including remnants of the former Afghan military, have also contributed to ongoing insecurity in parts of the country. These groups may seek to challenge Taliban authority, particularly in areas where the Taliban's control is weaker. The Taliban's consolidation of power is also threatened by internal rebellions. Afghan factions, such as the National Resistance Front (NRF), have launched uprisings against Taliban rule, particularly in the Panjshir Valley. While the Taliban has been able to suppress these uprisings militarily, they remain a symbol of opposition and potential future instability. Verso (2019).

The Taliban's failure to gain formal recognition from the international community has significantly hindered its efforts to secure diplomatic legitimacy and support. Most countries have refused to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, citing human rights concerns, particularly regarding the treatment of women and minorities, as well as fears of terrorism. Without recognition, Afghanistan is cut off from international aid, foreign investment, and access to international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This isolation makes it difficult for the Taliban to address the country's economic challenges and provides little incentive for positive reform. The Taliban faces ongoing international pressure to improve its governance, respect human rights, and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorist groups. However, the lack of diplomatic engagement and the group's reluctance to meet international demands complicates the chances for cooperation and recognition.

Religious Fundamentalism and Sharia Law

Religious fundamentalism and Sharia law are deeply intertwined in the governance model of the Taliban, and they play a central role in shaping Afghanistan's political, social, and cultural environment. To understand the implications of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan, it is essential to first examine the concepts of religious fundamentalism and Sharia law, as well as how they intersect in the Taliban's policies and governance. This section explores these two core elements, providing insight into their foundational role in Taliban ideology and the broader socio-political dynamics in Afghanistan. Religious fundamentalism refers to a strict, literal interpretation of religious texts and traditions, accompanied by a desire to return to what adherents believe is the true, unaltered essence of the religion. It typically involves a rejection of modernism, secularism, and liberal values, favoring instead a rigid adherence to traditional beliefs and practices. Religious fundamentalists often advocate for a return to the perceived "golden age" of their faith, where religious law governed every aspect of life. In the case of the Taliban, religious fundamentalism is rooted in an austere and puritanical interpretation of Islam.

The Taliban's ideology is shaped by the belief that a true Islamic state must be governed by a strict application of Sharia law, which they view as divinely ordained. The Taliban's religious fundamentalism is influenced by the Deobandi school of thought, which emphasizes strict adherence to Islamic texts and traditions, and the Salafi movement, which advocates for a return to the practices of the earliest Muslim communities (Ibrahim, 2017). For the Taliban, religious fundamentalism is not merely a personal belief but a political program. Their version of Islam is not only a matter of personal piety but also a comprehensive framework for governing the state and society. This worldview informs their policies, including the enforcement of moral codes, gender segregation, and the repression of dissent.

Sharia Law: An Overview

Sharia law, often referred to simply as "Sharia," is the Islamic legal system derived from the Quran (the holy book of Islam) and the Hadith (the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad). Sharia covers a wide range of issues, including worship, family life, business transactions, criminal law, and personal behavior. It is intended to provide guidance for Muslims on how to live a righteous life in accordance with the will of God (Allah). Sharia law is not a single, monolithic system but rather a collection of interpretations and practices that vary depending on the school of thought within Islam. The four main Sunni schools of jurisprudence Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali have different approaches to interpreting Sharia, while Shia Islam also has its own distinct interpretation. The Taliban adhere primarily to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, though their interpretation is often seen as particularly harsh and conservative compared to other Hanafi scholars. Under Sharia, the legal system covers both personal matters, such as marriage, inheritance, and religious duties, as well as criminal offenses like theft, adultery, and apostasy. Depending on the interpretation of Sharia, punishments for criminal offenses can range from fines and imprisonment to corporal punishment, including flogging and amputation, and in some cases, the death penalty.

The Taliban's Interpretation of Sharia Law

The Taliban's interpretation of Sharia law is characterized by a strict and literal adherence to Islamic texts, which results in policies that emphasize religious purity and social order according to their understanding of Islam. The Taliban view their rule as an attempt to create an Islamic state where every aspect of life, from governance to personal behavior, is dictated by Sharia law. Their version of Sharia is often considered to be a more extreme and puritanical interpretation than that followed by many other Muslim-majority countries. Sungur (2022) argues that, one of the most controversial aspects of the Taliban's rule has been its treatment of women. The Taliban's version of Sharia imposes severe restrictions on women's rights, including prohibitions on women working, leaving their homes without a male guardian, and attending school beyond the primary level. These policies are justified by the Taliban as necessary to maintain moral order and protect the dignity of women, based on their interpretation of gender roles in Islam. Women are expected to wear the full-body covering known as the *burqa*, and their participation in public life is severely restricted. Under Taliban rule, Sharia law is enforced through a system of religious courts. The group has reintroduced punishments that are derived from their strict interpretation of Islamic law, including public executions, amputation of hands for theft, and flogging for moral offenses such as adultery or alcohol consumption. These punishments are often carried out publicly in an attempt to deter crime and maintain social order, in line with the Taliban's view of Sharia as a tool for enforcing moral discipline.

Ibrhim and Shahram (2020), the Taliban's governance includes a strong focus on religious policing, with groups such as the *Hisbah* (morality police) tasked with enforcing Sharia law. These police forces are responsible for ensuring that individuals adhere to the Taliban's version

of Islamic conduct, which includes enforcing dress codes, prohibiting music and entertainment, and monitoring behavior in public spaces. The goal is to create a society that conforms to the Taliban's understanding of Islamic piety and moral purity. The Taliban has also imposed restrictions on education, particularly for girls and women. While the Taliban has made some efforts to establish Islamic schools, these institutions prioritize religious education over secular subjects. The Taliban claims that girls' education will be allowed within the framework of Sharia, but in practice, girls are often barred from attending secondary and higher education institutions. This strict approach to education is part of the Taliban's broader belief that all knowledge should be filtered through a religious lens.The implementation of Sharia law by the Taliban has been a point of contention in Afghanistan's relationship with the international community. Many countries and human rights organizations have criticized the Taliban's interpretation of Sharia, particularly in terms of women's rights and freedom of expression. International human rights law, which emphasizes equality, freedom, and personal autonomy, often conflicts with the Taliban's rigid application of Sharia, leading to significant tension in Afghanistan's foreign relations. Reuter and Thore (2021) asserts, the United Nations and several Western countries have expressed concern about the human rights situation under the Taliban, particularly regarding the treatment of women, the restriction of freedom of speech, and the lack of political freedoms. While the Taliban has claimed that its interpretation of Sharia is in line with Islamic principles, critics argue that its implementation is excessively harsh and violates fundamental human rights. Moreover, the Taliban's rejection of certain international norms such as democracy, gender equality, and free speech has complicated diplomatic efforts to engage with the group. The international community remains divided over how to engage with the Taliban government, balancing the need for humanitarian aid with the need to address human rights abuses.

Women's Rights and Gender Equality

The Taliban's policies, particularly those restricting women's access to education and employment, have had significant economic consequences, both for Afghan women and the country as a whole. The exclusion of women from the economy limits Afghanistan's potential for growth and development, as half of the population is unable to contribute fully to the workforce. The Taliban's ban on women working in most sectors means that a significant portion of the Afghan population is barred from contributing to the economy. In pre-Taliban Afghanistan, women made up a substantial part of the labor force, particularly in education, health, and other service industries. By eliminating women from these fields, the Taliban has greatly reduced the country's labor force capacity. Sectors such as healthcare, education, and social services are particularly affected. For instance, women were a crucial part of Afghanistan's healthcare system, both as doctors and nurses, especially in rural areas. Restrictions on women's participation in these fields mean that the country's already strained healthcare system has become more difficult to operate and less accessible, particularly for women and children.

By restricting girls' and women's access to education, the Taliban is undermining the development of human capital in Afghanistan. An educated female population is a key driver of economic growth, as it increases productivity, innovation, and long-term social welfare. The closure of girls' schools, particularly secondary schools and universities, deprives future generations of women of the tools they need to participate meaningfully in the economy. Research shows that countries with greater gender equality in education and employment tend to have higher rates of economic growth. Afghanistan's policies, by hindering the development of its female population, have effectively stunted the country's prospects for future economic

development. Afghan women, particularly in rural areas, have been central to the survival and livelihood of many households, often working in agriculture, home-based industries, or small-scale businesses. Restrictions on their ability to work limit household income, pushing more families into poverty. Many women in Afghanistan work in the informal economy, where they contribute to the household income by doing things like tailoring, handicrafts, or farming. Even in this informal sector, women face restrictions on mobility, trade, and networking, limiting their entrepreneurial opportunities and further stalling economic productivity. Nazar and Abubakar (2021).

The Taliban's policies, including restrictions on women's rights, have led to a reduction in international support for Afghanistan. Donor countries and international organizations are increasingly hesitant to provide aid to a government that imposes such severe restrictions on half of its population. Economic sanctions and a decrease in foreign aid have contributed to a severe economic crisis, with inflation, unemployment, and food insecurity at record levels. The Taliban's stance on women's rights has made it more difficult for international NGOs to operate in the country, particularly those that focus on women's health, education, and empowerment. As a result, many development projects have stalled or been halted, further exacerbating poverty and hindering efforts to rebuild Afghanistan's economy.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the implications of the new Taliban government on Afghanistan's political, social, and economic future, with a focus on religious fundamentalism and its broader effects. The study integrates a variety of data sources and analytical frameworks to explore the key issues facing Afghanistan since the Taliban's return to power in 2021. The following methodological steps are undertaken: The research employs case study analysis to examine specific instances of governance under the Taliban, with a focus on areas such as: Women's rights and education, Economic policies and international relations. Regional security and ethnic/religious relations. Case studies are drawn from reports of human rights organizations, international media coverage, and academic analyses of Taliban policies and their impacts on various segments of Afghan society. The study also analyzes media reports, documentaries, and interviews published after the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. This allows for real-time observations of the Taliban's governance in practice, especially concerning restrictions on media freedom and the suppression of dissent and changes.

Data Analysis

A comprehensive data analysis technique for studying the new Taliban government, religious fundamentalism, and Afghanistan's future could combine sentiment analysis and text mining**.** Sentiment analysis would track global and Afghan citizen opinions through social media, news articles, and surveys, assessing reactions to Taliban policies. Text mining could analyze official statements, speeches, and communications to identify key themes in governance and religious ideology. Regression analysis could forecast socio-economic outcomes, while network analysis would explore the relationships between Taliban factions, ethnic groups, and international actors. Finally, time series analysis would track political and security developments over time, providing insights into the trajectory of Afghanistan's future under Taliban rule.

Geopolitical Ramifications of the Taliban's Return to Power

The withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, after nearly 20 years of military involvement, marked a significant shift in global geopolitics. The Taliban's return to power raised questions about the effectiveness of the U.S.-led intervention and the global counterterrorism strategy. The U.S. now faces the challenge of containing the spread of

extremism from Afghanistan without a direct presence on the ground. The Taliban's control over Afghanistan has raised concerns about the resurgence of groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K), which could use Afghan soil to plan attacks on Western interests. The U.S. and its allies have taken steps to monitor and combat these threats through drone strikes, intelligence sharing, and engagement with regional actors. While the U.S. has provided humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, it has also withheld formal recognition of the Taliban government, insisting on conditions related to human rights, especially the rights of women and girls. The lack of recognition and diplomatic engagement has isolated the Taliban, limiting its ability to access international support. China has been cautious but increasingly active in engaging with the Taliban. Beijing is interested in Afghanistan's vast mineral resources and sees the country as strategically important due to its proximity to Central Asia, Iran, and Pakistan. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been a central focus in its strategy to engage with Afghanistan. Beijing is particularly interested in Afghanistan's natural resources, including lithium and other minerals essential for global tech industries. China has offered economic support, including potential investments in infrastructure, but only if the security situation stabilizes. China is also concerned about the rise of militant groups operating in Afghanistan, particularly in Xinjiang, where Uighur separatists are active. China has expressed concerns about the Taliban providing a safe haven for these groups, which could exacerbate China's internal security challenges. Russia has taken a more pragmatic approach to the Taliban, primarily focused on stabilizing Afghanistan to prevent the spread of extremism to Central Asia, a region that is under Russia's sphere of influence. While Russia has expressed concerns over the Taliban's human rights record, particularly regarding women's rights, it has engaged diplomatically with the group. Russia is concerned about the potential for terrorism and instability spilling over into neighboring Central Asian countries. As a result, it has cooperated with the Taliban on counterterrorism efforts, aiming to prevent extremist groups from gaining a foothold in the region.

Regional Stability and Strategic Implications

Afghanistan's geopolitical dynamics are critical not only for its own future but also for regional stability and the strategic interests of its neighbors and global powers. The return of the Taliban to power in 2021 has significantly altered the regional landscape in South and Central Asia, influencing security, economic policies, and diplomatic relations. The following explores how Afghanistan's situation impacts regional stability and the broader strategic implications for neighboring countries and key global actors.

According to Verso (2019), one of the most significant concerns for Afghanistan's neighbors is the potential for spillover of militant activity. The Taliban's return has emboldened other insurgent and terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State-Khorasan (ISIS-K), which has targeted both the Taliban and civilians. These groups pose a direct threat to the security of neighboring states, especially Pakistan, Iran, and the Central Asian republics. The porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan has historically facilitated the movement of insurgents and militants, including the Taliban and groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). While Pakistan has sought to exert influence over the Taliban, it faces the dilemma of combating insurgents operating from Afghan soil, which could undermine its own security. Nawad (2016).Countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, which share borders with Afghanistan, are concerned about the rise of militancy and terrorism. The instability in Afghanistan increases the risk of radicalization, terrorist attacks, and refugee flows, which could destabilize these relatively stable Central Asian states. Iran also faces security concerns, particularly regarding the presence of Sunni extremist groups, such as ISIS-K, that could target Shiite populations in

Afghanistan or cross into Iran. While Iran has engaged with the Taliban diplomatically, it continues to monitor developments in Afghanistan closely to protect its own territorial integrity.

Jamal and Willaim (2023) opines that, the return of the Taliban has prompted a realignment of regional alliances, with major powers adjusting their strategies toward Afghanistan. The strategic implications for neighboring countries and other global powers are profound, as they weigh the balance of influence and security. Pakistan has historically been a key ally of the Taliban, providing support during their initial rise to power in the 1990s and continuing to maintain close ties after their return. Islamabad sees the Taliban as a strategic partner in countering India's influence in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan's relationship with the Taliban is not without risks. The Taliban's control over Afghanistan could fuel anti-Pakistan sentiment among insurgent groups within the country. Additionally, the rise of terrorism from Afghan soil could strain Pakistan's stability and complicate its military and political strategy. India, which had invested heavily in Afghanistan over the last two decades especially in infrastructure, development projects, and diplomatic relations with the Afghan government has faced a strategic setback with the Taliban's return to power. New Delhi sees the Taliban as an adversary due to their historical ties with Pakistan. India is now more focused on managing the regional balance of power by strengthening its relationships with neighboring Central Asian republics and increasing its presence in the region through multilateral forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). India is also wary of any resurgence of cross-border terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. China views Afghanistan as a strategically important country due to its proximity to China's Xinjiang province, its mineral wealth, and its potential connectivity to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China is keen to maintain good relations with the Taliban, both for economic opportunities and to ensure stability in the region. Kamel (2015). However, Beijing remains cautious, fearing that instability in Afghanistan could embolden Uyghur separatist movements in Xinjiang. China is also likely to push for economic cooperation, offering investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure, natural resource extraction, and trade routes, though political instability and security concerns could hinder progress. Russia has been careful in its approach to Afghanistan, balancing between engaging with the Taliban and protecting its interests in Central Asia. Moscow's primary concern is the potential for instability in its southern periphery, particularly in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Russia has increased its diplomatic presence in the region, offering itself as a stabilizing force while trying to counterbalance U.S. influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan. At the same time, Russia has faced challenges in promoting a coherent security framework without directly confronting the Taliban.

Ibrahim and Shjahram (2020) argues, Afghanistan's position at the crossroads of South and Central Asia gives it significant strategic importance, both as a potential hub for trade and as a key player in regional connectivity projects. However, the country's political instability, economic challenges, and lack of infrastructure limit its ability to fully integrate into regional economic frameworks. Afghanistan is strategically located between the energy-rich Central Asian republics and the markets of South Asia. With the right political and security conditions, Afghanistan could become a central link in regional trade networks, particularly for energy exports from Central Asia to Pakistan and India. However, ongoing instability undermines these prospects. The successful implementation of projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline and the Central Asia-South Asia electricity transmission line requires a stable and secure Afghanistan. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to connect China with South Asia and Central Asia through extensive infrastructure projects. Afghanistan could potentially be a key transit point in this vision, but the risk of instability and security

threats to Chinese investments has slowed down Chinese plans. That said, China may continue to push forward with limited-scale projects, especially those related to Afghanistan's vast mineral resources, but these ventures will remain high-risk as long as security concerns persist. Iran has significant economic ties to Afghanistan, particularly in terms of trade and energy. The Taliban's rise to power may open new opportunities for bilateral economic cooperation, as Iran seeks to export goods and gas to Afghanistan and gain access to the Afghan market. However, the ongoing international sanctions on Iran and the Taliban's unrecognized status complicate the potential for fully realizing these economic exchanges.

Afghanistan's ongoing crisis, including political turmoil, human rights abuses, and economic collapse, has resulted in massive refugee flows into neighboring countries. Pakistan and Iran have taken in millions of Afghan refugees, straining their resources and creating challenges for social integration. If Afghanistan's instability continues, the refugee crisis could exacerbate regional tensions, especially if the influx of migrants destabilizes border areas or leads to anti-refugee sentiment within host countries. The stability of the Central Asian republics is closely tied to developments in Afghanistan. These countries are particularly concerned about the spread of extremism and organized crime across their borders. They have increased their own military cooperation, often with Russia, to strengthen border security and prevent destabilizing influences from Afghanistan. The broader Central Asian region has adopted a cautious approach to the Taliban, balancing between engaging diplomatically while safeguarding against the export of instability.

The Future of Afghanistan: Stability or Fragmentation?

The future of Afghanistan remains uncertain and fraught with challenges. Following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, many questions loom over whether the country will move toward stability or continue down a path of fragmentation and ongoing conflict. Afghanistan's complex socio-political landscape, its ethnic and regional divisions, and the Taliban's governance style will be key factors influencing the country's trajectory.

While the Taliban has maintained control over most of Afghanistan, their ability to provide long-term stability is uncertain. Several factors contribute to the possibility of either a stable or fragmented future under Taliban rule. The Taliban's governance style has been characterized by a centralization of power and the imposition of a rigid interpretation of Islamic law. However, they face difficulties in effectively governing a diverse and complex country. Afghanistan's ethnic and regional diversity means that there are significant challenges in providing inclusive governance that accommodates the interests of the various groups, such as Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and Pashtuns. Afghanistan's diverse ethnic groups have historically been divided by political, cultural, and economic differences. The Taliban, largely seen as a Pashtun movement, has struggled to fully integrate non-Pashtun groups, particularly in regions like the north, where ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks hold significant influence. Any attempt to marginalize these groups could lead to further fragmentation and regional instability. Despite Taliban control over Kabul, several regions of Afghanistan have local power brokers, militias, and warlords who retain significant autonomy. These groups may challenge the central government or engage in rivalries, undermining attempts at national unity. Afghanistan faces an ongoing economic crisis, exacerbated by international sanctions, the withdrawal of foreign aid, and a lack of access to global financial systems. This has led to soaring unemployment, hyperinflation, and widespread poverty. The Taliban's policies, particularly restrictions on women's rights and employment, have worsened the country's economic prospects. Women, who constitute a significant portion of the workforce, have been largely excluded from the economy, leading to further economic

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contraction. With a lack of international recognition and foreign investment, Afghanistan's economic future remains bleak, which may contribute to social unrest and instability.

The Taliban faces challenges in securing the country from various insurgent groups, including ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), which has been particularly active since the Taliban's takeover. ISIS-K has targeted both the Taliban and civilian populations, including religious minorities and women. The persistence of extremist groups poses a threat to Afghanistan's stability and could lead to further violence and fragmentation. The Taliban's ability—or inability—to manage such groups and prevent them from using Afghan territory to launch attacks on regional and international targets will significantly impact Afghanistan's future stability. Despite these challenges, there are several potential pathways to stability under Taliban rule: While the Taliban has faced international isolation, there is a possibility that diplomatic and economic engagement with key global powers could help stabilize Afghanistan. If the Taliban can meet certain international conditions, such as improving human rights, ensuring security, and fostering economic development, it could lead to recognition and foreign aid that might mitigate the country's crisis. Regional cooperation could help stabilize Afghanistan. Countries like China, Pakistan, and Russia have shown an interest in engaging with the Taliban, particularly to curb the spread of extremism and gain access to Afghanistan's resources. If these countries can assist Afghanistan with infrastructure, development, and security, it could improve Afghanistan's prospects for stability.

Afghanistan's future could just as easily tilt toward fragmentation, with various regions or ethnic groups seeking autonomy or control over their own territories. Afghanistan has a long history of regional and ethnic divisions, and the Taliban's centralizing approach to governance may exacerbate these tensions. In particular, the northern regions of Afghanistan, home to Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara communities, have been historically resistant to Pashtun dominance. Should the Taliban's Pashtun-centric policies persist, it could provoke resistance from these ethnic groups, leading to the reemergence of local militias or the formation of alternative governance structures. As the central government struggles to maintain control, regional warlords may regain power and challenge the Taliban's authority. Local militias, who were once central to the Afghan civil war in the 1990s, could once again play a dominant role in destabilizing the country. Warlords with significant local influence might reject Taliban rule and try to carve out their own spheres of influence. Widespread dissatisfaction with Taliban rule, particularly over human rights abuses, economic hardship, and the repression of women, could spark mass protests. While the Taliban has used force to suppress protests, the possibility of growing unrest cannot be ruled out. Prolonged unrest could further destabilize the country and lead to civil conflict, further splintering Afghanistan. The presence of extremist groups such as ISIS-K and the Afghan branch of al-Qaeda continues to threaten Afghanistan's stability. These groups often oppose the Taliban's approach, especially regarding their brand of Islamic governance, and could destabilize regions of the country, especially areas where the Taliban lacks full control. The conflict between the Taliban and these groups could lead to further territorial fragmentation and violence. If the central government fails to establish control and provide for the country's diverse ethnic groups, some regions may seek greater autonomy. In the past, the northern regions of Afghanistan, including the Panjshir Valley and areas inhabited by the Hazara and Tajik populations, have been resistant to Pashtun-dominated rule. A rise in regional autonomy movements could lead to the fragmentation of the country into various de facto independent regions or even a full-scale civil war.

The future of Afghanistan will also depend on the involvement of regional and international powers, each with its own strategic interests: Pakistan has historically supported the Taliban and seeks a stable Afghanistan to prevent the spread of militancy into its own territory. Pakistan also fears a rise in ethnic tensions in Afghanistan that could destabilize the region. China, with its interests in the Belt and Road Initiative and Afghanistan's mineral wealth, may be a stabilizing force but could also be drawn into regional disputes. The United States, although withdrawn, still retains a significant geopolitical interest in Afghanistan. Efforts to monitor counterterrorism threats and humanitarian aid will continue to shape Afghanistan's future. However, the U.S. is unlikely to commit to full-scale involvement in Afghan governance without a major shift in Taliban policies, especially regarding human rights. The geopolitical strategies of neighboring countries such as Iran, India, and the Central Asian republics will significantly influence whether Afghanistan becomes a unified or fragmented state. These countries have a vested interest in ensuring Afghanistan's stability, especially in terms of preventing the spread of extremism.

Conclusion: A Fragile Future

The future of Afghanistan is highly uncertain and depends on multiple factors. If the Taliban can navigate internal divisions, meet the demands for improved governance, and secure international support, there is a possibility of a stable Afghanistan. However, if ethnic tensions escalate, economic conditions worsen, and insurgent groups continue to challenge the Taliban's authority, Afghanistan could face fragmentation and ongoing conflict. In the short-term, the country's future appears fragile, as the Taliban's governance faces significant challenges, including widespread poverty, human rights abuses, and resistance from regional and ethnic factions. The international community, especially neighboring countries and global powers, will continue to play a pivotal role in determining whether Afghanistan will stabilize or descend into further fragmentation.

Recommendations

Given the significant challenges the Taliban faces in governing Afghanistan, several recommendations can be made to help foster stability, promote economic recovery, and improve the lives of Afghan citizens. These recommendations can be broadly categorized into internal governance reforms, economic strategies, international engagement, and human rights initiatives.

The Taliban should strive to build a more inclusive government by engaging ethnic, regional, and political groups in the political process. This includes granting representation to Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and other minorities in key decision-making positions. Inclusive governance would not only help reduce ethnic tensions but also foster a sense of national unity. Afghanistan's ethnic and regional diversity requires a system that respects and represents all groups. Without inclusion, the Taliban risks exacerbating divisions, leading to internal resistance and fragmentation. The Taliban should consider decentralizing power by empowering local leaders and tribal councils to handle regional governance issues. This could reduce the burden on the central government and improve the Taliban's ability to manage Afghanistan's complex regional dynamics. Afghanistan's history has shown that local power structures and regional autonomy play a crucial role in the country's governance. Decentralization could ease tensions and encourage local cooperation with the Taliban. The Taliban should invest in training and developing its administrative and civil service institutions. Engaging experts in governance, law, and public administration would help build a more efficient government structure capable of managing the country's needs. As an insurgent group, the Taliban has limited experience in

running a government. Strengthening its administrative capacity will improve service delivery, ensure better governance, and enhance public trust.

The Taliban should prioritize the development of key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and energy, as well as explore opportunities for economic diversification beyond foreign aid. The group should also engage international financial institutions and neighboring countries to secure loans or investments for vital infrastructure projects.Afghanistan's economy is heavily reliant on foreign aid, which has been severely restricted due to international sanctions. By fostering economic diversification, the country can begin to reduce its dependence on external aid, creating jobs and improving economic conditions for citizens.The Taliban should allow for the continued flow of humanitarian aid into Afghanistan, especially for food, healthcare, and education, while ensuring that aid is distributed equitably and not diverted for political purposes.Given the ongoing humanitarian crisis, humanitarian aid is crucial for alleviating the immediate suffering of the Afghan population. Supporting international organizations and NGOs can help mitigate the effects of poverty, hunger, and healthcare deficiencies. The Taliban should relax restrictions on women's education and employment, allowing women to re-enter the workforce and contribute to Afghanistan's economic recovery.Women represent half of the population, and their exclusion from the economy severely hampers national productivity and development. Promoting women's participation can stimulate economic growth and improve social stability.

The Taliban should make concrete steps toward improving human rights, particularly regarding women's rights, freedom of expression, and the protection of minorities. This includes allowing women to attend schools, universities, and to work in a wide range of sectors, as well as ensuring religious and ethnic minorities are not persecuted.Widespread human rights violations, especially against women and minorities, have generated significant international condemnation and resistance within Afghanistan. Adopting more progressive policies would improve the Taliban's legitimacy domestically and internationally, and potentially help gain international recognition and support.The Taliban should respect freedom of expression, allowing journalists, activists, and political dissenters to operate without fear of imprisonment or persecution. Establishing mechanisms for peaceful political dialogue and public debate would be a positive step toward democratic governance.A climate of fear stifles creativity, innovation, and progress. Encouraging political expression and press freedom would contribute to a more dynamic and accountable society, as well as improve Afghanistan's international standing.The Taliban should make an effort to protect religious minorities, particularly the Shia Hazara community, from persecution and violence. Promoting tolerance and coexistence among different religious and ethnic groups will be essential for long-term peace and stability.Religious intolerance has led to significant suffering in Afghanistan, especially for marginalized groups. A more inclusive and tolerant society would help prevent sectarian violence and encourage social cohesion.

The Taliban should take steps to engage diplomatically with the international community, particularly the United Nations, neighboring countries, and major global powers. This includes addressing concerns about terrorism, human rights abuses, and the country's commitment to countering drug trafficking.Afghanistan's international isolation has contributed to its economic and diplomatic challenges. By showing a willingness to comply with international norms, the Taliban could open pathways for foreign aid, trade agreements, and political recognition. The Taliban should strengthen ties with neighboring countries such as Pakistan, China, and Iran. Collaborative efforts in counterterrorism, economic development, and trade would be mutually beneficial and could help stabilize the region.Regional stability is closely tied to Afghanistan's

own future. Cooperation with neighboring countries could help address shared challenges, such as extremism and refugees, while fostering economic growth through trade and development initiatives.The Taliban should cooperate with international and regional powers on counterterrorism efforts, particularly in addressing the threat posed by ISIS-K and other extremist groups operating in Afghanistan.Terrorism and insurgency pose a significant threat to Afghanistan's security and the broader region. Cooperation with other countries in combating terrorism will help Afghanistan stabilize and improve its relations with the international community.

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REPOSITIONING LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS FOR EFFECTIVE GRASSROOTS GOVERNANCE AND NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Local government councils remain pivotal in ensuring efficient service delivery and promoting inclusive development at the grassroots level in Nigeria. Nevertheless, they grapple with myriads of challenges which impede their effectiveness in grassroots governance. This paper therefore underscores the imperative of repositioning local government councils for effective grassroots governance, thereby contributing to nation-building in Nigeria. The paper adopts the decentralization theory as theoretical framework, while relevant data were obtained from secondary sources. The findings of the paper revealed that despite huge allocations to local government councils through the Federation Account Allocation Committee, the grassroots have continued to suffer neglect and abandonment. Local government councils in Nigeria hitherto, is encumbered by bad governance, inadequate finance, flagrant abuse of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provisions regarding the operation State-Joint Local Government Account, overbearing control of local government councils by the State government, weak institutions, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, poor infrastructural development, inadequate awareness of the local populace on the essence and functions of local government councils and poor leadership recruitment amongst others which are pertinent for good governance and for the promotion of nation-building at the grassroots. The paper recommends amendment of the 1999 Constitution to drive local government financial autonomy, adequate funding, strong institutions, Independent Electoral Commission to conduct local government elections, youth and women empowerment, respect for the Constitution by the State Governors, advocacy and sensitization of the local populace on the functions of local government to reposition local government councils for effective governance at the grassroots and national development in Nigeria.
Keywords: Local government, governance, good-governance, grassroots, nation building.

Introduction

Local government in Nigeria is a creation of the State, as engendered in Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). It states "the system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every state shall subject to Section 2 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils." The primary motive behind the creation of local government councils was to bring governance closer to the people at the grassroots, ensuring that service delivery and the benefits of governance are accessible to the populace. To achieve this, the functions of local governments were clearly outlined in the Fourth Schedule of the 1999 Constitution. These responsibilities were designed to promote development at the local level and address the immediate need of the people.

However, there has been growing concerns over the abysmal and worrisome performance of local government councils in Nigeria. Despite numerous reforms introduced to enhance responsive governance at the local governments level, significant challenges remain. The reforms aimed improving governance at the grassroots started in the 1950s, right before independence. For instance, the Local Government Ordinance of 1950 was enacted in the Eastern Region, the Local Government Law of 1952 was introduced in the Western Region and the Native Authority Law of 1954 in the Northern Region. These were followed by the famous 1976 Local Government Reform, which sought to standardize and strengthen local governance across the country amongst others.

Despite these efforts, local governments have persistently failed to live up to expectations. They remain largely moribund, non-functional, ineffective, plagued by numerous challenges that have hindered their ability to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities. These challenges include lack of administrative and financial autonomy which is particularly exacerbated by the arbitrary application and abuse of the Section 162 (5, 6, 7, and 8) of the 1999 Constitution. Other issues include a flawed leadership selection process, where local government councils are often administered through Caretaker Committees rather than a democratically elected council executives. Furthermore, pervasive poverty, unemployment and corruption continue to cripple the ability of local governments to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities. As a result, the intended benefits of grassroots development and governance have not been realized, leaving a significant gap in local governance.

The consequence of these developments has raised significant concerns among scholars and practitioners of local government administration, as underdevelopment remains pervasive at the grassroots. There is no doubt that only an effective free, independent and autonomous local government can mobilize the human and material resources necessary for local development. Against this backdrop, this paper underscores the need to reposition local government councils in Nigeria for effective grassroots governance and nation-building in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

This section defines key concepts to ensure a clear focus of their context within this paper. These are the concepts of local government, good governance and nation-building.

Local Government

Local government is the government at the grass roots with a given population and constitutional power to elect officials for the administrative and regulatory functions in the local area (Abati &Kugbayi, 2022). In the guidelines to the 1976 Local Government Reform, "Local Government" was defined as:

> Government at the local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within a defined area. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as staff, institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services and to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the State and Federal governments in their areas, and to ensure, through devolution of functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized.

However, the definition above fails to mention the essence of local government which is to offer better services to the grassroots populace. Therefore, can be said to be a local government is governed through a representative council. It functions as a legal entity, and a political unit with defined territory, enjoying certain powers over its administration. Importantly, its council members are democratically elected, ensuring representation and accountability.

Local government is the third tier of government in Nigeria. It consists of 774 units spread across the 36 states of the Federation. Local governments are created to make available a range of essential services for upliftment of the wellbeing of the people at the grassroots. They serve as a vital instrument for nation building, performing both political and socio-economic roles. These include promotion of local democracy, providing political education, training ground for politicians, and fostering development in the areas of healthcare delivery, basic education, agriculture, and revenue generation. Their existence ensure that certain functions are effectively carried out by a government body which has close contacts with local communities, and local governments, more than any other organ of state, are better placed to perform these functions due to their proximity to the grassroots.

The 1976 Guidelines of Local Government outlines the principal aims of local government. These include ensuring that services and development activities align with local wishes by delegating responsibilities to local representative bodies. Additionally, local government seeks to promote democratic self-governance at the grassroots level and encourage initiative and leadership potential. Another key objective is to mobilize both human and material resources by encouraging public participation in local development efforts. Furthermore, local government provides a two-way channel of communication between local communities and government.

According to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), local government perform two main functions as outlined in Fourth Schedule. These functions are categorized into Mandatory and Participatory functions. The mandatory functions are exclusive to the local governments and can be carried out independently, while participatory functions are in collaboration with the state government. The mandatory functions of the local government include making recommendations to a state commission on economic planning, particularly regarding economic development affecting both the local and state levels. Other key responsibilities include, collection of rates, radio and television licences; establishment and maintenance of cemeteries, burial grounds and homes for the destitute; licensing of bicycles, trucks, canoes, wheel barrows and carts; establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, markets, motor parks and public conveniences; as well as constructing and maintaining roads, street lightings, drains and public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces, and other public facilities. Local governments are also responsible for naming roads, streets and numbering houses; providing services for sewage and refuse disposal; registration of births, deaths and marriages; assessing privately owned houses for the purpose of levying rates; regulating out-

door advertising, movement and keeping of pets, shops, restaurants, laundries, and sale of liquor.

The participatory functions of local government involve collaboration with the state government in areas such as, provision and maintenance of primary, adult and vocational education;development of agriculture and natural resources (other than the exploitation of minerals); and provision and maintenance of health services. The House of Assembly of a State may also assign other functions to local government councils as deemed necessary. According to the United Nations (2022), local governments are the closest level of government to the citizens. They are arguably critical to the protection and improvement of their lives and livelihoods citizens. As the core of local governments, they ought to be main drivers of equitable and sustainable development as well as providers of access to basic services. However, despite the 1999 Constitution provisions regarding local government functions, in reality, no local government in Nigeria truly serves the people. Instead, every household functions as its own local government, sourcing its basic needs, such as water, electricity, education, and healthcare. Rural poverty, unemployment, infant and maternal mortality and diseases have continued to worsen unabated. This assertion is consistent with the view of Olaopa (2017), who argues that within Nigeria's lopsided federal arrangement, local government is the most neglected tier in both theory and practice of democracy and federalism. The infrastructural efforts of the government barely reach the various localities that make up different local government areas in Nigeria.

Governance and Good Governance

Governance is defined as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences (United Nations Development Programme, 1997). According to the World Bank (1993), governance is the ability to manage a country's economic and social resources for development. The term can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

Good governance refers to the legitimate, accountable, transparent, democratic, efficient and equitable management of resources to promote human welfare and societal transformation (Nsibambi, 1988:60, cited in Sabiti, 2023). Good governance ensures that political, social, and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society, ensuring that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in decision-making processes (Ezeani, 2017). The components of good governance include participation, rule of law, transparency, accountability, consensus, orientation, equity and inclusiveness, responsiveness, and efficiency and effectiveness (Haghighi &Takian, 2024).

Nation-Building

Nation-building is a continuous process that evolves over time and is strengthened by effective leadership that is passionately national in orientation, rather than subservient to primordial affiliations. Alesina and Reich (2015) cited in Jega (2018) defined nation building "as a process which leads to the formation of countries in which the citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other." Thus, nation building involves transforming individuals within a sovereign state into conscious citizens who are proud of their country, obedient to a body of national laws often codified in a constitution and other forms of legislation, committed to their country's progress as well as its protection and defense. It also requires recognizing fellow citizens as equal, regardless of ethnic or linguistic background, race or religious differences.

More appropriately, nation building, in the context of this paper, is essentially about the reinvigoration of local government councils with a view to developing a cohesive national community at the grassroots level. This is achieved through effective and efficient governmental programs and policies for national unity and integration amidst complex diversity and multiplicity of contending identities. Therefore, the centralization of power and resources in the federal government within a multi-ethnic and deeply divided society has serious implications for development at the local level in all parts of the country.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the decentralisation theory as its framework for analysis. The theory was propounded by Tiebout (1956), Musgrave (1959) and Oates (1972). Decentralisation denotes the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to (a) field units, (b) subordinate units of levels of government, and (c) semi-autonomous public authorities (Canare, 2021). The theory assumes that the government's primary objective function is to maximize its citizens' welfare. It also assumes that decentralization fosters citizen's participation in government programmes, encouraging their active participation in the design and implementation of the programmes. Additionally, better services can be efficiently provided when power is devolved to local government, as they are closer to the grassroots.

Decentralisation provides space community involvement in development, enhances local resource mobilization, ensures efficient allocation of resources, and strengthens governance (Massuanganhe, 2005). Its primary goal is to reduce the workload at the centre, and transfer real power to the rural populace to bring political and administrative control closer to service delivery points. According to Sabiti (2023), decentralisation has the potential to effectively address governance challenges including high poverty levels, unemployment, inadequate service delivery, poor management culture, and complex political processes affecting decision making process in local government. Thus, decentralisation enhances the capacity of local governments to plan, finance, and manage the delivery of services to the grassroots populace.

This theory is apt and relevant to this study, considering the fact that achieving meaningful local governance is essential to ensuring that the dividends of democracy reach the grassroots. Local government must transition into a dynamic governance model that transforms lives, legitimize all development efforts and empowers communities to significantly participate in and benefit from the democratic process. Centralization hinders grassroots development initiatives, because it ties development to the unitary framework which in itself limits national integration (Olaopa, 2017).

Overview of Local Government Administration in Nigeria

During the early period of British colonial rule in Nigeria, local government functioned as an extension of the central colonial administration through the system of indirect rule. This approach involved the administration of the local area through the existing traditional authorities. In the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to reform the local administrative system varied across the regions in Nigeria. While the reforms in the eastern and western regions were aimed at increasing democratization of local government, those in the northern were mainly aimed at reducing enormous power exercised by traditional rulers at the local level. However, further reforms in the Northern region between 1959 and 1966 extended these changes to regional governments and aligned local government administration with the ruling political party's influence.

The 1976 Local Government Reform marked a turning point in the evolution of local government in Nigeria for a number of reasons. First, it is the first time in the political history of Nigeria that the federal government initiated local government reforms for all the states. Second, it introduced a uniform system of local government across the states of the federation. Third, it established the population range for local government areas, between a minimum of 150,000 and a maximum of 800,000. Fourth, it officially recognized local government local government as a third tier of a government. Fifth, local government staff training becomes an integral part of the local government management strategy, with federal government involvement. Sixth, it introduced full-time chairman for local government, while supervisory councilors and councilors were paid fixed salary instead of sitting allowances. Seventh, it democratized local governments across the federation (Amujiri, nd:87). Thus, the 1976 local government reform clearly defined the structure, functions, and authority of local governments throughout the country, thereby ending the monopoly of state governments over local administration. Other reforms include Dasuki local government review committee of 1984, Local Government Reform of 1988 and Local Government Review of 2004. All these reforms were directed at repositioning the local governments for effective grassroots development in Nigeria.

Massoud (2021) notes that between 1951-1976, regional governments and, later, the state governments had the sole responsibility in terms of policy making regarding local governments. This inevitably led to a crisis of legitimacy, as there was widespread perception that devolving power and authority was dangerous and may lead to the loss of control by the central government over local authorities. Prior to 1976, and from 1979 to 1983, there was little political will at the central level to grant local governments greater autonomy or independent revenue sources to enable them perform their basic function of effective social service delivery. State governments controlled local government finances, as federally allocated revenue for local governments was funnelled through joint accounts managed by state authorities. Many states withheld a significant proportion of these funds, transferring only what was required for overhead costs and salary payment, thereby limiting local government's financial independence and operational capacity.

Since 1979, the relationship between state governments and local governments has remained contentious, despite the constitution recognizing local governments as the third tier of government with clearly defined functions. However, they were placed under the control of the state governments, similar to the arrangement during the First Republic. An examination of the structure and functions assigned to local governments during the 1976 and the 1990 reforms suggests that both the Murtala/Obasanjo and the Babangida regimes attributed the inability of local governments to inefficiency, especially in the areas of social service delivery, to the excessive control exercised over them by the state governments. Their reforms, therefore, aimed at creating an enabling environment for local governments to perform their functions efficiently. Local government autonomy occupies a pivotal place in both reforms with a view to ensuring that local governments perform their functions within the limits of the power and authority assigned to them by the constitution (Massoud, 2021).

Challenges Confronting Local Government Councils in Nigeria

The ability of local governments to discharge their constitutional responsibilities at the grassroots level is hindered by inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure and lack of autonomy. This situation had led to frustration and growing discontent in the country as it obstructs grassroots governance and nation building (Jisalo, 2024 cited in Omonochi,2024). Thus, the key issues responsible for the abysmal performance of local government councils in

Nigeria include lack of fiscal, political and administrative autonomy, weak of community-driven checks and balances, corruption and lack of transparency in governance.

The State-Joint Local Government Account is one of the major avenues through which local government in Nigeria are deprived of financial autonomy. The 1999 Constitution (as amended) grants state governments control over local government funds through Section 162 (5-8), which states that:

> 162(5) - The amount standing to the credit of local government councils in the Federation Account shall be distributed among the States on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.
>
> 162(6) - Each State shall maintain a special account to be called "State Joint Local Government Account" into which shall be paid all allocations to the local government councils of the State from the Federation Account and from the Government of the State.
>
> 162(7) - Each State shall pay to local government councils in its area of jurisdiction such proportion of its total revenue on such proportion of its total revenue on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.
>
> 162(5) - The amount standing to the credit of local government councils of a State shall be distributed among the local government councils of that State on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State.

The State governments derive their powers from the above sections of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) to superintend over the revenue allocations to local government from the Federation Account Allocation Committee. The introduction of State-Joint Local Government Account means that funds allocated to local government councils are pooled and distributed by state governments. Local governments are regarded as a fundamental unit of development for any society. However, state governors often exert overbearing control over local governments. This system has therefore raised concerns due to its manner of operation. There have been reports of State Governors diverting and pilfering local government funds, in violation of the guidelines issued by the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit. This arrangement has led to financial mismanagement, delays in fund disbursement, and excessive state interference, severely limiting the ability of local governments to function effectively and deliver essential services at the grassroots level (Ibrahim, 2021).

Also, there is palpable lack of citizens' participation in decision making, as local government are being run by caretaker committees who are not democratically elected. In most cases, these committees are appointed by the state governor as a result of their political loyalty. Many states fail to conduct local government elections despite the expiration of elected official's tenures. In some cases, state governments have even sacked elected local government officers whose tenures had not ended and replaced them with caretaker committees, thereby placing local governments under administrative control. Running a local government with caretaker committees is anomalous, unlawful and illegal. It is a constitutional aberration going by Section 7 of the 1999 Constitution. For instance, in the case filed by sacked Ekiti state local government chairpersons, the Supreme Court declared Section 23(b) of the Ekiti State Local Government Administration (Amendment) Law, 2001, which allowed the governor to dissolve elected local government councils before their tenure expired as unconstitutional. The court ruled that local

governments must be managed by democratically elected officials, not caretaker committees. The Constitution does not recognize the appointment of caretaker committees to run the affairs of a local government. However, state governments were reluctant to conduct elections into local government councils for political reasons. Consequently, all local governments chairmen were made appointees of state governors. In such a situation, local governments were reduced to mere appendages of the state governments, with hardly enough funds to perform developmental functions for the benefit of local communities (Massoud, 2021).

Furthermore, one of the most significant challenges undermining local government autonomy is essentially inadequate funding. Local governments are encumbered by lack of financial autonomy. To address this problem, the Federal government in May 2019, introduced the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU). These guidelines were introduced to regulate the spending of local government funds and to guard against the overbearing influence of state governments in managing local governments' monthly allocations. The guidelines also reduced cash withdrawal from local government accounts to N500,000 daily. However, dissatisfied with this development, the 36 State Governors, through their Attorneys-General and Commissioner for Justice, challenged the guidelines. They argued that the NFIU guidelines, particularly provisions 1 to 6, along with the penalties prescribed, exceeded the powers of the NFIU, under sections 3(1) and 23(2)(a) of the Nigerian Financial Intelligent Unit Act, 2018 and therefore unconstitutional. However, the Governors lost the suit against financial autonomy for Local Governments (Alex & Onyebuchi, 2022).

Moreover, in March 2022, to address the challenge inherent in section 162(8) of the 1999 Constitution which empowers the state governments to distribute allocation to local councils "on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the state, the National Assembly passed a bill abolishing the state-joint local government account. The bill proposed the establishment of a special account where all allocations due to the local government councils, from the federation account and state government, shall be paid. However, since the bill seeks to amend a constitutional provision, it requires the approval of at least 24 state Houses of Assembly to take effect. However, the bill is yet to scale through because of lack of agreement between both legislative assemblies.

Summary of Annual Total Revenue Allocations to Local Governments in Nigeria (2015-2022)

Year	**Total allocation to local governments (# Billion)**
2015	1,205.19
2016	1,011.04
2017	1,263.39
2018	1,667.25
2019	1,636.76
2020	1,583.6
2021	1,776.8
2022	2,033.29
Grand Total	**12,177.32**

Source: Compiled by Authors from Office of the Accountant General of the Federation and CBN Annual Economic Reports, 2015-2022.

The above table shows the annual total revenue allocations to the 774 local government councils in Nigeria between 2015 to 2022. Local governments have literally been castrated on the altar of party politics. Governance appears to have been put in abeyance, as the presence and activities

of the local council pale into insignificance in terms of impact on the lives of the critical masses in rural communities. Governors deploy federal allocations meant for local governments to grandiose projects in urban centres, often at the expense of rural communities. Similarly, the internally generated revenue of the local government councils has been whittled down, as states governments have taken over all avenues through which the local councils can generate revenue internally. After collecting this revenue through third-party consultants, state government distribute it to local governments on a prorated basis, further restricting their financial autonomy.

Other challenges confronting local governments in Nigeria include leadership ineptitude, laxity and inertia, which have created core socio-economic challenges. Additionally, certain conditions predispose local governments to gross abuse by States government, despite the constitutional framework recognizing them as the third level of government. For example, the system that produces local government leadership is riddled with undemocratic tendencies, as state chief executives determines who run for elective offices. Governors handpick their loyalists, who must contest under a wholly guided electoral process superintended by State Independent National Electoral Commission. They also influence the selection of members of the State House of Assembly, who, in turn, remain at the governor's beck and call on critical matters that require legislative inputs (Kunle, 2022).

Furthermore, Massoud (2021) observes that local government institutions in Nigeria have failed woefully due to their inability to engage and mobilize the people for effective service delivery. In most cases, they have become conduit pipes for siphoning state resources by local elites. While lip service is often paid to the importance of citizen participation in governance at the local level, little is done in practice to involve them meaningfully. Corroborating the above view Adebayo and Bamidele (2000:2) asserts that most of the people who are marginalized and excluded from the system of local governance are the vulnerable and the impoverished, the uprooted and displaced, women, children and youth, the disabled, the aged, as well as both the rural and urban poor. These groups are often treated as the invisible 'informal' sector, and denied meaningful participation in governance and decision-making.

As a result of the growing concerns of lack of grassroots development and absence of governance at the local government level, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Attorney General of the Federation filed a lawsuit at the Supreme Court against 36 state governors to ensure the independence and proper functioning of the local government areas. In a landmark judgement delivered on July 11, 2024, the Supreme Court ordered that full financial autonomy be granted to local governments, recognizing them as an independent segment of the federation. The Court mandates that allocations from the Federation Account should be directly disbursed to local governments, bypassing state control, in line with Section 162(5-8) of the 1999 Constitution. However, the state governors have been reluctant to implement the judgement requesting for a delay in enforcement until February, 2025. However, the bigger issue is the need for the National Assembly to amend Section 162 to provide clearer constitutional backing for full local government autonomy.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes the imperative of strengthening local government councils for effective grassroots governance in Nigeria. This paper argues that local governments in Nigeria are quite often seen as less important tier of government, to the extent that their role in fostering development at the local level has been systematically eroded in recent years. The paper contends that local governments in Nigeria are not functioning effectively, as their capacity to provide essential services to grassroots communities has been severely hampered by inadequate

financial autonomy, inadequate infrastructure and administrative independence. Given the enormity of the task of nation building, it is crucial to deepen grassroots governance. To achieve this, local government administration in Nigeria should be revived and made to function optimally through well designed policies and programmes that will bring prosperity to the grassroots populace. The level of disconnect between the government and the grassroots people is alarming and worrisome. To bridge this gap, therefore, it is essential to grant administrative and financial autonomy and independence to local government councils in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To address the challenges hindering effective local government administration in Nigeria, this paper offers the following recommendations;

1. Strengthening of the local government administration through constitutional amendments to make it free, efficient and effective in the discharge of its constitutional responsibilities.
2. Empowering local government administration with adequate funding and financial autonomy to enhance their capability to deliver the dividends of democracy at the grassroots.
3. Ensuring accountability and transparency to enable local governments drive effective and efficient service delivery at the grassroots.
4. There is need to ensure citizens inclusion through adequate sensitization and engagement to promote good governance, as well as effective and efficient service delivery at the grassroots level.

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THE IMPACT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION ON FOOD SECURITY IN GOMBE METROPOLIS, GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Rural-urban migration is a growing phenomenon in Nigeria, with significant implications for food security, particularly in rapidly urbanizing areas like Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State. This study investigates the impact of rural-urban migration on food security by analysing how population shifts affect agricultural productivity, food availability, affordability, and accessibility in both rural and urban areas. The research qualitative interviews involving migrants, farmers, traders, and policymakers. Data is collected from both rural and urban respondents to understand migration patterns, drivers, and the consequences on local food supply chains. Findings reveal that rural-urban migration leads to Labour shortages in agricultural communities, reducing food production and exacerbating rural poverty. Simultaneously, the increasing urban population heightens demand for food, driving up prices and making nutritious food less accessible for low-income households. Additionally, urban infrastructure struggles to keep pace with rapid population growth, further straining food distribution systems. The study highlights key policy challenges, including the need for improved rural development programs, investment in sustainable urban food systems, and strategies to enhance agricultural resilience. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on migration and food security by providing evidence-based recommendations to policymakers on how to balance rural development, urban planning, and food sustainability. The study emphasizes the urgency of integrated policies that address migration-induced food security risks to ensure stable food systems in both rural and urban areas of Gombe State and beyond.

Keywords: *Rural-urban migration, food security, Gombe State, agricultural productivity, urbanization, food supply chains, Nigeria.*

Background of the Study

Globally, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration has been a recurring issue with countless socio-economic and political consequences. The incidence has been recording serious food security challenges especially among the vulnerable segments of the realities.

Rural-urban migration has become a dominant trend in Nigeria, contributing to rapid urbanization and presenting both opportunities and challenges for food security. Migration from rural areas to urban centres is driven by multiple socio-economic and environmental factors,

including unemployment, poverty, insecurity, climate change, and the search for better education and healthcare. While migration can enhance economic opportunities for individuals and boost urban labour markets, it can also negatively impact food production and distribution systems, particularly in states like Gombe, where agriculture plays a fundamental role in livelihoods and sustenance.

Gombe State, located in the northeastern region of Nigeria, has experienced significant rural-urban migration in recent decades. Gombe Metropolis, the state capital, has become a major destination for rural migrants seeking better economic prospects. However, this migration pattern has serious implications for food security, both in rural areas—where agricultural labour shortages reduce food production—and in urban areas—where increased demand puts pressure on food supply chains, leading to higher prices and affordability challenges. The situation is worsened by infrastructural deficits, economic instability, and limited government interventions to address food security concerns in both rural and urban settings.

Food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO,2021), exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. However, food insecurity remains a critical challenge in Nigeria due to structural and systemic problems such as low agricultural productivity, inefficient food distribution networks, and climate-related disruptions. The effects of rural-urban migration exacerbate these challenges, creating a food supply-demand imbalance that disproportionately affects vulnerable populations.

Rural areas in Gombe State rely heavily on subsistence and commercial farming. However, as young and able-bodied individuals migrate to cities, agricultural Labour shortages emerge, reducing productivity and leading to lower food output. This not only affects rural households that depend on farming for income but also disrupts food supply to urban markets. The influx of migrants into Gombe Metropolis increases the demand for food, leading to higher market prices. Many urban dwellers, especially low-income households, struggle to afford nutritious food, contributing to rising cases of malnutrition and food insecurity. Additionally, food imports from rural areas and other states are often affected by transportation challenges, further straining food availability. Strain on Urban Infrastructure and Services. The rapid urbanization in Gombe Metropolis is not matched by adequate infrastructure and services such as housing, markets, roads, and storage facilities. Poor urban planning exacerbates food insecurity as markets become congested, food storage facilities are inadequate, and transportation costs increase, making food less accessible.

Despite the growing concerns about migration and food security, existing policies have not effectively addressed these interconnected challenges. Rural development policies have failed to curb migration by creating viable economic opportunities in rural areas, while urban policies have not sufficiently tackled food insecurity among the growing urban population. The lack of a comprehensive strategy to balance rural agricultural productivity with sustainable urban food systems has left Gombe Metropolis vulnerable to food crises.

Statement of the Research Problem

Rural-urban migration has become a significant socio-economic trend in Nigeria, particularly in Gombe State, where many rural dwellers migrate to Gombe Metropolis in search of better economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and improved living conditions. While migration can drive urban growth and economic diversification, it also creates challenges that threaten food security in both rural and urban areas. Despite the increasing rural exodus, there is limited research on the direct impact of rural-urban migration on food security in Gombe Metropolis, making it difficult for policymakers to implement effective interventions.

One of the major challenges posed by rural-urban migration is the decline in agricultural productivity. The migration of able-bodied individuals from rural areas to urban centres leads to labour shortages in agriculture, reducing food production and farm output. As rural farming communities experienced dwindling workforce availability, food supply to urban areas becomes inconsistent, contributing to market shortages and price hikes. Additionally, the aging rural population left behind struggles to maintain agricultural production, often lacking the capacity for mechanized farming and modern agricultural techniques.

In urban areas, the increasing population placed pressure on food supply chains, leading to rising food prices and reduced affordability, especially for low-income households. The growing demand for food in Gombe Metropolis is not met with a corresponding increase in local food production, making the city more reliant on food imports from other regions, (Gombe state Government, 2022). This dependence makes the urban food system vulnerable to supply chain disruptions, price volatility, and inflation, further exacerbating food insecurity. Many urban migrants, who often settled in low-income communities with limited economic opportunities, struggle to afford nutritious and sufficient food, increasing the risk of malnutrition and hunger.

Research Questions

This study seeks to investigate the impact of rural-urban migration on food security in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State. To achieve this, the following research questions will guide the study:

- What are the key drivers of rural-urban migration in Gombe State?
- How does rural-urban migration affect agricultural productivity and rural food supply in Gombe State?
- What are the consequences of rural-urban migration on food security in Gombe Metropolis?
- What coping mechanisms do rural and urban households employ to address food security challenges resulting from migration?

These research questions will help in analysing the relationship between migration patterns and food security while providing insights for policymakers and stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of rural-urban migration on food security in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State. The specific objectives are to:

- Identify the key drivers of rural-urban migration in Gombe State.
- Assess the impact of rural-urban migration on agricultural productivity and rural food supply.
- Investigate the coping mechanisms adopted by rural and urban households to mitigate food security challenges caused by migration.
- Propose policy recommendations for balancing rural agricultural sustainability and urban food security in Gombe State.

These objectives will guide the study in providing a comprehensive analysis of how rural-urban migration affects food security and in suggesting practical solutions to mitigate its negative impacts.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between rural-urban migration and food security in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State. Given the increasing rate of migration from rural to urban areas, the findings of this study will offer valuable insights for various stakeholders, including policymakers, government agencies, development organizations, researchers, and local communities. The study will help policymakers and government institutions develop effective strategies to address food security challenges caused by migration. It will provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance agricultural sustainability and improve urban food systems.

Overall, this study is crucial in addressing the pressing issue of food security in the context of rural-urban migration. The findings will provide practical solutions to improve food security, strengthen rural agricultural productivity, and ensure sustainable urban development in Gombe State.

Literature Review

Literature on rural-urban migration and its impact on food security. It provides a theoretical framework, empirical evidence, and an analysis of the relationship between migration, agriculture, and urban food supply. The review also examines existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity in Nigeria and globally.

Conceptual Framework

Rural-Urban Migration

Rural-urban migration refers to the movement of people from rural areas to urban centres in search of better economic, social, and infrastructural opportunities. Several factors drive this movement, including poverty, unemployment, climate change, insecurity, and inadequate access to education and healthcare (Ajaero&Onokala, 2013). Migration can be voluntary or forced, and while it can contribute to urban economic development, it also has significant consequences for food production and security.

Food Security

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2008) defines food security as a situation in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Food security has four main dimensions:

Availability – The supply of food from local production and imports.

Accessibility – The ability of individuals to obtain food through income or social safety nets.

Affordability – The economic capacity of households to purchase sufficient and nutritious food.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories explain the phenomenon of rural-urban migration and its consequences for food security:

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Developed by Chambers and Conway (1992), this framework examines how households adapt to migration-induced food security challenges. It emphasizes the need for diversified income sources, improved agricultural policies, and better urban food systems to ensure sustainable food access for both rural and urban populations.

Empirical Review

Impact of Rural-Urban Migration on Agricultural Productivity

Studies have shown that rural-urban migration leads to labour shortages in agriculture, reducing food production and weakening rural economies (Awumbila, 2014). In Nigeria, migration has resulted in lower farm productivity, as younger generations leave farming for urban jobs, leading to food scarcity and increased reliance on food imports (Akinyele, 2019).

Climate Change, Migration, and Food Security

Climate change is a significant driver of rural-urban migration in Nigeria, as desertification, droughts, and erratic rainfall patterns make farming less viable (Oluwatayo & Ojo, 2016). Migration caused by climate-induced agricultural decline leads to increased urban food insecurity, as rural areas struggle to supply enough food to meet growing demand.

Coping Strategies for Food Security Amidst Migration

Households adopt various coping mechanisms to deal with migration-induced food insecurity. Rural communities rely on alternative income sources such as small-scale trading and remittances from urban migrants, while urban households adjust by purchasing cheaper food items, reducing meal portions, or engaging in urban farming (Adesina &Fashogbon, 2019).

Policy Review on Migration and Food Security

Several national and international policies address food security and migration challenges:

Nigeria's Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA)

Launched in 2011, the ATA aims to increase agricultural productivity, reduce food imports, and create employment opportunities in rural areas to discourage migration (Federal Ministry of Agriculture, 2015). However, challenges such as poor funding, weak infrastructure, and climate change have limited its impact.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Food Security

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) emphasizes the need for food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture. Nigeria has adopted this goal, but rural-urban migration remains a challenge to achieving national food security targets.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts qualitative approaches using interviews and focus Group Discussions to examine the impact of rural-urban migration on food security in Gombe Metropolis.

Study Area: The research was conducted in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, a rapidly urbanizing area experiencing significant rural-urban migration, which has implications for food demand and supply.

Population of the study: The population of the study targeted on people that migrated from rural areas of Gombe into the metropolis.

Sampling Technique: A Snowball sampling technique was employed:

Stage 1. Snowball sampling technique was employed in which the researcher intimated a rural-urban migrant who subsequently helped in identifying other migrants for the sake of the interaction to elicit data.

Sample Size: The research dwelled on conducting interviews and discussions, as such, the researcher was guided by the peak of realities of data saturation.

Methods of Data Collection
Primary Data Collection: Data was sourced from interviews and focus group discussion from the identified migrants. Moreso, interviews involving migrants, farmers, traders, and policymakers were conducted.

Data Analysis
Qualitative Data: The data elicited from interviews and FGDs were analysed using qualitative Data miner software (QDM).

Research Findings
Findings from interviews and FGD revealed that majority of rural migrants are young adults (18-35 years old), predominantly male, and have low levels of formal education.

Most migrants engaged in informal sector jobs, such as street vending, transport services, and low-wage labour.

Rural migrants cited unemployment, insecurity, and declining agricultural productivity as key reasons for migration.

Lack of employment and unstable income sources in rural areas pushed people toward urban centres.

Irregular rainfall, desertification, and soil degradation have led to poor agricultural yields, making farming unsustainable.

Rural areas experience banditry, herder-farmer conflicts, and communal clashes, prompting forced migration to urban areas.

Improved healthcare, education, and electricity in urban areas makes migration appealing to rural dwellers.

Conclusions
The study concludes that: Rural-urban migration is a significant contributor to food insecurity in Gombe Metropolis, driven by unemployment, climate change, and insecurity.

The migration trend has led to a decline in rural agricultural productivity, reducing food supply and increasing market prices in urban areas, Urban food insecurity has worsened due to increased demand, reliance on food imports, and rising costs.

Migrants and low-income households are disproportionately affected, facing high food costs and adopting unsustainable coping strategies.

There is a lack of comprehensive policies addressing both rural development and urban food security, necessitating immediate government intervention.

Recommendations
Improve rural farming techniques by providing access to mechanized equipment, irrigation, and climate-resilient crop varieties.

Promote agribusiness and Agro-processing industries to create jobs and discourage migration.

Enhance rural infrastructure, including better roads, storage facilities, and electricity, to support agricultural activities and reduce post-harvest losses.

Provide financial incentives such as low-interest loans to young farmers to encourage rural employment and Strengthen food supply chains to ensure a steady flow of food from rural areas to urban markets.

Improve rural security by addressing conflicts and strengthening law enforcement to reduce displacement and decentralize economic activities by establishing industries and commercial hubs in rural areas.

Revise food security policies to incorporate rural-urban migration dynamics and encourage private sector investment in agriculture and food distribution.

Enhance disaster preparedness programs to mitigate climate-related agricultural losses.

A comparative study of food security challenges in urban areas with different levels of rural-urban migration.

The role of climate change adaptation strategies in reducing migration-induced food insecurity.

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING INTERNET FRAUD AMONGST THE YOUTH IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
Cybercrime is a multifaceted and complex problem because as internet usage grows, the number of cybercrimes increases. This paper investigated the socio-economic factors influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud among youth in Osun State. Due to the nature of the investigation, secondary sources of data collection were adopted for the study. The study demonstrates and elucidates the socio-economic factors influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud in Osun State, identifying poverty as the major driver. The results show that poverty is the major driver influencing youth engagement in internet fraud in Osun State. The study suggested that to tackle these socio-economic plagues, economic empowerment initiatives should be provided by the government and non-governmental actors to tackle the economic problems that are identified as the major drivers of youth engagement in internet fraud in Osun State. By addressing these root causes, Osun State can reduce the popularity of internet fraud and create a safer cyber environment.

Keywords: Cybercrime, Internet Fraud, Poverty, Osun State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Internet fraud has become a major form of cybercrime worldwide. Internet fraud refers to cybercrime activity that occurs over the Internet or via email, including crimes like identity theft, phishing, and other hacking activities intended to defraud people out of their money (Fortinet, 2024). The development of internet technology signalled a dramatic improvement in the lives of people globally and it has significantly improved engagement and communication among individuals, no matter where they are in the world (Chukwuka,2022). Despite the numerous advantages of the internet, a large number of young people in Nigeria commit various social, financial, and economic crimes online. A lot of young people have become billionaires overnight owing to the revenues of such activities. Nigeria has experienced a rise in cybercrime. Nigeria ranked fifth in a global assessment on the origin of cybercrime behind Russia which ranked first, followed by the United States, China, and Ukraine in second, third, and fourth place, respectively (Akintaro, 2024).

Nigeria possesses a wealth of material and human resources, nonetheless, the nation faces numerous political and socioeconomic issues, including extreme poverty, unemployment, deteriorating infrastructure, instability, and social vices (Bakkihsand Tor, 2020). Poverty is one of the most unsettling issues facing Nigeria, despite possessing Africa's largest economy and population, Nigeria provides few possibilities for the majority of its people to thrive. An estimated 87 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line, the country's poverty rate is predicted to have reached 38.9% in 2023 making it the second-largest impoverished population in the world after India (World Bank, 2024). Due to the extreme poverty rate in Nigeria, many people have been compelled to employ survival techniques like cybercrime (Yahoo Yahoo), prostitution, drug abuse, cultism, etc. that are contrary to national standards, norms, and values.

Numerous studies have highlighted the alarming situation of cybercrime in Nigeria, identifying poverty as the major driver of cybercrime in Nigeria.Akinyetun (2021) asserts that the major driver of cybercrime in Nigeria is poverty, many young Nigerians resort to cybercrime due to extreme poverty, misery, and injustice to achieve the Nigeria of their dreams. Adesina (2017) is of the view that Nigeria's high unemployment rate and extreme poverty account for the country's cybercrime unsurprising. A significant percentage of the country's unemployed youths and graduates engage in cybercrime primarily in a desperate attempt to escape poverty or to provide basic needs for their families. In Osun state, the new trend is the active involvement of youths in internet fraud-tagged "yahoo yahoo" which has been seen as a survival means. A lot of youths are shouldering their family responsibilities due to the economic crisis the country is currently experiencing, and considering how rich in resources the country is and continuous government intervention, the overall image of the country shows a relatively constant growth in the degree of poverty. It is against the background of the study that the paper attempts to examine the socio-economic factors influencing the engagement of youth in internet fraud in Osun State and proffer experimental solutions to this plague. This study covers significant deficiencies in the literature by providing an extensive overview of cybercrime, outlining its prevalence in Osun State, and the socio-economic factors that are influencing youth participation and engagement in Internet fraud. Previous research frequently concentrates on the effects of cybercrime in Nigeria, leaving studies on the socioeconomic factors that are influencing the engagement of youth in cybercrimes limited and scanty.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Data were collected through secondary sources of data collection, from official publications, journals, textbooks, newspapers, blog posts, etc. Data were collected from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, blog posts, etc. This method becomes necessary considering the relevance, reliability, credibility, peer review, and objectivity of the data. These data were qualitatively analysed.

Conceptual Definition

Cybercrime

The concept of cybercrime is from two varying concepts; cyber and crime. Cyber implies involving a computer or computer network such as the internet, while crime implies an act or action that is illegal and punishable by law. Cybercrime simply implies an illegal activity that is carried out on a computer or computer network. Cybercrime are criminal action that targets or makes use of a computer or networked device. Cybercrime seeks to harm networks or computer users for financial gain (Kaspersky, 2019). The illicit use of computers, the internet, or network equipment is known as cybercrime. Adesina (2017) defines cybercrime as crimes conducted online that make use of a computer as a tool or a specific victim. It includes any unlawful activity carried out by one or more individuals using networked computers, phones,

and other information and communications technology (ICT) devices to access the Internet. These individuals are known as scammers, hackers, fraudsters, cybercriminals, or 419ners.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security asserts that any illegal activity involving computers or the internet is considered cybercrime. The internet has fundamentally altered our economy and the way that the world conducts business, and as online services have grown globally and our reliance on digital devices has grown steadily, cybercriminals have access to a wealth of information that they can use for illicit purposes. Cybercriminals can be lone individuals, members of organised crime groups, or state-sponsored entities. They use technology to their advantage, disguising themselves behind the anonymity of the internet and cryptocurrencies to endanger public safety as well as our national and economic security. Cybercrime is a highly lucrative, transnational crime, and cyber threat actors make billions of dollars annually, making cybercrimes one of the most (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2024).

Internet Fraud

Internet fraud is the use of online services, phones, computers, and software with Internet access to defraud or exploit victims of their money. Internet fraud refers to illegal activity that is mostly done to take advantage of people Ezedikachi (2022). The problem of internet fraud is multifaceted and complex because as internet usage grows, the number of internet frauds increases. Internet fraud ranges from online intellectual property theft, identity theft, phishing, page jacking, advance fee scams, bad cheque scams, fake money orders, wire transfer fraud, anonymous servers, hijacked emails, and fraudulent websites used as tools and platforms by criminals.

Internet fraud is a type of cybercrime fraud or deceit that uses the Internet to defraud people of their money, property, or inheritance. It entails concealing facts or giving false information. Internet fraud is any type of fraud scheme that falsely solicits new clients using websites, chat rooms, message boards, or emails to commit fraud. Akande (2024) is of the view that the term Internet fraud refers to deceit that uses the Internet's capabilities to conceal real information to give false information to victims in an attempt to defraud them of their money, property, or inheritance. In most cases, fraudsters deceive their victims using internet-enabled devices to withhold truthful information and provide them with fake information to defraud them of money.

The Genesis of Cyber Crime in Nigeria

Cybercrime is a very popular crime in Nigeria, the antecedent of cybercrime can be traced back to the year 2000 with the introduction of the internet. The advent of Internet service was a thoughtful innovation that sought to help the country stand out from other countries (Olowu,2022). The younger generation of the youth then saw it as an opportunity to deceive and control others, especially those from foreign countries. The phrase “Yahoo Yahoo” started to gain popularity in the year 2000 since Yahoo mail was the first widely used email platform in the early 2000s. Olowu (2022) asserted that it was so expensive to buy a desktop or laptop computer in the early days, that cybercafés were the hideouts of these cybercriminals then. The yahoo yahoo trend was booming in the early 20’s and the criminals engaging in these fraud schemes are generally referred to as yahoo boy. Yahoo Yahoo is the most prevalent vernacular name for cybercrime in Nigeria and typically these criminals use email to trick unwary victims, especially using a Yahoo account or Yahoo Messenger (Moga, Galle, and Rukayyat, 2021).

In the early 20’s, these criminals employ a variety of strategies to obtain money from their victims. Many of these fraudsters use fake profiles to send scam emails to unsuspecting victims mostly foreigners, some of them coerce their victims into helping them obtain travel

papers to their place of residence or even help them obtain residency permits afterward they cease communicating. Others pose as a wealthy person from Nigeria, usually a prince or other regal figure, and ask for your assistance in sending a sizable amount of money to him and you are assured of receiving a substantial reward in return for your help. In other cases, these scammers create stories about terrible life events, tragedies, family deaths, personal injuries, or other hardships to keep their victims anxious and complicit in their schemes, and they also ask victims to donate money to help them overcome their alleged financial difficulties (Grigutytė, 2025). During this era, weak cybercrime laws encourage criminals to commit more crimes because they know they can always circumvent prosecution.

Awhefeada and Bernice (2020) assert that before 2015 there was no law particularly addressing cybercrime in Nigeria, instead there were statutes whose contents were deemed pertinent to reducing cybercrime. Previous relevant laws against cybercrimes like; The Criminal Code Act, The Penal Code Act, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (Establishment) Act 2004, the Advanced Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act 2006, the National Identity Management Commission Act 2007, The Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2011 existed before The Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention Etc.) Act 2015 was passed. The Cybercrimes Act, of 2015 is the main legislation on cybercrime in Nigeria, it was designed to prevent, identify, prosecute, and punish cybercrimes in Nigeria, it was intended to be an effective, unified, and comprehensive legal, regulatory, and institutional framework (Adeniyi, 2021). As the number of internet users is increasing exponentially every day, and as the internet becomes more accessible and cheaper, the threat shifted from the commonized Yahoo Yahoo to Yahoo Plus where cybercriminals use traditional spiritual methods like voodoo or juju to hypnotize their victims into complying with their requests and giving them whatever amount of money they request (Moga, Galle, and Rukayyat, 2021).

In recent times, cybercrime has eaten deep into Nigerian society, this is evident among the young ones. A significant number of Nigerian Youths between the ages of 18 and 35 have taken advantage of technological advancement to engage in cybercrime (Ogunjobi, 2020). The African Giant cyber threat landscape continues to experience a surge in number. In 2020, Nigeria was ranked 16th among the countries most affected by cybercrime in the world (Asadu, 2021). Specifically, in 2020, the EFCC recorded a total of 976 convictions, while the number surged up to 2,220 convictions in 2021. By 2022, the figure had jumped to 3,785 and the majority are related to cybercrime (Forbes, 2024). As of 2023, Nigeria has experienced a rise in cybercrime, the recent ranking reported that Nigeria ranked fifth in a global assessment on the origin of cybercrime behind Russia which ranked first, and the United States, China, and Ukraine, which came in second, third, and fourth place, respectively (Akintaro, 2024). The growing threat of cybercrime is causing global fret as cases of financial, property, and personal identity theft among individuals, corporations, and governments are sabotaged.

Internet Fraud in Osun State

Internet fraud and cybercrime are becoming a major issue in Osun State. The use of digitaltechnology and easy internet access has provided cybercriminals with new methods to exploit individuals and businesses for financial gain. Osun State has been identified as one of the hubs for internet fraud in Osun State. Olatunji, Olatunji, and Adeyemi (2024) conducted a study on crime study incidents in Osogbo, Osun State, the study revealed that internet scams and cybercrime have the highest mean weighted value of 4.4, which implies that there is a high occurrence of internet scams and cybercrime in the study area.Internet fraud in Osun State has been a concern, with the EFCC arresting suspected fraudsters multiple times.

Abanikannda (2019) in his study on awareness and impact of cybercrime among selected university undergraduates in Nigeria asserts that a substantial percentage of Osun State's

undergraduate students engage in internet fraud. The study asserts cybercrime is well-known among undergraduates of university students in Osun state. The study revealed that phishing, hacking, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, blackmailingon the internet, fraud, and forgery, are cybercrimes that cybercriminals engage in, and also thatundergraduate students of universities in Osun state are aware of this. He further warned against the impact of cybercrime that a lot of undergraduates have become criminally oriented when they get involved in cybercrimes, some of these students have become victims of cyberbullying, while some even abandon their studies to get fully involved in cybercrime.

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Internet Fraud in Osun State

The recent surge in cybercrime and internet fraud has impacted the socio, political, and economy of the country. It is therefore critical to assess the socio-economic factors influencing the rise in internet fraud amongst our youth. It is when these factors are identified we can proffer appropriate solutions to tackle this plague. These socio-economic factors are categorised into; economic factors, social factors, cultural factors, demographic factors, and psychological factors.

Economic Factors

i. **Poverty:** one of the economic factors influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud in Osun State is poverty. In Nigeria, poverty is a key factor contributing to cybercrime. Impulsive Nigerian youth are compelled to turn to internet fraud as a way to close the gap between their reality and the Nigeria of their dreams due to the country's pervasive multifaceted poverty, hardship, and inequality (Akinyetun, 2021)

ii. **Unemployment:** The high percentage of youth unemployment that Nigeria is now facing has led to a startling rise in cybercrimes in the country (Ewuzie, Obioma, Gift, Hayford, Chinaza, and Udegbunam, 2023). Even though Osun State is among the states with the lowest unemployment rate of 2.9% representing 58,031 unemployed individuals. A large proportion of these unemployed individuals mostly survive on internet fraud, even a larger percentage of employed and engaged youth still engage in cybercrimes.

iii. **Economic instability and Income inequality:** Cybercrime among Nigerian teenagers is becoming more prevalent due to the economic difficulties that the country is experiencing (Onje, 2024). Economic instability has shifted more responsibilities to the youth to fend for themselves and sometimes their family which has led to engagement into internet fraud to keep up with these responsibilities. The unequal distribution of income across the population in Osun State has also led to the quest for sudden wealth to balance the gap. Youths are indulging in all types of cyber activities that will fetch them a sustainable income.

Social Factor

iv. **Social Exclusion:**Defective socialization is considered a causative factor of involvement in cybercrime. Feeling excluded from society or lacking social connections can increase the likelihood of engaging in cybercrime.

v. **Peer Influence:**Another social factor influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud is peer influence, associating with peers who engage in cybercrime can increase the likelihood of engaging in cybercrime. A study by Oyenuga (2020) asserts that peer group influence is another factor that influences youth involvement in cybercrime. Many young people are drawn to Internet fraud because of their interactions with so-called yahoo-

boys and yahoo-girls and their desire to become wealthy and lead flamboyant lives (Ulo, 2022)

vi. **Family dynamics:**Family background is one factor responsible for youth involvement in cybercrime. It is easier for a youth with a disadvantaged family background to be socialised into involvement in cybercrime by friends than youth who are well-to-do and better monitored (Oyenuga, 2020). Ineffective parental guidance and poor parental supervision have also been associated with youth engagement in cybercrime, and this can be related to the parents' occupations.

vii. **Education:**Limited access to quality education or vocational training can increase the likelihood of engaging in cybercrime. These unemployed and unengaged youth sometimes see internet fraud as a quick way of getting rich and sustainable since they have no job or skills to generate income.

Cultural Factors

viii. **Cultural values and social norms:**cultural values and social norms that emphasize material wealth and status can contribute to cybercrime. Our cultural values have been blighted and dejected to materialism and individualism. The current social norms emphasise material wealth and prioritize individual success over collective well-being which is a push factor for youth to engage in internet fraud. Youth unfortunately live in a society where values and ethics are changing very fast. In a society such as Nigeria with gross structural inequalities, a high rate of indiscipline, a weak sanctioning system, and a wide gap between the rich and the poor, there is a tendency for the deprived to reject and embrace illegal means of achieving prescribed goals such as being wealthy in young age (Ninalowo, 2014).

ix. **Technological culture:**Technological culture that emphasises technological advancement and innovation can create an environment conducive to cybercrime. The urge to use the latest gadgets among youth is another factor that encourages internet fraud in our society. A culture that relies heavily on technology for daily life communication creates an environment for cybercrime.

Demographical Factors

x. **Age:** Young people, particularly those in their teens and early twenties are more likely to engage in cybercrimes. Nigerian cybercrime is peculiar among young people called yahoo-yahoo boys (Nwokoro, Chima, Ndom, and Iheonu, 2022). A large number of these Yahoo boys are between the ages of 18 and 30, and they are either enrolled in a university or about to be admitted to the university (Doppelmayr, 2013).

xi. **Gender:** Males are more likely to engage in cybercrime than females. Youths that engaged in fraudulent activities relating to the internet were labelled yahoo-yahoo boys. They are referred to as boys because they are majorly male youths engaged in various criminal activities (Doppelmayr, 2013).

xii. **Urbanisation:**Rapid urbanization in Nigeria which manifests mainly through rapid population growth is a challenging issue for policymakers. The urban population grows at an annual rate of 4.3% (WDI, 2016). Nigeria's urban population share stayed at about 54.28% in 2023 which implies almost 55% of the population resides in urban areas. Urban areas tend to have higher rates of cybercrime which implies urbanization is one of the major reasons that led to an increase in cybercrimes in Nigeria. Urbanization and crime move in tandem.

Psychological factors

xiii. **Personality traits:** certain personality traits such as covetousness and greed are other personal traits that might promote participation in cybercrime. Greed is taking more than one needs, whereas covetousness is seeking what belongs to others (Oyenuga, 2020). The two always indicate that there is a lack of contentment and can increase the likelihood of engaging in cybercrime

xiv. **Low self-esteem:**Low self-esteem is a psychological process when someone lacks confidence about who they are and what they can do. They often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate. Low self-esteem is another active factor responsible for the involvement of youth in cybercrime perpetration, individuals with low self-esteem may be more likely to engage in cybercrime as a means of seeking validation or revenge.

Conclusion

Internet fraud is becoming increasingly popular with cybercriminals constantly evolving their tactics to stay ahead of their victim. This study demonstrates and elucidates the socio-economic factors including economic factors, social factors, cultural factors, demographical factors, and psychological factors influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud in Osun State identifying economic factors as the major driver influencing the engagement of youths in internet fraud in Osun State.

Recommendation

To tackle the socio-economic plague influencing the incessant rise in internet fraud, economic empowerment initiatives should be provided by the government and non-governmental actors to tackle the economic problems that are identified as the major drivers of youth engagement in internet fraud in Osun State. Social factors, cultural factors, demographic factors, and psychological factors can be tackled by conducting public awareness campaigns to educate individuals about the risks and consequences of internet fraud. By addressing these root causes of internet fraud, Osun State can reduce the popularity of internet fraud and create a safer online environment.

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DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The concept of development administration is an integral part of a system that facilitates the wellbeing and smooth operation of that system to achieve desired result. Development administration helps in strengthening the administrative processes and structures in an organization for effective and efficient service delivery. The paper was able to examine the principles, practices, prospects and factors impeding development administration process in Nigeria with particular reference to the administrative sector in Nigeria. The paper adopted dependency theory and modernization theory as it theoretical frame work. The following factors impede development administration process in Nigeria - corruption, inadequate personnel, inadequate monitoring, poor leadership and weak/lack of adequate manpower amongst others. The paper recommended that adequate provision of infrastructure; elimination of corruption; elimination of greed and enthronement of accountability and sufficient manpower; and, continued utilization of development administration tools by the government and other relevant agencies will help in mitigating the menace of underdevelopment in Nigeria.

Keywords: Development, Administration and underdevelopment

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the term "development" dates back to the history of human civilization itself; starting from the primitive agriculture period, leading to the surplus production; and subsequently, the advent of modernization in Europe, proceeding to advancements in socio-economic, and political system; and their attendance negative consequences in form of pollution, disease, oppression, suppression and inequality; and further necessitated the opposing Marxist theorists stands about development; explaining both economic growth and inequality in the political system. Therefore, development means an event constituting a new stage in a changing situation; the process in which something grows or changes and becomes more advanced; or the act or process of creating something over a period of time. Development means improvement in a country's economic and social conditions; and advancement in way of managing an area's natural and human resources, with a view to create wealth and improve people's lives.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

Development

The concept of development is a general term which has universal application like monetary currency. The word is somehow viewed as lovely, affectionate, holy, uplifting and attractive to all and sundry, (Yusuf, 2024).

Development as a process is generally referred to as an attempt leading to growth into higher, fuller, and mature conditions. In contemporary parlance, development is interpreted to be a process of desirable changes in the achievement of multiplicity of goals. For a political scientist, political development involves increase in the levels of political participation, greater

progressivism and rationality in the legislative process, more progressive and effective judicial system and more effective political, and efficient administrative and executive system. It also assumes a mature media, independent election machinery, dynamic political parties and enlightened pressure groups. To an economist, development means a higher level of economic development and a greater concern for economic justice, Yusuf, (2024).

According to Rostow (1960), development is viewed in terms of modernizing a basically traditional society or a subsistence sector of a developing society, with the aim of attaining sustained growth. Rostow classified four stages as essential in delineating the process of development. These stages are; the traditional society; the pre-conditions for the 'take off', and the sustained economic progress.

To Wallman (1980), in his book, Perceptions of Development defines development as an inevitable but certainly unilinear movement towards a condition of maximum industrialization, modern technology, higher gross national product (GNP) and highest material standards of living. This means that development implies 'progress' which itself implies evolution toward some ultimate good. For the average person, the term economic development refers simply to achievement by poor countries of higher level of real per capita income and of improved condition of living for their people. In a technical sense, economic development refers to a process of economic growth within an economy, the central objective of the process being higher and rising real per capital income for that economy and with the benefits of this higher and rising income being widely defused within the economy.

Generally, development covers not only human development but also political and social development. Human development includes both socio and civil development. Social development includes the provision of social services like education, health and recreation. The term development is characterized by scientific progress, industrial advancement, capital and technical knowhow. Conversely, 'Underdeveloped' or 'undeveloped', and 'developed' are the terms that denote social and economic conditions of the people in a particular nation or state. Therefore, development is an all elusive term and includes not only the conditions of life but also the goals and objectives that one has to attain and its ability to progress, change and develop. However, the comparative condition of development is relative and ever changing. It varies according to what is needed and what is desired. A nation which employs its resources effectually is considered to be more developed than a nation which does not. In this regard, the two objectives of development are to ; elimination of poverty sustenance and respect for the rights of human dignity

Underdevelopment

Underdevelopment is low level of development characterized by low real per capital income, poverty, illiteracy, low life expectancy and underutilization of resources, Yusuf, (2024). Underdeveloped countries fail in the provision of high level of standard of living to a large segment of its population. Primarily, underdevelopment is used to distinguish countries along benchmarks concerning human development such as marco-economic growth, health care delivery, education, and standard of living, high level of poverty, low level of gross national product, and low income. Underdevelopment sustains absolute poverty, a situation where by the citizens lack basic needs such as food, clothing and housing.

According to Rodney (1972), underdevelopment is primarily made of two components; a comparative aspect as well as the relationship of exploitation; namely, the exploitation of one country by another. Therefore, underdevelopment is primarily a comparison of the level of development of any two nations or set of countries at a given period in time and the exploitation

of one country by another. The term "underdevelopment" is not defined by a lack of resources by Rodney, but it is explicitly referred to Africa as "underdeveloped'' and not "developing" because of its past and present exploitation that has created socio-economic backwardness. An 'underdeveloped' nation is framed as the antithesis of 'developed' nation and several theories such as dependency theory and modernization theory, had offered explanation as to why some countries have been underdeveloped.

In the opinion of Kuznets (1955), which offered three definitions of underdevelopment; first, it may mean failure to utilize fully the productive potential, warranted by the existing state of technical knowledge, and failure resulting from the resistance of social institutions. Secondly, it mean backwardness in economic performance compared with the few economically leading countries of the period; and thirdly, it mean economic poverty in the sense of failure to assure adequate sustenance and material comfort to most of a country's population.

Administration

The term 'administration' is derived from the Latin words – 'Ad' and 'Ministrare'. Administration means to assist or to manage. It is the act of managing something in the public or private spheres. Several Scholars have defined the term Administration in various ways. For example, Administrative system can be viewed in the following manner:-

(a) An environment that motivates the administration as well as be a recipient of its activities;

(b) The inputs transferring incitements from the social settings to the administration.

(c) The outputs transmitting the outcomes of administrative act to the administration

(d) The procedure of conversion, which changes inputs into outputs; and

(e) Feedback, which is an important ingredient in the conversion process from output to input.

Nigro (2017) defined administration 'as the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. John A. Vieg (2014) also viewed administration as the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources, aimed at making those things happen which we want to happen and simultaneously preventing developments that fail to square with our intentions. To Luther Gulick (1937), administration has to do with getting things done, with the accomplishment of defined objectives, while J.M. Piffiner and R. Presthus (1960), sees administration as the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends. A cursory analysis of the various definitions above shows two crucial mechanisms of administration. First the cooperative effort of administration and second it is a pursuit of common purposes.

Development Administration

Development Administration is a dynamic concept which brings about socio-economic and politico-economic changes in society. It aimed towards development; it strives for change, growth, progress and overall advancement in every sphere of a country. Edward, W. Weidner (1960), defined development administration as "an action-oriented, goal-oriented administrative system. In addition, Weidner observed further that development administration is the process of guiding an organization towards the achievement of progressive political, economic and social objectives that are authoritatively determined in one manner or another.

Gant (2006) defined development administration as that aspect of public administration in which the focus of attention is on organizing and administering public agencies in such a way as to stimulate and facilitate defined program of social and economic progress. It has the purpose of

making change attractive and possible to the population generally. Montgomery (1996) averred that development administration means carrying out planned change in economy such as in agriculture, industry and capital, and to a lesser extent in the social service of the state such as education and health. These definitions connote that development administration is a process to move towards higher position; a perpetual and a dynamic process; a joint effort for the achievement of determined goals; a work-oriented and goal-oriented administration; a significant instrument to solve the diverse problems of the third world; is not only the administration of development but also the development of administration; and it is administrative machinery for a change and modernize third world societies.

Esman (2021), submitted that development administration is the central core in the role of governmental administration through inducing, guiding, and managing the interrelated processes of nation building, economic growth, and societal change. This therefore buttressed the assertion that development administration is the administration of developmental programmes designed to promote nation-building and socio-economic development and the concomitant development of administrative practices and institutions necessary for the implementation of such programmes.

Growth

While development is an ongoing process which helps achieve sustainable growth of a country and also helps in achieving political, social and economic growth, and coping with new challenges, growth is an important ingredient required for development. However, one cannot assume that growth alone can make development or make the economy grow. There are a number of other important areas through which the development can take place like education, health etc. it is easy to achieve growth but economic development is not easily achievable.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

After World War II, the advent of multilateral and bilateral organizations for assistance and aids by developed countries to newly independent nations brought about development administration, and monetary assistance and facilities under the United States International Development (USAID) and Comparative Administration Group (CAG) led to propagation of development administration as a tool for accomplishment of socio-economic development of the newly independent nations called third world.

In practical terms, the following three factors led to the growth of development administration;

(a) The emergence of newly decolonized nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America after the World War II;

(b) The emergence of international and American economic and technical plans for assistance to third world nations; and

(c) The establishment of the Comparative Administration Group in United States and the interest shown by its members in developing nations and their public administration systems.

In the 60s and 70s, development administration became the dominant issue in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, as a means of executing development policies and plans, which focused on their nation-building and socio-economic development. However, during the 80s and 90s, the new international economic order became a significant agenda in the arena of development and thus, questioned the operations and efficacy of development administration. However, the new order demanded a re-adjustment of the global economy through globalization, trade liberalization, aids and technological transfer which were expected to transform developing countries but were generally overlooked by developed nations, as majority of the leaders of the third world countries were lured to make illicit transfers of their

meager income and assets to developed countries. Consequently, poverty became the order of the day in most of the developing nations.

Goals and Objectives of Development Administration
Two main issues were identified as development administration's goals. They are;

a. Nation-building and

b. Socio-economic development.

In the literature, the term "development administration" has been used in two interrelated senses. First, it refers to the administration of development programs, to the methods used by large organizations, like governments, to implement policies and plans designed to meet their developmental objectives (Riggs, 1970). Second, it involves the strengthening of administrative capabilities. These two aspects of development administration, that is, the administration of development and the development of administration are intertwined.

Today, development administration is concerned with the formulation and implementation of the four P's – planning, policies, programmes, and procedures and according to Stone (1967), the goals of development administration are; To strengthen and expand the social and political infrastructure with the object of creating new resources for development, formulate, reformulate and implement a set of related development goals, plans and programmes, re-organize the administrative structures and procedures for the realization of development objectives; To ensure people participation in development effort, promote growth of social and political infrastructurem initiate institutional building and administrative reforms to facilitate development programs, initiate economic goals of eradicating poverty, mproving the quality of life, enforce social goals of fairness, justice, peace, equality and service to the people ;

Importance of Development Administration
Development Administration is relevant in modern day because;

(i) The study of development administration has generally had a dominant normative concern with enhancement of administrative capabilities in "developing" nations.

(ii) It is an aspect of public administration that is centrally concerned with one of the many values men seek, and which varies in the strength and kind of allegiance it commands country to country, group to group, and person to person. The concept of development administration helps in relating administrative means to administrative ends, and thus, aids the process of selecting appropriate means for achievement of developmental goals in various cultural contexts.

(iii) Development administration has provided the whole area of public administration with a programmatic goal or value orientation. The study of development administration is assisting the practitioners of public administration to identify conditions that maximize the rate of development in various settings (Riggs, 1964).

(iv) Development administration has stressed upon the role of administrative system in generating and sustaining change in its environment.

(v) Development administration is a requisite to nation building.

Characteristics of Development Administration
The followings are the features of development administration:

Change-orientation:

Development administrators' emphasis is on the change of attitudes, outlooks and orientation of administrators in order to bring about over all socio-economic transformation in the society. Development administration is change-oriented administration. This change involves the movement of system or a structure from one point to another.

Goal-orientation and Result- Oriented
Development administration is a 'goal-oriented' administration. It is an administration that is designed to achieve certain specific goals and result-oriented with sole emphasis on socio-economic change of the society.

Commitment, devotion and dedication:
Commitment to the problems of the country, commitment to social and economic change, and commitment needed to change the socio-economic conditions of the country is the ultimate focus of development administration. Development administrators are not only commit to planning and implementation of the programme of development, but also committed to the entire process of transformation and modernization of the society.

Client-orientation:
Development administration is client-oriented, and aimed at the aspirations and requests of the clients and the people of the areas. The needs, requirements and wants of the needy people of the underdeveloped countries are to be satisfied and fulfilled within a specified time. Hence, development administration has to be positively oriented towards satisfying the needs of the people. The people are not the passive beneficiaries; but are active participants in the development programmes.

Planned and coordinated efforts:
Development administration refers to organized efforts to development administration, and carry out the development programs and projects of which, its efforts are directed towards national development through planning and co-ordination.

Goal-oriented administration
Development administration is goal, purpose, and objective-oriented administration. Its main goals are social and economic. It handles development programmes and plays an appropriate role in bringing about desired social, political and economic changes to the society. It is flexible in its operation, operational in its nature and its contents are positive.

Management capacities
Development administration involves creating and enhancing management capacities as a means of achieving development goals and it have the capacity to face social and economic challenges and nation building. Its focus is on improving the skills and knowledge of development-oriented administrators, so that they may be able to respond to the growing needs of the people. A unique and specific function of development administration is management. Therefore, its operators need adequate development and training for their operational efficiency.

Participation
Development goals involve greater participation of the people. In democracy, participation implies strengthening of the pressure groups, political parties, equal opportunity in political offices and respect for public opinion in government affairs. Development administration is therefore the machinery for creating and promoting such condition that will facilitate greater participation of the people in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of programmes

and projects. For participation to be meaningful and effective, people must be familiar with the problems to be addressed.

Creativity and innovativeness

An important element in development administration is creativity. It means ability and power to develop new ideas. Innovation means application of these ideas. Thus, the important task of development administration is to promote and carry out innovation. Development administration is an instrumentality of government which lays emphasis upon the adoption of new structures, procedures, policies, plans, programmes, which will help in achieving the development objectives of the society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Dependency Theory and Modernization Theory

Dependency theory is a mixture of various theories, including world systems theory, historical structure theory, and neo-Marxist theory. Collectively, these theories contrast modernization theory, an earlier theory of state development. Dependency theory can be seen as a critique based on the following question or problem: Why do some countries become rich while others remain poor? This question is posed against the previously held conception that economic development was beneficial to every country within the international system.

Modernization theory considers nature, economic situations, world market integration, and technological development or transfers of technology between developed countries and underdeveloped countries. The deficiency in this theory derives from its internal examination of development among underdeveloped countries. It assumes that such countries are underdeveloped simply because they are still at a very early stage of their own development, and to advance, they need to look at developed (particularly Western) countries. Western countries can be seen as standards, offering specific patterns or standards that countries can follow to achieve modernity.

Dependency theorists also describe the interaction of more than just the core and periphery. They argue that states perform different functions within the world economy, which are divided into four groups instead of two: center of the center (CC), periphery of the center (PC), center of the periphery (CP), and periphery of the periphery (PP). For example, the CC consists of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The PC includes advanced and industrialized countries, such as Canada, Japan, Italy, and Spain. Countries within this group have less global power and wealth than the CC countries. There are also CP countries, such as South Africa, India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia. These countries have a reasonable amount of wealth despite the fact that they are still undergoing processes of development.

The Central Propositions of Dependency Theory

There are a number of propositions, all of which are contestable, which form the core of dependency theory. These propositions include:

1. Underdevelopment is a condition fundamentally different from undevelopment. The latter term simply refers to a condition in which resources are not being used. For example, the European colonists viewed the North American continent as an undeveloped area: the land was not actively cultivated on a scale consistent with its potential.

2. The distinction between underdevelopment and undevelopment places the poorer countries of the world is a profoundly different historical context. These countries are not "behind" or "catching up" to the richer countries of the world. They are not poor because they lagged behind the scientific transformations or the Enlightenment values of the European states. They are poor because they were coercively integrated into the European economic system only as producers

of raw materials or to serve as repositories of cheap labor, and were denied the opportunity to market their resources in any way that competed with dominant states.

3. Dependency theory suggests that alternative uses of resources are preferable to the resource usage patterns imposed by dominant states. There is no clear definition of what these preferred patterns might be, but some criteria are invoked. For example, one of the dominant state practices most often criticized by dependency theorists is export agriculture.

The criticism is that many poor economies experience rather high rates of malnutrition even though they produce great amounts of food for export. Many dependency theorists would argue that those agricultural lands should be used for domestic food production in order to reduce the rates of malnutrition.

Critiques:
1. Oversimplification: Baran's theory oversimplifies complex development issues, neglecting local agency and factors, lack of empirical evidence: Some argue that his claims are not supported by sufficient empirical data, too broad: His definition of dependence is too broad, making it difficult to apply to specific contexts, ignores internal dynamics: Baran focuses on external factors, downplaying the role of internal dynamics in shaping development, limited policy implications: His theory offers limited practical solutions for addressing underdevelopment.

ECOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

Riggs (1960) in his book the Ecology of Public Administration made the most notable contribution to the debate of ecology of administration by stressing the relationship between public administration and its environment. His main emphasis is on the human- social system and not on physical or biological aspects of the environment. Through his work, we are able to know that development administration has its own set of environment and it is surrounded by social, political, economic and cultural sets of environments, which usually influenced its operations. At the same time, development administration also interacts with its social, political, economic and cultural environment for successful execution of development programmes in the society

(a) Social Environment of Development Administration

Development administration is always influenced by social problems in the environment such as poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination, destitution, income inequality etc. that constitutes hindrance to development. In developing countries, society is getting divided into ‘haves’ and ‘haves not’, which has resulted to perennial to social conflicts, increasing illiteracy level, insecurity, banditry, disunity, tribalism, religious extremism, increased rape, kidnapping, arson, ritual murder, armed robbery etc that had impacted negatively on development administration. Governments at all levels must therefore focus on development administration and implement social justice and social welfare policies to enhance peace, law and order to bring about development in developing countries. Development administration must strive to reduce corruption in the society; ensure improved welfare and social justice to facilitate development.

(b) Political Environment of Development Administration

Development administration is completely depends on the political system, hence, political factor influences the structure and functioning of development administration. Development administrator’s operations and activities are politically directed and controlled. In fact, politics also frame development policies and programmes, and determine who get what, when and how,

in development administration. Also, policy formulation is the work of politics while implementation is the job of development administration.

(c) Economic Environment of Development Administration

In the economic environment, issues such as pricing, currency, banking, planning, budgeting, production, distribution, consumption and exchange rate etc influences and affects the functioning of development administration in developing countries. Other economic factors like import-export rate, mode of production, industrialization level, saving pattern, purchasing capacity, income level etc affects the operations of development administration. In developing countries such as Nigeria, unequal distribution of resources and income is causing a great dissatisfaction and conflicts in the society.

(d) Cultural Environment of Development Administration

In developing countries, culture impact and influence the functioning of the development administration. Development administration is bound by peoples culture as development policies and programmes of the government have a cultural dimension. Therefore, development administration had to be operated in line with the culture of the environment. Because of cultural disparity and cross-cultural settings in developing countries, the implementation of policies and programmes is not usually smooth and friction may be witnessed at various level of organizational set up for development, which hampers implementation process. To ensure smooth operations, development administrators must protect cultural heritage sites and organize entertainment facilities, games, dance, songs etc to facilitate the buy-in of locals in the development programmes and projects. Supernatural beliefs, deity and operation of witchcraft, wizard etc which are peculiar to indigenous African societies must be taken into cognizance by development administrators operating in African societies for successful implementation of development programmes.

(e) Administrative Environment of Development Administration

The existence of public bureaucracy i.e. the public service and civil service must be recognized by development administrator in their activities and implementation of development programmes. The rules and regulations of the public services and civil service, the constitution and other extant laws of the country must be complied with by development administration in its operation and during execution of development programmes. Any infractions or breaches to existing laws and infractions to constitution and existing service rules may negates the functioning of development administration.

CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The challenges confronting development administration in developing countries like Nigeria are multifarious. However, notable among these problems are;

(1) **Inadequate personnel:** Shortage of administrators and personnel with sufficient skills and knowledge to deal with development administration

(2) **Fraud:** Fraudulent practices among political and managerial personnel engaged in development administration programmes, resulting in integrity problem

(3) **Inadequate monitoring:** Absence of adequate monitoring system to measure and evaluate the execution of development programme and ensure compliance with development plans and goals

(4) **Poor leadership:** Absence of exceptional leadership to coordinate development programmes

(6) **Bureaucratic domination in development:** The role of bureaucracy as the main tool of development is also questioned. The bureaucracy is an efficient instrument with which administrative policies are implemented. But the bureaucracy proved to be a very powerful institution. In fact, bureaucratic power goes hand in hand with political power.

(8) **Administrative Corruption:** The biggest challenge for the development administration is administrative corruption. The government allocates a lot of money for development projects and that money is spent through the administration. Corruption at the administrative level is often seen in developing countries as money is not spent in the right place.

(10) **Lack of bureaucratic professionalism:** Different departments are required for different types of work. In developing countries, there is no separate division for each job. As a result, there is a lack of bureaucratic professionalism in the proper implementation of the policy.

Conclusion

This paper is on the principles, practices, prospects and challenges of development administration in Nigeria. The paper established that there are numerous factors impeding development administration process in Nigeria. These factors include corruption, low budgetary allocation, fraud, inadequate personnel, inadequate monitoring, poor leadership, corruption among others and these call foran urgent attention for intervention by practitioners, government agencies, federal and statedevelopment experts and other relevant stakeholders.

Recommendations

(1) There is need for adoption of indigenous development administrative plan to further enhance accountability in the public sector in Nigeria.
(2) Continuous utilization of development administration tools by Federal, state and other relevant agencies to improve on the well-being of the people.
(3) The Nigerian state and Africa states in general should build their developmental strategies around their cultural affiliations and values in order to develop faster

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COUPLE INFERTILITY AND FAMILY STABILITY IN CALABAR MUNICIPAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examines the relationship between couple infertility and family stability in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it investigates the effect of couples' genetic disorders and hormonal imbalances on family stability. The study population includes both single and married individuals residing in the metropolis. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 400 respondents was selected. Data collected from the field were presented using simple percentages and analyzed with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed a significant relationship between genetic disorders, hormonal imbalances, and family stability. Based on these findings, the study recommends, among other measures, that awareness campaigns led by medical social workers should be implemented to reduce stigma, educate individuals on early diagnosis of genetic disorders, and promote proactive health behaviors to prevent infertility.
Keywords: Couple infertility, genetic disorders, hormonal imbalances, family stability

Introduction

Infertility, the inability of a couple to conceive after a prolonged period of unprotected sex, is a complex issue that affects many individuals and families worldwide. Infertility is often viewed through both medical and cultural lenses. Medically, infertility can arise from various factors, including hormonal imbalances, blocked fallopian tubes, low sperm count, or other health conditions affecting either the male or female partner.

In Nigeria, both male and female infertility can result from underlying health conditions. In women, conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and hormonal imbalances can contribute to infertility. For men, low-sperm count or poor sperm quality due to health problems like infections or lifestyle factors can be a significant cause (Ajuluchukwu& Eze, 2017; Nnana, Isaac & Blessing, 2023). The prevalence of untreated infections and limited access to healthcare in some areas may exacerbate these issues. Environmental pollution, poor nutrition, and exposure to chemicals can also impact fertility (Baker, 2018).

In Calabar Municipality, a region in southeastern Nigeria, infertility has become a significant social concern, affecting not only the emotional and psychological well-being of couples but also the stability of families. The social, cultural, and economic consequences of infertility often lead to changes in family dynamics, gender roles, and relationships (Bauer & Collins, 2021). The causes of infertility are commonly attributed to a range of factors, from health issues to environmental conditions, nutrition, and even lifestyle choices. However, infertility is not only a medical challenge; it is also shaped by cultural beliefs and practices. In

the context of Calabar, a predominantly Igbo and Efik ethnic region, infertility carries significant social weight (Ofem, Ojiho, Eyang & James, 2024). In these communities, children are seen as crucial for the continuity of the family lineage, and the inability to have children can result in stigmatization and social exclusion (Binns & Messer, 2020).

According to Cross River State Ministry of Health (2020), infertility in Calabar Municipality is often viewed through a cultural and traditional lens. In many African societies, including the Efikand Ibibio ethnic groups predominant in bar, there is a strong societal expectation for couples to bear children, especially in the first few years of marriage. Failure to do so can lead to stigmatization, particularly for women, who are often blamed for the couple's inability to conceive, this stigma may lead to isolation from the community and even from extended in members, which can undermine the stability of the family unit. Paschou, Athanasiadou, Hafford-Letchfield, Hinchliff, Mauskar, Rees, &Lambrinoudaki (2024), noted that family stability in this setting is often closely tied to the ability to have children, and failure to do so can lead to emotional distress, marital strain, and a sense of inadequacy, particularly for women. As with many other regions, age is a critical factor in infertility. Women over the age of 35 may experience reduced fertility, and this can add to the emotional burden for couples hoping to conceive. The emotional and psychological impact of infertility can destabilize marriages and family life (Nnana, Isaac & Blessing, 2023).

According to Steffan & Potočnik (2023), couples experiencing infertility may undergo significant emotional strain, which can manifest in several ways. Infertility can lead to significant tension between partners. Disagreements over the causes of infertility, the emotional and physical toll of medical treatments, and feelings of guilt or inadequacy can result in marital conflict. In some cases, this stress can cause couples to drift apart, leading to separation or divorce. In many cases, traditional gender expectations exacerbate the strain. Women, who are often expected to bear children, may face intense pressure and societal blame for infertility. Men, on the other hand, may feel a loss of identity or face criticism for being unable to father children. This unequal burden can create frustration, resentment, and emotional distance in relationships. Seeking medical treatment for infertility can be costly, and in regions like Calabar, where access to advanced reproductive healthcare is limited, couples may spend significant resources on fertility treatments, traditional medicine, or consultations with local healers (Casado-Espada, de Alarcón, de La Iglesia-Larrad, Bote-Bonaechea, & Montejo, 2019). The financial strain of infertility treatments may further destabilize the family, leading to stress (Tangban, E. E., Nnana&Udousoro, 2024).

Despite the challenges, many couples in Calabar Municipality find ways to cope with infertility. Some seek support from family members or religious institutions, while others may explore medical or alternative treatments. Counseling and therapy are gradually becoming more recognized as effective ways of helping couples manage the emotional and psychological impact of infertility. Moreover, Steffan & Potočnik (2023), stated that community-based support systems, such as fertility support groups or religious communities, offer emotional and social support to couples facing infertility. These groups provide a platform for couples to share experiences, gain emotional support, and find practical solutions. Over time, increasing awareness and acceptance of infertility as a medical condition rather than a moral failing has been recommended to reduce stigma and promote family stability, yet to not avail. It is on this note that the present study seeks to examine couple infertility and family instability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Couple infertility in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area is not just a medical issue, but a complex social challenge that affects family stability. The causes of infertility are multifaceted, involving health, environmental, and lifestyle factors. However, it is the social stigma, cultural

expectations, and gendered roles surrounding infertility that contribute most significantly to the destabilization of families (Nnana, Tangban, Tiku &Abonor, 2023).

Couple infertility can significantly impact family stability, affecting both the emotional and practical aspects of a relationship. Infertility is a medical condition that involves the inability of a couple to conceive a child after trying for a prolonged period (usually over a year without success), and it can lead to a range of challenges that affect not only the individuals involved but also the broader family dynamic (Nnana, Enobong, Anyang, Cecilia & Beauty, 2023). Couples experiencing infertility may face intense emotional stress due to unmet expectations of parenthood. This can create feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation. In some cases, it can lead to a breakdown in communication between partners as they cope with their individual and shared frustrations. Fertility challenges often lead to questions about personal worth, particularly for individuals who place a significant part of their identity in their ability to conceive. The inability to have children may lead to feelings of inadequacy or failure, especially in societies or cultures that emphasize family creation as a key part of adulthood. Infertility is often accompanied by a sense of loss whether it is the loss of dreams of having biological children or the mourning of the possibility of starting a family in the traditional way. This grief can significantly impact both partners and their ability to function as a unit, sometimes leading to long-term emotional scars (Ofem, 2023).

In many cultures, childbearing is seen as a fundamental part of married life. Couples struggling with infertility may face societal stigma, feel isolated, or experience judgment from family and friends who do not understand the complexity of infertility. This can create a sense of alienation, causing the couple to withdraw from social activities and further destabilizing family relationships. Families may feel disappointed or upset by the couple's inability to have children, which can create tension, guilt, and unwanted pressure (Nnana, Rita & Adie, 2024). In some cultures, children are seen as essential for ensuring family continuity, and without them, there may be cultural shame or concerns about lineage, further compounding the strain on the couple (Tangban&Nnana, 2024).

The emotional, financial, and social strain of infertility can sometimes lead to divorce or separation. Studies show that couples facing infertility have a higher likelihood of experiencing relationship breakdowns compared to couples who do not face these challenges. The constant pressure and inability to reconcile differences over the issue of childbearing can sometimes cause irreparable damage to the relationship. Infertility often forces couples to re-evaluate their life plans and what family stability looks like for them. They may face the difficult decision of whether to continue trying fertility treatments, consider adoption, or remain child-free. These uncertainties can significantly influence a couple's long-term goals, including career aspirations, lifestyle choices, and financial planning (Nnana& Isaac, 2024). Couple infertility can have a profound impact on family stability, affecting emotional, financial, and social dimensions of life. While some couples develop resilience and strengthen their bond through shared experiences, others face substantial challenges that strain their relationship. Building on this premise, the present study explores the relationship between couple infertility and family stability in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature review

Couples, Genetic Disorders, and Family Stability

Genetic disorders are health conditions caused by abnormalities in an individual's DNA, often inherited from one or both parents. These disorders can significantly impact physical, mental, and emotional well-being, thereby influencing family stability. In the context of couples in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria, genetic conditions present unique challenges to marital relationships and overall family dynamics. Ajuluchukwu and Eze (2017)

note that inherited genetic disorders can affect various aspects of health, with conditions such as sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, and certain forms of inherited deafness being prevalent in Nigeria. Sickle cell disease, in particular, remains a major public health concern due to the high frequency of sickle cell trait carriers. Furthermore, limited awareness and inadequate education about genetic risks, especially among young couples, exacerbate the situation (Nnana, Adie, Omini, &Runyi, 2024).

Ogunyemi and Eze (2018) opined that when couples carry genes for genetic conditions, they may unknowingly pass these traits to their children, leading to a cycle of inherited disorders within families. However, genetic counseling remains largely inaccessible in many parts of Calabar, leaving couples unaware of the risks they may face, particularly when both partners are carriers of the same genetic disorder. This lack of awareness contributes to high infertility rates among couples (Christiana, Nnana, Emmanuel, Lilian, & Victor, 2022).

According to Baker (2018), the presence of genetic disorders in a family can lead to numerous challenges that affect overall stability. One of the most profound impacts is on a couple's fertility. In cases of infertility, parents may experience grief, guilt, and frustration, which can strain relationships and lead to conflicts within the family unit. Additionally, the financial burden of medical treatment can further destabilize families, particularly in Calabar Municipality, where access to healthcare resources is often limited, and treatment costs are high. For families affected by genetic disorders such as sickle cell disease, the need for ongoing medical attention adds another layer of stress, contributing to marital discord (Nnana, Olofu, &Runyi, 2024). Couples may feel overwhelmed by the demands of caregiving, leading to burnout or emotional disengagement. When multiple children within a family are affected by a genetic disorder, the situation becomes even more challenging, often resulting in long-term financial strain, emotional exhaustion, and social isolation (Baker, 2018).

Genetic disorders are health conditions caused by abnormalities in an individual's DNA, often inherited from parents. These disorders can have a profound impact on those affected, influencing their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. In the context of couples in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria, genetic disorders present unique challenges to family stability. According to Ajuluchukwu and Eze (2017), genetic disorders are often inherited from one or both parents and can affect various aspects of health. In Calabar Municipality, as in many other parts of Nigeria and Africa, conditions such as sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, and certain forms of inherited deafness are prevalent among couples. Sickle cell disease, in particular, is a significant public health concern in Nigeria due to the high frequency of carriers of the sickle cell trait. The prevalence of these genetic disorders is further compounded by limited awareness and education about genetic risks, especially among young couples.

Ogunyemi and Eze (2018) opined that when couples carry genes for inherited conditions, they may unknowingly pass these traits to their children. Binns and Messer (2020) asserted that the social and cultural implications of genetic disorders also play a role in family dynamics in Calabar Municipality. In many Nigerian communities, traditional beliefs often stigmatize infertility and certain genetic disorders, particularly those associated with disabilities. This stigma can lead to exclusion, discrimination, and even rejection of affected individuals. Consequently, couples may experience social isolation, making it even harder for the family to maintain a sense of stability and support. The cultural stigma surrounding genetic disorders can also negatively impact the mental health of couples, who may feel ashamed or blamed for their inability to conceive.

Addressing the challenges posed by genetic disorders requires improved healthcare services and education to ensure the stability of affected families. In Calabar Municipality, there is a growing need for accessible genetic counseling and awareness programs for couples.

Educating couples about the risks of genetic disorders, particularly through prenatal counseling and genetic screening, could significantly reduce the incidence of inherited conditions. By understanding genetic risks, couples can make informed decisions about proper counseling and medical checks before marriage in order to take preventive measures against future health challenges (Binns & Messer, 2020). Furthermore, improving the availability and quality of healthcare services in Calabar Municipality is essential for providing adequate support to families affected by genetic disorders. Public health campaigns that raise awareness about common genetic conditions can play a crucial role in reducing stigma and promoting informed decision-making (Nnana& Nwadike, 2024).

Couples, Hormonal Imbalances, and Family Stability

Hormones are chemical messengers that regulate various bodily functions, including metabolism, mood, reproductive processes, and growth. When these hormones become unbalanced, they can affect an individual's physical and emotional health, potentially straining relationships and family dynamics. In the context of couples, hormonal imbalances can have far-reaching effects on both partners, influencing their well-being, emotional stability, and overall relationship (Saadedine, Kapoor, & Shufelt, 2023). According to the American Pregnancy Association (2021), hormonal imbalance refers to a condition in which hormone levels in the body are either too high or too low. In couples, hormonal imbalances can arise from various factors, including medical conditions, lifestyle changes, stress, or age-related changes. Both men and women can experience hormonal imbalances, which can affect their reproductive health, energy levels, mood, and general quality of life. For women, hormonal imbalances are often linked to conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), menopause, thyroid disorders, or endometriosis. These imbalances can disrupt menstruation, lead to infertility, and cause symptoms such as mood swings, hot flashes, fatigue, and weight gain. In men, hormonal imbalances typically involve testosterone deficiency or hypogonadism, which can affect libido, energy levels, mood, and sexual function. Additionally, stress and poor lifestyle choices—such as an unhealthy diet, lack of exercise, or excessive alcohol consumption—can exacerbate hormonal imbalances in both partners (Nnana&Nsan, 2024).

Casado-Espada et al. (2019) postulated that hormonal imbalances can significantly influence family stability by affecting the emotional and physical health of individuals and by straining relationships between partners. The emotional toll of hormonal imbalances is often the first indicator of distress in relationships. Women experiencing imbalances due to conditions like menopause or PCOS may suffer from mood swings, irritability, and depression, which can create tension in the household. Similarly, men with low testosterone levels may experience fatigue, depression, or a diminished interest in intimacy, which can reduce emotional closeness between partners.

Hormonal imbalances can create a cycle of misunderstanding and frustration within relationships, as partners may struggle to recognize the physiological causes behind each other’s behavior. One of the most significant effects of hormonal imbalances in couples is on sexual health and intimacy. In women, fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels can lead to a decreased libido and make sexual intercourse painful. Similarly, men with low testosterone levels may experience reduced sexual desire, erectile dysfunction, or performance anxiety. A decline in sexual intimacy can result in emotional distance between partners, leading to feelings of rejection, frustration, and loneliness. Over time, this deterioration in physical intimacy may weaken the emotional connection between couples, ultimately affecting the stability of their relationship (Paschou et al., 2024).

Scully and Donovan (2017) emphasized that hormonal imbalances can also affect a couple’s ability to conceive, posing challenges to family stability. Conditions such as polycystic ovary

syndrome (PCOS) in women and low sperm count in men can lead to infertility, making conception difficult. The emotional toll of infertility often results in feelings of guilt, inadequacy, or blame between partners. Moreover, societal and familial pressures regarding childbearing can add further strain to the relationship, intensifying stress and emotional distress.

Managing hormonal imbalances, particularly in chronic conditions such as thyroid disorders, PCOS, or menopause, often requires ongoing medical intervention. Treatment options may include medications, hormone replacement therapy, diagnostic tests, or fertility treatments, all of which can be financially burdensome. Financial strain, especially when one partner is unable to work due to health complications, can increase stress within the family, further challenging its stability.

Furthermore, hormonal imbalances often manifest as mood swings, fatigue, or behavioral changes, making effective communication between partners more difficult. Affected individuals may withdraw emotionally or react impulsively, leading to frequent misunderstandings. Meanwhile, the unaffected partner may struggle to empathize, mistaking these mood fluctuations for personality traits rather than recognizing them as symptoms of an underlying medical condition. This lack of awareness and understanding can erode trust and intimacy, making it even more challenging for couples to navigate their difficulties together (Babaniyi, Ajao, Akor, &Babaniyi, 2023).

Zhao and Li (2021) observed that although hormonal imbalances can pose significant challenges to couples and family stability, various effective solutions and coping strategies can help manage these conditions and minimize their impact on relationships. The first step in addressing hormonal imbalances is obtaining appropriate medical care. Treatments such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT), medications, and lifestyle modifications—including regular exercise, stress management and dietary adjustments—can help regulate hormone levels and alleviate symptoms.

Couples are also encouraged to seek genetic counseling, particularly if there is a family history of hormonal disorders or if fertility concerns arise. In some instances, consulting a fertility specialist can provide targeted solutions for reproductive health challenges. Beyond medical treatment, couples therapy can be beneficial in helping partners navigate the emotional and psychological effects of hormonal imbalances, thereby strengthening communication and fostering healthier relationships.

Additionally, addressing and reducing the stigma associated with chronic health conditions, including certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs), is essential in ensuring that individuals and families do not experience shame or social isolation. By working together and seeking the necessary medical and emotional support, couples can effectively manage the impact of hormonal imbalances and maintain strong, stable family relationships.

Theoretical framework

Social Context Theory

The **Social Context Theory**was propounded by **Robert King Merton (1979)** in his work *Social Theory and Social Structure.* The theory suggests that the **cultural structure of the family** has undergone significant transformation due to **social change, modernization, and civilization**, which have directly impacted family dynamics and marital stability (Giddens, 2005; Ritzer, 1996). Merton's perspective on family structure is influenced by the works of **Frédéric Le Play**, a French scholar who conducted scientific studies on family structures and occupations. Drawing from Le Play's research, Merton theorized that **family disintegration and marital instability** are consequences of the breakdown of traditional societal structures, a phenomenon he referred to as **anomie.** He argued that as societies transitioned from **pre-industrial to modern structures,**families faced increasing pressure to adapt to new socio-political

environments. Many struggled to withstand these pressures, leading to **family disorganization, divorce, and intra-family conflicts.**

Historically, marriages in traditional societies were governed by **customary laws** embedded in **norms, values, customs, and traditions.** These legal frameworks were **strict and coercive, ensuring adherence** to societal expectations. Marital disputes were typically resolved within the **family unit or through traditional institutions,** and those who violated marital contracts faced**severe penalties** (Jaja, 2013). However, with **modernization and legal reforms,**marriage regulation has shifted toward a **more complex system** involving **statutory laws, customary laws, and canon laws.** This transformation has created ambiguity in determining which legal framework should take precedence in matters of **marital stability.** The coexistence of **statutory, customary, and religious laws**has made it increasingly difficult to assess which system exerts the greatest influence on **marriage and family life in contemporary society.**

The application of this theory to the study suggests that marital instability among the people of Calabar Municipality is primarily driven by infertility, which results from various factors, including genetic disorders, hormonal imbalances, and chronic sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These factors have significantly altered the cultural structure, along with traditional practices and beliefs, thereby influencing family stability and marital relationships (Ajuluchukwu& Eze, 2017).

Methodology

This study adopts a survey research design, which is suitable for collecting relevant data through the use of questionnaires. The survey method was chosen because it allows for the collection of first-hand information from respondents in a structured manner.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Calabar, the capital of Cross River State, was originally known as Akwa Akpa in the Efik language. The city is located along the Calabar and Great Kwa Rivers, as well as the creeks of the Cross River from its hinterland. It is often described as the tourism capital of Nigeria. Administratively, Calabar is divided into Calabar Municipal and Calabar South Local Government Areas. It covers an area of 406 square kilometers (157 square miles) and had a population of 371,022 as recorded in the 2006 census (Wikipedia, "About Calabar Metropolis"). Historically, on September 10, 1884, Queen Victoria signed a Treaty of Protection with the King and Chiefs of Akwa Akpa, known to Europeans as Old Calabar. This treaty enabled the United Kingdom to exercise control over the entire territory surrounding Calabar, including Bakassi. Today, Calabar is a large metropolis consisting of several towns, including Akim, Ikot Ansa, Ikot Ishie, Kasuk, Duke Town, Henshaw Town, Cobham Town, Ikot Omin, Obutong, Anantigha, Uwanse, and Nsidung (Bayside).

Study Population

The study population comprised both single and married individuals from different communities within Calabar Municipal Local Government Area. According to the 2006 National Population Census, the population of Calabar Municipal Local Government Area was recorded as 179,392. This figure represents the total population from which the study sample was drawn. The area consists of eleven political wards.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

This study employed a combination of sampling techniques. A **multistage sampling technique** was used to systematically select the study area. The **stratified sampling technique** was adopted to categorize the population based on specific characteristics such as marital status, while the **simple random sampling technique** was used to ensure equal representation of respondents. Additionally, a **purposive sampling technique** was employed to select three

communities within Calabar Municipal Local Government Area based on their demographic diversity and relevance to the study.

To determine the sample size, the **Taro Yamane (1967) statistical formula** was applied, ensuring an appropriate and representative sample for the study.

Findings

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondent

Variables	Group	No of respondents	Percentage
Age	18-23 years	28	7.7
	24-29 years	85	22.7
	30-35 years	160	42.7
	36-40 years	82	21.7
	41 years and above	20	5.2
	Total	375	100
Sex	Male	203	54.3
	Female	172	45.7
	Total	375	100
Educational Level	FSLC/SSCE	127	28.7
	ND/NCE	89	23.3
	HND/B.Sc	70	18.7
	M.Sc/Ph.D	89	19.6
	Total	375	100
Religion	Christian	355	94.6
	Muslim	12	3.2
	African Traditional Religion	8	2.1
	Total	375	100
Marital Status	Single	100	27
	Married	225	60
	Divorced/separated	50	13
	Total	375	100

Source: Field work (2025)

From distribution of responses according to their age assortment/segregation shows that out of the sample population of375,28 responses representing 7.7 percent falls within the age bracket/range of 18-23 years, 85 responses which represent 22.7 percent falls within the age bracket of 24-29 while 160 responses representing 42.7 percent falls within the age range of 18-21 years whereas 82 responses representing 21.7 percent falls within the age range of 22-25and 20 responses representing 5.2 percent falls within the age range of 26 and above thereby making a total of 100 percent. This shows that those that were active in age (from 18-21 years) totaling 73.1 percent were more in the study.

The distribution of respondent's responses by their gender segregation shows that out of the sample population of 375,203 responses representing 54.3 percent are males while 172 responses representing 45.7 percent are females making a total of 100 percent. Therefore, there were more males than females in the study.

The data on distribution of respondent's responses according to their educational level revealed that out of a sample population of 375, 70 responses which represent 18.7 percent belonged to the category of HND/B.Sc, 89 responses representing 23.3 percent fall under ND/NCE, whereas 127 responses which represent 28.7 percent belonged to the category of

FLSC/SSCE, 89 responses which represent 19.6 belonged to the category of M.Sc/Ph.D. This implies that 58 percent of total respondents who participated in the study were in FLSC/SSCE class.

In terms of the distribution of respondent's responses by their religion revealed that out of the sample population of 375, 355 responses representing 94.6 percent were Christians, 12 responses representing 3.2 percent were Muslims whereas 8 responses
which represents 2.1 percent belonged to African Traditional religion which constitute a total of 100. Evidence from the analysis showed that Christians were more in the study than other religion.

Item based on respondents' marital status revealed that singles who participated in the study were 100 respondents, representing 27%, married couples were 225 representing 60%, while those who were divorced/separated were 50, representing 13%.

Hypothesis one

H_0: There is no significant relationship between couples' genetic disorders and family stability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area;

H_1: There is a significant relationship between couples' genetic disorders and family stability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area;

The independent variable of this hypothesis is couples' genetic disorder while the dependent variable is family stability. The statistical tool is Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between couples' genetic disorder and family stability (N = 375)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	Rxy	Sig.
Couples' genetic disorder (X)	4.743	61,131			
			62,440	0.47*	.05
Family stability (Y)	4,895	65,013			

$p<.05$; df = 373; critical r = 0.113

Hypothesis two

H_0: There is no significant relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area

H_1: There is a significant relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area. The independent variable of this hypothesis is couples' hormonal imbalance while the dependent variable is family stability. The statistical tool is Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The result is presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability' (N = 375)

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	Rxy	Sig.
Couples' hormonal imbalance (X)	4.743	61,131			
			59,457	0.52*	.05
Family stability (Y)	4, 652	59,034			

$p<.05$; df = 373; critical r = 0.113

Table 3 showed that at .05 level of significance and degrees of freedom 373, the critical r-value is 0.113. The calculated r-value obtained in establishing the relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability is 0.52 ($p<.05$). The calculated r-value is seen to be greater than the critical r-value with the obtained significant value less than .05 level of significance used in the study. With these results the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability was rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is a significant relationship between couples' hormonal imbalances and family stability in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. The obtained correlation coefficient was positive indicating positive correlation between the independent and the dependent variable.

Discussion

The findings from the first hypothesis reveal a significant relationship between couples' genetic disorders and family stability in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. This supports the argument by Ogunyemi and Eze (2018), who opined that inherited genetic conditions can unknowingly be passed on to offspring, leading to a cycle of genetic disorders within families. The limited availability of genetic counseling services in many parts of Calabar further exacerbates the issue, as many couples remain unaware of their genetic risks. Consequently, the inability to conceive due to genetic disorders contributes to marital distress, which may lead to emotional disconnection, psychological stress, or even dissolution of the marriage. The findings align with Baker (2018), who noted that genetic disorders can significantly impact family stability by introducing emotional, financial, and psychological challenges. The inability to bear children due to hereditary factors often results in feelings of grief, guilt, and frustration among couples. In many African societies, where fertility is deeply linked to cultural expectations and social status, childlessness may lead to external pressures from extended family members, further straining marital relationships. This suggests that improving access to genetic testing and counseling services could help mitigate some of these challenges by equipping couples with the necessary knowledge to make informed reproductive decisions.

Similarly, the results from the second hypothesis establish a significant relationship between hormonal imbalances and family stability in Calabar Municipality. This is consistent with the work of Casado-Espada et al., 2019, who argued that hormonal imbalances can disrupt family stability by affecting both the emotional and physical well-being of individuals. Conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), menopause, or thyroid disorders can lead to emotional distress, mood swings, irritability, and depression. These changes often create tensions within relationships, especially when partners struggle to understand or cope with the effects.

Beyond the physiological aspects, the financial burden of managing hormonal disorders—such as the cost of medical treatments, medications, and consultations—may also contribute to marital strain. Additionally, cultural misconceptions surrounding infertility and reproductive health may lead to blame being placed on one partner, further escalating conflict. The findings underscore the need for increased awareness and intervention programs, including access to affordable healthcare, hormonal therapy, and counseling services, to support couples navigating these challenges.

Implications of Findings

The study's findings highlight the crucial intersection of health and family stability. Genetic disorders and hormonal imbalances not only affect reproductive health but also have broader implications for marital relationships, emotional well-being, and societal expectations. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including healthcare reforms to

provide better access to reproductive health services, community sensitization on the realities of infertility, and psychological support mechanisms for affected couples. Future research could explore the role of socio-economic factors in shaping how couples cope with these challenges, as well as potential policy interventions to promote family stability in the face of infertility-related issues.

Infertility is a significant social concern in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, affecting the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of couples. Beyond being a medical issue, infertility is deeply influenced by cultural beliefs and practices. In this predominantly Igbo and Efik region, children are regarded as essential for family continuity, and childlessness often results in stigmatization and social exclusion. The study findings revealed a significant relationship between infertility-related factors—such as genetic disorders and hormonal imbalances—and family stability. These results highlight the need for comprehensive medical, psychological, and cultural interventions to address infertility and its impact on families.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Medical social workers should conduct awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and educate individuals on early diagnosis of genetic disorders. Public health initiatives should promote proactive behaviors that help prevent infertility-related conditions.
2. Couples planning to start a family should undergo early screening for hormonal imbalances and genetic disorders. Medical institutions should provide accessible genetic counseling and fertility support programs.
3. Support groups and counseling services should be available to help couples cope with the emotional challenges of infertility. Psychological interventions can enhance marital communication, reduce stress, and strengthen relationship stability.
4. Healthcare providers should adopt a multidisciplinary approach by integrating endocrinology, STI management, genetic counseling, and fertility treatments. Personalized care plans can help mitigate the effects of infertility on family stability.
5. Healthcare practitioners should recognize and respect cultural beliefs surrounding infertility. Family involvement in treatment processes can foster supportive environments and reduce stigma.

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TRADITIONAL MEDICAL PRACTICES AND HEALTHCARE UTILIZATION IN AKPABUYO, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract
This study examines the relationship between traditional medical practices and the utilization of health services in Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, it explores how herbal medicine and spiritual/ritual healing influence healthcare utilization. Using the chi-square statistical tool, hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level, revealing significant relationships between herbal medicine, spiritual/ritual healing, traditional birth attendance, and healthcare utilization. The study concludes that traditional medical practices play a crucial role in shaping healthcare choices in the area. It recommends integrating traditional birth attendants (TBAs) into the healthcare system through training and support while improving access to modern healthcare to enhance maternal and child health outcomes.

Keywords: Herbal Medicine, Spiritual, Ritual Healing, traditional medical practices, utilization of health services

Introduction

Traditional medicine in Africa is deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs, relying on indigenous knowledge passed down through generations. It encompasses herbal remedies, rituals, and holistic healing practices for diagnosing, treating, and preventing diseases. Traditional healers—herbalists, diviners, and spiritual practitioners—play a crucial role in healthcare, particularly in rural areas where access to modern medical services is limited. In Nigeria, herbal medicine is one of the most widely practiced forms of traditional healing. In Akpabuyo, Cross River State, the Efik people have a long-standing tradition of using local plants and herbs to treat various ailments. These remedies, derived from the region's abundant plant life, are commonly used to manage conditions such as malaria, gastrointestinal disorders, skin infections, hypertension, and diabetes. Notable medicinal plants include bitter leaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*), neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*), and pawpaw leaves (*Carica papaya*), all known for their therapeutic properties (Akinyemi & Ibrahim, 2024).

In many Nigerian societies, traditional medicine remains a vital component of healthcare, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas. Calabar, the capital of Cross River State in southeastern Nigeria, is a dynamic city known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse ethnic composition, and historical significance. The city's healthcare system reflects an interaction between traditional healing practices and modern medical services. According to (Umoren, 2021), traditional healers in Akpabuyo possess extensive knowledge of identifying, harvesting,

and preparing herbal remedies. They also understand the appropriate dosages and methods of administration. These remedies are often complemented by spiritual practices, such as prayers or rituals, depending on the perceived cause of the illness (Nnana, Olofu&Runyi, 2024). For many residents of Akpabuyo, traditional treatments are regarded as effective and reliable, particularly in areas where access to modern healthcare is limited.

Additionally, spiritual healing plays a crucial role in traditional medicine in Akpabuyo (Umoren, 2021). The Efik people, for instance, have a long-standing tradition of spiritual healing, where diviners, priests, and community elders provide guidance and perform rituals to restore health. These practices are based on the belief that illnesses can arise from spiritual imbalances, curses, or ancestral displeasure. To address such conditions, traditional healers may conduct ceremonies, offer sacrifices, or communicate with ancestral spirits. Spiritual healing is particularly significant in treating conditions such as infertility, mental health disorders, and chronic illnesses—especially when modern medical interventions are perceived as inadequate or when the community believes the illness has a spiritual origin. Beyond physical recovery, these practices provide emotional and psychological support, which is essential for overall well-being.

According to Bassey and Akpan (2015), the government of Cross River State has made significant investments in improving healthcare infrastructure, particularly in maternal and child health services. To meet the basic healthcare needs of the population, primary healthcare centers have been established across various parts of the metropolis. These centers provide essential services such as immunization, antenatal care, and treatment for common illnesses like malaria and diarrhea. For many residents, these facilities serve as the first point of contact when seeking medical attention. In addition to public healthcare initiatives, private healthcare providers in Akpabuyo have played a crucial role in expanding healthcare access. Private hospitals and clinics offer a wide range of medical services, including specialized care that may not be readily available in public hospitals. While private healthcare is often regarded as more efficient and personalized, the high cost of services can make it inaccessible to low-income individuals (Nguyen, Tariq, Hinchcliff, Luu & Dunne, 2023).

Health education also plays a vital role in enhancing the utilization of healthcare services in Akpabuyo. Government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have launched various public health campaigns to raise awareness about prevalent diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. These initiatives focus on educating the public about the importance of regular health checkups, vaccinations, and preventive measures, such as the use of insecticide-treated bed nets for malaria prevention (Bassey & Akpan, 2015; Ofem, Ojiho, Eyang & James, 2024; Tangban&Nnana, 2024).

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on promoting institutional deliveries and encouraging the use of skilled birth attendants during childbirth. Public health campaigns have been launched to reduce reliance on traditional birth attendants (TBAs), who often lack the necessary training and medical equipment to manage complications during childbirth (Bassey & Akpan, 2015). However, despite these efforts, many women in Calabar, particularly in rural areas, continue to give birth at home with the assistance of TBAs. This persistence is largely influenced by cultural beliefs and a deep-seated mistrust of modern medical services. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine traditional medical practices and the utilization of health services in Akpabuyo, Cross River State, Nigeria (Nnana, Isaac & Blessing, 2023).

In Calabar, as in many other parts of Nigeria, both traditional medical practices and modern healthcare services play crucial roles in the health system. While traditional medicine

remains an essential component of healthcare, particularly in rural and remote areas, modern health services have significantly expanded in urban centers like Calabar. Despite this growth, both systems face distinct challenges that affect their effectiveness, accessibility, and utilization.

Although Akpabuyo is relatively well-developed, several factors hinder effective access to healthcare services, particularly for residents of rural and peri-urban areas. Poor transportation infrastructure, inadequate roads, and the lack of reliable public transport make it difficult for people to reach healthcare facilities, especially in emergencies. Furthermore, many healthcare centers in these areas suffer from underfunding and staffing shortages, leading to overcrowding and prolonged waiting times.

The cost of healthcare services is another major barrier for many residents. Despite government efforts to introduce health programs aimed at making medical services more affordable, many individuals still struggle to afford treatment, particularly in private hospitals. The high cost of specialized care, medications, and laboratory tests often forces people to turn to traditional medicine, which is generally more affordable (Nnana, Tangban, Tiku, &Abonor, 2023).

Cultural beliefs and mistrust of modern medical practices also influence healthcare utilization in Calabar. Traditional medical practices, including herbal medicine and spiritual healing, continue to enjoy significant support, especially among older generations. Some individuals perceive modern medicine as foreign and incompatible with their cultural or spiritual needs. This reluctance to embrace formal healthcare services is particularly evident in rural communities, where traditional healing practices remain deeply entrenched.

Literature review

The Concept of Traditional Medical Practices

Traditional medical practice refers to healthcare systems, treatments, and healing methods that have been passed down through generations within various cultures and societies. It encompasses a broad range of practices, including herbal medicine, spiritual healing, acupuncture, massage therapy, and other natural or community-based approaches to health. These practices are typically based on indigenous knowledge, cultural beliefs, and the natural environment and are often used alongside or instead of modern medical interventions. Traditional medicine is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical contexts of the people who practice it. The knowledge of herbs, rituals, and therapeutic techniques is often transmitted from elders or healers to younger generations, preserving ancient healing traditions. For example, in Africa, the use of local plants and roots to treat ailments has been a significant aspect of traditional healing for centuries. Traditional medicine often adopts a holistic approach, addressing not only the physical aspects of health but also the spiritual, ritualistic, and social dimensions of well-being. In many cultures, healing is viewed as the restoration of balance between the body, mind, and spirit. Illness is often perceived as a result of disharmony in this balance, and treatment aims to restore equilibrium through herbal preparations, spiritual healing, and lifestyle modifications (Bassey &Ikpi, 2015; Nnana& Nwadike, 2024).

According to Bassey and Ikpi (2015), traditional medical practices continue to play a crucial role in many societies, particularly in rural and underserved areas. In many regions, traditional medicine remains more accessible than modern healthcare due to lower costs and the ease of obtaining services. In rural areas with limited access to formal health facilities, traditional healers often serve as the primary healthcare providers. Moreover, traditional medicine is often more culturally familiar and acceptable to people within various communities. It aligns with local beliefs and practices, providing a sense of continuity and identity. Many individuals feel more comfortable seeking help from local healers who understand their cultural

values and traditions. In some cases, traditional medical practices complement modern healthcare. For instance, some individuals use herbal remedies alongside prescribed medicines or incorporate spiritual healing into conventional treatments (Nnana, Enobong, Anyang, Cecilia & Beauty, 2023). This integrative approach can enhance health outcomes, particularly in the management of chronic diseases. Additionally, traditional medical practices place a strong emphasis on preventive healthcare and overall wellness. Practices such as dietary regulations, herbal tonics, and lifestyle modifications are often prescribed to maintain health and prevent diseases (Mohiuddin, 2019). These preventive measures are particularly valuable in rural areas where healthcare infrastructure is weak (Bassey &Ikpi, 2015; Tangban, Nnana&Udousoro, 2024).

Klobodu, Milliron, Agyabeng, Akweongo&Adomah-Afari, (2020) observed that many traditional treatments lack scientific validation. The absence of clinical trials and systematic research on the efficacy and safety of herbal remedies, for instance, hinders their full integration into formal healthcare systems. This gap in scientific evidence often leads to skepticism among modern healthcare professionals and policymakers, limiting the recognition and acceptance of traditional medical practices. One major challenge of traditional medicine is the lack of formal regulation and oversight. The absence of standardized guidelines can result in the use of untested or potentially unsafe substances, improper dosages, and unsanitary treatment conditions. These issues raise significant concerns about the safety and reliability of traditional healing methods. Additionally, in many countries, tensions exist between traditional medicine and modern healthcare systems. Although traditional medicine plays a critical role in community health, the lack of coordination between the two systems often leads to challenges in patient care (Christiana, Nnana, Emmanuel, Lilian & Victor, 2022). When individuals prioritize traditional treatments over professional medical care, it can lead to delayed diagnoses and suboptimal health outcomes.

Another challenge is the informal nature of training among traditional healers. Unlike modern healthcare professionals, many traditional practitioners acquire their knowledge through apprenticeship rather than structured education, leading to inconsistencies in treatment approaches and patient outcomes. Furthermore, as younger generations embrace urbanization and modern education, there is an increasing risk that traditional healing knowledge will be lost or gradually diminished. To ensure the sustainability of traditional medicine, it is essential to document, preserve, and integrate this knowledge in a structured and systematic manner.

Herbal Medicine and Utilization of Health Services

Herbal medicine, deeply rooted in ancient traditions, continues to play a crucial role in global healthcare. It involves the use of plants and plant-based substances for medicinal purposes and has been an integral part of healing practices across various cultures for centuries. While traditionally associated with indigenous and folk medicine, herbal remedies are increasingly being incorporated into modern healthcare systems, particularly as interest in natural and alternative treatments grows (Umoren, 2021).

Historically, indigenous communities worldwide have relied on plant-based therapies to treat a broad spectrum of ailments, ranging from minor wounds to chronic diseases. Plants contain bioactive compounds such as alkaloids, glycosides, flavonoids, and terpenoids, which exhibit therapeutic properties, including anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and analgesic effects. For instance, ginger has long been used to alleviate nausea and inflammation, while peppermint has been recognized for its effectiveness in addressing digestive issues. One of the most notable aspects of herbal medicine is its accessibility, especially in rural and underdeveloped regions. In many communities, it serves as the primary form of healthcare due to its affordability and the ease of sourcing medicinal plants locally. This accessibility makes it a vital healthcare solution

for populations with limited access to modern medical facilities. Additionally, the knowledge of medicinal plants is often transmitted through generations, fostering a strong cultural connection between communities and their traditional healing practices (Umoren, 2021; Nnana, Rita & Adie, 2024).

According to Bassey and Akpan (2015), herbal medicine is widely regarded as a natural and holistic approach to healthcare. Many individuals prefer herbal remedies over pharmaceutical drugs due to the perception that they are milder and have fewer adverse side effects. This preference is particularly pronounced in the management of chronic conditions, where prolonged use of conventional medications may result in undesirable side effects.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement toward integrating herbal medicine with conventional healthcare services, a trend known as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Many healthcare systems, particularly in Africa, Asia, and parts of Europe, are increasingly acknowledging the benefits of combining herbal remedies with modern medical practices to improve patient care. One driving factor behind this integration is the increasing number of patients who use herbal remedies alongside prescribed medications. Individuals often seek herbal treatments for non-emergency conditions such as stress, mild pain, or digestive disorders. As a result, healthcare providers are beginning to recognize the role of herbal medicine in addressing these ailments and are offering guidance on its safe use, particularly in relation to potential interactions with pharmaceutical drugs (Nnana& Isaac, 2024).

Moreover, research into the efficacy of herbal remedies is essential while also providing guidance on safe practices. Additionally, the regulation of herbal products and the standardization of dosages can help reduce risks and enhance the effectiveness of herbal treatments. Herbal medicine continues to play a significant role in global healthcare, particularly in regions where access to modern medicine is limited or where individuals prefer natural remedies.

While integrating herbal medicine into formal healthcare systems presents challenges, it also holds great potential as a complementary treatment option. As scientific research continues to validate its efficacy and as regulations and safety standards improve, herbal medicine is likely to remain a vital component of healthcare. Collaboration between traditional and modern healthcare systems, along with enhanced patient education and awareness, will be crucial in ensuring that herbal remedies are used safely and effectively to improve health outcomes worldwide (Khan & Rahman, 2016).

Spiritual/Ritual Healing and Utilization of Health Services

Spiritual and ritual healing is a practice deeply rooted in many cultures around the world. It refers to the use of spiritual or religious rituals and interventions to address physical, emotional, and psychological ailments. Often intertwined with traditional belief systems, spiritual healing seeks to restore balance, harmony, and well-being by invoking supernatural forces, divine beings, or ancestral spirits. While these practices hold profound cultural significance, their relationship with modern health services is complex and multifaceted (Roger, 2020; Nnana, Adie, Omini&Runyi, 2024). According to Odebiyi and Adebayo (2017), spiritual and ritual healing is grounded in the belief that illness is not only a physical condition but also a manifestation of spiritual disharmony or moral imbalance. Various cultures around the world, including many African, Indigenous, and Eastern traditions, believe that health and well-being are influenced by forces beyond the physical realm. These forces may include ancestors, deities, spirits, or cosmic energies.

Spiritual healers—often called shamans, diviners, or spiritual leaders—are viewed as intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds. They perform rituals, offer prayers, and provide guidance to restore balance and healing. Rituals are a central element in many spiritual

healing practices and may include prayer, chanting, meditation, fasting, or the use of sacred objects.

For example, in some African cultures, spiritual healers conduct rituals to appease ancestral spirits or deities to cure illnesses believed to be caused by spiritual disturbances. In Hinduism, rituals such as **puja** (prayer) or **yajnas** (sacrificial rites) are performed to invoke divine intervention for physical or mental health problems. Rituals can also involve sacrifices or offerings to spirits or gods, which are believed to restore both spiritual and physical harmony. In many cases, these rituals are highly personalized, with the healer tailoring them to the specific conditions of the individual (Nnana&Nsan, 2024).

Klobodu et al., (2020) noted that spiritual healers often diagnose ailments through divination, visions, or the interpretation of dreams. However, with the increased availability of healthcare facilities, modern medical services provide more structured and evidence-based approaches to treatment.

Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and Maternal Healthcare

Amadi and Akpan (2017) argue that while traditional birth attendants (TBAs) continue to play a vital role in maternal healthcare, particularly in rural communities, integrating them into modern healthcare systems can significantly improve maternal health outcomes. TBAs are culturally relevant, accessible, and trusted within their communities, making them an important part of the healthcare system. Umoren, (2021) postulated that TBAs provide essential maternal care, particularly in underserved communities. However, the growing expansion of modern health services in the region offers women better access to quality care and safer childbirth options.

To achieve better maternal health outcomes, a more integrated approach that combines the strengths of both traditional and modern healthcare systems is essential. By training and supporting TBAs while also providing access to modern healthcare, Akpabuyo can ensure that mothers and children receive the best possible care during pregnancy and childbirth (Tangban&Nnana, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism was postulated by **Herbert Spencer and Robert Merton in 1898**. It is a sociological perspective that views society as a **complex system** in which different parts work together to maintain **stability and social order**. This theory emphasizes the importance of **social structures**, such as healthcare, education, and religious institutions, in shaping human behavior and ensuring societal cohesion. A key principle of structural functionalism is that each component of society has **specific functions** that contribute to the overall functioning of the system. For example, healthcare plays a crucial role in **promoting well-being, maintaining social roles, and supporting economic growth.** When individuals, including**orphans and vulnerable populations,** receive adequate healthcare, they can actively participate in society. However, when healthcare access is limited, it creates **dysfunctions**, which may lead to economic and social instability. In the context of this study, structural functionalism helps explain the role of both**traditional and modern healthcare systems** in maintaining social balance. Traditional medicine, like conventional healthcare, fulfills specific societal functions by integrating cultural practices, addressing health needs, and shaping social expectations. By ensuring that healthcare services are accessible and effective, societies can enhance**social stability and overall well-being**.

Despite its contributions, structural functionalism has faced criticism for its**inability to explain social change.** The theory primarily focuses on stability and does not adequately address how societies evolve over time. Additionally, it assumes that all social structures serve a **positive function,** even though some institutions may persist despite being dysfunctional. Another limitation is that it does not fully account for**power dynamics, social inequalities, and conflicts**, which are essential factors in understanding healthcare accessibility and disparities.

However, structural functionalism provides a useful framework for understanding how healthcare systems contribute to social stability. By applying this theory, the study examines how access to healthcare influences**individual well-being and societal cohesion**, highlighting the role of both traditional and modern medical services in maintaining a balanced and functional society.

Systems Theory

Systems theory was introduced by **biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1930s**. This theory emphasizes that all components of a system are **interconnected** and that changes in one part affect the entire system. The core principles of systems theory include **interdependence, wholeness, multiple levels, and homeostasis. Interdependence** refers to the idea that different parts of a system are **closely connected**, meaning that any change in one component **influences other parts**. For instance, when a healthcare system undergoes transformation, it affects other related systems, such as **education, the economy, and social welfare. Wholeness** suggests that the **entire system is greater than the sum of its parts.** To fully understand a system, one must examine it **as a whole**, rather than focusing only on individual components. **Multiple levels of a system** highlight that organizations or institutions exist within **larger structures,** such as **communities, states, and nations**. These levels are **interrelated** and can impact one another.

Homeostasis refers to a system's tendency to **resist change** in order to maintain stability. Organizations, including healthcare systems, often struggle to adapt to change due to their reliance on **established structures and processes** (Klein, 1996).

From a systems perspective, the**structure of roles** within a system plays a crucial role in maintaining balance. For example, in healthcare, professionals working together **must understand their roles and responsibilities** to ensure effective service delivery. A well-functioning system includes **clear and motivating goals, structured processes, collaboration, high performance standards, and strong leadership**. In relation to this study, systems theory explains how **healthcare accessibility, vulnerability, and disability** affect overall system functionality. If orphans and vulnerable individuals **lack access to healthcare,** it disrupts other systems, leading to **negative consequences** for society. For instance, inadequate healthcare can result in **higher mortality rates, economic burdens, and reduced social productivity.**

Despite its relevance, systems theory has been criticized for being **more of a model than a formal theory.** Some scholars argue that its concepts are **too broad** and **methodological rather than theoretical.** Additionally, systems theory**does not always adhere to traditional scientific methods**, as it allows for different models to explain various phenomena (Walsh, 1993). Some critics also believe that the theory is **too general** to be effectively applied to individual behaviors.

Nevertheless, systems theory provides a **valuable framework**for understanding the**interconnectedness of healthcare services.** It highlights how both **traditional and modern medical practices**function within**larger social systems**, influencing health outcomes and overall societal well-being.

Methodology

A research design, according to (Egbuche&Nzotta, 2020), is the structuring of an investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationships. It serves as a plan of action for data collection from respondents. In this study, a **survey research design** was adopted because it enables the collection of relevant information through the use of questionnaires. According to Ogunbameru et al. (2024), a survey design is an attempt to elicit information from a sample of a population to determine the accurate status of the population. This design was chosen as it allows for empirical generalizations based on the collected data.

Study Area

The study was conducted in **Akpabuyo Local Government Area (LGA), Cross River State, Nigeria.** Akpabuyo LGA is located in the southern part of Nigeria and shares the Atlantic coastline with Bakassi and the Republic of Cameroon to the west. It lies between**latitude 4.47°N and 5.27°N**and**longitude 8.23°E and 8.27°E**. Akpabuyo is situated **north of Calabar Municipality**and**southeast of Calabar South Local Government Area**. According to the **National Population Commission (NPC, 2006) census**, the population of Akpabuyo LGA was **272,252 people.**

Population and Sampling Technique

The study targeted **adults and youths aged 15 to 60 years** in Akpabuyo LGA. The **probability sampling technique** was employed to ensure that each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. The population was first **classified into graduate and undergraduate unemployed youths,** and further**stratified into male and female respondents.** After stratification, the**simple random sampling (ballot method)** was used to select the required sample size of**150 respondents**. This ensured a fair representation of different demographic groups within the study area. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in this study. Primary data were collected through fieldwork using structured questionnaires, which allowed for direct responses from participants. Secondary data were obtained from various sources, including textbooks, academic journals, internet sources, magazines, and other resource materials.

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the test-retest reliability method was applied. This process involved administering the questionnaire at different times to the same respondents to determine its consistency. The results confirmed that the questionnaire could produce reliable and consistent outcomes over repeated applications.

The tables and simple percentage was used to present the data while the chi-square statistical tool was used to analyze the tested hypotheses. Chi-square (x^2) is represented as;

Chi-square (x^2) is represented as;

$$X^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

X^2 = Chi square

$\sum$ = Summation

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Findings

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Males	70	47
Females	80	53
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results indicate that out of 150 respondents, 70 (47%) were male, while 80 (53%) were female. This suggests a relatively balanced representation, with a slightly higher participation of female respondents.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Below 21	18	12%
21-25	45	30%
26-30	39	26%
31-35	23	15%
36 and above	25	17%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The majority of respondents (30%) were aged between 21-25 years, followed by those aged 26-30 (26%). The least represented age group was below 21 (12%). This suggests that younger individuals were more willing to participate in the study, possibly due to their increased accessibility and engagement.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Single	45	30%
Married	45	30%
Divorced	30	20%
Widow/Widower	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

An equal proportion of respondents were single (30%) and married (30%), while 20% were divorced, and 10% were widowed. The higher representation of single and married individuals may indicate their greater engagement with the study's subject matter.

Table 4: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage %
Civil Servant	30	20%
Trader/Business	22	15%
Students	68	45%
Politician	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Students represented the largest occupational group (45%), followed by civil servants (20%) and traders/businesspersons (15%). Politicians formed the smallest category (10%). The predominance of students may be attributed to their availability and readiness to participate in academic research.

Table 5: Level of education of Respondents

Level of Education	No of Respondents	Percentage %
FSLC/SSCE	75	50%
Diploma/B.Sc/HND	60	40
M.Sc/Ph.D	15	10
Total	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Half of the respondents (50%) had FSLC/SSCE qualifications, while 40% held a Diploma/B.Sc./HND, and 10% had an M.Sc./Ph.D. This distribution reflects a diversity in educational backgrounds among participants, suggesting varied perspectives on the subject matter.

Table 6: Respondents view on question 7 from the questionnaire

Responses	Males	Females	Total	Percentage %
Yes	55	60	115	77%
No	15	20	35	23%
Total	70	80	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows that out of 150 respondents, 115 (77%) comprising of 55 males and 60 females agreed, 35 (23%) comprising of 15 males and 20 females disagreed to the question.

Table 7: Respondents view on question 11 from the questionnaire

Responses	Males	Females	Total	Percentage %
Yes	50	49	99	66%
No	20	31	51	34%
Total	70	80	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above shows that out of 150 respondents, 99 (66%) comprising of 50 males and 49 females agreed,51 (34%) comprising of 20 males and 31 females disagreed to the question.

Table 8: Respondents view on question 15 on the questionnaire

Responses	Males	Females	Total	Percentage %
Yes	51	69	120	80%
No	20	10	30	20%
Total	71	79	150	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

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The table above shows that out of 150 respondents. 120 (80%) comprising of 51 males and 69 females agreed, while 30 (20%) comprising of 20 males and 10 females disagreed to the question.

Data Analysis

In the course of this study, two hypotheses were formulated. These hypotheses were tested so as to accept or reject them. The hypotheses were tested using the chi-square ($X^{2)}$ statistical tool.:

Chi-Square Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between herbal medicine practice and the utilization of health services in Akpabuyo.

Chi-Square Calculations:

- $\chi^2 = 6.31$, df = 2, $p < 0.05$ (Table value = 5.99)

Decision Rule:

Since the calculated χ^2 (6.31) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a **significant relationship** between herbal medicine practice and health service utilization in Akpabuyo.

Hypothesis Two

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between spiritual/ritual healing practice and the utilization of health services in Akpabuyo.

Chi-Square Calculations:

- $\chi^2 = 10.37$, df = 2, $p < 0.05$ (Table value = 5.99)

Decision Rule:

Since the calculated χ^2 (10.37) is greater than the table value (5.99), the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests a **significant relationship** between spiritual/ritual healing practices and health service utilization in Akpabuyo.

Discussion

The study findings align with previous research highlighting the influence of traditional healing practices on healthcare utilization. The **first hypothesis** supports the view of Bassey and Akpan (2015) that herbal medicine is often preferred due to its perceived natural properties and lower risk of side effects compared to pharmaceuticals. Similarly, Junaid and Sulaimon (2018) observed that in rural areas with limited access to modern healthcare, herbal remedies remain a primary treatment option. The **second hypothesis** aligns with the assertions of Odebiyi and Adebayo (2017), who argue that spiritual and ritual healing is deeply rooted in cultural beliefs that health conditions have both physical and spiritual dimensions. This perspective reinforces the continued reliance on spiritual healers alongside conventional medical services in Akpabuyo. The strong statistical significance in this finding suggests that traditional healing practices are not merely supplementary but play an integral role in the community's healthcare choices.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating traditional and modern healthcare systems to improve accessibility and acceptance of medical services. Policymakers and healthcare practitioners should consider culturally sensitive approaches when designing health interventions to ensure better utilization of formal healthcare services.

Conclusion

There is growing recognition of the need to integrate traditional and modern medical practices in order to improve health outcomes in Akpabuyo and across Nigeria. Some initiatives have been introduced to train traditional healers in basic healthcare practices, such as recognizing danger signs in pregnancy or administering first aid. This integration could help bridge the gap between the two healthcare systems, ensuring that people can receive the best of both worlds—culturally appropriate care combined with medical expertise.

Traditional medical practices continue to play an essential role in the healthcare system in Calabar, offering a blend of herbal remedies, spiritual healing, and culturally significant approaches to treatment. However, the growing presence of modern healthcare services in the city has provided opportunities for improving health outcomes through professional care, advanced medical technologies, and government health initiatives. Despite the challenges of access, cost, and cultural barriers, there is potential for a more integrated approach to healthcare that combines the strengths of both systems, ensuring better health outcomes for the people of Calabar.

Recommendations

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

i. The government should establish formal frameworks for collaboration between traditional healers and medical professionals through structured training programs, certification processes, and referral systems.
ii. Health ministries should develop guidelines to regulate the use of herbal remedies to ensure safety, efficacy, and compatibility with modern treatments.
iii. State health agencies should implement training programs for Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in basic obstetric care, emergency response, and safe delivery practices.
iv. A certification process should be introduced to ensure that TBAs meet minimum competency standards before assisting in childbirth.
v. Government support should include the provision of essential medical supplies, referral pathways, and financial incentives for TBAs working in underserved communities.
vi. Public health campaigns should be launched to educate communities on the safe and effective use of herbal remedies, emphasizing the importance of consulting both traditional and modern healthcare providers.
vii. Community outreach programs should be introduced to dispel myths surrounding modern medicine and encourage evidence-based healthcare-seeking behaviors.

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