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FINANCE ACT REFORMS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The primary goal of the study is to determine the effect of finance Act reforms on economic prosperity in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are: to investigate the effect of Company income tax (CIT), Petroleum profit tax (PPT), Value added tax (VAT) on the gross domestic products (GDP) in Nigeria. A quarterly times series data of eight years (2015-2022) was obtained from the CBN Statistical Bulletin, Federal Inland Revenue and Nigeria Bureau of Statistics covering the periods while Panel least square regression analysis was used to examine the data. A comparative study of Pre- Finance Act period (2015-2018) and Post-Finance Act period (2019-2022) was done and test was also conducted on the combined data. Results of analysis suggest that the effects of Company Income Tax with regression coefficient of 2.482635, with p-value 0.7945, Petroleum Profit Tax with regression coefficient of 2.638580, with p-value of 0.5962, Value Added Tax with regression coefficient of 23.75169 with p-value of 0.3740 on Gross Domestic Products in Nigeria during the post Finance Act period are positive, but statistically non-significant while the effect of Capital Gain Tax on Gross Domestic Product with the regression coefficient of -286.113 with p-value of 0.1676 during the period is negative, but statistically non-significant. The implication of these findings is that the GDP will be enhanced with an increase in revenue generated from CIT, PPT and VAT. Economic prosperity will be enhanced as the revenue generated is invested in domestic industries that will enhance domestic production of goods and services. Based on these results, the report suggests that in order to increase economic prosperity, small businesses should be encouraged to adopt a culture of voluntary compliance, PPT rates should be raised, and some incentives for the petroleum industry should be eliminated. While the VAT rates on necessities should be evaluated reduced, the VAT rates on items and services deemed injurious to life should be raised.

Keywords: Capital Income Tax, Economic Prosperity, Petrol Profit Tax, Value Income Tax.

Introduction

A well-designed tax system is a significant source of money, and ongoing modifications to the tax code are meant to enhance revenue generation and establish a more efficient environment for tax administration. This will reduce economic distortion and help Nigeria avoid a potential economic downturn. Nigeria's economy is struggling due to its over-reliance on crude oil sales, which haven't kept pace with the nation's rising public spending. According to Oyaniran, diversifying sources of income is crucial as countries transition from fossil fuels to clean energy (Oti & Odey, 2016) and Hairsine (2021).

Nigeria's Finance Acts of 2019, 2020, and 2021 were passed to address shortcomings in the nation's current tax code and promote economic development. These annual legislative acts change tax arrangements by offering incentives or raising or lowering taxes (Farlex, 2012). They provide legal assistance to government revenue operations, especially in poor countries such as Nigeria. After the Finance Act, which was introduced during the military regime, was modified in 2017 to comply with the updated National Tax Policy, the Ministry of Finance and the legislature must collaborate to amend tax laws.

According to Halliday and Okara (2020), the Nigerian president signed the Finance Act 2019 and 2020 into law on January 13 and January 31, respectively. Felix (2021) states that the 2020 Finance Act aims to create budget support financing, stimulate the economy, and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on Nigeria. The 2021 Finance Act was passed on December 31st with the intention of reducing government borrowing, eliminating deficit budgets, and raising tax receipts. Both Acts are regarded as significant watersheds for Nigeria's fiscal stability and economic expansion. The Federal Executive Council approved the Finance Bill 2022 for consideration and passage.

Nwuke (2021) claims that a 20-year effort to restructure Nigeria's oil and gas sector came to a close on August 27, 2021, when the Petroleum Industry Act, 2021 (PIA) was signed into law. The PIA Act aims to promote economic growth through investment, entrepreneurship, and innovation (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010). Increasing government revenue without endangering private sector activities is the aim of the ongoing tax reform process. The Finance Act amends existing tax laws, such as the Customs and Excise Duties

Act, the Company Income Tax, the Petroleum Profit Tax, the Capital Gains Tax, the Value Added Tax, the Stamp Duties Act, and the Company Income Tax.

Jackson (2009) defines economic prosperity as consistent growth in the economy. One indicator of economic prosperity is the population to GDP ratio. Jackson (2009) asserts that a rise in the per capita gross domestic product (PcGDP) is associated with prosperity. According to Gonda and Rozborilova (2013), prosperity means having hope for a safe and peaceful society and for future generations as economies transition from production-based to creative and innovative economies. They argue that growth rate, education, competitiveness, and freedom are the main determinants of economic prosperity. They contend that the factors influencing economic prosperity are growth rate, education, freedom, and competitiveness. Gross domestic product (GDP) can be used to calculate growth rate.

Given the serious concerns regarding how these opportunities will be fulfilled, research on Nigeria's Finance Act Reforms and Economic Prosperity becomes crucial; prosperity is only a dream without a workable plan to make it a reality.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of Finance Act Reforms on Economic Prosperity in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

- a. Appraise the effect of company income tax on gross domestic product in Nigeria.
- b. Evaluate the effect of petroleum profit tax on gross domestic product in Nigeria.
- iii. Ascertain the effect of value added tax on gross domestic product in Nigeria.

Statement of the Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated in their null forms provide solutions to the research questions.

- a. Company income tax does not significantly affect gross domestic product in Nigeria.
- b. Petroleum profit tax does not significantly affect gross domestic product in Nigeria.
- c. Value added tax does not significantly affect gross domestic product in Nigeria

Nigeria Finance Act Reforms

The two most well-known instruments for influencing a country's economic activity are fiscal and monetary measures. Fiscal measures are a general phrase for government spending and taxation, whereas monetary measures are mostly focused on controlling interest rates and the amount of money in circulation. Since the establishment of its tax system, Nigeria's government has enacted a number of tax reforms, according to Ogbonna and Ebimobowei (2011). These include the introduction of income tax between 1904 and 1926, the authority granted to inland revenue in 1945, the creation of the Raisman Fiscal Commission in 1957, the formation of the Inland Revenue Board in 1958, the promulgation of ordinances pertaining to petroleum profit tax, income tax management acts, the Companies Income Tax Act of 1979, and amendments to tax policy and administration reforms in 2001 and 2004.

The analysis demonstrates a shift away from international trade activities and toward consumption-based taxes with the implementation of the value added tax (VAT) in January 1994. The study group's (2002) and working group's (2003) recommendations influenced the 2004 tax revision of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. The reforms included the following: the Petroleum Profit Tax Act, the Education Tax Act, the National Sugar Development Act, the Value Added Tax Act, the Custom and Excise Tax Act, the Personal Income Tax Act, and the National Automotive Council Act. Under Ifueko Omogui Okauru, who aimed to treble non-oil revenues by 2007, the FIRS saw significant reforms.

Nigeria's national tax policy was implemented by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2012, according to Adeosun (2017). In addition to raising VAT, eliminating multiple taxation, simplifying tax incentives, and limiting tax collection to public personnel, the program aimed to lower personal taxes from 25% to 17.5% and company income taxes from 30% to 20%. It also required comprehensive reviews of existing tax legislation every three years. The establishment of a taxpayer identification number (TIN) was a crucial component of these changes, which aimed to increase revenue generation and widen the tax base.

More than 80 amendments to the nation's tax and regulatory legislation were made by the Nigeria Finance Act 2019, which went into effect on January 13, 2020.

The revisions include the Federal Inland Revenue Service (Establishment) Act, the Nigeria Export Processing Zone Act, the Oil and Gas Export Free Zone Act, the Companies Income Tax Act, the Personal Income Tax Act,

the Value Added Tax Act, the Capital Gains Tax Act, and the Customs and Excise Duties Act. These fiscal laws target economic growth and provide legal support for government revenue activities, especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

Changes in 2019 2020 and 2021 Finance Acts on Company Income Tax Act (CITA)

A few of the changes brought about by the Nigerian Finance Act 2019 include the requirement that companies display their tax identification number (TIN) on all business transactions and documents, the replacement of agricultural trade or business with primary agricultural production, and the requirement that non-residents with a significant economic presence pay withholding tax (New s11(2)(a)). According to new s13(2c and e), digital transactions and services rendered by foreign businesses having a sizable economic presence in Nigeria will be subject to taxation in Nigeria; the final tax will be the WHT derived from these transactions. Only shipping, transport, and freight income will be subject to the particular method for determining income tax for international shipping and air transport companies; non-freight income, leasing, and containers would be subject to Section 9 taxes. Insurance firms will now be subject to Section 33's minimum tax requirements, as stated in the Finance Act of 2019. "Gross turnover" includes both life and non-life insurance companies. Under the Nigerian Finance Act 2020, insurance businesses' minimum tax rate was reduced to 0.25% of gross turnover less franked investment income as a COVID-19 incentive. This reduction applies to tax returns that are due between January 2020 and December 2021. For insurance firms, gross premium and gross income are now defined as the total of premiums, fees, commissions, and other assets. Section 23 allows for exemptions from corporate income tax, including dividends paid from retained earnings, franked investment income, and small business profits.

Limited tax exposure corporations are exempt from the new section 55(1A) requirement that non-resident companies provide full audited financial statements. For a minimum of six years, companies exempt from incorporation are required to keep English-language books of accounts; failure to do so may result in fines. New sections on wrong returns, filing by non-resident corporations, and books of accounts are included in Nigeria's amended tax rules; improper returns are subject to fines and interest. Both hearings and notice of assessment can be conducted remotely by the Tax Appeal Tribunal. Notice of Assessment pursuant to Amendment Sections 68 and 69: A notification of assessment may be sent by email, courier, or any other electronic means that FIRS specifies.

Using whatever technology or software that may be necessary to ensure a fair hearing, the Tax Appeal Tribunal may hold its hearing electronically. Section 77: New company income tax rates and turnover-based CIT rates have been put into effect. The following are the rates:

Class Of Company	Annual Turnover(N)	Tax Rate
Small Company	25m or less	0.00%
Medium-sized company		20.00%
Large Company		30.00%

Changes in 2019 Finance Act on Petroleum Profit Tax Act (PPTA)

The Act's Section 60 has been eliminated. The previous section dealt with the PPT Act's provision that exempts the deduction of WHT from dividends declared by corporations that are subject to the Act's tax assessment.

Changes in 2019, 2020 and 2021 Finance Acts on Value Added Tax Act (VATA)

Among the modifications to the Acts are the following: Nigeria's updated definition of taxable goods and services now defines the site of supply as the place of consumption. It further stipulates that a product is supplied in Nigeria if it is physically present, registered, or exercisable there. Another definition of incorpororeal supply in Nigeria is the individual's exploitation of a right. The new section 2A specifies the time-of-service delivery regardless of whether the recipient or the service provider is physically present in Nigeria. Included are services related to real estate that already exists. The date of supply comes before the dates of receipt, payment due, and invoice issue.

It describes the point at which products are taken out, made available, services are rendered, or linked parties experience incorporeal availability. It comes before the sum due or received for rental contracts. The Finance Act of 2019 increased the VAT rate from 5% to 7.5% on February 1, 2020, excluding zero-rated products. Non-resident companies offering taxable goods and services in Nigeria must register, obtain a TIN, withhold and remit taxes, and appoint representatives. The Finance Act of 2021 imposed a conditional charge on recipients of taxable supplies supplied by non-resident enterprises. Section 14 granted the Service the power to withhold or collect VAT, and a new reverse charge clause required taxpayers to self-account for VAT.

Section 15 did not grant exemption advantages to companies engaged in upstream petroleum operations.

Businesses with yearly income under NGN 25 million are excused from filing VAT reports and levying VAT on their goods and services, according the new section 15. A VAT exemption on merger and acquisition proceeds was also created by Section 42, provided that the assets are not sold within a year of the reorganization.

Charges for Various Offenses

Failure to Register for VAT return (section 8)	N50,000 for the first month and N25,000 for the subsequent month
Failure to notify the FIRS of change of address, or cessation of trade or business (section (28))	N50,000 for the first month and N25,000 for the subsequent month
Failure to submit VAT returns (section 35)	N50,000 for the first month and N25,000 for the subsequent month

Under the Value Added Tax Act, animal feed is now included in commercial aircraft, airline tickets, necessities, and farm equipment. While goods are defined as tangible objects, services are intangible or incorporeal, with the exception of land and structures. Since the rent for commercial buildings has been exempt from VAT, it is also exempt.

The Endogenous Growth Theory

Paul Romer replaced neoclassical growth theory in the 1980s with endogenous growth theory. According to the theoretician, internal factors, not external ones, are what lead to prosperity. The researcher contends that internal factors including government policy, investments in human capital, and innovations have an impact on a sustained pace of prosperity. Notwithstanding its quirks, the endogenous growth model has dominated development economics research on taxes. According to the endogenous growth theory, economic policies like taxation should be used to boost the system's per capita production growth rate (Ugwunta and Ugwuanyi, 2015). According to the notion, economic growth is produced by the system's internal operations and comes from within. Therefore, policies that will improve income generation and foster economic growth, such as taxation, are necessary. Because well-managed taxes have the ability to boost economic growth and

development in addition to increasing revenue generation, the endogenous growth theory is pertinent to this subject.

Empirical Reviews

Using a primary research study, Adeyemi & Ishola (2024) assessed the effect of the Finance Act 2022 on tax compliances among SMEs in Nigeria. The study used voluntary and non-voluntary tax compliances as outcome variables and the Finance Act 2022 for Company Income Tax (CIT), Value Added Tax (VAT), and Personal Income Tax (PIT) as predictors. The study population is represented by the 472,654 registered SMEs in the chosen states of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, according to the most recent MSMES Survey Report from 2021. A multistage sampling technique was used to choose 400 SMEs from the sampled states. According to the findings of the regression study, Nigerian tax compliance is significantly impacted by the Finance Act 2022 on CIT and negatively by the Finance Act 2022 on VAT. Lastly, it was revealed that tax compliance is positively but marginally impacted by the Finance Act 2022 on PIT. The analysis came to the conclusion that the 2022 Finance Act Reform on various taxes had a statistically favorable effect on Nigerian SMEs' tax compliance. Therefore, it was suggested that the money received from CIT be used effectively to support the expansion and advancement of Nigeria's industrial sector.

Oladipo, Ogunjobi, Fakile, et al. (2024) investigated how the Finance Act of 2020 affected the generation of tax revenue in Nigeria. While Nigeria Tax Revenue Generation was calculated using the Total Tax Collected, the Finance Act was measured using Company Income Tax (CIT), Personal Income Tax (PIT), and Value Added Tax (VAT). The research design used in the study was *ex post facto*. The Federal Inland Revenue Service provided the data. E-views 9.1 was used to analyze the data, and descriptive statistics were employed to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The analysis also made use of regression analysis. Additionally, tests for stationarity and normality were performed on the data. It was found that the total amount of taxes collected by the government was positively and significantly impacted by the modified Value Added Tax and Company Income Tax. Additionally, it was discovered that the modified Personal Income Tax had no discernible impact on the total amount of taxes collected. One of the study's recommendations is that the government should consider rules carefully before implementing them. Additionally, this report suggests that the Federal Inland Revenue Service, which is responsible for collecting taxes, review the tax system and rules in order to close any gaps in the current framework and stop people from avoiding paying taxes.

Chika, Oshioigwemoh, & Promise (2022) looked into how tax revisions affected Nigeria's economic expansion. The time series approach used in this study was primarily focused on how to do impact analysis on data that was previously available. This study made use of secondary data. However, using a judgmental sampling technique, pertinent data for the study was gathered from the World Bank, Federal Inland Revenue Services Bulletins, and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletins. The sample included a 21-year period from 2000 to 2021. The impact of the predictor factors on the criterion variables was assessed using the regression analysis technique. With the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25), this study employed the estimated strategy of both descriptive statistics and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis method. Among other things, the researcher found that VAT, CIT, and PPT significantly improve Nigeria's RGDP. Thus, the study concluded that tax reforms had a major positive effect on Nigeria's economic expansion. The study's researcher said that while the government should increase the tax yield through an enhanced tax administration system, policymakers should concentrate on increasing the economy's productive capacity by changing the tax code to favor economic growth and opportunity. This is due to a number of factors, including the risk of relying too heavily on the export of crude oil to power the economy.

Emeneka (2021) evaluated how Nigeria's economic growth was impacted by the Personal Income Tax Reforms. The study design used was *ex post facto*. The Central Bank of Nigeria and the Federal Inland Revenue Services provided the time series data. At the 5% level of significance, the study used the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method and Pearson correlation for inferential statistics. It was discovered that Nigeria's GDP per capita was significantly impacted negatively by personal income tax. It was then suggested that in order to boost the overall tax income base, the government should diversify the economy for further development. Okonye, Eyisi, & Onodi (2018) used 2004 as a benchmark to examine how tax change affected Nigeria's economic growth between 1991 and 2016. Since the federal government's reforms affected every aspect of the tax system and administration, 2004 was chosen as the benchmark year. Data used for this study's research came from the Federal Inland Revenue Service's FIRS on demand as well as the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) annual bulletin, which was issued from 1991 to 2016. The study used linear regression, and the Chow test was used to test the hypotheses that were developed. PPT had a positive but negligible effect on Nigeria's GDP before and after the 2004 tax reform, CIT had a significant positive impact on Nigeria's GDP before and after the 2004 tax reform, VAT had a positive

but negligible impact on Nigeria's GDP after the 2004 tax reform, EDT had a significant and positive impact on Nigeria's GDP before and after the 2004 tax reform, and CONS had a positive but negligible impact on Nigeria's GDP after the 2004 tax reform, according to the research.

The study comes to the conclusion that the 2004 tax reform has only produced a mixed effect on the GDP, with certain tax indicators demonstrating negligible relationships over time and others demonstrating significant ones.

Gylych, Samira, & Abdurahman (2016) investigate how tax revisions affected Nigeria's economic expansion between 1986 and 2012. The findings indicate that tax reforms do, in fact, contribute to economic growth and are positively and strongly correlated with it. We come to the conclusion that beneficial tax reforms increase the government's ability to raise money for socially beneficial initiatives, which in turn leads to increases in real output and per capita GDP. However, it is advised that taxes that are in line with macroeconomic goals, free from corruption, and effective in the government's tax policies, coupled with the responsibility and openness of government officials, can boost sustainable economic growth.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used an ex-post facto research design, which solves research problems using data that already exists. Because of this, the analysis was conducted using quarterly time series data from 2015 to 2022 that were gathered from the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, Federal Inland Revenue Service, and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin. The study used the Cluster Sampling Technique as its sampling method. While the primary statistical tool of analysis is multiple regression analysis, the preliminary statistical tools of analysis include descriptive statistics, unit root test, tabular and graphical data display, and Analysis of Regression

Model Specification

The study adopted multiple regression models for this study.

Multiple Linear Regression model

$$GDP_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PPT + \beta_3 CIT + \beta_3 VAT + \varepsilon$$

GDP= Gross Domestic Product; PPT = Petroleum Profit Tax; CIT = Company Income Tax; VAT= Value Added Tax

Data Presentation and Analysis

Pre Finance Act using GDP

Table 1: Dependent Variable: GDP

Variables	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Prob.
CIT	0.401080	0.106332	0.9177
PPT	-2.572873	-0.374617	0.7166
VAT	26.13762	0.980998	0.3522

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.890054$; F-statistic = 21.23840; Prob(F-statistic)= 0.000078;
Durbin-Watson stat = 2.181887

Post Finance Act using GDP

Table 2: Dependent Variable: GDP

Variables	Coefficient	t-Statistic	Prob.
CIT	2.482635	0.268304	0.7945
PPT	2.638580	0.549312	0.5962
VAT	23.75169	0.935468	0.3740

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.806901$; F-statistic = 11.44673; Prob(F-statistic)= 0.000899;
Durbin-Watson stat = 1.514654

A comparative analysis of the impact of Nigeria's Finance Act Reforms on GDP throughout the eight-year period from 2015 to 2022. The Least Square Model of the impact of the Finance Act Reforms on Nigeria's GDP during that time period is shown in Table 1, and the Least Square Model of the impact of the Finance Act Reforms on Nigeria's GDP during that same period is shown in Table 2.

Table 2's findings indicate that the Finance Act Reforms' Adjusted Coefficient of Determination (R^2) for the GDP of Nigeria before and after the reforms was 0.890054 and 0.806901, respectively. This indicates that 89% and 80% of the fluctuations in Nigeria's GDP over the period were explained by the independent variables (CIT, PPT, and VAT), with the remaining 11% and 20% being explained by other economic variables that the model did not account for. These findings

imply that the independent variables accounted for a larger portion of Nigeria's GDP in the preceding period.

However, as a general rule, a Durbin Watson Statistics Coefficient nearer 2 is also regarded as having no autocorrelation. The Durbin Watson Statistics Coefficients from Tables 1 and 2 are 2.181887 and 1.514654, respectively, which are nearer 2. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that the GDP pre and post model tables do not exhibit autocorrelation. Given these findings, we draw the conclusion that there was no autocorrelation in any of the study's models at that time.

Discussion of Findings

Company Income Tax (CIT) and Gross Domestic Products

According to Table 1, the pre-finance act's coefficient of CIT is 0.401080, and the p-value is 0.9177 ($0.9177 > 0.05$). Therefore, we draw the conclusion that CIT had a positive but non-significant impact on Nigeria's GDP during that time. In a similar vein, table 2 indicates that the post-finance act's coefficient of CIT is 2.482635 and its p-value is 0.7945 ($0.7945 > 0.05$). Therefore, we claim that during the Pre-Finance Act and Post-Finance Act periods, CIT had a positive but non-significant impact on Nigeria's GDP. With a p-value of 0.7945 for the Post-Finance Act period compared to 0.9177 for the Pre-Finance Act period, the degree of non-significance does, however, diminish.

The aforementioned findings on CIT were corroborated by Adeyemi & Ishola (2024); Oladipo, Ogunjobi, Fakile, et al. (2024); Chika, Oshiogwemoh, & Promise (2022); Okonye, Eyisi, & Onodi (2018); and Gylych, Samira & Abdurahman. (2016)

The same table 1 shows that the p-value is 0.7166 ($0.7166 > 0.05$) and the coefficient of PPT in the pre-finance act is -2.572873. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that PPT had a negative but insignificant impact on Nigeria's GDP at that time. Similarly, table 2 indicates that the p-value is 0.5962 ($0.5962 > 0.05$) and the coefficient of PPT in the post-finance act is 2.638580. Thus, we claim that PPT had a positive but non-significant impact on Nigeria's GDP both before and after the Finance Act.

With a p-value of 0.7166 for the Post-Finance Act period compared to 0.5962 for the Pre-Finance Act period, the degree of non-significance rises, nevertheless. Oshiogwemoh, Chika, and Promise. (2022) In contrast to PPT, Okonye, Eyisi, and Onodi (2018) found that GDP is positively but not considerably impacted.

Accordingly, table 1 shows that the pre-finance act's VAT coefficient is 26.13762 and its p-value is 0.3522 ($0.3522 > 0.05$). Therefore, we draw the conclusion that VAT had a positive but non-significant impact on Nigeria's GDP during that time. Likewise, table 2 indicates that the post-finance act's VAT coefficient is 23.75169 and its p-value is 0.3740, with 0.3740 being greater than 0.05.

Therefore, we claim that during the Pre-Finance Act and Post-Finance Act periods, VAT had a positive but non-significant impact on Nigeria's GDP. With a p-value of 0.3522 for the Post-Finance Act period compared to 0.3740 for the Pre-Finance Act period, the degree of non-significance does, however, diminish.

Summary of Findings

The study's conclusions are summarized as follows, based on a comparative analysis of the pre and post finance act that was carried out to test the six null hypotheses that were developed, the results of that analysis, and the debates that followed:

- i. Although not statistically significant, corporation income tax had a favorable impact on Nigeria's gross domestic products throughout that time. This was determined using the firm income tax regression coefficient of 2.482635 and a p-value of 0.7945 ($0.7945 > 0.05$).
- ii. ii. Although not statistically significant, the petroleum profit tax has a favorable impact on Nigeria's GDP. The regression coefficient of petroleum profit tax, 2.638580, with a p-value of 0.5962 ($0.5962 > 0.05$), revealed this.
- iii. iii. Although not statistically significant, value added tax has a favorable impact on Nigeria's gross domestic products. This was found using the value added tax regression coefficient of 23.75169 and a p-value of 0.3740 ($0.3740 > 0.05$).

Recommendations

Based the findings of the study, the discussions and the conclusions, the study suggest the following recommendations to tax authorities and lawmakers in Nigeria:

- i. Since Nigeria is still working to instill the culture of voluntary tax filing and payment, we advise that the exemption of businesses with annual revenue of N25,000,000 and less from paying corporate income tax be examined and that all businesses, regardless of size, be required to file returns and pay taxes owed. Additional steps should be taken to minimize manufacturing costs in order to support small businesses, such as the construction of decent roads, infrastructure, power, and tax breaks.

- ii. In order to showcase Nigeria's GDP and economic success, as indicated by the study's findings, the government should also provide a calm and stable environment for petroleum operations in the nation.
- iii. The impact of VAT on various goods and services should be taken into account by the lawmakers throughout the review. For items and services deemed detrimental to human health, the government could think about raising the VAT rate to 10%, while for fundamental and survival-related goods and services, the rate should be lowered to 5%. Lastly, the nation should make sure that more people are included in the tax system in order to increase the amount of VAT and other consumption taxes collected.

Contribution to Knowledge

The fact that no study conducted a comparative analysis was one of the main gaps in the literature found during the empirical evaluation; this study did so for the Pre-Finance Act and Post-Finance Act eras.

Furthermore, it was noted from the gaps in the literature that none of the recent research addressed the years 2015–2022. By focusing on these most recent years, our study took advantage of this to add to the body of knowledge already in existence. As a result, the report is more up to date and can be trusted by the nation's legislators, tax officials, and economic planners when making important decisions that will impact the prosperity of the economy.

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IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN NIGERIA'S NINTH AND TENTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of digitalization on transparency and accountability within Nigeria's Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies, motivated by a growing concern over the inconsistent adoption and effectiveness of digital governance tools in legislative processes. Despite significant investments in platforms like the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TSA), Bank Verification Number (BVN), and the National Open Data Portal, legislative oversight and public trust remain unevenly improved. The research is guided by two key objectives: (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of these digital platforms in enhancing legislative transparency and accountability; and (2) to identify infrastructural, institutional, and policy-related challenges affecting the digitalization of Nigeria's parliamentary systems. Anchored in E-Governance Theory, which posits that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can transform government operations and foster civic engagement, and Institutional Theory, which explains organizational adaptation to digital reforms, the study employs a mixed-methods design. A sample of 465 respondents including legislators, staff, ICT personnel, and civil society monitors—was selected using stratified random sampling. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and document analysis, while statistical tools such as

regression and chi-square tests were used to validate relationships among variables. Findings show that over 84% of respondents believe digital platforms have significantly improved financial transparency, identity verification, and access to legislative records. However, 72% cited poor infrastructure, 67% noted institutional resistance, and 58% highlighted policy gaps as persistent challenges. The study concludes that while digitalization is reshaping legislative governance, its transformative potential is constrained by systemic weaknesses. It recommends: The development of a unified legislative digital governance framework to standardize implementation across all branches and levels; and substantial investment in digital infrastructure and capacity-building programs to equip legislators and support staff with the necessary technical skills.

Keywords: Digitalization, Transparency, Accountability, E-Governance, Legislative Processes

Introduction

Digitalization has emerged as a transformative force in governance worldwide, reshaping how institutions deliver services, engage citizens, and uphold accountability. Globally, countries like Estonia and South Korea have leveraged digital identity systems and e-governance platforms to foster transparency and reduce corruption (Reischauer et al., 2024; Hale, 2008). The World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have consistently emphasized digital governance as a pillar of sustainable development and public sector reform (World Bank, 2016; UNDP, 2020).

Across Africa, digitalization is gaining traction. Countries such as Kenya and Benin have implemented biometric systems and e-government portals that significantly improved budget transparency and citizen engagement (Zumofen et al., 2022; UNDP, 2020). However, challenges such as digital inequality, infrastructure gaps, and cybersecurity risks persist (Demin et al., 2022; Gillwald, 2010).

In Nigeria, the Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies have embraced digital reforms to enhance legislative transparency and accountability. Initiatives like the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), Treasury Single Account (TSA), and Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) have curbed financial leakages and improved fiscal discipline (Obidike & Onuora, 2025; Omar et al., 2024). The National Open Data Portal and Biometric Verification Number (BVN) have further empowered citizens to monitor public spending and legislative activities (Jayeola & Musumhi, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Despite these advancements, Nigeria's digital governance remains fragmented. While the Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies have endorsed key reforms, implementation gaps, inconsistent digital protocols, and limited stakeholder engagement undermine their effectiveness (Shenkoya, 2023; Udegbonam et al., 2023).

There is a pressing need for a unified digital governance framework across federal, state, and local levels, capacity-building programs to improve digital literacy among legislators and civil servants, robust cybersecurity policies to protect sensitive legislative data, and inclusive platforms that allow citizens to monitor, engage, and hold lawmakers accountable.

While digitalization has introduced promising reforms in Nigeria's public sector, its impact on legislative transparency and accountability remains uneven and under-researched. The Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies have made strides in adopting digital tools, yet the extent to which these technologies have improved legislative oversight, reduced corruption, and enhanced public trust is still unclear.

There is a pressing need to evaluate how digital platforms such as e-parliament systems, online bill tracking, and digital budget monitoring have influenced the behaviour and performance of legislators. Furthermore, the lack of standardized digital protocols across federal and state legislatures raises concerns about consistency and effectiveness.

Without a comprehensive framework for digital governance in the legislature, Nigeria risks missing out on the transformative potential of technology in strengthening democratic institutions. This study seeks to investigate the role of digitalization in promoting transparency and accountability in the Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies, identifying both the successes and the systemic barriers that must be addressed.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent has digitalization improved transparency and accountability in the legislative activities of Nigeria's Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies?
- ii. What are the key barriers to effective implementation of digital governance tools within Nigeria's legislative institutions?

Research Objectives

- i. To evaluate the effectiveness of digital governance platforms (e.g., IPPIS, TSA, BVN, National Open Data Portal) in enhancing transparency and accountability in the Ninth and Tenth Assemblies.
- ii. To analyze the infrastructural, institutional, and policy-related challenges affecting the digitalization of legislative processes in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Digitalization

Legner et al. (2017) defines Digitalization as “the manifold sociotechnical phenomena and processes of adopting and using digital technologies in broader individual, organizational, and societal contexts.” This definition emphasizes the adoption and integration of digital tools into everyday systems, highlighting both technical and social dimensions.

Brennen & Kreiss (2016) posited that Digitalization refers to “how many domains of social life are restructured around digital communication and media infrastructures.” Focuses on the transformative impact of digital media on society, especially in communication, culture, and governance.

Gorenšek & Kohont (2019) argued that Digitalization is “the acceptance or increase of the use of digital technology by organizations, industries, and countries.” This definition is rooted in organizational behavior, stressing how institutions adapt to digital tools to remain competitive.

Clerck (2017) sees Digitalization as “the use of digital technologies and data to create revenue, improve business, replace/transform business processes, and create an environment for digital business.” A business-centric view that links digitalization directly to value creation and operational transformation.

Reis et al. (2020) noted that Digitalization is “the integration of digital technologies into business models to enhance competitiveness and operational efficiency.” He highlights the strategic role of digitalization in reshaping industries through innovation and automation.

This study defines Digitalization as the broader socio-technical process of integrating digital technologies into organizational, economic, and social systems to transform operations and interactions.

Digitization

OECD (2009) defines digitization as the conversion of analog information into digital form, enabling it to be processed, stored, and transmitted by digital devices. According to Kallinikos, Aaltonen & Marton (2013) digitization refers to the encoding of analog information into digital formats, which allows for computational manipulation and integration into digital infrastructures.

Lund, Furubotn & Pejovich (2017) observed that the digitization is the foundational process that enables digital transformation by converting physical records, media, and processes into machine-readable formats.

Digitization in this study refers to the technical process by which Nigerian government agencies convert analog records, documents, and workflows into digital formats to enable electronic processing and integration into e-governance systems.

Digitalization as a Socioeconomic Transformation

Tilson et al., (2010) see digitalization as the sociotechnical process through which digital technologies induce changes in institutional structures, business models, and societal norms.

According to Henriette et al., (2016) digitalization involves the strategic adoption of digital technologies to transform economic activities, social interactions, and governance mechanisms. Schwab (2017) argues that digitalization is a key driver of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, reshaping economies, labor markets, and societal structures through pervasive digital integration. Digitalization as a socioeconomic transformation in this study refers to the widespread adoption of digital technologies in Nigeria that alters economic structures, governance practices, and social behavior, influencing how institutions operate and citizens interact with the state.

Digitalization in Governance

According to UNDP (2021) digitalization in governance refers to the integration of digital tools and platforms into public sector operations to enhance service delivery, transparency, and citizen participation.

Margetts & Dunleavy (2013) posits that digitalization transforms governance by enabling real-time data collection, predictive analytics, and automated decision-making in public administration. Gil-Garcia (2012) holds that digitalization in governance is the use of ICTs to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of government processes and interactions with stakeholders. Digitalization in governance in this study refers to the deployment of digital platforms, data systems,

and ICT infrastructure by Nigerian public institutions to enhance administrative efficiency, transparency, and citizen engagement in national security and service delivery.

Literature Review

Digitalization has been widely recognized as a catalyst for improving governance worldwide. Scholars like Reischauer et al. (2024) argue that digital tools foster transparency by enabling real-time access to government data and reducing bureaucratic opacity. Hale (2008) emphasizes that digital governance enhances global accountability by creating systems that are harder to manipulate and easier to audit.

The World Bank (2016) and UNDP (2020) have also highlighted digital transformation as a key driver of sustainable development, particularly in public financial management and citizen engagement.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, digitalization is increasingly seen as a solution to governance challenges. Zumofen et al. (2022) studied Benin's e-government initiatives and found significant improvements in budget transparency and citizen trust. Similarly, Gillwald (2010) noted that while digital tools are promising, infrastructural deficits and policy fragmentation hinder their full potential across African states.

The African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy calls for harmonized digital frameworks to promote inclusive governance and reduce corruption continent-wide.

Obidike & Onuora (2025) conducted an empirical study on federal MDAs in Anambra State, showing that IPPIS and TSA significantly reduced financial irregularities and improved public sector transparency. Shenkoya (2023) used bibliometric analysis to demonstrate that digital transformation especially through platforms like the National Open Data Portal has curbed corruption and improved governance, though infrastructural weaknesses remain a barrier. Ojo et al. (2021) examined local governments in Ogun State and found that digitalization improved the integrity of financial information and accountability mechanisms.

Neibo (2025) emphasized the role of digital governance in payroll management, procurement, and fiscal monitoring, noting that resistance to change and cybersecurity concerns still pose challenges. Obeta & Edwin (2025) explored digital governance in HRM practices, concluding that it fosters a culture of transparency and accountability in Nigerian public organizations.

Empirical studies on digital governance and national security in Nigeria reveal a complex interplay between technological adoption, institutional capacity, and

systemic vulnerabilities. While digital governance initiatives have gained momentum, their impact on national security remains uneven and often underwhelming. Ogene (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study analyzing Nigeria's cybersecurity landscape. The research found that over 90% of African enterprises—including Nigerian institutions lack basic cybersecurity protocols, leaving them vulnerable to phishing, ransomware, and infrastructure sabotage. Nigeria reportedly loses an estimated \$500 million annually to cyber incidents. The study emphasized the need for strategic investment in governance, skilled personnel, and emerging technologies to mitigate risks.

Ugwueze et al., (2016) examined the effectiveness of ICTs in Nigeria's security administration. Their qualitative study revealed that despite the deployment of digital tools, insecurity especially in northern Nigeria continues to escalate. The authors attributed this to underutilization and sabotage of available security technologies. They concluded that without proper installation, maintenance, and institutional support, e-governance will fail to enhance national security.

Achor (2025) explored the role of digital governance in promoting transparency across Nigerian public institutions. Using survey data from 200 respondents and secondary literature, the study found improvements in payroll management and procurement tracking. However, challenges such as low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and resistance to change within the bureaucracy hinder broader security gains. The study recommended public-private partnerships and inclusive digital policy frameworks to strengthen governance outcomes.

These empirical findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to digital governance—one that integrates cybersecurity, institutional reform, and citizen engagement to effectively protect Nigeria's sovereignty in the digital age.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the E-Governance Theory. E-Governance Theory explores how governments use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve public administration, enhance service delivery, and foster citizen engagement. It goes beyond mere automation—it's about transforming governance structures to become more transparent, accountable, participatory, and efficient.

According to Halachmi & Greiling (2013) e-governance enables real-time access to government data, empowering citizens and enhancing democratic trust. It supports the idea that digital tools can reduce corruption and improve oversight by making government operations more visible and auditable. Ojo (2013) defines e-governance

as the use of ICT to improve transparency, provide information speedily, and enhance administrative efficiency in public service delivery.

Relevance to the Study

This research investigates how digitalization affects transparency and accountability in Nigeria's legislative processes. E-Governance Theory is highly relevant for several reasons: it is a framework for Evaluating Digital Tools and platforms like IPPIS (biometric payroll system), TSA, (centralized treasury account), GIFMIS (budget and procurement tracking) and National Open Data Portal. These tools align with e-governance principles by automating processes and reducing human interference—key to curbing corruption and enhancing fiscal discipline.

E-governance emphasizes interactive governance, where citizens can monitor legislative activities, submit feedback, and access public records. This is crucial for holding lawmakers accountable and fostering participatory democracy. Olatunji (2023) found that e-governance initiatives in Ekiti State improved citizen participation and reduced corruption by increasing access to government information.

Digital workflows adopted by the Ninth and Tenth Assemblies (e.g., DocFlow, MDA Naira Payment Solution) reflect the institutional shift that E-Governance Theory predicts—moving from manual, opaque systems to automated, transparent ones.

E-governance tools create audit trails, reduce manual errors, and expose irregularities. For example, IPPIS helped eliminate ghost workers, saving billions in public funds. Shenkoya (2023) argues that digital transformation is a verified solution to improving transparency and accountability in Nigeria's governance, though infrastructural weaknesses remain a barrier.

Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate the impact of digitalization on transparency and accountability within Nigeria's Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies. Using a stratified random sampling technique, a total of 465 respondents—including legislators, administrative staff, ICT officers, and civil society actors—were selected to ensure balanced representation across key institutional roles. Data was collected through structured questionnaires, key informant interviews, and document analysis of legislative records and digital platform usage logs. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests such as chi-square and regression analysis, while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis to identify recurring governance patterns. Ethical protocols were strictly observed,

including informed consent, anonymity, and approval from relevant oversight bodies, ensuring the credibility and integrity of the research process.

Presentation of Results and Findings

Table 1: Effectiveness of Digital Governance Platforms

Quantitative analysis revealed strong positive perceptions of digital platforms used within the Assemblies:

Digital Tool	% Respondents Affirming Positive Impact	Notable Observations	
IPPIS	86.4%	Eliminated ghost workers, ensured payroll integrity	
TSA	83.1%	Minimized revenue leakages, improved budget accountability	
BVN	79.5%	Enhanced identity verification, exposed hidden accounts	
National Open Data Portal	68.7%	Increased public access to legislative records	

Source: field study, 2025

Table 1 presents the results of responses on the positive perceptions of digital platforms used within the Assemblies. 86.4% responded that IPPS eliminates ghost workers. 83.1% respondents noted that TSA exposes leakages. 79.5% respondents agreed that BVN enhanced identity verification, exposed hidden accounts. While 68.7% answered that national open data portal increased public access to legislative records.

A senior finance officer noted:

“The IPPIS changed everything. We now have clean records of staff and payments.”
(Director of Account, NAS, June, 2025)

A News Editor added:

“The Open Data Portal allows us to crosscheck what legislators claim. It’s a game changer for civic oversight.” (Turaki Adamu Hassan, REPS SPEAKER MAGAZINE, Abuja, May, 2025)

These results affirm that digital platforms have substantially enhanced legislative integrity through improved financial control, staff validation, and data accessibility.

Table 2: Infrastructural, Institutional, and Policy-Related Challenges

While digital tools proved effective, several persistent challenges hinder optimal implementation:

Challenge Category	% Respondents Reporting as Significant	Illustrative Quotes
Infrastructural (e.g., unreliable internet, poor hardware)	71.9%	“Digital tools crash often—especially during plenary.”
Institutional (e.g., resistance to change, poor ICT culture)	66.8%	“Many legislators prefer manual systems—they don’t trust digital records.”
Policy Gaps (e.g., lack of enforcement, weak cyber laws)	58.4%	“We have tools but no binding protocols for consistent use”

Source: field work, 2025

Table 2 presents respondents responses on the challenges of digitalization in the 9th and 10th Assemblies. 71.9% noted that weak technical capacity and erratic power supply undermine consistency. 66.8% responded that cultural resistance and limited

digital literacy among staff delay full adoption. While 58.4% noted that absence of a national legislative ICT framework causes fragmentation.

This position was supported by one of the respondents, who posited:

“Our systems are digital, but without a national standard, everyone improvises. That’s a recipe for error.” — ICT Unit Director, Tenth Assembly

These findings show that technical and human resource barriers must be addressed to unlock the full potential of digitalization in legislative governance. Digital platforms such as IPPIS, TSA, BVN, and the Open Data Portal are effective in enhancing transparency and accountability in Nigeria’s Ninth and Tenth Assemblies. However, infrastructural limitations, institutional inertia, and policy gaps remain significant obstacles. These insights underscore the need for a comprehensive digital legislative strategy, robust capacity-building programs, and standardized governance protocols to sustain progress.

Discussion of Findings

This section interprets the results of the study in relation to the research objectives and existing empirical literature. The findings are discussed under two thematic headings:

Effectiveness of Digital Governance Platforms

The study revealed that digital platforms such as IPPIS, TSA, BVN, and the National Open Data Portal significantly enhanced transparency and accountability in Nigeria’s Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies. Over 84% of respondents affirmed that these tools improved financial oversight, reduced payroll fraud, and increased public access to legislative records.

These findings align with the empirical study by Obidike & Onuora (2025) which found that IPPIS and TSA adoption had a statistically significant effect on transparency in federal MDAs, using Friedman’s 2-Way ANOVA to confirm the relationship. Similarly, Jayeola & Musumhi (2023) highlighted how BVN exposed hidden accounts and curbed financial irregularities, reinforcing accountability in Nigeria’s financial systems.

The role of the National Open Data Portal in promoting civic oversight and data accessibility also echoes findings by Shenkoya (2023) who emphasized that digital transformation is a verified solution to improving governance outcomes, though implementation remains uneven due to infrastructural limitations.

Challenges Affecting Digitalization of Legislative Processes

Despite the positive impact of digital tools, the study identified several challenges: 71.9% of respondents cited infrastructural deficits (e.g., unreliable internet, power outages). 66.8% reported institutional resistance and low digital literacy. While 58.4% pointed to policy gaps and lack of enforcement mechanisms.

These findings are consistent with Udegbumam et al. (2023) who documented barriers such as poor infrastructure, resistance to change, and weak policy frameworks in Nigeria's public service digital transformation efforts. Their study emphasized the need for harmonized digital strategies and capacity-building to overcome these systemic issues.

Additionally, Kadir & Sanni (2024) found that institutional quality significantly moderates the effectiveness of digitalized accounting practices in MDAs, suggesting that without strong governance structures, digital tools may not yield their intended impact.

The qualitative insights from interviews such as reluctance among legislators to adopt biometric systems and the absence of standardized ICT protocols further reinforce the literature's emphasis on the human and institutional dimensions of digital reform.

The findings confirm that digital governance platforms are effective in enhancing transparency and accountability in Nigeria's legislative processes. However, infrastructural, institutional, and policy-related challenges continue to hinder full implementation. These results are strongly supported by empirical studies across federal MDAs, local governments, and national policy reviews, underscoring the need for a comprehensive digital governance framework and sustained investment in capacity-building.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of digitalization in enhancing transparency and accountability within Nigeria's Ninth and Tenth National Assemblies. Drawing from both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews, it found that digital governance platforms such as IPPIS, TSA, BVN, and the National Open Data Portal have contributed significantly to improved financial oversight, staff verification, and civic access to legislative records. These tools have bolstered institutional credibility and strengthened public trust in parliamentary processes.

However, the findings also highlighted persistent challenges. Infrastructural deficits, institutional resistance to digital adoption, and gaps in policy enforcement continue to constrain the full potential of digital transformation in legislative governance.

Without strategic interventions, the gains achieved may be uneven and unsustainable.

Grounded in empirical evidence and theoretical insights, the study underscores the importance of developing a unified, robust framework for e-governance in Nigeria's legislature that addresses technical, cultural, and regulatory barriers.

Recommendations

1. Develop a Legislative ICT Policy Framework

Establish a standardized and enforceable digital governance policy across federal and state legislatures to ensure consistency, interoperability, and compliance.

2. Invest in Infrastructure and Connectivity

Upgrade internet access, power supply, and digital hardware in National Assembly facilities to support seamless operation of digital tools and platforms.

3. Capacity Building and Digital Literacy

Introduce regular training programs for legislators and administrative staff to enhance their digital competencies and reduce resistance to innovation.

4. Expand Citizen Engagement Platforms

Integrate user-friendly e-parliament and feedback portals to increase public participation in legislative processes and foster civic accountability.

5. Strengthen Cybersecurity Measures

Implement robust data protection protocols and legislative cybersecurity policies to safeguard sensitive information and mitigate digital vulnerabilities.

6. Encourage Interagency Collaboration

Promote collaboration between the National Assembly, NITDA, civil society, and development partners to ensure inclusive digital transformation strategies and resource mobilization

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ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS RELATED TO IMPLEMENTING CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR HERDER-CROP FARMERS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the persistent and evolving nature of herder-crop farmer conflicts in Nigeria. It underscores a critical reality of current government interventions, while varied, have largely failed to deliver sustainable peace due to systemic governance deficits and a lack of genuinely integrated, bottom-up approaches. It is the position of the paper that the conflict is not merely a security issue or an environmental problem, it is a complex socio-ecological challenge deeply intertwined with issues of identity, justice, and political will. This paper advanced the way forward for effective herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCF) management in Nigeria demanding a fundamental paradigm shift. This requires an unwavering commitment from all levels of government to prioritize impartial justice, dismantle corrupt practices, and foster transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance structures. Policies must be co-created with affected communities, acknowledging their diverse needs and traditional practices, rather than being imposed from above. Investing in adaptive land-use planning, modernizing livestock management in culturally sensitive manners and empowering local peace-building initiatives are not just recommendations, but essential pillars for building resilience and fostering peaceful coexistence. Ultimately, the future of herder-crop farmer relations, and by extension, Nigeria's stability and food security, hinges on the government's capacity to move beyond reactive measures and embrace a truly collaborative, empathetic, and integrated strategy for conflict resolution and sustainable peace.

Keywords: *Administrative Issues, Challenges, Prospects, Implementing Herder-Crop Farmer, Conflicts Resolution*

Introduction

Despite the diverse strategies adopted by the Nigerian government to address herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs), their implementation has been significantly hampered by a complex interplay of systemic governance deficits, deeply entrenched socio-cultural and political hurdles, and escalating resource constraints compounded by emerging security threats. These challenges often interact synergistically, creating a protracted and intractable conflict environment that undermines even well-intentioned interventions.

Governance Deficiencies in Administration of Conflict Resolution Strategies

Governance failures represent a primary and pervasive impediment to effective conflict resolution and sustainable peace in the context of herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs). Nigeria suffers from weak institutional frameworks, characterized by a perceived lack of consistent political will to address the root causes of the conflict or to consistently punish perpetrators (SBMintel, 2017; TSU Digital Scholarship, 2020). The ambiguous land tenure system, particularly stemming from the Land Use Act of 1978, creates confusion over land rights and exacerbates tensions, as it often conflicts with customary land tenure systems and does not adequately cater to the nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle of herders (Oladotun & Emmanuel, 2019; Ohadiugha & Gado, 2025). This legal ambiguity makes it difficult to establish clear boundaries and enforce agreements, leading to persistent disputes over land ownership and usage.

Furthermore, corruption and bias within state and local governance structures are widely reported, severely undermining the credibility and effectiveness of government interventions. Security agencies, traditional rulers, and even local government officials are frequently accused of biased responses and corrupt practices, which further inflame the conflict rather than resolving it (CDD West Africa, 2019; Brottem & McDonnell, 2020; Ogayi & Agada, 2025). Herders, for instance, have alleged that security agents collude with farmers to seize their cattle and demand exorbitant payments for their release (CDD West Africa, 2019). Similarly, traditional leaders, often co-opted by political elites, may perpetuate inequitable resource distribution or incite youth, eroding their authority and credibility as impartial mediators (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020). This perceived partiality leads to a situation where the government is seen as an actor in the conflict, rather than an impartial mediator, driven by self-serving political and economic interests (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020). The lack of effective policing and impartial law enforcement is explicitly cited as a root cause of the conflict, with media coverage often biased against pastoralists, further inflaming tensions (The New Humanitarian, 2025).

A pervasive lack of coordination and stakeholder engagement further undermines intervention efforts. Policy formulation often adopts a top-down approach, where the government dictates solutions without adequate involvement of grassroots stakeholders, including herders, farmers, and local communities. This top-to-bottom methodology leads to public disdain, suspicion, and strong opposition, particularly for initiatives like the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) and Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) Settlements, which are often misconstrued as attempts to seize ancestral lands for Fulani pastoralists. The inconsistent communication and alignment among various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local communities result in fragmented efforts and a lack of local ownership, making it difficult to achieve sustainable peace (ResearchGate, 2025b).

Socio-Cultural and Political Hurdles Impeding Herder-Crop Farmer Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria

Beyond direct governance failures, the implementation of interventions is severely complicated by deep-seated socio-cultural and political hurdles that often transform resource-based conflicts into more intractable identity-based violence.

Community mistrust and resistance to change are significant barriers. Government policies, particularly those related to land use like the NLTP and RUGA, have been met with widespread disdain and suspicion from local communities. These initiatives are often perceived as attempts to dispossess indigenous communities of their ancestral lands to benefit Fulani pastoralists, who are sometimes viewed as foreigners or intruders (ResearchGate, 2025b). This lack of policy acceptability, stemming from a top-down approach that neglects grassroots participation, threatens long-standing amicable relationships and fuels opposition along ethnic, regional, and religious lines (ResearchGate, 2025b). Pastoralists themselves often resist permanent settlement, preferring their traditional seasonal movements, which complicates efforts to establish fixed grazing reserves.

The politicization of conflicts is a particularly insidious hurdle. What began as resource competition has increasingly taken on dangerous ethnic and religious dimensions, especially in Nigeria's Middle Belt (Ohadiugha & Gado, 2025; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2023). State and local leaders have been accused of instigating intense identity politics, leading to a schism along ethnic and religious lines (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020). The conflict is often framed as one between predominantly Muslim Fulani herders and predominantly Christian non-Fulani farmers, exacerbating existing societal divisions (Wikipedia, 2024). The indigene/settler dichotomy is exploited by political leaders, fueling retaliatory violence and territorial claims (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020). This divisive politics can lead to a lopsided distribution of vital resources like land, favoring indigenous

farming communities and further disadvantaging herders (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020).

Furthermore, the manipulation of youth by political leaders is a grave concern. Unemployed and idle youth are sometimes exploited, provided with arms and drugs, and incited to engage in violence against perceived opponents (Brottem & McDonnell, 2020). This exploitation transforms a resource conflict into a broader socio-political struggle, making peaceful resolution more challenging. The pervasive anti-herder bias in media narratives and misinformation on social media platforms further aggravates conflicts, deepening biases and making it difficult to foster a new narrative of peaceful coexistence. These socio-cultural and political dynamics create a complex environment where trust is low, grievances are deep-seated, and interventions are easily undermined by partisan interests.

Resource Constraints and Emerging Threats to Herder-Crop Farmer Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria

The implementation of government interventions is further complicated by severe resource constraints and the emergence of new, complex threats that exacerbate the conflict dynamics.

Funding limitations are a critical challenge for all types of government interventions. Legislative and developmental initiatives, such as the NLTP and the establishment of grazing reserves, require substantial financial investment for infrastructure development (e.g., ranches, water points, veterinary clinics) and support programs (e.g., vocational training, livelihood diversification). However, insufficient and inconsistent funding often limits the reach and effectiveness of these initiatives, leading to slow implementation and the abandonment of projects. For instance, efforts to resuscitate grazing reserves, like Wawa-Zange in Gombe State, are underway but face the challenge of dilapidated infrastructure due to historical underinvestment. The overextension of security forces to manage herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) also diverts critical resources from other pressing security challenges across Nigeria, creating vulnerabilities elsewhere.

The impacts of climate change continue to be a fundamental and intensifying driver of the conflict, directly undermining developmental interventions aimed at resource management. Desertification, erratic rainfall patterns, and prolonged droughts in northern Nigeria force herders to migrate southward in search of dwindling pastures and water resources. This southward movement leads to increased competition for reduced forage and water availability in central and southern regions, making it difficult for any policy, including anti-open grazing laws or grazing reserves, to fully contain herder movements. The Nigerian government's failure to implement

effective climate resilience strategies and resource governance policies has worsened the problem, as environmental degradation continues to shrink available land for both farming and grazing (Ogayi & Agada, 2025).

Finally, the exacerbating role of insecurity, particularly the rise of banditry and the growing alliance between jihadi groups and criminal elements, presents a formidable and evolving threat that severely complicates government interventions. What began as traditional clashes has escalated into unending violence involving AK-47s and military-grade firearms. Jihadi groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP are exploiting local grievances (e.g., poverty, lack of education) to attract followers and establish a presence in conflict-affected areas (GGA, 2025). They are actively building stronger ties with disgruntled communities, herder-affiliated armed groups, and various criminal gangs, leading to increased casualties and displacement (GGA, 2025). This collaboration allows these groups to sustain their operations by imposing taxes on farmers and engaging in kidnapping for ransom, thereby financing their acquisition of ammunition and expanding their reach through intelligence gathering and tactical planning (GGA, 2025). This complex infiltration challenges traditional military responses, making peaceful resolution more difficult and diverting critical resources from other security challenges (GGA, 2025; ResearchGate, 2025a). The presence of these armed groups and criminal syndicates creates an environment where violence is profitable, deepening distrust and making community-led peace-building efforts extremely challenging.

Herder-Crop Farmer Conflicts its Implication on Educational Administration in Nigeria

Herder-crop Farmer Conflicts crisis increases the incidences of out of school children in Nigeria and constitutes a generational setback to peace-building, economic and national development in Nigeria. This is the case because each time there is Herder-crop Farmer Conflicts, schools in the affected areas will be closed for a reasonable period of time usually resuming when peace have been restored.

Prospects and Recommendations for Sustainable Management of Herder-Crop Farmer Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria

Addressing the complex and deeply entrenched herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) in Nigeria requires a holistic, multi-pronged approach that moves beyond reactive measures to focus on sustainable, long-term solutions. The preceding analysis of challenges underscores that effective interventions must integrate security, development, and inclusive governance, while adapting to the dynamic socio-ecological landscape. The following recommendations are derived from an analysis of existing challenges and successful theoretical frameworks, offering a pathway towards sustainable peace and coexistence.

Integrated Approaches

Sustainable management of herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) necessitates a shift from fragmented, piecemeal interventions to holistic strategies combining security, development, and inclusive governance. The pervasive cycle of violence and the multifaceted nature of the herder-farmer conflict cannot be addressed by isolated efforts (UN Human Security, 2019). Instead, a comprehensive and integrated approach is required, one that bridges the humanitarian-development-peace nexus by addressing root causes while simultaneously reducing community vulnerability to protection risks (UN Human Security, 2019). This approach recognizes that security cannot be achieved without addressing underlying developmental deficits, and development cannot thrive without peace.

This integrated approach demands a beneficial collaborative policy partnership formula that actively involves all key stakeholders: herders, farmers, indigenous landowners, and representatives from local, state, and federal governments (ResearchGate, 2025b). This collaborative model, supported by Social Contract Theory and Collaborative Governance Theory, ensures that solutions reflect diverse perspectives, fosters local ownership, and significantly reduces resistance to policy initiatives (ResearchGate, 2025b). For instance, a proposed land partnership ownership structure could allocate significant shares to herders (70%) and community landowners (15%), with smaller percentages for local, state, and federal governments, ensuring mutual benefits and shared responsibilities (ResearchGate, 2025b). Such a bottom-up approach, where grassroots implementers are involved in policy formulation, is crucial for successful implementation and ownership, leading to potential positive outcomes such as reduced violent clashes, improved resource sharing, and strengthened community engagement (ResearchGate, 2025b). Furthermore, security sector reforms must be integrated into this holistic framework, ensuring that security operations respect human rights and promote accountability, thereby rebuilding trust with affected communities (GGA, 2025).

Policy Refinements

Existing policies require significant refinement to address their limitations and ensure their effectiveness in mitigating herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs). This involves moving towards more adaptive and context-sensitive legislative and developmental frameworks.

Firstly, there is a critical need for adaptive land use policies that acknowledge the dynamic nature of socio-ecological systems and the traditional mobility of pastoralists (ejmeb.com, 2023; prism.sustainability-directory.com, 2025). Instead of blanket bans on open grazing, which have shown unintended negative consequences such as increased food insecurity for some groups and displacement of herders to

neighboring states (uh-ir.tdl.org, 2023), policies should promote structured land-use agreements. The resource partitioning model, for instance, suggests formalizing arrangements where farmers lease post-harvest land to pastoralists for grazing, with farmers benefiting from the cattle manure (rsisinternational.org, 2025). This fosters complementarity and interdependence, transforming potential conflict into mutual benefit. Policy adaptability, characterized by alternative dispute settlement mechanisms, flexibility, and continuous learning, is crucial for effective land conflict resolution and fostering trust (ejmeh.com, 2023).

Secondly, improved livestock management strategies are essential. The National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) aims to modernize livestock production through ranching, but its implementation must be adapted to Nigeria's diverse socio-political and cultural realities through extensive public and civic engagements (rsisinternational.org, 2025; nesgroup.org, 2019). Efforts to resuscitate grazing reserves under the National Livestock Growth Acceleration Strategy (NL-GAS) should be accelerated, focusing on improving dilapidated infrastructure such as road networks, healthcare facilities, veterinary clinics, and water points (vanguardngr.com, 2025a). These revitalized reserves should support breed improvement centers and pasture cultivation to reduce herders' reliance on seasonal migration (vanguardngr.com, 2025a). Crucially, the strategy should encourage shared land use within these reserves, where farmers provide crop residue for herders, and herders, in turn, supply manure to enrich the farmers' soil, fostering a mutually beneficial exchange (fmld.gov.ng, 2025). Lessons from past projects, such as the Second Livestock Development Project, indicate that pastoralists may resist permanent settlement, preferring seasonal movement, which must be factored into policy design (World Bank, 1995). Furthermore, strategies should include genetic improvement and diversification of livestock species, early warning systems for disease outbreaks, and precision livestock farming technologies to enhance resilience and productivity (frontiersin.org, 2025).

Community Engagement and Capacity Building

Effective and sustainable conflict resolution is impossible without genuine community engagement and robust capacity building at the local level. The pervasive mistrust and resistance to top-down government policies highlight the urgent need for a bottom-up approach that fosters local participation and ownership (ResearchGate, 2025b; ResearchGate, 2023).

Firstly, strengthening dialogues and local conflict resolution mechanisms is paramount. The government must reinforce and expand platforms for dialogue among all stakeholders, including farmers, pastoralists, vigilantes, ethnic and religious leaders, and security agencies, to facilitate collective decision-making on

managing mutual threats and competing interests (GGA, 2025). The establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms and community-based peace committees, such as the Protection Action Groups (PAGs) and Farmer-Herder Peace Forum, should be scaled up to foster dialogue, reconciliation, and social cohesion at the local level (UN Human Security, 2019; ResearchGate, 2023). These local committees, when genuinely inclusive and empowered, can mediate minor disputes before they escalate, leveraging traditional conflict resolution methods (ResearchGate, 2023). The non-application of restorative justice procedures by the government has often rendered traditional conflict resolution structures ineffective, underscoring the need for their re-integration and support (ResearchGate, 2020).

Secondly, capacity building for communities and local institutions is essential. This involves training local leaders, community members, and peace committee members in conflict reporting, early warning systems, mediation, and violence prevention (UN Human Security, 2019; gojamss.net, 2025). The successful design and installation of Early Warning and Early Response Systems (EWERS) in collaboration with state governments, as seen in Benue and Nasarawa, should be replicated and institutionalized through legislative processes (UN Human Security, 2019).

Furthermore, promoting comprehensive livelihood diversification for both farmers and herders is crucial to build economic buffers against shocks and reduce reliance on traditional practices that contribute to conflict (knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu, 2023; ResearchGate, 2022). This includes providing vocational training, skills upgrades, and start-up kits, particularly for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable populations (UN Human Security, 2019; ResearchGate, 2022). Investing in accessible and affordable educational systems in rural areas can also enhance human capital development and expose individuals to broader livelihood opportunities (ResearchGate, 2022).

Finally, fostering new narratives for peaceful coexistence is vital to counter anti-herder bias and inflammatory media narratives that exploit religious and ethnic divides (The New Humanitarian, 2025). Promoting a shared identity and highlighting common goals among communities can build loyalty and collaborative relationships (pon.harvard.edu, 2025). This includes emphasizing the historical symbiotic relationship between farmers and herders and the mutual benefits derived from cooperation.

Future Research Directions

Despite the extensive body of literature on herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) in Nigeria, several areas warrant further in-depth research to inform more effective and

sustainable interventions. The complexity and evolving nature of these conflicts necessitate continuous scholarly inquiry to bridge existing knowledge gaps and provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

Firstly, there is a critical need for more granular and localized impact assessments of specific government interventions (ResearchGate, 2025a; ResearchGate, 2025b). While general critiques of policies like the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) and anti-open grazing laws exist, detailed empirical studies on their varied effectiveness across different states and communities are often lacking or not publicly accessible (ResearchGate, 2025b; uh-ir.tdl.org, 2023). Future research should conduct rigorous evaluations of these policies, including their economic impacts on prices, productivity, land use, consumption, poverty, and inequality, to fully understand their intended and unintended consequences (uh-ir.tdl.org, 2023). Similarly, the effectiveness of specific security operations (e.g., Operation Whirl Stroke) in achieving long-term peace and stability, beyond temporary conflict containment, requires more systematic investigation (ResearchGate, 2025a; ResearchGate, 2025c).

Secondly, deeper research is needed into the historical trajectories and fluctuations in conflict intensity. Understanding the precise timelines of conflict escalation and de-escalation, as well as the specific precursors to such fluctuations, can provide invaluable insights into early warning signs and effective preventive measures (ResearchGate, 2015). This historical analysis should also explore the long-term impacts of colonial legacies and post-colonial land policies on current conflict dynamics.

Thirdly, the applicability and adaptability of successful international interventions to the Nigerian context require thorough investigation. Comparative studies that analyze conflict mitigation strategies from other countries facing similar herder-farmer or resource-based conflicts (e.g., in the Sahel or East Africa) can offer valuable lessons. Research should focus on identifying which elements of these successful interventions are transferable to Nigeria's unique socio-political and cultural landscape, and how they can be adapted to ensure local relevance and acceptance (ResearchGate, 2025b).

Fourthly, while the role of technology in conflict resolution has been suggested, more empirical research is needed on the practical implementation and effectiveness of security-based technologies (e.g., biometric data identification, instant information communication, aerial surveillance) for conflict deterrence, early warning systems, and impartial law enforcement in Nigeria (asric.africa, 2025; gojamss.net, 2025). This includes assessing the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and

ethical implications of deploying such technologies in rural and conflict-affected areas. Furthermore, research could explore the potential of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for more effective land-use planning and resource management in conflict-prone regions (scirp.org, 2019).

Finally, there is a need for more nuanced research into the socio-psychological dimensions of the conflict, moving beyond broad ethnic or religious categorizations. This includes exploring the psychological origins of unmet human needs (e.g., identity, security, recognition) and how they become conscious motivators for collective action and violence, as suggested by Human Needs Theory (gmu.edu, 2025; <https://www.google.com/search?q=wissjournals.com.ng>, 2025). Research should also delve deeper into the gendered impacts of herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) and the effectiveness of formal economic support mechanisms in supplementing informal coping strategies adopted by affected households, particularly women (ifpri.org/blog, 2025). Understanding these deeper human elements and their interaction with structural factors is crucial for designing more empathetic and effective peace-building and livelihood diversification programs.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a comprehensive examination of government interventions in herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) in Nigeria, analyzing their strategies, implementation challenges, and future directions. We began by establishing herder-crop farmer conflicts (HCFs) as a critical and escalating security and development challenge, driven by a complex interplay of resource scarcity exacerbated by climate change, rapid population growth, and profound governance deficits, all of which have been tragically amplified by ethnic and religious dimensions and the proliferation of sophisticated arms (Ogayi & Agada, 2025; Ohadiugha & Gado, 2025; TSU Digital Scholarship, 2020). A critical review of these strategies revealed that while they represent diverse attempts to address the conflict, their implementation has yielded mixed and often limited success.

The core of the paper findings highlighted significant issues and challenges impeding the effectiveness of these interventions. These include pervasive governance deficiencies, such as weak political will, widespread corruption, institutional capacity gaps, and a persistent top-down approach to policy formulation that alienates local communities (SBMintel, 2017; Brottem & McDonnell, 2020; ResearchGate, 2025b). Deep-seated socio-cultural and political hurdles, including community mistrust, resistance to change, and the dangerous politicization of conflicts along ethnic and religious lines, further complicate resolution efforts (Ohadiugha & Gado, 2025; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2023). Finally, severe resource constraints (e.g., funding limitations) and the exacerbating role of emerging threats

like banditry and the growing alliance between jihadi groups and criminal elements, fundamentally undermine security and development initiatives, creating an environment where violence is often profitable (GGA, 2025; MPRA, 2025).

Despite these formidable challenges, the chapter identified crucial prospects and actionable recommendations for sustainable management. These include the imperative for integrated approaches that holistically combine security, development, and inclusive governance; necessary policy refinements such as adaptive land use policies (e.g., resource partitioning model) and improved, context-sensitive livestock management strategies (e.g., revitalized grazing reserves with shared use); and a renewed emphasis on genuine community engagement and capacity building through strengthened local dialogue mechanisms and livelihood diversification programs (ResearchGate, 2025b; rsisinternational.org, 2025; UN Human Security, 2019).

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IMPLICATION OF FAKE NEWS ON SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: OPINIONS OF RESIDENTS OF YENAGOA, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The proliferation of fake news poses significant implications for societal development in Nigeria. This phenomenon, fuelled by the rapid dissemination of information through various media channels, erodes trust, fuels disinformation, and perpetuates social divisions. Nigeria, with its diverse ethnic and religious composition, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of false information. This research therefore examines the implications of fake news on societal development in Nigeria with specific attention to the opinions of Yenagoa residents. In order to achieve the research objectives, the survey method was adopted using the convenience sampling technique. Findings shows that social media is the catalyst for the proliferation of fake news in Nigeria and has greatly impacted on the development of the society having a negative effect on social cohesion. It is therefore recommended that there is need for multi-pronged approaches to combat fake news, including media literacy programmes, fact-checking initiatives, and stringent regulation of social media platforms, and that only through a concerted commitment to truth, transparency, and responsible information dissemination can Nigeria overcome the perils of fake news and foster sustainable societal development.

Keywords: Fake News, Development, Implication, Opinions, Societal

Introduction

In an era dominated by the rapid dissemination of information through various media channels, Nigeria, like many other countries, faces a significant challenge,

especially, due to the activities social media are being used for. One of such activity is the spread of fake news. Guanah (2018) asserts that one of the issues that the social media have thrown up in the international communication scene recently is that of “fake news” perpetuation. He defines “Fake news” as any falsehood that is intentionally and deliberately being presented as a correct and truthful news report.

According to Agbaje and Popoola (2020) “the rise of fake news poses a grave threat to the country's societal development, as it erodes trust, fuels disinformation, and perpetuates social divisions.” Nigeria, a nation rich in diversity, cultural heritage, and aspirations, finds itself grappling with the consequences of this phenomenon. Also, fake news has permeated all spheres of life, and has become a lucrative business for many who believe that fake news generates clicks because people click on things that they want to believe, and this leads to advertisements revenue on which most media organisations survive. In some countries, fake news is being used to blackmail for money, for character assassination, to attract advertisements directly and indirectly, or to draw attention to a new publication (The Cable, 2017). Fake news tends to increase because of the demand for it.

According to The Cable (2017) the consumer of fake news is a major cause of the proliferation, and Gullibility, Loss of humanity, Implicit Bias, Confirmation Bias, Lethal Combination, and Lack of critical thinking have been identified by psychologists and media experts as the reasons for that. Fake news refers to fabricated or misleading information deliberately designed to deceive and manipulate public opinion. With the advent of social media platforms and the widespread availability of digital technology, the spread of fake news has reached alarming proportions. Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation, with its diverse ethnic and religious composition, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of false information.

The implications of fake news on societal development in Nigeria are far-reaching and multifaceted. Firstly, the dissemination of fake news undermines the credibility of news media and other information sources. Trust which is a critical element in any functioning society, becomes eroded as individuals struggle to differentiate between genuine and fabricated news stories. This erosion of trust not only affects the media landscape, but also permeates various sectors of society, including politics, governance, business, and social interactions.

Secondly, the prevalence of fake news exacerbates social divisions within Nigeria. Misleading narratives, often driven by ulterior motives, can stoke ethnic, religious, and political tensions. False information has the potential to incite violence,

exacerbate conflicts, and breed hatred among different groups, undermining the country's social fabric and impeding progress towards national unity (Ogwezzy, 2021).

According to Guanah (2018) “fake news has the potentials of destabilising the polity, sowing the seeds of chaos and confusion, causing tension, and threatening countries' unity. The perpetuation of fake news is made possible by the social media which remain the major transmitters” (p. 29). Moreover, fake news negatively impacts Nigeria's economy and international reputation. False reports on issues such as economic policies, investment opportunities, or public health crises can mislead investors, hinder economic growth, and deter foreign direct investment. Additionally, the dissemination of fake news about Nigeria in international media can harm the country's image, leading to reputational damage and impeding its ability to attract international partnerships and collaborations.

In the Yenagoa metropolis, which is the capital city of Bayelsa State, fake news is mostly prevalence during election seasons. This is to say that, at the peak of every electioneering process, political activities always dominate other issues in Yenagoa, and as such, most messages within the media space are targeted at promoting political propaganda in order to discredit opposition parties and their candidates.

Albeit, most times, the reason some people engage in the spread of fake news is to acquire political mileage, and for financial gain, especially for online platforms that seek to attract traffic and drive advertising revenue growth; yet, to make the fake news look authentic, the purveyors always attribute their sources to some “top government officials” who, according to them, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak on the matter (Guanah, 2018).

Addressing the challenges posed by fake news requires a multi-pronged approach. It necessitates active engagement from various stakeholders, including government bodies, media organizations, educational institutions, and individuals themselves. Robust media literacy programmes, fact-checking initiatives, and stringent regulation of social media platforms are some of the strategies that can be employed to combat the spread of fake news (Akinkuotu, 2020).

The implications of fake news on societal development in Nigeria are profound and demand urgent attention. The erosion of trust, the exacerbation of social divisions, and the adverse economic consequences hinder progress, unity, and prosperity. Recognising the gravity of this issue, and undertaking collective efforts to counter fake news is crucial for Nigeria's path towards a well-informed, cohesive, and

prosperous society. Only through a concerted commitment to truth, transparency, and responsible information dissemination can Nigeria overcome the perils of fake news and foster sustainable societal development.

Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of fake news in Nigeria poses significant challenges to societal development. False information, intentionally created and disseminated to deceive and manipulate public opinion, undermines trust, perpetuates social divisions, and hampers progress in various sectors of the country. While the implication of fake news on societal development is widely acknowledged, there is a gap in comprehensive research specifically focused on Nigeria and Yenagoa metropolis context. Existing studies tend to generalize the issue without considering Bayelsa's unique socio-political landscape and its ambitious development goals. Therefore, this study sought to bridge this gap by investigating the opinions of the Yenagoa residents on the impact of fake news on societal development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine how familiar the residents of Yenagoa are with the term "fake news"
2. To find out the opinions of Yenagoa residents on the implication of fake news on societal development.
3. To determine the social media platforms that are mostly used for disseminating fake news among Yenagoa residents.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The Agenda Setting Theory forms the theoretical foundation of this study. The theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. It states that the media have the power to influence the public's perception of social issues and topics by selecting and highlighting specific news stories, thereby shaping the public agenda and determining what people think about. It posits that the media's agenda-setting ability plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing the salience of various issues within society. Media may not tell you what to think, but will tell you what to think about.

The term "agenda setting" describes how the media can affect the public's awareness of topics rather than their level of understanding about them. Langs and Langs (as cited in Yaroson & Asemah, 2022) posit that the media build up public images of public figures. The media constantly present objects and suggest what individuals in the society should think about, know about and have feelings about. Hence, Guanah

(as cited in Guanah & Adeoye, 2024, p. 11) declares that “until the media are involved, no matter or issue revolves; every issue remains docile until the media choose to activate it and cause it to be matters of national discourse.”

Research has shown that most of the pictures people store in their heads are based on what they come across in the media. McCombs (n. d) notes that the power of the news media to set a nation’s agenda, to focus public attention on a few key public issues, is an immense and well-documented influence. Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news.

For example, if fake news stories are widely circulated and receive significant media attention, they may divert public attention from actual societal challenges or important development issues. The media's focus on sensationalized or fabricated news can lead to a distortion of priorities, causing the public to be less informed or misinformed about critical matters that require attention and action.

Furthermore, the Agenda-Setting Theory also recognises the role of media gatekeepers and agenda setters who determine what news stories receive coverage and how they are framed. In the case of fake news in Nigeria, media gatekeepers have a responsibility to exercise caution in their selection and coverage of news, ensuring that accurate and verified information is disseminated while fake news is not amplified or legitimized through excessive attention.

By understanding and applying the agenda-Setting Theory, researchers and policymakers can recognise the power dynamics at play in the media landscape and develop strategies to counteract the negative implications of fake news on societal development. This may involve promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills among the public, enhancing fact-checking mechanisms, and encouraging responsible journalism that prioritizes accurate information and constructive narratives for the betterment of Nigerian society.

In the context of fake news and societal development, the agenda-Setting Theory helps explain how the media's portrayal and coverage of fake news can impact the development trajectory of the country. The theory suggests that when the media gives prominence to fake news stories, it can influence public perception and understanding of important issues, thereby shaping the societal agenda.

Fake News and Societal Development

The concept of fake news has received global attention among communication scholars in recent times. This is partly because of the pervasive nature of false information across the globe. "The term fake news consists of two words 'fake' which implies something not genuine, but meant to be accepted as true, and 'news' which means information about current events. Therefore, it can be said that fake news is information or news that is not genuine, but presented and expected to be conceived as being true" (Apuke & Omar, 2020).

Media scholars have conceptualized fake news in many different ways but with almost the same meanings. For instance, According to McGonagle (2017) fake news is information that has been purposefully created and spread with the goal of misleading and deceiving people into accepting untrue information or casting doubt on verifiable truths. Disinformation that is portrayed as or is likely to be interpreted as novel in this context. Similarly, fake news is described as "a situation where misinformation takes the form of a news story to approximate the legitimacy which society associates with real news" by Duffy, Tandoc, and Ling (2019, as referenced in Apuke & Omar, 2020).

Central to the discourse of 'fake news' are three key concepts: misinformation, disinformation and mal-information. Information scientists have long debated the nature of information: what it is, where it comes from and the kinds of actions it affords humans, information sharing behaviour is integral to humans, people value exchanging information even when it is true or false which are diffused via social networks, as misinformation and disinformation. Social media have made such diffusion easier and faster (Wilson & Umar, 2019).

Misinformation, disinformation and mal-information are raw materials that form fake news, information sharing systems which are currently and mostly unregulated have altered conventional information behaviour. Information published based on falsehood whether with little iota of facts can have devastating consequences on governments, people, businesses, information professionals, and user experience designers, as well as other groups. The main reason misinformation is troublesome is because it can make information hard to use and cause receivers to become confused and distrustful (Wilson & Umar, 2019).

According to Nanaane (2019) the rise of fake news emphasizes how established institutional defences against misinformation and disinformation are being undermined in the digital age, which presents a problem for tech behemoths like

Facebook, Google, YouTube, and other social media platforms. News which supposed to be an accurate and timely reportage of events is seriously being distorted by the lack of gate keeping process, filtering, fact-checking or editorial judgement which constitutes the standard practice in the conventional media of communication. However, with the coming on board of the social media, this filtering mechanism of news processing no longer obtains.

In an era of astounding speed of information, where information spreads at an amazing speed, the consequence is that people may want to play frontline role in the dissemination of information, in manners suggestive of some sort of gains in being the first, or among the first people to burst the news.

Societal development is a multidimensional concept that transcends economic growth. It involves the enhancement of human capabilities, freedoms, and overall well-being, as articulated by scholars like Amartya Sen. The United Nations' Human Development Index and the idea of sustainable development further underscore the interconnected and holistic nature of societal development, emphasising the importance of addressing diverse dimensions for lasting positive change.

Societal development, also known as social development, refers to the progress and improvement in various aspects of a society's well-being, encompassing economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions. It involves positive changes in the quality of life for individuals and communities, aiming for advancements that contribute to the overall welfare of society.

In the words of renowned development economist Amartya Sen, societal development goes beyond a narrow focus on economic growth. Sen argues for a broader understanding that includes the expansion of capabilities and freedoms that enable individuals to lead lives they value. In his seminal work "Development as Freedom," Development should be seen as a process of extending substantive freedoms, enabling people to select and pursue the lives they have reason to value, according to Sen (2007).

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides a comprehensive perspective on societal development. The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) incorporates indicators beyond economic measures, such as life expectancy, education, and income, to assess the overall well-being of a society. This multidimensional approach recognizes that societal progress involves improvements in health, education, and income distribution, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various aspects of human development.

Societal development also encompasses the idea of sustainable development, as articulated in the Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future." The report defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept emphasizes the integration of economic, social, and environmental considerations to ensure that development initiatives are enduring and beneficial in the long term.

The nexus between fake news and societal development is that, "Fake news can inhibit social development by undermining trust in institutions, creating divisions and conflicts, and spreading misinformation that can lead to poor decision-making. But on the other hand, some experts argue that fake news can also promote social development by encouraging critical thinking and media literacy" (Howard, 2000).

In the same vein, one of the biggest negative effects of fake news on social development is its impact on trust. Fake news can lead to a breakdown in trust between people and institutions, which can have serious consequences for social development. For example, if people don't trust their government or media, they may be less likely to participate in civic life or engage in public discourse. Additionally, "fake news can lead to divisions and conflicts within society, which can make it difficult for people to work together towards shared goals." (Lie Machines, 2007).

Fake News and Citizen Journalism

Citizen journalism has become an important component of the modern media landscape, offering diverse perspectives and increasing the democratization of news production and distribution. Browman and Willis (2003) defines "Citizen journalism as the act of citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information." Also, Gilmor (2004) asserts that "Citizen journalism is the work of people who act as the eyes and ears of their communities and beyond by gathering, sharing, and analysing information."

Accordingly, Brussels and Jacobs (2006) states that, "Citizen journalism refers to grassroots, participatory practices of collecting, filtering, and distributing news and information, and encompasses a range of online and offline activities." It therefore means that Citizen journalism is a form of news reporting and information dissemination where individuals, often not professionally trained journalists, actively engage in the collection, creation, and sharing of news and stories, typically using digital and online platforms, to contribute diverse perspectives and grassroots insights to the public discourse. This kind of journalism has been widely and prominently practiced in Nigeria in recent times - thanks to microblogging sites, like

Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tik-Tok and traditional blogsites. These platforms are used on a daily basis to collect and disseminate news and information to the public either wittingly or unwittingly by a significant number of users.

Guanah (2024) opines that citizen journalism has the potential to democratise the news production process, provide alternative perspectives, and hold powerful institutions accountable. However, it also raises concerns about the lack of professional training, journalistic standards, and verification processes among citizen journalists. This liberalistic way of practicing journalism by all and sundry in Nigeria does not come without its challenges, prominent of which is the high incidence of frequent churning out of fake and misleading news. (Hammed, 2023). Hunt and Matthew (2015) define "Fake News" as news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers. This is often what happens in the midst of unguarded citizen journalism in Nigeria, especially during the build-up to the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria where the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had to debunk a number of fake news relating to its activities by issuing official statements to correct the distorted news spreading in the media.

The Nexus between Fake News and Citizen Journalism

The nexus between fake news and citizen journalism is complex and multifaceted, reflecting the dynamic nature of the modern media landscape. Citizen journalism, characterised by the participation of ordinary individuals in the collection, reporting, and dissemination of news, has gained prominence with the advent of digital technologies and social media platforms. However, this democratization of news production comes with both positive and negative consequences, particularly in the context of fake news.

Whereas citizen journalism allows for a liberal and more democratic reportage of happenings and events around us, it also portends a danger of misinformation of the public – a trend which is now rife and prominent in the new media, especially in the social media space. Every 'tom, dick and harry' now has the liberty of typing a news story or information – verified or not – with his/her smartphone in the name of practicing citizen journalism, then push same online to millions of netizens who are readily available to consume online content either to keep themselves from boredom, idleness or strictly for information purposes. The stage of gatekeeping a news story or information as practiced in the conventional process of journalistic story reporting (which would have ticked all the verification, review, and editorial boxes of ascertaining the trueness, accuracy, objectivity, and fairness of the news story and ultimately prevent churning out fake news) is completely disregarded.

One of the main criticisms of citizen journalism is that “it can be a breeding ground for misinformation and fake news” (Caplan, 2007). This is because citizen journalists are not necessarily held to the same standards of accuracy and fact-checking as professional journalists. In addition, some argue that “citizen journalism can lead to “echo chambers” in which people only consume information that confirms their existing beliefs, rather than being exposed to a variety of perspectives” (Nikki, 2010).

According to Robyn and Nikki (2007) “the rise of citizen journalism has led to an increase in “confirmation bias,” which is the tendency to seek out information that confirms our existing beliefs and ignore information that contradicts them.” This can be problematic because it can lead to a further polarization of opinions and a decrease in the quality of public discourse. Another criticism of citizen journalism is that it can lead to the spread of “filter bubbles,” which are personalized, narrow information streams that only show us content that we are likely to agree with.

Eli Pariser, author of “The Filter Bubble”, (2015) argues that this is harmful because it prevents people from being exposed to new ideas and perspectives, which can limit our ability to learn and grow. “Another concern about the relationship between fake news and citizen journalism is that it can blur the lines between fact and fiction, making it difficult for people to discern what is true and what is not” (Liza, 2000). Liza Featherstone argues that the blurring of fact and fiction can lead to “post-truth” societies, in which people have trouble distinguishing between reality and fiction.

Some have argued that the relationship between fake news and citizen journalism has also had a negative impact on democracy. For example, Philip (1996) argued that “the spread of misinformation and the decline of traditional media have eroded trust in institutions and made it harder for democracy to function effectively”.

Social Media as a Catalyst for Fake News

The writer’s overall perception and attitude to information from social media can be likened to the attitude of the German historian and publicist, August Von Schlozer (1735–1809) when he said, “foolish is the man who never reads a newspaper and even more foolish is the man who believes what he reads just because it is in the newspaper,” (Toluna, 2018). The above statement can be rephrased by substituting newspaper for social media. One can then say that foolish is the person who does not use social media (any of the platforms), and even more foolish is the person who believes what she or he reads or sees just because it is from social media. By this, one is saying that every information from any social media platforms should be treated with a pinch of salt until credibility is established before belief. At least,

another source should substantiate whatever the social media offer before it can be taken seriously.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” Citing Olise (2014), Suntai and Targema (2017) say social “media are online communication media that use web-based technologies which enable users to download, upload, interact and collaborate with one another regardless of distance and time. Social media as a concept is the use of technology combined with social interaction to create and co-create value.” The categories of social media can be extremely broad which include social networks, content-sharing sites, content-ranking tools, broad and Geo-Location tools (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media have facilitated interactivity and enhanced participation of citizens in the discussion of issues at local, national and international levels. This portends a lot for democracy, a system of government that thrives on the principles of popular participation and diversity of views and opinions in the public sphere (Agboola & Fasasi, 2019). In contemporary democratic practice, social media are being used by governments to involve citizens in decision making and civil society to engage citizens in specific issues (Chukwuma, 2018).

Social media have transformed the landscape of news sharing. With social media, participatory journalism, creation of online community, instantaneous feedback, easy and fast news delivery, wider access to news stories is made possible and easier. “In spite of these emerging benefits and potentials accruing from the use of social media for news sharing, social media has somewhat encouraged the proliferation of fake news. In fact, the advent of social media has accelerated the spread of fake news. This is because anyone with the required exquisite device and Internet connection can adequately be involved in the production and distribution of any type of news that may look very believable even when it is just fake news” (Siapera, 2018).

Consequently, “a lot of what is churned out is alarming, and it has become a norm overtime to mislead people and contradict stories with catchy headlines. While some of this information put on social media is as a result of shallow research and ignorance, some others are deliberate, with the author meaning to misinform and mislead people, and to spark off emotional responses” (Ofili, 2020).

Invariably, social media users are exposed to series of fake news that may cause serious threats to national security and social cohesion. For example, the fake news that President Muhammad Buhari had died after he left the country to the UK for medical treatment. Upon his arrival, it was shared on a number of new media platforms that he was a clone. This fake news created a lot of confusion among Nigerians and made some Nigerians to lose faith in the Nigerian government. Again, a horrid photograph of a lady lying in the pool of her blood was spread all over Twitter. She actually a victim of traffic accident in the Dominican Republic but the news spread on Twitter that she was a victim of violence. This sparked up tension between herdsmen and farmers conflict which leads to the death of many Nigerians. Thus, Apuke and Omar (2020) categorically stated that “fake news disrupts the nation's peace and harmony.”

Fake news on social media rose to prominence in 2016 during the United States of America presidential election, leading people to question science, true news, and societal norms. “Fake News is increasingly affecting societal values, changing opinions on critical issues and topics as well as redefining facts, truths, and beliefs. In the past five years or so, social media has redefined the structure, dimensions, and complexity of sharing news” (Berkowitz & Schwartz, 2016). “The impact of social media specifically on political affairs, has been attracting more interest, as social media platforms, notably Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, enable the broad sharing of information and news” (Vosoughi et al., 2018). “In addition to providing information, another main purpose of social media is to enable people to engage in social interaction, communication, and entertainment” (Hwang et al., 2011; Kuem et al., 2017).

In particular, many social media posts are looking for support, where reposting aims to spread messages via the multiplicative effect. Fake news can have significant and far-reaching impacts on societal development. Some key ways in which fake news can influence various aspects of the society are:

1. Erosion of Trust:

Fake news undermines trust in traditional media, institutions, and even in information itself. When people are exposed to misinformation, they may become sceptical of all sources of information, making it difficult for society to make informed decisions.

2. Political Polarization:

Fake news often reinforces existing beliefs and can contribute to the polarization of society. People may be more likely to believe and share information that aligns with their pre-existing views, deepening divides within communities and nations.

3. Impact on Elections:

Misinformation and fake news can influence public opinion, sway voters and potentially affecting the outcomes of elections. This can have long-lasting consequences for the democratic process and the legitimacy of elected officials.

4. Social Unrest:

False information can contribute to the spread of fear, panic, and mistrust, potentially leading to social unrest. In extreme cases, it can even contribute to violence and conflict within communities.

5. Economic Consequences:

Fake news can have economic implications, especially when it spreads false information about companies, markets, or economic policies. Stock markets, for example, can be affected by rumours and misinformation, leading to financial instability.

6. Public Health Concerns:

During events like pandemics, the spread of fake news can have serious public health consequences. Misinformation about treatments, transmission, and prevention measures can contribute to the worsening of health crises.

7. Educational Impact:

Misinformation can affect education by distorting historical facts, scientific principles, and other important information. This can hinder the development of critical thinking skills and create a society less equipped to make informed decisions.

8. Manipulation of Public Opinion:

Fake news can be used as a tool for manipulation by individuals or groups with specific agendas. It can be strategically disseminated to shape public opinion and advance particular ideologies.

9. Cybersecurity Threats:

Fake news can be used as a vector for cyber threats. For example, phishing attacks may use false information to trick individuals into divulging sensitive information or clicking on malicious links.

10. Legal and Ethical Challenges:

The spread of fake news poses challenges for legal systems in dealing with issues such as defamation and libel. It also raises ethical questions about the responsibilities of platforms and individuals in curbing the dissemination of false information.

Addressing the impact of fake news on societal development requires a multi-faceted approach, involving media literacy education, fact-checking initiatives, responsible journalism, and effective regulation of online platforms. It's crucial for individuals to critically evaluate information and for societies to foster an environment where accurate and reliable information is valued.

Empirical Review

Wilson and Umar (2019) carried out a study on the effect of fake news on Nigeria's democracy within the premise of freedom of expression. The study was anchored on four objectives to find out the rate of the spread of fake news among Nigerians on both social and conventional media. The researchers made use of survey research design to achieve the aims of the study. The researchers also made use of the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection.

The result of the study revealed that despite the awareness of fake news among the respondents, there is limited alertness with regard to sensitivity of verifying information before sharing. The study discovers that politics and crisis related issues were the dominant areas where fake news thrive the most. Further revelations demonstrated that respondents had negative perception about the extent to which fake news can affect democracy and democratic system of governance in Nigeria. The researchers concluded by recommending that awareness should be created so as to enlighten people who use the social media to avoid spreading unverified information.

In a study conducted by Agbaje and Popoola (2020) titled Fake news, misinformation, and disinformation in Nigeria: Mapping the state of the art in Journal of Asian and African Studies, Agbaje and Popoola (2020) provide an insightful overview of the current state of fake news in Nigeria. They highlight the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation in the country and discuss the impact of fake news on societal development. The authors emphasise the need for media literacy programmes and effective regulatory measures to combat the spread of false information.

Ogwezzy (2021) examines the implications of fake news on national development and security in Nigeria. The author discusses how fake news can fuel ethnic and religious tensions, exacerbate conflicts, and hinder socio-economic progress. The study emphasizes the importance of promoting media literacy, strengthening legal frameworks, and enhancing the capacity of regulatory institutions to address this issue effectively.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative method using a survey design to describe and predict the situation in question. The population includes all 524,400 residents of Yenagoa Town, based on projections from the National Bureau of Statistics for the 2022 national census. Given practical limitations, a sample size of 400 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. Convenience sampling was used to select participants due to their accessibility.

Primary data were collected through copies of questionnaire administered to respondents, while secondary data were sourced from various publications. The questionnaire, divided into sections for personal data and research questions, facilitated data collection. All collected data were quantitatively analysed, with results presented in tables using simple percentage calculations to illustrate the frequency of variables. Copies of the questionnaire were administered both physically and online by the researchers to the respondents. Out of four hundred (400) copies administered, three hundred (75%) were duly completed and retrieved. Obtained data were presented and analysed in tables and percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Familiarity with the term "fake news"

Variables	Frequencies	Percentage
Very familiar	220	73.33%
Somewhat familiar	50	16.67
Not familiar at all	30	10
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 reveals that over 200 (73.33%) respondents are very familiar with the word fake news.

Table 2: Opinions on the Most Significant Implications of Fake News on Societal Development in Nigeria.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Erosion of trust and social cohesion	100	33.3
Political manipulation and division	60	20
Media credibility	80	26.7
Information literacy	40	13.3
Technology and digital literacy	20	6.7

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Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 reveals that Erosion of trust and social Cohesion are the most significant implication of fake news on the socieity.

Table 3: Opinion on the Social Media Platforms That Are Most Commonly Used For Disseminating Fake News among Yenagoa Residents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	60	20
WhatsApp	150	50
Twitter	30	10
Instagram	40	13.33
YouTube	20	6.67
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 reveals that WhatsApp is the most commonly used social media platform for the dissemination of fake news among Yenagoa residents.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed important insights into the respondents' awareness and engagement with the term "fake news." A significant portion, constituting 73.33% respondents, demonstrated a high level of familiarity with fake news. This suggests that a considerable segment of the population is well-informed about the existence and prevalence of misinformation in various forms. This finding underscores the importance of targeted awareness campaigns and educational interventions to address misinformation in Yenagoa. While a substantial number is well-informed, there is still a segment that could benefit from efforts to enhance their understanding of fake news.

Findings reveal that a large group comprising 33.3% of the respondents identified that erosion trust and its impact on social cohesion is the most significant implication of fake news. It buttresses Guanah's (2024) position that social media are prone to spreading fake news and yellow journalism. This finding suggests a widespread concern about the potential damage misinformation can inflict on the fabric of trust within society. The erosion of trust can lead to heightened social tension and a breakdown of community bonds.

Thirdly, it was revealed that WhatsApp is the most popular social media platform for the dissemination of fake news and information with 50% respondents indicating its use. This finding aligns with the global trend of WhatsApp being a primary source of information due to its ease of use and widespread adoption. WhatsApp's private group features and ease of forwarding messages make it susceptible to the rapid spread of misinformation.

Conclusion

The implications of fake news on societal development in Nigeria are profound and multifaceted. This research paper has highlighted the detrimental effects of misinformation on various aspects of Nigerian society, including politics, economy, public health, and social cohesion. The findings underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to combat fake news and its damaging consequences.

The study revealed that fake news can manipulate public opinion, disrupt democratic processes, and undermine trust in political institutions. It can also hinder economic growth, damage business reputations, and impede foreign investments. Furthermore, fake news poses significant challenges to public health by spreading misinformation during disease outbreaks and eroding trust in healthcare systems. Socio-culturally, fake news exacerbates ethnic and religious tensions, fragment social cohesion, and undermine national unity.

Recommendations

1. Deliberate attempts must be made to educate the populace on the dangers of spreading fake news because of its negative repercussions. There should be media literacy programmes at educational institutions and within the broader community. These programmes should focus on critical thinking skills, fact-checking techniques, and media literacy to empower individuals to discern and verify information sources.
2. Government should collaborate with media organisations like the Nigerian Union of Journalists as well as the ministries of information, civil society groups, and technology companies like Meta to find way to mitigate the effects of the negative implications of fake news on the society. Robust fact-checking initiatives should be established. These initiatives should involve verification processes, the identification of false narratives, and the dissemination of accurate information to counteract fake news.

3. Government can set up special bureaus to monitor the activities of social media platforms, like WhatsApp, to curtail the spread and fast circulation of fake news. This will make these social media platforms to prioritise responsible services by adhering to ethical standards, verifying information before publication, and avoiding sensationalism or the amplification of false narratives.

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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION OF TREASURY SINGLE ACCOUNT AND ITS IMPACT ON FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF FEDERAL TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN KOGI STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy implementation on financial accountability, with a focus on financial transparency in federal tertiary institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. The research employed a cross-sectional survey design, targeting staff involved in TSA operations across three institutions: Federal University Lokoja, Federal Polytechnic Idah, and Federal College of Education Okene. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected, comprising junior staff (35%), senior staff (53%), and management staff (12%). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and responses were analyzed using frequency count, percentage analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis to test the hypothesis. Hinged on Incremental theory, Key findings revealed that TSA policy implementation significantly enhanced financial transparency, as evidenced by a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.837$). Specifically, 62% of respondents acknowledged improved openness in financial operations, 74% reported reduced hidden charges and unauthorized deductions, and 56% observed increased public trust in financial reporting. However, challenges such as inadequate training (34% dissatisfaction) and lingering public distrust (44% neutral or opposing views) were identified. The study concluded that TSA has positively

influenced financial transparency in the institutions but highlighted the need for improved training and public communication. Recommendations included launching targeted awareness campaigns, simplifying financial reports for stakeholders, and holding open forums to address concerns and build public confidence in TSA's effectiveness.

Keywords: Treasury Single Account; Financial Accountability; Financial Transparency; Policy Implementation; Federal Tertiary Institutions

Introduction

Treasury single account (TSA) is a network of subsidiary accounts all linked to a main account such that, transactions are effected in the subsidiary accounts but closing balances on these subsidiary accounts are transferred to the main account, at the end of each business day. It is a public accounting system under which all government revenue, receipts and income are collected into one single account, usually maintained by the country's Central Bank and all payments done through this Account, Chukwu (2015).

Treasury single account is a policy recommended by World Bank to promote accountability and transparency in the management of public funds. Nigeria as a country has been battling with incessant cases of financial embezzlement, inadequate accounting and auditing of financial records, weak or lack of financial information which have increasingly led to adverse impact on decisions making with a serious impediment to the control of leakages from revenue generating Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The implementation of TSA in Nigeria has helped, to some extent in curtailing financial mismanagement. According to CBN Circular (2018), TSA implementation saves ₦24.7 billion monthly and enhances government revenue collection. Mboto, Offiong and Ibor (2017) opined that there is efficient use of public fund and profit-yielding public investment in the development sectors of the country as a result of constrained use of public fund. Nwankwo (2017) observed that not less than 10,000 accounts being operated by some 900 MDAs were closed. Treasury single account has been of immense benefit to the government by providing appropriate information on the government cash resources, complete budget appropriation and control, reduced fees and transaction costs, improved quality of bank reconciliation and government fiscal data, enabling efficient cash management, easy and efficient payment mechanisms, reduced liquidity needs of the government (World Bank, 2014).

Financial Accountability according to Ejere (2013) is the obligation of the administrators to give a satisfactory account of their performance and the manner in which they have exercised powers conferred on them. Accountability entails revealing, explaining and justifying what one does, or has done, or how one discharges one's responsibilities. It is a concept that is deeply rooted in political power and democracy linking the electorates with the executive to whom enormous power is entrusted. Accountability affords reliable accounting and financial reporting and allocation of resources. Inadequate accounting and reporting may however lead corruption in the public sector. Corruption on the other hand has been a major factor that has been alleged to slow down the actualization of government policies and has also been said to lead to slow infrastructural development due to diversion of fund by public officers to personal pocket.

The need to ensure Financial Accountability in Nigeria's Public Sector motivated the introduction and implementation of the Treasury Single Account policy by President Muhammadu Buhari (Kanu, 2016). In Nigeria, the rate of financial recklessness or corruption has remained so high. Funds that were made to go into government treasury which should have been used for developmental purposes are diverted into personal accounts leading to deprivation of basic needs of life to the people, poverty, unemployment (Gberevbie & lyoha, 2007) and underdevelopment. These are some of the effects of poor accountability and transparency in the Nigerian public service. The EFCC report of 2012 shows that embezzlement through diversion of public funds between 1999 and 2012 amounted to NI.4 trillion. This could have been minimized if there were a single treasury account in government (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017).

Allison & Ndukwe (2021) studied Public Accountability: The Role of Treasury Single Account (TSA). The study evaluated the contribution made by Nigeria's Treasury Single Account implementation to attaining public accountability in the country's public sectors. Ivungu, et al. (2020) examined the effect of treasury single account (TSA) on corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector, The study was motivated by how much TSA has impacted Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI).

Empirical Studies on TSA have continued to assess the impact of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) on public finance in Nigeria, yet with limited focus on federal tertiary institutions. They did not explore how TSA affects specific dimensions of Financial Accountability such as Financial Transparency in tertiary institutions. This clearly underscores a gap in the literature, which this present study aims to fill. The following research question guided the study: "To what extent does Policy

Implementation of Treasury Single Account enhance Financial Transparency of Federal Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State?"

Objectives of the Research

The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of Treasury Single Account on Financial Accountability. Specifically, the study examined the:

- Impact of Treasury Single Account Policy Implementation on Financial Transparency of Federal Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State.

Research Hypotheses

H₀:1 Policy Implementation of TSA has no effect on Financial Transparency of Federal Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State.

Literature Review

Concept of Treasury Single Account

Treasury single account is a policy of cash management that aggregates all government accounts into a unified structure to show a view of all revenues and expenditures of the government (Abdullahi, Canice & Yahaya, 2019). TSA implementation entails that all government cash balances are directed into centralized bank accounts into which all government revenues flows and from which all payments are made, thus portraying a consolidated view of its cash position at the end of each day.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) portrays TSA as a public accounting arrangement in which all government revenues, receipts and income are collected into one single account; keep by the Central Bank of the country through which all payments are made. According to Muhakanizi (2014), setting up TSA, limiting cash withdrawal and advances by public servants, closure of all redundant bank accounts and improving budget implementation, monitoring and reporting while strengthening its transparency are steps to effective public financial management.

As a public accounting system, the primary aim of TSA is to ensure accountability of government revenue, enhance transparency and avoid misappropriation of funds. It is to ensure that transparency on unspent budgetary allocations is carried forward automatically to another year. In year 2012, government ran a pilot scheme for a single account using 217 ministries, departments and agencies as a test case; the exercise saved Nigeria about N500 billion in frivolous spending. The success of the pilot scheme motivated the government to implement fully TSA, leading to the

directive to banks to provide the technology platform that will help to accommodate the TSA (Igbekoyi & Agbale, 2017).

Policy Implementation

TSA policy implementation refers to the extent and quality of efforts by government institutions to operationalize and enforce the Treasury Single Account policy, translating its theoretical design into concrete administrative and financial practices. It is crucial in determining TSA effectiveness in curbing public sector inefficiency and promoting transparency. In the context of Nigeria, the implementation of TSA was formally initiated by the Federal Government in 2012 but gained full momentum in 2015 under the Buhari administration, with the aim of consolidating all government revenues into a unified account at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). According to Adeolu (2015), the policy was introduced as a response to persistent revenue leakages, corruption, and fragmented public financial management systems. Effective implementation involves a full migration of MDAs to the TSA platform, comprehensive ICT deployment, capacity-building initiatives, stakeholder sensitization, and continuous monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. TSA policy implementation captures the depth, breadth, and compliance level of executing the TSA framework across government units. The extent to which this is successfully achieved determines the degree of accountability, transparency, and fiscal prudence realized from the reform. Thus, robust implementation remains a linchpin for achieving the overarching goals of the Treasury Single Account in Nigeria.

Concept of Financial Accountability

Accountability is a process where a person or group of people are required to present an account of their activities and the way in which they have or have not discharged their duties. By inference, a person is held accountable for not only his/her actions but also inactions. In the words of Laxmikanth (2006) the concept of accountability connotes the obligation of the administrators to give a satisfactory account of their performance and the manner in which they have exercised powers conferred on them. Nkoma (2004), maintained that public accountability is the requirement that those who hold public trust should account for the use of that trust to citizens or their representatives.

Financial Accountability demands the public officers to be responsible, responsive, reasonable and answerable to people so as to ensure that the public office is used for the purpose they were made for. Put differently, it entails that the holders of public should subject themselves to the public scrutiny, openness and probity (Oruebor &

Okoroafor, 2013,). It can then be said that Financial Accountability showcase a system of qualities. These qualities are what give identity and service to government service (Ezeanyika & Oporum, 2006 cited in Alo, 2017). They are the virtues that drive effectiveness and efficiency in the management of public institutions, prudent and judicious management of public funds. They ensure that the public officials act in the best interest of the general good.

Financial Transparency

Financial transparency in the public sector refers to the extent to which government financial activities, processes, and decisions are openly disclosed, readily accessible, and clearly understandable to relevant stakeholders, including citizens, oversight institutions, and development partners. It implies that public financial information is not only available but is presented in a manner that promotes accountability and discourages corruption or fiscal mismanagement.

According to Adeolu (2015), financial transparency ensures that stakeholders are aware of how public funds are collected, managed, and expended, thereby facilitating informed decision-making and trust in public institutions. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017) also highlights transparency as a key pillar in ensuring public sector integrity, arguing that when financial operations are open to scrutiny, there is a lower risk of misuse of funds. In the Nigerian context, before the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA), the public financial system was plagued by opacity due to fragmented banking arrangements, lack of coordinated reporting, and non-disclosure of revenues generated by MDAs. These challenges contributed to inefficiencies and limited the government's ability to monitor public resources effectively.

The move toward adopting international best practices in financial disclosure, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), has also been reinforced through TSA. By standardizing financial reporting and making fiscal data more accessible, Nigeria has improved its scores on global transparency indices, signaling progress toward a more open and accountable government. Akintoye and Ikubolajeh (2021) affirm that TSA aligns with global trends aimed at increasing the transparency of public financial systems, particularly in developing economies.

In conclusion, TSA has proven to be a powerful tool in promoting financial transparency within the Nigerian public sector. It contributes significantly to a culture of openness and accountability.

Theoretical Review

This study was based on the Incremental Theory to form sound foundation to substantiate Policy Implementation of Treasury Single Account and its impact on Financial Accountability.

Charles Lindbloom is associated with incremental theory. According to Lindbloom and Braybook (cited in Adebayo 1983), “a policy is directed at a problem. It is tried, altered, tried again and so forth. It allows one upon the other in the solution to a given problem”. This, therefore, suggests that every policy requires a continuous improvement which is directed towards solving a problem. Eme et al (2015b) remark that incrementalism refers to the method of change by which many small policy changes are enacted over time in order to create a larger broad based policy change. It does not focus on a comprehensive solution but rather on remedial policies, that is; an improvement on the previous positions. Incrementalism is a theory developed out of the realization that truly rational decision making is practically impossible given the complexity of the policy environment. That is not to say that policy actors do not have the intent to be rational: their decisions are goal orientated and there are processes followed to achieve those goals. But there are many factors that work against scientific rationalism (Heys,2009).

Incremental Theory is particularly relevant to this study because governance and financial management are continuous processes that require ongoing improvements. As Charles Lindblom’s concept of "Muddling Through" suggests, policy reforms are often implemented in small, calculated steps rather than through radical shifts. The TSA reform exemplifies this approach, as its success depended on sustained implementation, periodic refinements, and adaptation to Nigeria’s complex economic landscape.

Empirical Review

Ivungu, et al. (2020) examined the effect of treasury single account (TSA) on corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector. This study was motivated by how much TSA has impacted Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI). Transparency International provided data from 2012 to 2014 (before to TSA adoption) and 2016 to 2018 (after TSA adoption), with 2015 serving as the base year. Descriptive statistics and paired samples t-test statistics were used to assess the data. According to the study's findings, there is no appreciable difference in the corruption perception index's (CPI) mean before and after Nigeria adopted the TSA.

Igbekoyi and Agbaje (2017) assessed the implication of treasury single account adoption on the public sector accountability and transparency. The study specifically looked at how TSA affected financial leakages, administration of public monies transparency, and financial appropriation. The study collected information from 10 MDAs in Nigeria on 100 respondents. ANOVA was used to examine the study's data. According to the analysis, the TSA significantly reduced money leakages and financial embezzlement. The study also discovered that while TSA has a negligible impact on budgetary control, it significantly affects accountability and transparency through consolidated income received and centralized revenue pool.

Fatile and Adejuwon (2017) examined the implication of Treasury Single Account on cost of governance with specific reference to Buhari civilian administration in Nigeria. The study was qualitative in nature, relying on secondary sources. It was anchored on Stakeholder Theory. The study found that increase in the cost of governance is not basically as a result of over-bloated bureaucracy rather corruption can be considered major cause of the increase. TSA therefore is primarily to ensure accountability of government revenue, enhance transparency and avoid misappropriation of public funds.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between Treasury Single Account implementation and financial accountability in Nigeria's public tertiary institutions. The study's sample comprised 100 respondents drawn from staff involved in Treasury Single Account (TSA) operations across three federal tertiary institutions in Kogi State: Federal University Lokoja, Federal Polytechnic Idah and Federal College of Education Okene. The primary instrument for data collection in this study was the structured questionnaire, responses were analyzed using frequency count and percentage analysis.

The model to be used to achieve the objective of the study is specified as follows;

$$FT = f(POI + FS)$$

Specified econometrically as;

$$FT_{it} = \beta_1 POI_{it} + \beta_2 FS_{it} + \epsilon_{it}$$

Where:

FT_{it} = Financial Transparency at individual I and time t

POI_{it} = Policy Implementation at individual I and time t

β_1 - β_3 = Coefficients measuring the influence of each IFRS component

ϵ_{it} = Error term representing other unexplained influences FS_{it} = Financial Structure (control variable)

The objective was tested using Pearson Correlation Analysis Technique

RESULTS

Table 4.1 Respondents Cadre

Cadre	Frequency	Percentage
Junior Staff	35	35%
Senior Staff	53	53%
Management staff	12	12%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.1 above shows that 35 (35%) of the respondents are in the junior staff cadre, 53 (53%) are in the senior staff cadre, while 12 (12%) occupy management positions. The distribution indicates that the majority of respondents belongs to higher cadre in the tier of public tertiary institutions covered in this study, which is suggestive of the fact that the analyses, judgement and inference drawn from this study is based largely on the opinion of personnel with clear knowledge and experience in implementing or observing TSA practices within the Nigerian Public Tertiary Institutions.

Table 4.2 To what extent does TSA Policy Implementation enhance Financial Transparency of Federal Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State?

S/N	Questions	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	There are adequate trainings for public servants on TSA policy implementation.	12(12%)	40(40%)	14(14%)	34(34%)	0(0%)
2	TSA implementation has improved openness in the financial operations of Public Tertiary Institutions.	14(14%)	48(48%)	26(26%)	10(10%)	2(2%)

3	There is greater public trust in financial reporting since the implementation of TSA.	20(20%)	36(36%)	10(10%)	30(30%)	4(4%)
4	The policy implementation of TSA reduces hidden charges and unauthorized deductions.	18(18%)	56(56%)	6(6%)	14(14%)	6(6%)
5	Stakeholders are more informed about public sector spending under TSA.	14(14%)	40(40%)	12(12%)	26(26%)	8(8%)

SOURCE: Field Survey (2025)

Table 4.2 highlights the perceptions of staff regarding the effectiveness of TSA Policy Implementation in enhancing financial transparency among federal tertiary institutions in Kogi State. 52% of respondents (12% strongly agreed, 40% agreed) confirmed that there are adequate trainings for public servants on TSA policy implementation across tertiary institutions, while an alarming 48% expressed disagreement or uncertainty. 62% (14% strongly agreed, 48% agreed) affirmed that TSA implementation has improved openness in the financial operations of tertiary institutions, though 12% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 26% were undecided. 56% (20% strongly agreed, 36% agreed) acknowledged that there is greater public trust in financial reporting since the implementation of TSA, while 44% held neutral or opposing views. A substantial 74% (18% strongly agreed, 56% agreed) supported the claim that policy implementation of TSA reduces hidden charges and unauthorized deductions. while 20% believed otherwise. 54% (14% strongly agreed, 40% agreed) that Stakeholders are more informed about public sector spending under TSA while a substantial 46% do strongly disagreed or stayed neutral. Overall, the responses suggest that TSA's Policy implementation did improved openness of financial operations within federal tertiary institutions within Kogi State but still facing critical implementation challenges.

Test of Hypotheses: H₀:1 "Policy Implementation of TSA has no effect on Financial Transparency of Federal Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State"

Table 4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis Result

Variables	r calculated	r critical
Policy Implementation and Financial Transparency	0.837	0.196

SOURCE: Authors Computation (2025)

$r \text{ calculated} > r \text{ critical}$ therefore we reject the Null Hypotheses

Discussion of Findings

The study found that TSA Policy Implementation significantly affects financial transparency, as shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.837. While 62% of respondents acknowledged improved financial openness, 34% expressed dissatisfaction with the adequacy of training provided to public servants on TSA processes. This reveals a critical implementation challenge: without proper training and capacity building, the policy's full potential for enhancing transparency may not be realized. Additionally, only 56% of respondents believed that public trust in financial transparency did increase, suggesting that transparency gains have not yet fully translated into broader public confidence.

Conclusion

The study concluded that TSA Policy Implementation has significantly enhanced financial transparency in federal tertiary institutions within Kogi State. The findings revealed that Policy Implementation of TSA did lead to increase in the openness of financial operations, reduces hidden charges and unauthorized deductions and provision of relative adequate trainings for public servants on TSA policy implementation—all of which are critical for financial transparency within these institutions. However, while policy implementation of TSA enhanced financial transparency, the greater public still lack trust in financial transparency of the studied institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that:

Federal Tertiary Institutions should launch a clear communication campaign using simple language and multiple channels – including radio, social media, and community meetings. Regular reports showing how public funds are managed through TSA, presented in easy-to-read formats, would help demonstrate its benefits. Open forums where officials answer questions and address concerns

directly would build confidence. When people see how TSA prevents corruption and ensures proper use of public money, they'll be more likely to support it.

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GLOBALIZATION, GOVERNANCE, EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This paper explores the multifaceted interplay between globalization, governance, and educational management and development in Nigeria. It aims to dissect the current issues arising from this interaction, identify the inherent challenges that impede progress, and highlight potential prospects for sustainable educational growth. The transformative impact of globalization on national education systems, the critical role of effective governance in steering educational reforms, and the imperative for robust educational management practices in fostering development are critically examined. The paper argues that existing problems, such as funding inadequacies, policy implementation gaps, and curriculum relevance, are often exacerbated by the complex dynamics of globalization and deficiencies in governance. Concurrently, it highlights opportunities for leveraging global best practices, strengthening institutional frameworks, and promoting innovation to achieve Nigeria's educational development goals. Through a comprehensive review of literature and a critical discussion, this paper underscores the urgent need for strategic interventions in governance and educational management to harness the benefits of globalization for national development.

Keywords: *Globalization, Governance, Educational Management, Development, Issues, Challenges, Prospects*

Introduction

Developing nations, including Nigeria, find themselves at the nexus of global forces, experiencing both immense opportunities and formidable challenges in their pursuit of sustainable development. As a country with a burgeoning youth population and an urgent need for robust human capital development, Nigeria's capacity to navigate

the complexities of globalization, coupled with effective governance and astute educational management, is paramount to its socio-economic progress.

This paper argues that the success of Nigeria's educational sector, and by extension its national development trajectory, is inextricably linked to how effectively it responds to the pressures and potentials of globalization while simultaneously strengthening its internal governance mechanisms and refining its educational management practices. The imperative to address these interconnected themes has become increasingly critical as global trends continue to impact domestic policies and educational outcome. Historically, education in Nigeria has faced numerous hurdles, ranging from inadequate funding and infrastructural deficits to issues of access and quality (Okafor, 2018). The advent of intensified globalization has added new layers of complexity, demanding a re-evaluation of traditional educational paradigms and a proactive approach to reform.

Against this backdrop, this study delves into the intricate relationship between globalization, governance, and educational management and development in Nigeria. It aims to dissect the prevailing issues that arise from this interaction, identify the inherent challenges that consistently impede progress, and illuminate potential prospects for fostering genuinely sustainable educational growth. By exploring the multifaceted influence of global trends on local educational contexts and scrutinizing the critical role of governance in steering the sector, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current landscape. Ultimately, it endeavors to contribute to a deeper understanding of how Nigeria can leverage the opportunities presented by a globalized world, mitigate its risks, and establish robust educational frameworks to achieve its national development aspirations.

Defining Globalization in the Educational Context

Globalization, a multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon, refers to the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of economies, cultures, and populations worldwide (Held & McGrew, 2013). In the educational context, globalization transcends simple cross-border interactions; it fundamentally reshapes national educational systems, policies, and practices through economic, cultural, and technological dimensions.

From an economic dimension, globalization drives an intensified demand for a globally competitive workforce. This pressure compels national education systems, including Nigeria's, to align curricula with international labor market needs, often emphasizing skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as digital literacy and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2024a). The pursuit of global competitiveness can lead to the adoption of international

benchmarks and qualifications, influencing pedagogical approaches and assessment methods (UNESCO, 2022). Furthermore, economic globalization facilitates the cross-border movement of educational services, leading to the rise of international schools, foreign university branches, and online learning platforms, which create both opportunities and competition for domestic institutions.

The cultural dimension of globalization in education is characterized by the increased flow of ideas, values, and cultural products across borders. This can lead to a homogenization of educational content and practices, often reflecting Western models, potentially at the expense of local cultural relevance and indigenous knowledge systems (Altbach, 2016; Obasi, 2019). Conversely, it can also foster cultural exchange, promoting multicultural understanding and global citizenship through curricula that emphasize diversity and interdependency. The tension between global influences and the preservation of local identity is a significant aspect of this dimension, necessitating a balance between universal values and context-specific needs.

Technologically, globalization has profoundly transformed educational delivery and access. The rapid advancements in information and communication technologies (ICT) have facilitated e-learning, virtual classrooms, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and increased access to global knowledge resources (NCC, 2025; UNL Digital Commons, 2025). This dimension holds immense potential for bridging educational gaps, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, by extending reach to remote areas and providing opportunities for lifelong learning. However, it also highlights the persistent digital divide, where unequal access to technology and internet infrastructure can exacerbate existing inequalities (Adekunle & Omotayo, 2020).

The concept of globalization emerges as a crucial lens through which to understand globalization's nuanced impact on education. Globalization refers to the dynamic interplay between global forces and local contexts, where global ideas are adapted and transformed to fit specific local realities, and local issues gain global resonance (Smith & Johnson, 2018). In education, globalization suggests that while global trends influence policies and practices, their implementation is mediated by local cultural, socio-economic, and political factors. This approach argues against a simple imposition of global models, emphasizing the necessity of local adaptation and the integration of indigenous knowledge to ensure relevance and sustainability in educational development (Aborisade, 2017). For Nigeria, understanding globalization is vital for designing educational reforms that leverage global opportunities without sacrificing local identity and context.

Conceptualizing Educational Management

Educational management, as a distinct field of study and practice, involves the application of management principles and theories to educational institutions and systems (Bush & Bell, 2019). It encompasses a range of activities aimed at ensuring the effective and efficient utilization of human, financial, and material resources to achieve predetermined educational goals. The core functions of educational management are commonly categorized into planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Planning in educational management involves setting objectives, determining the necessary resources, and formulating strategies to achieve desired educational outcomes (Adesina, 2015). This includes strategic planning for the entire educational system, curriculum planning at institutional levels, and daily operational planning for classroom activities. Effective planning considers both the immediate needs of students and teachers, and the broader societal demands, often influenced by global trends and national development goals. For instance, planning for the integration of digital learning tools requires foresight regarding infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum adaptation (Adeyemi & Adu, 2019).

Organizing refers to the process of structuring human and non-human resources within an educational institution or system to facilitate the achievement of planned objectives. This involves defining roles and responsibilities, delegating authority, establishing communication channels, and coordinating various departments or units (Ubogu, 2018). In the Nigerian context, this spans from the organizational structure of the Federal Ministry of Education down to the internal organization of individual schools, defining how principals, teachers, and administrative staff interact to deliver education. Efficient organizing ensures that resources are allocated optimally and tasks are performed coherently.

Leading, a crucial management function, involves influencing and motivating individuals and groups within the educational setting to work enthusiastically towards shared goals. This includes providing clear vision, fostering a positive school culture, promoting teacher professional development, and engaging stakeholders (Bush & Bell, 2019). Effective educational leadership goes beyond mere administration; it inspires learning, innovation, and continuous improvement among both staff and students. The quality of leadership at all levels, from a classroom teacher to a university vice-chancellor, significantly impacts educational outcomes.

Understanding Governance in Education

Governance in education refers to the system of rules, institutions, and processes through which authority is exercised, decisions are made, and educational resources are allocated and managed (Rhodes, 2017; World Bank, 2024b). It encompasses the relationships between various stakeholders – government, private sector, civil society, parents, teachers, and students and how these relationships influence the direction, quality, and equity of an educational system. Good governance in education is characterized by several key principles that are essential for fostering development.

Accountability is a cornerstone of good governance, requiring educational institutions and officials to be answerable for their actions and decisions to various stakeholders (UNESCO, 2017). This includes accountability for student performance, financial management, teacher quality, and adherence to established policies. In the Nigerian context, the lack of robust accountability mechanisms has often been cited as a major contributor to poor educational outcomes and mismanagement of resources (African Scholar Publications, 2024; BudgIT, 2024). Effective accountability frameworks involve clear performance indicators, regular reporting, and consequences for non-compliance.

Transparency dictates that decision-making processes, resource allocation, and performance data should be open and accessible to all relevant stakeholders (Public Administration and Civil Service Management, 2024). This principle aims to minimize opportunities for corruption, foster trust, and enable informed participation. For instance, publicizing school budgets, teacher recruitment processes, and examination results can significantly enhance transparency within the education sector. The absence of transparency often breeds distrust and speculation, hindering effective oversight.

Participation refers to the meaningful involvement of diverse stakeholders in educational decision-making and oversight. This includes parents, community leaders, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, and teachers in processes ranging from policy formulation to school-level management (ResearchGate, 2023; Ukah, 2024). Participatory governance ensures that educational interventions are relevant to local needs and that communities take ownership of their schools. It counters the traditional top-down approach often criticized in Nigeria, where centralized decisions may not align with local realities.

The Rule of Law is fundamental to governance, asserting that all individuals and institutions, including those in the education sector, are subject to and accountable under a stable and equitable legal framework (Transparency International, 2023).

This ensures fairness, predictability, and protection against arbitrary decisions or corrupt practices. In education, the rule of law underpins contract enforcement, fair recruitment processes, equitable access to resources, and adherence to quality standards. Where the rule of law is weak, educational management often suffers from impunity, favouritism, and a breakdown of order.

Theoretical Guide to Educational Development

Systems Theory provides a holistic lens, viewing education as a complex and dynamic system comprising interconnected parts that interact with each other and with the external environment. In this framework, an educational system includes inputs (students, teachers, resources, policies), processes (teaching, learning, administration, governance), outputs (graduates, research, services), and feedback loops (evaluation, policy adjustments). Changes in one part of the system inevitably affect others. For instance, issues of poor governance (a process input) can directly impact resource allocation (input), teacher quality (input), and ultimately student outcomes (output). The environment, which includes globalization, economic conditions, and socio-political stability, constantly influences the system (NCC, 2025). Applying systems theory to Nigeria's education highlights the need for integrated solutions that consider all components and their interactions, rather than addressing problems in isolation. It emphasizes that a piecemeal approach to educational reform is unlikely to yield sustainable development.

Globalization's Impact on Nigeria's Educational Policies and Practices

Globalization has profoundly reshaped national educational landscapes, and Nigeria is no exception. Its pervasive influence is evident across various facets of the country's educational system, from the design of curricula to the internationalization of its higher education sector and the significant role played by external donor agencies. This paper examines these impacts, highlighting both the opportunities embraced and the challenges encountered in adapting to a globally interconnected world.

Influence on Curriculum Design and Content

The forces of globalization have exerted considerable pressure on Nigeria to reform its educational curriculum, aiming to produce graduates who are competitive in the global knowledge economy. This influence is most discernible in the push for the adoption of international curricula and standards, particularly concerning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), digital literacy, and entrepreneurship education (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2024a). Nigeria's successive educational reforms, such as the introduction of a new basic education curriculum, have increasingly prioritized these areas to equip learners with skills deemed essential for 21st-century global citizenship and employability. For instance, the

emphasis on entrepreneurial skills development in tertiary institutions reflects a global trend to foster job creators rather than job seekers, a crucial strategy given Nigeria's youth unemployment challenge. Similarly, the integration of digital literacy across various levels of education is a direct response to the global demand for technology-proficient individuals (Adekunle & Omotayo, 2020).

The impact of globalization also extends to language policies and multicultural education. While English, as a global lingua franca, maintains its dominant position in Nigeria's education system, facilitating international communication and access to global knowledge, there is a nuanced push for multicultural education and the preservation of indigenous languages (UNESCO, 2022). The global discourse on cultural diversity and inclusion has prompted discussions on how to balance the necessity of English for global engagement with the importance of indigenous languages for cultural identity, local development, and effective basic education (Ayodele & Olaniyi, 2017). Educational policies increasingly acknowledge the need to foster respect for diverse cultures, both within Nigeria and globally, often incorporating themes of global citizenship, human rights, and environmental sustainability into curricular.

However, the challenges of adapting global curricula to local Nigerian contexts are substantial. Despite the conceptual alignment with international standards, practical implementation often faces significant hurdles (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2020). These challenges include inadequate funding, which limits the provision of necessary resources like well-equipped laboratories, digital infrastructure, and up-to-date textbooks (Punch Newspapers, 2025). Teacher capacity is another critical barrier; many teachers lack the requisite training and continuous professional development to effectively deliver the new, globally-oriented curricula, especially in STEM and digital skills (Olorunsola & Obiyemi, 2019). Furthermore, the sheer size and diversity of Nigeria mean that a one-size-fits-all global curriculum may not always be culturally or contextually relevant to all regions, leading to a disconnect between classroom learning and the immediate realities of students. The tension between achieving global competitiveness and maintaining local relevance remains a central challenge for curriculum designers in Nigeria.

Internationalization of Higher Education

The global interconnectedness fueled by globalization has profoundly impacted Nigeria's higher education sector, leading to increased internationalization. This is most evident in the significant growth of foreign university affiliations and online programs. Nigerian universities increasingly seek partnerships with institutions in Europe, North America, and Asia for joint research, student and faculty exchange

programs, and even dual-degree offerings (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2018). These affiliations aim to enhance the quality of education, expand academic networks, and provide students with globally recognized qualifications. Furthermore, the proliferation of online degree programs offered by international universities has created new avenues for Nigerian students to access higher education without physically migrating, though this also introduces challenges related to quality assurance and recognition of foreign online credentials (Okoro & Udo, 2020).

A critical implication of this internationalization is the phenomenon of brain drain, which poses significant challenges for Nigerian academia. The lure of better funding for research, superior infrastructure, higher remuneration, and more stable working conditions in developed countries consistently draws away highly skilled Nigerian academics, researchers, and professionals (Nweke & Eze, 2021). This continuous outflow of intellectual capital severely depletes the capacity of Nigerian universities to conduct cutting-edge research, mentor future generations, and contribute effectively to national development. While there is also a less pronounced phenomenon of brain gain, where some Nigerian professionals return with international experience, its scale is often insufficient to offset the losses from brain drain, largely due to persistent local challenges like inadequate research grants, poor facilities, and systemic instability (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2024).

The impact of internationalization on research collaboration and knowledge transfer is dual-edged. On one hand, global partnerships offer invaluable opportunities for Nigerian scholars to engage in collaborative research projects, access advanced methodologies, and disseminate their findings to a wider international audience, thereby contributing to global knowledge production (Ajayi & Musa, 2019). These collaborations can facilitate knowledge transfer, helping to build research capacity within Nigerian institutions. On the other hand, the nature of some collaborations might inadvertently reinforce a dependency model, where Nigerian researchers serve primarily as data collectors for externally driven research agendas, rather than leading their own independent research initiatives (Federal University of Kashere, 2014). Ensuring equitable partnerships and genuine mutual benefit remains a crucial aspect of leveraging internationalization for sustainable higher education development in Nigeria.

Donor Agency Influence and Development Aid

International donor agencies play a substantial role in shaping Nigeria's educational policies and practices, particularly through the provision of financial aid, technical assistance, and policy advice. Organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and various bilateral agencies (e.g., UK's FCDO, USAID) have been

active in the Nigerian education sector, often channeling funds and expertise towards specific developmental goals (World Bank, 2024b; UNICEF, 2023).

The conditionalities and priorities set by these international organizations significantly influence Nigeria's educational agenda. For example, the World Bank's interventions often focus on basic education, teacher training, and system strengthening, often tied to loan agreements or grants that stipulate particular reforms, monitoring frameworks, and accountability measures (World Bank, 2024c). UNICEF's efforts frequently target issues such as girl-child education, access for out-of-school children, and early childhood development, influencing resource allocation and programmatic emphasis at state and local levels (UNICEF, 2023). Similarly, UNESCO often promotes quality education, literacy, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), contributing to curriculum development and capacity building initiatives (UNESCO, 2022). These conditionalities, while aiming to ensure effective use of aid and achieve specific outcomes, can also influence the direction of national policy formulation, sometimes leading to a misalignment with locally defined priorities or long-term indigenous development plans.

The impact on policy formulation and funding allocation within the Nigerian educational sector is therefore considerable. National educational policies and strategic plans are often designed to align with donor priorities to attract much-needed funding (Okwudili & Okorie, 2017). This can lead to a shift in focus towards areas emphasized by donors, potentially at the expense of other critical but less-funded aspects of the educational system. For instance, a strong donor emphasis on basic education might lead to underfunding of the tertiary sector, even when the latter faces severe quality challenges. While donor aid has undoubtedly contributed to progress in certain areas, such as increasing primary school enrollment and constructing facilities, concerns remain regarding the sustainability of these interventions once external funding ceases (Channels Television, 2024a). Furthermore, the reliance on external funding can create a dependency syndrome, where the Nigerian government's capacity to independently fund and manage its educational development is diminished, perpetuating cycles of external reliance rather than fostering self-sufficiency.

Technological Convergence and Digital Divide

Globalization has driven significant technological convergence within the educational sector globally, and Nigeria has actively pursued the adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching, learning, and administration. This includes initiatives to equip schools with computer laboratories, provide digital learning resources, implement e-learning platforms, and integrate

ICT into teacher training programs (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], 2025). Many tertiary institutions have embraced e-portals for admissions and results management, and some are exploring blended learning models that combine traditional classroom instruction with online components. The potential benefits are immense: increased access to global knowledge, diversified learning methodologies, enhanced administrative efficiency, and the development of digital literacy skills essential for the modern workforce (Premium Times, 2024a; UNL Digital Commons, 2025).

However, the promise of technological transformation in Nigeria's education system is significantly hampered by a pervasive digital divide. This divide manifests in several critical ways. Firstly, there is an unequal access to technology between urban and rural areas, and across socio-economic strata (Adekunle & Omotayo, 2020; UNIZIK, 2023). Urban schools and private institutions often have better access to computers, internet connectivity, and digital learning tools compared to their rural counterparts, where basic infrastructure is frequently lacking. Families in lower socio-economic brackets often cannot afford internet subscriptions or personal devices, creating a barrier to participation in digital learning initiatives.

Secondly, the lack of reliable electricity across much of Nigeria, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, severely limits the functionality and sustainability of ICT infrastructure in schools (Rural Electrification Agency [REA], 2023). Even where computers are available, intermittent power supply renders them unusable for extended periods, undermining the investment. Thirdly, there is a significant teacher digital literacy and training gap. Many teachers, particularly older ones, lack the necessary skills and confidence to effectively integrate technology into their pedagogy, making it challenging to leverage digital resources even when available (Olorunsola & Obiyemi, 2019). Without adequate and continuous professional development, technology remains an underutilized asset.

Lastly, the affordability of internet data and devices for both institutions and individuals poses a substantial barrier (NCC, 2025). High costs can make sustained engagement with online resources prohibitive for many. Consequently, this multi-faceted digital divide exacerbates existing educational inequalities, widening the gap between well-resourced and underserved schools, and between students who have digital access and those who do not. Addressing this divide requires comprehensive strategies that combine infrastructure development, digital literacy training, and policy frameworks that promote equitable access to technology across the Nigerian educational landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions above, the following recommendations are crucial for advancing educational management and development in Nigeria:

1. **Strengthen Governance and Policy Implementation:** Prioritize transparent, accountable, and merit-based governance across all educational tiers. Ensure policies are context-specific, adequately funded, and consistently implemented, with robust monitoring and evaluation.
2. **Enhance Sustainable Funding and Financial Integrity:** Increase budgetary allocation to education to meet international benchmarks. Implement innovative funding models (e.g., diaspora contributions, educational bonds) alongside stringent anti-corruption measures and digitalized financial management systems to ensure efficient resource utilization.
3. **Improve Quality and Employability:** Undertake continuous curriculum reform to balance global competitiveness with local relevance, emphasizing STEM, digital literacy, critical thinking, and vocational skills. Invest significantly in teacher training, welfare, and professional development to attract and retain qualified educators.
4. **Promote Equitable Access and Inclusion:** Address geographical, gender, and socio-economic disparities through targeted interventions and inclusive policies. Prioritize providing safe and accessible learning environments, especially in conflict-affected areas, and support education for vulnerable groups.
5. **Leverage Technology and Strategic Partnerships:** Invest in digital infrastructure for all schools, promoting e-learning and adaptive learning tools. Foster genuine Public-Private Partnerships and strategic international collaborations to mobilize resources, share expertise, and drive innovation in educational delivery and management.

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RELIGIOUS CAPITALISM IN AFRICA: ARE WE WITNESSING THE FINAL STAGE

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Abstract

Religious capitalism has become an increasingly prominent phenomenon in Africa, where churches, mosques, and faith-based organizations now function as major economic and political actors. This development has emerged in the context of neoliberal reforms, weakened state capacity, and the enduring authority of religion in African societies. By operating universities, hospitals, banks, and media enterprises, religious institutions have fused spiritual authority with capitalist accumulation, reshaping the contours of economic life. This paper critically examines whether religious capitalism represents the “final stage” of capitalism in Africa. It argues that while religious capitalism is a powerful and distinctive formation, it is better understood as a conjunctural development rather than an endpoint. The study highlights its internal contradictions, including prosperity gospel ideologies that legitimize inequality, the politicization of religious authority, and the fragility of its legitimacy amid rising disillusionment. Furthermore, religious capitalism coexists with neoliberal corporate expansion, informal economies, and state patronage, demonstrating capitalism’s adaptive multiplicity. The paper concludes that religious capitalism reflects the adaptability of global capitalism to African contexts rather than its ultimate culmination, and it calls for sustained scholarly engagement with its socio-political implications.

Keywords: Religious capitalism, Africa, prosperity gospel, neoliberalism, political economy

Introduction

In recent decades, Africa has witnessed the dramatic rise of religious capitalism, a phenomenon in which religious institutions and leaders increasingly operate as economic and political actors alongside their spiritual roles. Churches, mosques, and faith-based organizations have expanded into diverse sectors such as education, healthcare, banking, real estate, and media, thereby blurring the boundaries between sacred devotion and material accumulation (Obadare, 2018). This development has been particularly visible in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa,

where megachurches and charismatic religious movements command significant resources and wield considerable political influence (Ukah, 2020). The transformation reflects both structural and cultural shifts: the retreat of the state under neoliberal reforms, coupled with the enduring legitimacy of religion in African societies, has positioned faith-based organizations as alternative providers of welfare, employment, and moral guidance (Marshall, 2009; Gifford, 2015).

The intersection of faith and finance has raised critical debates about the trajectory of capitalism in Africa. Some scholars have argued that religious capitalism marks a distinctive phase of capitalist development, one that embeds accumulation in spiritual logics and moral economies (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000). Others suggest that it may represent the “final stage” of capitalism on the continent, given its expansive reach into both economic life and political processes. Yet this claim is contentious. Capitalism has historically demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, transforming through mercantile, industrial, and neoliberal phases in response to shifting global and local conditions (Harvey, 2005). Religious capitalism may thus be better understood as a conjunctural formation, an expression of capitalism’s flexibility in adapting to Africa’s socio-economic realities, rather than its ultimate culmination.

This study critically examines whether religious capitalism constitutes the final stage of capitalism in Africa. It situates the rise of religious capitalism within the broader history of capitalist transformations while highlighting its unique African expressions. The analysis underscores the contradictions that underlie this formation, particularly the prosperity gospel’s legitimation of inequality, the entanglement of religious elites in politics, and the risks of disillusionment when promised prosperity does not materialize. By framing religious capitalism as a conjunctural rather than terminal phenomenon, this paper contributes to ongoing debates on the adaptability of capitalism and the role of religion in shaping African political economies

Research Problem

The intersection of religion and capitalism in Africa has evolved into a complex phenomenon often described as *religious capitalism*, where spiritual authority is leveraged for economic, social, and political gain. While religion has historically played a vital role in shaping African societies, providing moral guidance, social cohesion, and community development, recent decades have witnessed the commercialization and politicization of religious institutions (Gifford, 2015). Mega-churches, Islamic foundations, and other religious organizations now operate large-

scale businesses, media networks, and investment portfolios, while their leaders exert substantial influence over political processes and public policy (Haynes, 2007).

This dual role of religious institutions, as spiritual guides and economic actors, raises critical questions regarding the ethical implications, social consequences, and developmental impact of religious capitalism. Religious capitalism may perpetuate socio-economic inequality by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of religious elites while exploiting followers through obligatory donations and promises of divine rewards (Bompani, 2017). Moreover, the increasing entanglement of religion with political governance challenges democratic accountability and may legitimize elite dominance under the guise of spiritual authority (Berger, 2019).

Despite the growing literature on religious commercialization in Africa, there remains a paucity of research examining whether the continent is approaching the “final stage” of religious capitalism; where religious institutions function predominantly as socio-economic and political powerhouses rather than spiritual entities. This research problem is significant because it interrogates the balance between faith, wealth, and political influence, highlighting the potential consequences for ethical governance, social equity, and sustainable development.

Thus, the central research problem can be articulated as follows: To what extent has religious capitalism in Africa evolved into a stage where religious institutions primarily serve economic and political interests, and what are the implications of this transformation for social, economic, and political development on the continent?

Conceptual Framework on Religious Capitalism

Religious capitalism refers to the intersection of religious practice and economic activity, where religious institutions, leaders, and followers engage in wealth accumulation, entrepreneurial ventures, and socio-political influence through spiritual authority (Iannaccone, 1998). The concept draws inspiration from Max Weber’s (1905/2002) notion of the Protestant ethic, which links religious values with capitalist behavior, but in contemporary African contexts, it manifests differently. Unlike the classical Western model, African religious capitalism often involves charismatic leadership, mass mobilization of followers, and direct engagement in commercial and political enterprises (Gifford, 2015).

Religious capitalism embodies multiple interrelated dimensions. Economically, religious institutions operate businesses, investment portfolios, and media networks,

generating substantial income for both the organization and its leaders. Churches, mosques, and religious foundations often engage in real estate, banking, and commercial ventures, transforming spiritual authority into financial capital (Hanciles, 2018). Politically, religious leaders increasingly influence political outcomes by endorsing candidates, shaping public policy, and mobilizing large numbers of adherents during elections. This political leverage consolidates the authority of religious elites, blurring the boundary between spiritual guidance and governance (Haynes, 2007).

On a socio-cultural level, religious capitalism reshapes social norms and values by equating spiritual success with material prosperity. Followers are often encouraged to participate in giving schemes, tithing, or other financial commitments with the promise of spiritual or material rewards, reinforcing cycles of dependency and influence (Bompani, 2017).

In essence, religious capitalism is not merely the commercialization of faith; it represents a structural transformation in which religious institutions act simultaneously as spiritual, economic, and political actors. This fusion raises critical questions about exploitation, ethical governance, and social equity, particularly in African societies where religious authority carries profound cultural legitimacy.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Marxist Theory of Religion as its primary theoretical framework. Karl Marx famously described religion as the “opium of the people,” arguing that religious institutions can function as instruments of social control, legitimizing existing power structures while pacifying subordinate populations (Marx, 1844/1978). Religion, in this sense, is not only a spiritual phenomenon but also a socio-economic tool that can perpetuate inequality and facilitate exploitation.

In the context of African religious capitalism, Marxist theory provides an analytical lens for understanding how religious institutions operate simultaneously as spiritual, economic, and political entities. Religious leaders often harness spiritual authority to accumulate wealth, influence political decisions, and maintain socio-cultural dominance over followers. By promising spiritual rewards in exchange for material contributions or loyalty, these institutions can reinforce socio-economic hierarchies and legitimize elite power (Bompani, 2017).

Marxist theory also illuminates the potential exploitative dimension of religious capitalism. Followers may be encouraged to donate substantial resources under the guise of spiritual obligation, while religious elites consolidate wealth and social

influence. In this framework, religion serves as a mechanism that both obscures structural inequalities and sustains the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of a few.

Applying Marxist theory to the African context allows scholars to interrogate whether religious capitalism is approaching its “final stage”; a phase in which religious institutions are primarily economic and political actors rather than purely spiritual guides. This perspective provides critical insights into the ethical, social, and developmental implications of religious capitalism, particularly in societies where religious authority intersects deeply with cultural norms and political governance.

The Rise of Religious Capitalism in Africa: A Historical Trajectory

The rise of religious capitalism in Africa can be traced to the late twentieth century, when neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment programs weakened the role of the state in welfare provision, creating a vacuum that religious institutions quickly filled. Churches and mosques began to assume responsibilities that traditionally belonged to governments, offering education, healthcare, and social welfare. At the same time, they transformed into formidable economic actors. In Nigeria, Pentecostal megachurches such as Winners’ Chapel and Redeemed Christian Church of God operate sprawling universities, printing presses, hotels, and media empires (Ukah, 2020). Similarly, in Ghana and Kenya, large charismatic churches have diversified into real estate development, financial services, and private health care (Gifford, 2015).

This development is not accidental but reflects the broader entanglement of religion with capitalist accumulation. Neoliberal globalization fostered a market-oriented ethos that churches adopted, linking spiritual growth with material prosperity. The prosperity gospel movement, in particular, has been instrumental in redefining wealth as both a divine blessing and a moral obligation. Faith leaders often encourage entrepreneurship, tithing, and donations as pathways to divine favor and financial success, thus aligning religious devotion with capitalist practices (Marshall, 2009). The cultural authority of religion in Africa further strengthens this dynamic: in contexts where religion holds legitimacy far beyond that of the state, religious leaders command trust and obedience that translate into economic power (Obadare, 2018). In this way, religious capitalism has emerged not just as an economic arrangement but as a social system in which faith and finance are deeply intertwined.

Religious Institutions as Economic Actors in Africa

Religious institutions in Africa have transcended their traditional roles as sites of worship to become central players in national and transnational economies. In countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa, churches and mosques now manage large business portfolios. Nigerian Pentecostal megachurches such as Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and Winners' Chapel own private universities, publishing presses, real estate empires, and satellite television stations that generate enormous revenue (Ukah, 2020). In Ghana, charismatic churches invest in commercial radio and television networks, shaping not only religious discourse but also the cultural and political spheres (Gifford, 2004). This entrepreneurial expansion has created what some scholars call a "faith industry," in which religion itself becomes commodified, with services, miracles, and prosperity teachings marketed to adherents in exchange for financial contributions (Obadare, 2018).

What distinguishes religious capitalism in Africa is its reliance on the spiritual legitimacy of leaders to justify accumulation. Unlike secular corporations that depend primarily on market logic, religious institutions draw on sacred authority to validate financial demands such as tithes, donations, and seed offerings. Faith is presented as an investment, with promises of spiritual and material returns. This intertwining of economic and spiritual capital blurs conventional boundaries, allowing religious organizations to embed themselves deeply into everyday economic life. Thus, they operate simultaneously as spiritual guardians and formidable economic conglomerates.

Religious Capitalism and the Welfare Gap in Africa

The growth of religious capitalism in Africa is closely linked to structural transformations in governance and welfare provision. Following structural adjustment programs in the 1980s and 1990s, African states were compelled to reduce public spending on education, healthcare, and social services (Harvey, 2005). This created a vacuum that religious institutions stepped in to fill, offering essential services to communities neglected by the state. Churches and mosques-built schools, hospitals, microfinance institutions, and housing schemes, often presenting these efforts as spiritual missions. For instance, in Nigeria, Covenant University (owned by Winners' Chapel) and Babcock University (owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church) have become prestigious higher education institutions, filling a gap left by declining public universities (Marshall, 2009).

By stepping into these spaces, religious institutions gain legitimacy as both spiritual and developmental actors. However, their role is ambivalent. On one hand, they provide much-needed services and opportunities for citizens. On the other hand, their operations are often privatized and profit-driven, reinforcing neoliberal logics that shift responsibility away from the state. In this sense, religious capitalism alleviates immediate social needs while entrenching broader inequalities, since access to faith-based services often depends on ability to pay. These dynamic highlights that religious capitalism is not an autonomous or final stage of capitalism but is deeply tied to the failures and retreats of the African state under global neoliberal restructuring.

Contradictions and Limitations of Religious Capitalism in Africa

Religious capitalism faces profound contradictions that limit its potential to be a stable or final stage of capitalism. A key tension lies in the prosperity gospel ideology, which promotes the idea that wealth is evidence of divine favor, while poverty is attributed to spiritual failure or insufficient faith (Ukah, 2020). This narrative legitimizes inequality by moralizing poverty, thereby diverting attention from systemic and structural issues such as unemployment, corruption, and weak governance. While prosperity preaching inspires hope and motivates entrepreneurial activity, it risks producing widespread disillusionment when promised prosperity remains unfulfilled.

Another contradiction emerges in the political arena. Religious elites increasingly wield their economic and spiritual power to influence electoral processes and policy-making. In Nigeria, Pentecostal pastors openly endorse candidates and mobilize large constituencies, while in Uganda and Kenya, clerics have lobbied governments on social and economic policy (Obadare, 2022). This fusion of clerical and political authority raises questions about accountability, transparency, and the erosion of secular democratic spaces.

Additionally, religious capitalism is vulnerable to corruption and scandals. Mismanagement of church funds, accusations of exploitation, and reports of lavish lifestyles among religious leaders have provoked criticism both within and outside religious communities. Such controversies undermine the legitimacy of religious capitalism and highlight its fragility as an economic and moral order. These contradictions suggest that religious capitalism may be better understood as a transitional phase than a permanent endpoint.

Religious Capitalism as a Conjunctural Formation

A more nuanced understanding situates religious capitalism as a conjunctural formation, shaped by the specific intersection of neoliberal globalization, weak state institutions, and enduring religious influence. African religious organizations thrive in a context where states are unable or unwilling to meet citizens' socio-economic needs, and where global neoliberalism promotes privatization, deregulation, and entrepreneurialism. Religious institutions thus serve as alternative welfare providers and ideological legitimators of capitalist practices (Gifford, 2015).

This conjunctural character also points to its dependence on broader global and regional trends. Technological innovations, such as digital platforms, have allowed religious leaders to extend their economic influence beyond physical congregations, transforming faith into an online commodity. Demographic shifts, particularly Africa's youthful population, further shape the trajectory of religious capitalism, as young people increasingly consume faith through digital channels that blend spirituality, entrepreneurship, and lifestyle branding. Meanwhile, the penetration of transnational capital, through foreign investments and global religious networks, embeds African religious institutions in wider capitalist flows.

Religious capitalism, therefore, should not be understood as an inevitable or terminal stage but as a contingent phenomenon that reflects Africa's specific socio-political and economic conditions. Its future will likely be shaped by its ability to navigate the pressures of globalization, governance reforms, and generational change.

Is Religious Capitalism the Final Stage of Capitalism in Africa?

The proposition that religious capitalism constitutes the "final stage" of capitalism in Africa is both intellectually stimulating and deeply contested. Capitalism as a system has historically been defined by its resilience and capacity for reinvention. From mercantilism and colonial trade in the early modern era, to the rise of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, and later to post-war Keynesian developmentalism and neoliberal globalization, capitalism has consistently mutated in response to structural crises and contextual pressures (Harvey, 2005). Religious capitalism, therefore, is better understood as one of capitalism's many mutations rather than its culmination. It reflects the ways in which capitalist logics of accumulation, commodification, and expansion embed themselves in religious and cultural domains, particularly in contexts where state structures are weak or failing.

In the African context, the rise of religious capitalism cannot be divorced from the governance vacuum left by the retrenchment of the state under neoliberal reforms.

As Marshall (2009) notes, religious institutions have stepped into spaces abandoned by state welfare, providing education, healthcare, housing, and microfinance with remarkable efficiency and reach. This substitution has enhanced the legitimacy of religious organizations, positioning them not merely as custodians of spiritual authority but also as pivotal socio-economic actors. However, their interventions remain deeply ambivalent: while they fill immediate welfare gaps, they also entrench market logics that privatize access to essential services and shift responsibility away from the state.

The claim that religious capitalism is the “final stage” also risks oversimplifying Africa’s political economies by ignoring the coexistence of multiple capitalist trajectories. Neoliberal reforms imposed by international financial institutions continue to shape fiscal and trade policies, while informal economies remain dominant in many African societies, sustaining livelihoods for the majority through small-scale trade, artisanal work, and subsistence farming. Additionally, state-led patronage networks and rentier practices persist as central mechanisms of accumulation, particularly in resource-rich economies. Religious capitalism thus does not displace these dynamics but interacts with them, often amplifying their contradictions.

Moreover, the spatial unevenness of capitalist development in Africa underscores the limits of finality. In urban centers, megachurches and faith-based enterprises dominate landscapes with their universities, hospitals, media conglomerates, and real estate projects. Yet, in rural areas, livelihoods are still grounded in subsistence agriculture, informal credit associations, and kinship-based economic networks. Religious capitalism, therefore, operates unevenly across regions, classes, and social groups, reflecting its status as a conjunctural phenomenon rather than a universal endpoint.

Ultimately, the characterization of religious capitalism as the “final stage” of capitalism in Africa collapses under closer scrutiny. While it is a powerful and distinctive articulation of capitalist rationality in African societies, it coexists with other modes of accumulation and remains vulnerable to crises of legitimacy rooted in prosperity theology and unequal distribution of resources. Rather than signifying capitalism’s closure, religious capitalism is more accurately situated as a dynamic phase in capitalism’s ongoing reconfiguration, shaped by the interplay of global neoliberalism, weak state capacity, and the enduring cultural authority of religion

Research Findings

The study reveals that religious capitalism in Africa has emerged as a formidable socio-economic and political force, reshaping the boundaries between faith and market practices. Evidence shows that religious institutions are no longer confined to the spiritual domain but have become major players in diverse sectors such as education, health, real estate, media, and finance. Nigerian Pentecostal megachurches, Ghanaian charismatic movements, and South African independent churches illustrate the expansion of religious organizations into entrepreneurial domains, thereby creating a “faith industry” that commodifies spiritual services while mobilizing significant financial resources.

A central finding is the functional role of religious capitalism in addressing governance and welfare gaps left by weakened state institutions. Following neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment programmes, African governments retreated from social service provision. In this vacuum, churches and mosques stepped in, offering schools, hospitals, microfinance, and housing. This substitution positioned religious institutions as critical welfare providers, enhancing their social legitimacy. However, the findings also reveal that these interventions are often privatized and exclusionary, reinforcing neoliberal logics rather than promoting inclusive welfare.

The ideological dimension of prosperity theology emerged as both a driver and a contradiction of religious capitalism. The promise of wealth as divine reward motivates followers to contribute financially and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Yet, by moralizing poverty, prosperity theology obscures structural inequalities and fosters disillusionment when promised breakthroughs fail to materialize. This contradiction undermines the moral authority of religious leaders, particularly when conspicuous consumption by elites contrasts starkly with the poverty of congregants.

Another key finding is that religious capitalism is not a terminal or stable stage of capitalism but a conjunctural phenomenon shaped by global and local dynamics. Neoliberal globalization, digital innovation, demographic change, and weak governance converge to sustain the rise of religious capitalism. The ability of religious organizations to adapt to technological platforms, mobilize large youthful populations, and embed capitalist accumulation within religious logics underscores the resilience of capitalism rather than its finality.

Overall, the findings suggest that while religious capitalism has become a distinctive feature of Africa’s political economy, it remains embedded in broader capitalist transformations. Its contradictions, uneven reach, and dependence on fragile

legitimacy prevent it from being the “final stage” of capitalism. Instead, it exemplifies capitalism’s capacity to adapt by appropriating religious authority and cultural legitimacy to advance economic accumulation in African societies.

Discussion of Findings

The findings underscore that religious capitalism in Africa represents both continuity and innovation within the wider trajectory of global capitalism. On one hand, it reflects capitalism’s historic adaptability, a point emphasized by Harvey (2005) who argued that neoliberalism restructures economic and social life by pushing privatization and shifting responsibilities from states to non-state actors. In Africa, religious organizations have capitalized on this restructuring, stepping into welfare gaps and embedding capitalist logics within spiritual frameworks. On the other hand, religious capitalism illustrates a uniquely African articulation of capitalism, where religious legitimacy functions as a critical resource for accumulation and authority.

The role of religious institutions as economic actors resonates with Gifford’s (2004, 2015) work, which documents how charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Ghana and Nigeria have become intertwined with political economy. By running universities, hospitals, and media enterprises, these institutions have transcended spiritual functions, positioning themselves as alternative development actors. However, this reconfiguration raises concerns about the privatization of social services, which, while alleviating immediate welfare needs, simultaneously entrenches neoliberal logics of exclusion and commodification. Thus, religious capitalism provides a partial solution to state failure but perpetuates the very inequalities it claims to redress.

The ideological core of prosperity theology further complicates the picture. As Ukah (2020) highlights, prosperity teachings frame wealth as divine favor and poverty as spiritual failure, encouraging adherents to embrace entrepreneurship and sacrificial giving. While this empowers some by aligning with capitalist values of risk-taking and accumulation, it also risks deepening disillusionment when promised breakthroughs fail to materialize. Obadare (2018, 2022) cautions that the conspicuous consumption of religious elites; through private jets, luxury estates, and global networks; undermines their moral authority and reinforces critiques of exploitation. This suggests that religious capitalism thrives on an unstable ideological foundation that is prone to crises of legitimacy.

The findings also reinforce the argument that religious capitalism is best seen as a conjunctural phenomenon rather than a final stage of capitalism. Its rise is

contingent on specific conditions: neoliberal globalization, weak governance, and technological innovations that expand the reach of religious organizations. As Gifford (2015) observes, religious institutions have become deeply embedded in African modernities by leveraging global capitalist flows while drawing on local spiritual traditions. This conjunctural perspective avoids deterministic interpretations and highlights the fluidity of capitalist forms in Africa.

Finally, the coexistence of religious capitalism with other capitalist forms, such as corporate neoliberalism, informal markets, and state patronage, demonstrates that it is not replacing capitalism's other dynamics but rather intertwining with them. This multiplicity suggests that religious capitalism should be understood not as the culmination of capitalism in Africa but as one among many expressions of its ongoing evolution. In this sense, religious capitalism confirms capitalism's resilience by showing its ability to absorb religious legitimacy into economic accumulation, while also reminding us of its contradictions and vulnerabilities.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the phenomenon of religious capitalism in Africa and assessed whether it represents the "final stage" of capitalism on the continent. The findings demonstrate that religious institutions have become significant economic actors, filling governance and welfare gaps, mobilizing financial resources, and embedding capitalist rationalities within spiritual frameworks. Through universities, hospitals, media empires, and real estate investments, religious organizations operate as formidable conglomerates that combine sacred authority with market logics.

However, the analysis also reveals the contradictions at the heart of this formation. The prosperity gospel provides an ideological foundation for accumulation but simultaneously obscures structural inequalities and risks disillusionment when promised prosperity fails to materialize. The conspicuous consumption of religious elites further undermines their legitimacy and exposes the fragile basis of religious capitalism as a sustainable economic model.

Importantly, religious capitalism does not exist in isolation. It coexists with neoliberal corporate expansion, informal markets, and state patronage systems, demonstrating that it is not the culmination of capitalism but one of its many reconfigurations. Its trajectory is shaped by conjunctural forces such as neoliberal globalization, weak governance, technological innovation, and Africa's youthful demographics. In this sense, religious capitalism exemplifies capitalism's adaptability rather than its endpoint.

Recommendations

Religious capitalism's ambivalence requires careful policy and scholarly engagement. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

Religious institutions should be encouraged to increase accountability and transparency in their economic ventures. Establishing clearer financial reporting systems would reduce exploitation and restore public trust in faith-based organizations.

Governments must reassert their role in welfare provision. By strengthening public education, healthcare, and social safety nets, states can reduce over-reliance on religious organizations for essential services, ensuring inclusivity and equity.

Civil society and regulatory agencies should monitor the commercialization of religion to curb exploitative practices while respecting religious freedom. Balanced regulation can prevent excessive commodification of faith without undermining its positive contributions to development.

Scholars should continue to interrogate religious capitalism as a dynamic, conjunctural formation. Comparative research across African countries can provide deeper insights into how global capitalism is localized through religious logics, and how this shapes social, political, and economic life.

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THE IMPACTS OF SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT ON PEACE AND STABILITY IN NEIGHBORING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES

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Abstract

This study examined the impacts of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states. The conflict, which erupted in 2013, has had profound humanitarian, socio-political, and security implications for Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic. The study identified a significant research gap in existing literature, which often focuses on South Sudan's internal dynamics without adequate attention to the broader regional consequences. The objectives were to examine the causes of the South Sudan conflict, ascertain the impacts of South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states. The paper was anchored on Fragile State Theory as the theoretical framework explains how states that are unable or unwilling to perform the core functions necessary for governing effectively. It employed a qualitative, survey-based research design to assess the impact of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in Sub-Saharan African states. The finding shows that that political rivalry, particularly between President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, has dominated the nation's unstable political environment, that armed groups and militias exploited the instability, spreading violence into Uganda and Kenya. The influx of South Sudanese refugees has reshaped the social and political landscapes of host countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia in significant ways. It recommended that; Government should engage in multi-stakeholder workshops and dialogues involving South Sudanese communities, governmental representatives, and regional experts to facilitate a deeper understanding of the multifaceted root causes of the conflict. Regional oversight body should be created comprising representatives from affected neighboring countries of Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, international organizations, and local civil society organizations to regularly assess and report on the impacts of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in the region.

Keywords: South Sudan; Sub-Saharan Africa; Regional Security; Refugees; Peacebuilding

Introduction

Conflict have long been a significant distrupctor of peace and stability worldwide, with profound consequences for political, social, and economic systems. The nature, causes, and effects of conflicts vary widely, but their impact is universally detrimental, particularly in regions already struggling with development challenges. The 20th century witnessed two world wars that caused unprecedented destruction and reshaped international relations. The aftermath led to the establishment of institutions like the United Nations (UN) aimed at promoting global peace and preventing future conflicts. The ideological rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union influenced numerous conflicts around the world, often turning local disputes into proxy wars. Post-Cold War, the nature of conflicts shifted predominantly to intrastate conflicts, characterized by civil wars, ethnic clashes, and insurgencies. Examples include the Syrian Civil War, the Yemeni conflict, and the ongoing strife in Afghanistan. The rise of terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has introduced new dimensions to global security threats, leading to extensive military interventions and counterterrorism efforts (Igboke, 2023).

Africa has witnessed a range of conflicts, from civil wars and ethnic clashes to insurgencies and transnational terrorism. Prominent examples include the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), the Rwandan Genocide (1994) the civil wars in Sudan and South Sudan, the insurgency in Nigeria by Boko-Haram, and the ongoing instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo, these conflicts have led to massive displacement, with millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking safety and stability. Africa is a continent rich in natural resources, cultural diversity, and historical significance. However, it has also been plagued by numerous conflicts that have undermined peace and stability across various states. The origins of these conflicts are multifaceted and can be traced back to a combination of historical, socio-political, economic, and environmental factors. The arbitrary borders drawn by colonial powers often grouped together diverse ethnic groups with historical animosities, leading to tensions and conflicts post-independence. The rapid and often poorly managed process of decolonization left many African states with weak governance structures, making them susceptible to internal conflicts. Deep-seated ethnic and tribal divisions have been a major source of conflict, as groups vie for power, resources, and recognition. Frequent changes in government, often through coups and armed insurrections, have destabilized many African states. The abundance of natural resources, such as oil, minerals, and diamonds, has often fueled conflicts, as different groups and external actors competed for control over these valuable commodities. High levels of poverty and

economic inequality contribute to social tensions and unrest. Environmental degradation and climate change have exacerbated resource scarcity, leading to conflicts over arable land, water, and other essential resources (Bayramov, 2018).

The impact of conflict on the peace and stability of African states cannot be overstated. Conflicts have ravaged countries, destroyed economies, and resulted in significant human suffering. It has disrupted social cohesion, hindered development, and perpetuated cycles of violence and instability. This introduction aims to provide an overview of the nature and consequences of conflicts in Africa, emphasizing their implications for peace and stability. The consequences of these conflicts are profound which include; humanitarian crisis, casualties and displacement. Conflicts have caused significant loss of life, injuries, and the displacement of millions, creating one of the largest refugee crises in the world. Widespread human rights abuses, including massacres, sexual violence, and child soldier recruitment, have been rampant in conflict zones. Wars and conflicts have led to the destruction of vital infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and transportation networks, severely hampering economic development loss of livelihoods, agricultural activities and other means of livelihoods have been disrupted, exacerbating poverty and food insecurity, social and political impact, governance challenges, persistent conflicts weaken state institutions, undermine governance, and erode the rule of law, social fragmentation, conflicts deepen social divisions, making reconciliation and nation-building efforts more challenging, regional instability, conflicts in one country often spill over into neighboring states, destabilizing entire regions and complicating efforts for peace and development (Muriuki, 2023).

The Sudanese conflict, particularly since the secession of South Sudan from Sudan in 2011, has had profound implications for the peace and stability of Sub-Saharan Africa. The conflicts within and between these two nations have significantly influenced the broader peace and stability of the African continent. This period has been marked by continuous internal strife, civil wars, and political instability that have not only devastated the socio-economic fabric of Sudan and South Sudan but have also reverberated across the region, impacting neighboring countries and beyond. The independence of South Sudan was initially seen as a beacon of hope for resolving long-standing ethnic and political tensions in the region. However, the subsequent eruption of civil war in South Sudan in December 2013 and ongoing conflicts in Sudan's Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile regions have led to severe humanitarian crises. These crises have manifested in widespread displacement, with millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking asylum in neighboring countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Chad, and the Central African Republic. The massive movement of populations has placed

enormous pressure on the resources and infrastructures of host countries, often leading to social tensions and instability (Williams, 2019).

Moreover, the conflicts have facilitated the proliferation of arms and the movement of insurgent groups across borders, exacerbating security threats in the region. The fragility of state structures in Sudan and South Sudan has provided fertile ground for armed groups and militias to operate with relative impunity, further destabilizing the region. The economic repercussions are also significant, as disrupted trade routes and halted oil production have hampered economic growth and development not only in Sudan and South Sudan but also in the broader East African region of Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya. The unending conflict in South Sudan has had profound implications not only within its borders but also across the wider Sub-Saharan African region. This study aims to analyze the effects of instability in South Sudan on the peace and security of three strategically and regionally significant neighboring countries of Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. These countries were selected due to their geopolitical importance, economic interdependence with South Sudan, and active roles in regional diplomacy and conflict resolution. Against this backdrop, the paper assessed the broader effect of the South Sudan conflict on the peace and stability of Sub-Saharan African states. Specifically, the paper examined the causes of the South Sudan conflict, ascertain the impacts of South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states.

Literature Review

Conflict

The word “conflict” comes from the Latin word *conflictus*, which means collision or clash. Defining conflict depends on the nature of conflict as something that takes place in society. Conflict is commonly understood as: a form of opposition between parties; an absence of agreement between parties; a way to solve social contradictions; a natural process in human social interaction.

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

Conflict is defined as inappropriate actions of specific political groups which can be resolved either by violent or non-violent ways. One of the political theorists, (Burton, 1990), differentiates the so-called negotiable and deep-seated conflicts. In the book *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, some writers state that; the former could be solved utilizing negotiation and peaceful cooperation, whilst the latter is generally inclined to have a more complicated nature that could only be settled by eradicating the main underlying factors of the conflict itself. The main concept of the conflict could be divided into armed conflict, violent conflict, and contemporary conflict (Lomia, 2020)

Conflict is endemic to all social life. It is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation. Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations, the normative concept of conflict, strongly influenced by a preoccupation with stability and equilibrium in organizational/national design, links conflict to violence, destruction, inefficiency and irrationality. Using the term in a broad sense it may be suggested that conflict refers to all kinds of antagonistic interactions. More specifically, it can be termed as a situation in which two or more parties have incompatible objectives and in which their perceptions and behaviour are commensurate with that incompatibility

According to Beji and Andrew (2017) conflicts are inevitable and inherent in all interdependent relationships even the teeth and the tongue as organs in human body do conflict with each other. Conflict is normal in human relationships, and it serves as the motor of change. Conflict has been misunderstood by many who simply regard it as necessarily negative. Conflict is wrongly associated with war, fight, anarchy, misunderstanding, stress, crisis, aggression, arguments, etc. people who hold such a harmful view of conflicts tend to handle conflict in a destructive way. The point is that most of the remarkable development in the world arose from conflict situations.

Okpe (2008) noted that conflict is an inevitable aspect of human life and a basic fact of social interaction. Conflicts are a natural part of life and arise when individuals or groups pursue different goals and aspirations in a social environment. The view of Lewis A. Coser, sees conflict as ...a struggle over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values, but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals. Conflicts can occur between individuals, between collectivities, or between individuals and collectivities. Human migration conflicts are perennial features of social life. Conflict has the potential to become chaotic and uncontrollable, leading to violence. This inherent violence-generating propensity is what makes conflict a unique form

of human migration relations. It can cause displacement, harm to individuals and communities, and disruption of social and economic systems. To prevent this, it is important to address the root causes of conflict and work towards peaceful resolution and reconciliation (Ukwayi et al, 2018). This can be done through diplomatic efforts, conflict resolution mechanisms, and support for community-based initiatives that promote understanding and cooperation. Postcolonial African countries have experienced a variety of conflicts, and one area in which human migration has contributed to this is through the increase in internal, sectional, and other forms of conflicts in several countries. This has been particularly prevalent in the post-cold war era (Eze, et al, 2022). The roots of these conflicts can be traced to structural defects inherited from colonial masters, and since their departure, conflicts of different types and magnitudes have occurred in many African countries. Some countries have experienced minor conflicts, while others have had to contend with large-scale conflicts, and in some cases, the escalation of conflicts has led to full-blown wars (Ukwayi et al, 2018).

The pattern of conflicts in some African countries has been changing due to the prevailing circumstances. In some states, the main cause of conflicts can be attributed to economic factors, while in others it is based on ethno-religious tendencies (Ukwayi et al, 2018). Africa has been dealing with both old and new conflicts in different parts of the continent. Several countries in recent years have experienced conflicts resulting in loss of lives, displacement of people, and damage to infrastructure (Eze, et al, 2022; Odinka et al, 2023). The affected countries include Rwanda, Angola, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, and Cote d'Ivoire. The changing nature of conflicts around the world has had an impact on Africa, where conflicts are now more internal than between states (Manu, et al, 2014; Okpa et al, 2023). The sources of threats to peace have shifted from conflicts between states to internal conflicts. As a result, Africa is experiencing a large number of intra-state conflicts that have generated thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons. These individuals are often forced to leave their homes and live at the mercy of other countries and the international community. According to Jallow (2007) close to half of the world's population of refugees and internally displaced persons can be found in Africa. These conflicts have created a humanitarian crisis and have a significant impact on the economic and social development of the affected countries.

Conflict in Africa has had a major detrimental effect on the continent's development, with an estimated cost of approximately \$300 billion. This amount is equivalent to the total international aid received during the same period. This highlights the

potential for development that was lost due to conflict. Additionally, the report notes that this estimate only covers the periods of actual combat and does not include the indirect costs of war, such as inflation, debt, and high unemployment (Olaniyan, 2016; Ogar et al, 2023). The knock-on effects of conflicts have important developmental implications. For instance, income generated from natural resources may be directed towards private individuals instead of benefiting the entire nation. Additionally, conflicts may cause more deaths as a result of their aftermath than from the actual fighting, especially among women and children. Moreover, conflicts cause evident physical and emotional consequences that lead to human migration.

War

War is a state of mutually declared aggression between two or more parties prosecuted by conventional (uniformed and armed) soldiers, with the knowledge and observation of a third (neutral) party (Waltz, 2007) Clausewitz's formula - war is the continuation of policy by other means has been replaced by its opposite: policy is the continuation of war by other means. But these two formulas are, formally, equivalent. They both express the continuity of competition and the use of alternately violent and non-violent means towards ends which do not differ in essence.

Clausewitz regarded war as a logical mechanism used by the state to attain definite political goals. Military acts were not ends in themselves; rather they were tools to be employed in pursuit of larger political objectives (Kelly, 2016). Clausewitz emphasized the necessity of gaining decisive wins in battle. He felt that by delivering a catastrophic defeat to the adversary, a country might compel them to yield and obey its political objectives (Kelly, 2016)

War is a means of achieving an end, a weapon which can be used for good or for bad purposes. Some of these purposes for which war has been used have been accepted by humanity as worthwhile ends: indeed, war performs functions which are essential in any human society. It has been used to settle disputes, to uphold rights, to remedy wrongs: and these are surely functions which must be served. One may say, without exaggeration, that no more stupid, brutal, wasteful or unfair method could ever have been imagined for such purposes, but this does not alter the situation.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is the process of ending a dispute and reaching an agreement that satisfies all parties involved. Since conflict is an essential part of being human, effective conflict resolution is not designed to avoid disagreements. Instead, conflict resolution skills are used to facilitate discussions, increase understanding and control

emotional responses. Moyalan, (2024), some of the most common cognitive errors that lead to unproductive or unresolved conflict include: Self-serving fairness interpretations: This term refers to the process of one or more parties deciding what is “fair” from a biased point of view. In workplace conflict resolution, you’ll learn skills that help you discuss conflict from a more neutral stance. Overconfidence when arguing or disputing a matter can led to undesirable outcomes. While overconfidence in a personal disagreement may simply cause embarrassment, this cognitive error can be even more detrimental when dealing with legal issues particularly when you are ill-prepared for the argument at hand. Overconfidence also prevents one or more conflicting parties from seeing the other’s perspective, which is an issue that workplace conflict resolution aims to resolve.

Escalation tactics can prolong a dispute for longer than necessary, thus making an agreement even more difficult to reach. In a personal dispute, escalation may involve one party raising the stakes of the argument, or bringing in additional issues that exist outside of the situation at hand. In legal terms, escalation refers to increasing charges or spending more money on litigation (Imm, 2022).

Avoidance is the practice of circumventing conflict. Examples of avoidance may include bottling up emotions, changing the subject when an issue is brought up, or physically leaving the situation altogether. Blaming refers to the tactic of one or more parties ridding themselves of responsibility for a disagreement thus placing all the faults on the other party. When blaming is used during a conflict, it can be difficult to get both parties to agree on how they played a role in the situation. When one party looks down upon the other from an inaccurate moral high ground, a real resolution is virtually impossible. Finally, we have one of the most common and destructive cognitive errors found in conflict resolution: emotional volatility, often expressed through insults (Imm, 2022).

Conflict resolution is often confused with the term conflict resolved. Conflict resolution is primarily not conflict resolved, but agenda setting on peace principles. It was defined by Heitler in (1990), as “the attainment of a solution that satisfies the requirement of all the seemingly conflicting forces and thereby, produces a feeling for all participants”. Wallenstein (2008) defines conflict resolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent acts against each other. It is essentially aimed at intervention to change or facilitate the course of a conflict. According to Albert (2001) conflict resolution serves three Purposes namely: minimization of chances of destructive conflicts, stabilization of cessation of destructive conflicts as to prevent escalation, and

prevention of outbreak of a full-blown conflict done by uprooting the basic reasons for the conflict.

Peace

As simple as the word “peace” may seem, providing a clear-cut definition of it in the study of International Relations seems more demanding as historic events, ideologies and peculiar regional circumstances have shaped the meaning of peace. But at a first glance, Galtung (1967) describes it as an “umbrella concept”. To him, it is a state of mind felt as a consequence of the actualization of certain stated human desires. That is, it is a feeling of internal serenity as a result of external stability. Galtung (1967) also describes peace as touching the concept of law and order. That is, an anticipated social order achievable through the instrumentality of force and the threat of it.

This concept, however, does not ignore violence; rather it erects regulations and outlines punishments to produce and maintain a state of tranquillity. Also, there is the idea of peace as absence of any mutually agreed hostility, otherwise known as “negative peace”. It is important to note that this only rule out the existence of deliberate violence between groups or states, but considers the need for occasional revolts, protests, demonstrations, et cetera. On the other hand, a condition of order conjured by respect for human socio-cultural diversity is called “positive peace”. It is a social condition where multi-culture is respected; multi-ethnic is loved; multi-idea is welcomed; multi-religion is embraced; minorities are protected; equality of rights, equity, justice, guided liberty and freedom are guaranteed. Therefore, the characteristics of peace in International Relations could be cooperation and integration. However, in the study of International Relations, there have been divergent views and debates on the right theory and practice to attain peace; especially in a world characterized by selfishness, greed, inequality, conflict, violence, war, power, exploitation, oppression, bluff, etc

Perspectives on Peace as a Concept Idealists are the most ambitious group in seeking international peace. Plato (1941) argued that the utopian peace is only found in an ‘ideal form’ just as Socrates’ truth and goodness are found in an ideal form, which cannot be fully attainable. The idealists argued that man, by nature, is not violent; man is a peace lover, he will always want to keep peace with his neighbour, but in case of probable violence, social and political norms, regimes and organization could inhibit such (Richmond, 2008).

In ancient political thoughts, Heraclitus, the Pythagorean philosophers, and the Greek ideal saw harmony peace in this context as an ultimate principle of state

existence, they saw it as physical and ethical principle; a property on human nature. That is, peace is inherent feature of human being. Put differently, Bansikiza (2004) submits that peace is both a gift by God and an effort by the people to achieve it, individually and socially. Due to the fact that peace is not reached once and for all, it demands continuous attempt in connecting divided people, reconciling differences and removing bitterness harboured. However, the idealists' notion of a world void of war, promoting disarmament, the right of self-determination for all men, and the presence of a world government to ensure order and proper distribution of scarce resources brought about the establishment of the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization after the World War I and World War II respectively (Richmond, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

Fragile State Theory

The paper adopted the Fragile State Theory as the theoretical framework. The theory refers to a conceptual framework used to understand states that are unable or unwilling to perform the core functions necessary for governing effectively. These states typically face chronic insecurity, weak institutions, poor service delivery, and limited legitimacy. Core Characteristics of Fragile States, weak or absent state authority, inability to provide basic services, poor governance and political instability, high vulnerability to conflict and external shocks, limited control over national territory, Key institutions like the military, police, judiciary, and civil administration are often ineffective, corrupt, or contested (Rotberg, 2004).

Assumptions of Fragile State Theory and Their Application to South Sudan. Fragile states lack monopoly of legitimate violence Theory assumption: A fragile state is unable to exercise sovereign control over the use of force within its borders. Since independence in 2011, South Sudan's government has struggled to control armed groups, militias, and tribal factions. Rebel groups like SPLM-IO (Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition) have regularly challenged the state's authority. The inability to demobilize fighters has fueled insecurity, leading to regional spillovers in neighboring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, DRC, and CAR.

Fragile states are unable to deliver essential services. Fragile states fail to provide public goods such as security, health, education, and infrastructure. The government has consistently failed to deliver basic services in health, education, and water access, this failure has led to mass displacement and dependence on humanitarian aid, affecting border communities in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan, refugee camps in neighboring states have become pressure points, straining host communities and

governments (OECD, 2015). Fragile states suffer from legitimacy crises. Fragile states face challenges in gaining public trust, and their institutions lack legitimacy. Electoral delays, ethnic favoritism, and corruption have eroded confidence in the government of President Salva Kiir. Political rivalries (e.g., between Kiir and Riek Machar) have undermined peace deals. This internal legitimacy crisis has international repercussions neighboring Sub-Saharan states have been forced to intervene diplomatically and militarily, often without lasting success (Clapham, 2018).

State Fragility Theory is particularly relevant for assessing South Sudan's impact on regional stability as it provides a framework to analyze how the country's internal dynamics reverberate throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. By leveraging this theory, the study systematically evaluates the interplay of political instability, economic disintegration, social unrest, and security threats tied to the South Sudan conflict. State fragility refers to the inability of a government to provide basic services, maintain order, and enable economic stability. It includes dimensions such as weak institutions, lack of legitimacy, and social fragmentation. The conflict in South Sudan threatens not only its own stability but also that of neighboring countries. Fragile states often have spillover effects, leading to increased refugee flows, cross-border violence, and economic instability. By applying the state fragility lens, we can evaluate how the South Sudanese crisis contributes to similar vulnerabilities in countries like Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia. State fragility theory assists in understanding the root causes of conflicts, including ethnic tensions, resource distribution issues, and governance failures. The South Sudan conflict exemplifies a breakdown in state functions, making it crucial to examine how these dynamics affect peace building efforts across Sub-Saharan Africa. International interventions often recognize state fragility as a primary challenge. Assessing how the global response to South Sudan's instability such as peacekeeping missions and humanitarian aid aligns with fragility indicators can inform future interventions and strategies to promote stability in the region. The theory highlights that merely achieving a ceasefire does not guarantee long-term peace. It emphasizes the need for rebuilding state capacity and legitimacy post-conflict. Understanding this in the case of South Sudan illuminates the challenges faced by peace efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa, where weak institutions can resurface conflicts even after initial resolutions. The theory provides a framework to identify indicators of state fragility that can predict future unrest. This is crucial for policymakers seeking to address the root causes of instability in South Sudan and its impact on surrounding nations, supporting proactive measures to enhance regional resilience.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative, survey-based research design to assess the impact of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in Sub-Saharan African states. It was conducted in Abuja, Nigeria, targeting strategic institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the African Union office, South Sudan Embassy, academic experts, and postgraduate students from Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 28 respondents from a total population of 214, ensuring informed perspectives were obtained. Data collection involved Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to gather first-hand information from individuals with direct experience in diplomacy, peacebuilding, and regional security affairs. Secondary data were drawn from journals, official records, and media sources to complement the interviews. Content analysis was employed to systematically organize, code, and interpret data, identifying recurring patterns and themes. This method allowed for the rigorous examination of qualitative material, offering depth to the findings through the direct voices of participants. The outcome of this approach highlights the regional implications of the South Sudan conflict and its influence on policy frameworks, humanitarian concerns, and the collective security posture of Sub-Saharan African states.

Analysis of research objectives

Analysis of the causes of South Sudan conflict from 2011-2024

According to Beji and Justin (Oral Interview, 2024), on the causes of South Sudan conflict, argued that;

Ethnic tensions are central to understanding the South Sudan conflict. The Dinka and Nuer, the two largest ethnic groups, have historically competed for resources and political power. When the conflict began, both sides mobilized their ethnic bases, leading to vicious cycles of violence. Atrocities committed against civilian populations often targeted specific ethnic groups, deepening the divide and resulting in a pervasive culture of fear and distrust that persists today. The two respondents summarized the causes of South Sudan into political factors, economic, and ethnic tensions.

In the same vein, Akangbe (in an oral interview, 2024) also confirmed that;

Oil is the backbone of South Sudan's economy, providing the majority of government revenue. However, the management of this resource has been plagued by corruption, mismanagement, and lack of transparency. Control over oil-rich areas has been a major battleground in the conflict. Additionally, the economic crisis, fueled by falling oil prices and infrastructure damage from the war, has exacerbated poverty and created competition for scarce resources, further fueling tensions

The conflict in South Sudan is rooted in a complex mix of political rivalry, ethnic divisions, historical grievances, and competition over natural resources. According to Ayuba (Oral Engagement, 2024), regional actors like Uganda and Sudan played destabilizing roles, while international bodies struggled to mediate lasting peace due to weak enforcement mechanisms and limited commitment from local leaders. Agbiloko (Oral Interview, 2024) highlighted the deep political discord within the SPLM after independence, where rivalry between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar swiftly took on ethnic overtones, fueling violence between Dinka and Nuer communities. Aishat (Oral Interview, 2025) attributed the unrest to unresolved grievances inherited from decades under Sudan, warning that independence brought political fragmentation instead of unity. Daniel (Oral Interview, 2025) and Fatima (Oral Interview, 2025) pointed to the weaponization of ethnic identity and oil wealth as major drivers of conflict, deepening mistrust, corruption, and marginalization. Two major outbreaks — in December 2013 and July 2016 — were direct results of political and military provocations. The 2015 peace accord failed to address underlying ethnic hostilities and competing claims over state power and resources, ultimately prolonging instability and bloodshed across South Sudan's fragile statehood.

Analysis of the impacts of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states

According to James (Oral Interview, 2025) on the impacts of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states. He argued that the South Sudan conflict has significantly affected neighboring country of Uganda, both politically and socially. Firstly, Uganda has hosted over a million South Sudanese refugees, placing immense pressure on local resources and public services. This influx has also raised tensions with local communities, leading to competition over resources. Politically, the Ugandan government has engaged

militarily in South Sudan, supporting Salva Kiir's government. However, this involvement has drawn criticism and complicated Uganda's internal politics and its relations with other regional players.

Likewise, in the opinion of Amina (in an oral interview, 2025) argued that;

The South Sudan conflict has had profound implications for Kenya. Security-wise, the instability has led to increased cross-border crime, including arms trafficking and the movement of militia groups. The conflict also has economic ramifications; the disruption of trade routes through South Sudan impacts Kenyan businesses, especially in Kampala and Nairobi, as many goods transit through South Sudan. Furthermore, the influx of South Sudanese refugees has strained Kenya's resources, particularly in regions like Turkana, where the local economy is already fragile.

The South Sudan conflict has deeply affected the peace and security landscape of neighboring Sub-Saharan African states. Solomon (Oral Interview, 2025) noted that the conflict has worsened ethnic tensions and regional instability, particularly affecting Ethiopia's security environment. As a mediator in the crisis, Ethiopia has faced challenges balancing peace efforts with rising domestic ethnic unrest and cross-border humanitarian demands. The conflict's destabilizing effects have extended beyond South Sudan's borders, impacting humanitarian operations and straining Ethiopia's internal governance. James (Oral Engagement, 2025) observed that Uganda's military involvement set a dangerous precedent, encouraging regional interventionist policies. The unchecked proliferation of armed groups and cross-border arms trafficking has created a regional security dilemma, compelling countries like Uganda and Kenya to heighten their military vigilance. Solomon further stressed that while Ethiopia continues to broker peace deals, it grapples with the conflict's spillover effects on trade, migration, and internal stability within the Horn of Africa. Ayuba (Oral Interview, 2024) emphasized the severe humanitarian crisis, with mass displacement, lack of basic services, and resource conflicts in border communities. The cumulative effects of poverty, malnutrition, and violence have weakened social cohesion and undermined efforts to establish peace, leaving neighboring states vulnerable to instability.

Analysis of how the influx of refugees from South Sudan influenced the social and political dynamics of host countries in Sub-Saharan Africa

According to Sarah (in an oral interview, 2025) on how the influx of refugees from South Sudan influenced the social and political dynamics of host countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; she argued that the influx has had a profound impact on social dynamics in Uganda. Hosting over a million South Sudanese refugees has led to both tensions and opportunities for social cohesion. On one hand, infrastructure and resources in host communities, particularly in northern Uganda, are under significant strain. This has sometimes led to competition between refugees and host communities over resources like water, land, and jobs, resulting in tensions.

Michael opinion on how the influx of refugees from South Sudan influenced the social dynamic of Kenya, particularly in areas like Turkana, the influx of South Sudanese refugees has been significant. Socially, we see a blending of cultures, but it's also complex. Refugees often arrive with trauma and unresolved issues that can lead to misunderstandings with local communities. There have been instances of tensions, especially regarding land ownership and access to local resources. Politically, the refugee situation has compelled local governments to improve infrastructure and services, but the increased demand overwhelms the systems. This led to political challenges, as local officials must balance their constituents' needs with the obligations towards refugees. There's also been pressure on the national government to manage border security better while addressing humanitarian needs.

Similarly, Akangbe (2024) argued that;

The South Sudanese refugee influx has significantly influenced community structures in Ethiopia. Many refugees have settled in areas already characterized by ethnic diversity, which has sometimes heightened existing ethnic tensions. However, it has also prompted communities to adopt more inclusive approaches to local governance, as they realize that a stable and peaceful environment benefits everyone.

According to Amina (in an oral interview, 2024), the refugee crisis has led to significant humanitarian challenges in Kenya. Upon arrival, refugees are often severely under-resourced, necessitating urgent humanitarian support including access to basic necessities such as food, potable water, adequate shelter, and medical care. Humanitarian agencies are stretched thin, and the outdated infrastructure in areas hosting refugees can't cope with the sudden population increase. This situation

has resulted in increased tensions between host communities and refugees, sometimes leading to clashes or discrimination, complicating Kenya's broader efforts toward social cohesion and stability.

The influx of refugees from South Sudan has significantly impacted socio-economic political and environmental dynamics of host countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Discussion of findings

The causes of conflict in South Sudan remain deeply rooted in political, economic, ethnic, and external factors. Findings from this study reveal that political rivalry, particularly between President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, has dominated the nation's unstable political environment. Young (2021) emphasized that personal rivalries often overshadow national interest, with leaders prioritizing power over state-building. Economically, South Sudan's overdependence on oil wealth has worsened poverty and inequality due to mismanagement and corruption, as highlighted by Kibe, (2024). This economic imbalance fuels resource-based grievances, particularly in marginalized areas. The absence of strong governance structures following independence created fragmented political allegiances, as noted by Mawutor, (2020), while the failure to forge a unified national identity has further aggravated internal divisions. Ethnic polarization, especially between the Dinka and Nuer, has been manipulated by political elites to secure power, leading to cycles of retaliatory violence (Lucarini, Parisio, Branca, Segnani, Ippolito, Pellegrini, & Di Cesar, 2020). Additionally, smaller ethnic groups have begun mobilizing against perceived exclusion, contributing to localized unrest. External actors, including neighboring states and international organizations, have complicated peace efforts, often pursuing their strategic interests rather than genuine stability, deepening the conflict's persistence.

The South Sudan conflict has had far-reaching consequences for peace and stability in neighboring Sub-Saharan African states. The study established that armed groups and militias exploited the instability, spreading violence into Uganda and Kenya. Maru (2023) observed that the conflict's spillover heightened insecurity through unchecked cross-border movements of armed factions. Refugee displacement posed another serious challenge, with Uganda hosting over a million South Sudanese refugees, straining local resources and creating tensions within host communities (Shewaye, 2021). Economically, the conflict disrupted vital trade routes and hindered cross-border commerce, particularly affecting markets in Kenya and Ethiopia (Maru, 2023). The economic burden of supporting displaced populations and declining trade slowed development efforts in these countries (Betts, Bloom,

Kaplan, & Omata, 2017). Furthermore, the conflict's ethnic character rekindled old tensions in neighboring regions with similar ethnic groups. Owujie, (2023) emphasized that South Sudan's crisis revived historical grievances in border communities, worsening inter-communal relations and threatening regional stability.

The influx of South Sudanese refugees has reshaped the social and political landscapes of host countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia in significant ways. The rapid population increase strained public services, infrastructure, and scarce resources, creating tensions between refugees and host communities (Da Silva, Ribeiro, & Espíndola, 2023). While some communities demonstrated solidarity, Abu (2023) observed that competition for jobs and services often sparked hostilities, particularly in already vulnerable areas. Cultural diversity increased through refugee settlement, fostering cross-cultural exchanges, though Lang (2021) warned that tensions could rise if locals perceived refugees as a threat to their livelihoods or traditions. Politically, refugees in some cases engaged in local governance and organized community groups, as Sang, Gui, Ying, Diao, & Ng, (2022) noted, which empowered them but also provoked resistance from local political actors. Abukar, (2024) further explained that in Uganda, refugee policies became intertwined with national politics, as authorities sought to control refugee-heavy regions while carefully managing competing interests to preserve local stability and political authority.

Conclusion

The conflict in South Sudan, which erupted in 2013, has had profound and lasting consequences on peace and stability across Sub-Saharan Africa. Marked by ethnic violence, political rivalry, and humanitarian crises, the conflict's effects have spilled into neighboring states. Armed groups exploited South Sudan's weak governance, leading to cross-border raids, arms trafficking, and regional insecurity, forcing countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia to strengthen military defenses, sometimes escalating tensions. The influx of South Sudanese refugees created significant humanitarian pressures, with Uganda and Ethiopia hosting millions. This has strained public services and deepened competition over scarce resources, often igniting tensions with host communities. Ethnic divisions in South Sudan have also destabilized neighboring societies, especially where similar ethnic groups reside, fueling local disputes and complicating reconciliation efforts. Economically, disrupted trade routes and regional markets have worsened poverty and unemployment, while the financial burden of refugee care hampered growth. The instability has enabled the rise of armed criminal groups, banditry, and trafficking networks, threatening regional security. These layered challenges demand urgent, coordinated intervention. Governments, regional blocs, NGOs, and international

actors must adopt practical, inclusive strategies that address both immediate humanitarian needs and the long-term roots of instability to safeguard regional peace.

Based on the finding the following recommendations were made;

- i. Government should engage in multi-stakeholder workshops and dialogues involving South Sudanese communities, governmental representatives, and regional experts to facilitate a deeper understanding of the multifaceted root causes of the conflict.
- ii. Regional oversight body should be created comprising representatives from affected neighboring countries of Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, international organizations, and local civil society organizations to regularly assess and report on the impacts of the South Sudan conflict on peace and stability in the region.
- iii. Government should develop and promote programs focused on the integration of South Sudanese refugees into host communities that prioritize inclusivity and mutual benefit. These programs should aim to facilitate dialogue between refugees and local populations, promote cultural exchange, and establish economic opportunities that involve both groups.

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URBAN MOBILITY AND RISK: ANALYZING ROAD USE PRACTICES OF MOTORCYCLE AND TRICYCLE OPERATORS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Urban mobility in Nigeria has increasingly relied on informal transport systems, particularly motorcycles (*okada*) and tricycles (*keke NAPEP*), which have become indispensable for short-distance travel and last-mile connectivity. In Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), these modes of transport serve as critical lifelines for residents navigating a city with limited formal public transit infrastructure. However, their proliferation has introduced significant challenges to road safety, traffic management, and urban security. This study investigates the common road use behaviors of motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja and examines how these behaviors impact traffic safety and accident rates. It further explores the role of policy enforcement, operator training, and urban infrastructure in shaping mobility practices within the informal transport sector. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines document and content analysis with empirical data from traffic reports, policy documents, and scholarly literature, the study reveals that informal operators frequently engage in unsafe practices such as overspeeding, lane indiscipline, overloading, and non-compliance with traffic regulations. These behaviors contribute to a disproportionate number of road traffic accidents, with motorcycles and tricycles accounting for a significant share of urban fatalities and injuries. The findings highlight systemic gaps in enforcement, with many operators lacking valid licenses and formal training, and operating in an environment with inadequate infrastructure and weak regulatory oversight. The study applies Oyesiku's Urban Mobility Framework to contextualize these challenges, emphasizing the structural and policy-driven factors that shape informal transport behavior. It argues that unsafe mobility practices are not merely individual choices but are embedded in broader urban governance failures. The research concludes with key recommendations, including the implementation of mandatory licensing and training programs for informal operators, and strategic investment in dedicated infrastructure such as motorcycle lanes and zonal traffic controls. These interventions are essential for promoting safer, more inclusive, and sustainable urban mobility in Abuja.

Keywords: *Urban Mobility, Road Use Practices, Risk, Regulatory Framework*

Introduction

Urban mobility in developing countries is undergoing a rapid transformation, driven by population growth, economic shifts, and infrastructural limitations. In Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, the proliferation of motorcycles (commonly referred to as *okada*) and motorized tricycles (*keke NAPEP*) has emerged as a dominant mode of transport, particularly for short-distance travel and in underserved peri-urban areas. These informal transport systems have become indispensable for many residents, offering flexible and affordable mobility in the face of inadequate public transportation infrastructure (Kwaghgba & Tyozenda, 2024).

However, the rise of these transport modes has also introduced significant challenges to urban safety, traffic management, and public health. Motorcycle and tricycle operators often engage in risky road use practices such as overspeeding, non-compliance with traffic regulations, and operating without proper licensing or safety gear. These behaviors contribute to a disproportionate number of road traffic accidents (RTAs), many of which result in serious injuries or fatalities (Konlan & Hayford, 2022). Vulnerable road users—including pedestrians and passengers—are particularly affected, with motorcycles accounting for a substantial share of urban traffic casualties across Sub-Saharan Africa (Ntramaha et al., 2023).

In Abuja, the situation is compounded by weak enforcement of traffic laws, inconsistent policy implementation, and the socio-economic realities that push many unemployed youths into informal transport work. The removal of fuel subsidies and rising costs of vehicle ownership have further incentivized the use of motorcycles and tricycles, reshaping urban mobility patterns in ways that are both economically pragmatic and structurally risky (Kwaghgba & Tyozenda, 2024).

This paper aims to critically examine the road use practices of motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja, investigating how these behaviors affect urban safety and mobility. It aims to contribute to the discourse on sustainable urban transport by identifying the behavioral, infrastructural, and policy-related factors that shape risk in the informal transport sector.

Problem Statement

Despite their utility in bridging mobility gaps, motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja pose a growing threat to urban safety and security due to their prevalent engagement in unsafe road practices. These include frequent violations of traffic laws, overloading, lack of protective equipment, and aggressive driving behaviors. The consequences are evident in the rising incidence of road traffic crashes, injuries,

and fatalities, particularly among low-income and vulnerable populations (Konlan & Hayford, 2022).

Moreover, the informal nature of this transport sector—characterized by poor regulation, limited oversight, and inadequate training—has made it difficult for authorities to enforce safety standards or track operators involved in criminal activities. In some cases, motorcycles have been implicated in armed robberies and other security breaches due to their speed and maneuverability in congested urban environments (Ntramaha et al., 2023).

The lack of dedicated infrastructure, such as motorcycle lanes or safe loading zones, further exacerbates the problem, forcing operators to compete with larger vehicles on roads not designed for mixed traffic. This not only endangers the riders themselves but also disrupts traffic flow and increases the risk of collisions.

Given Abuja's status as Nigeria's administrative capital and a rapidly expanding urban center, the unchecked growth of informal transport systems poses a significant challenge to achieving safe, inclusive, and sustainable urban mobility. There is an urgent need for empirical research that investigates the specific road use practices of motorcycle and tricycle operators, assesses their impact on safety and security, and proposes actionable policy interventions.

Research Questions

1. What are the predominant road use practices among motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja, and how do these practices affect urban road safety?
2. To what extent do regulatory and infrastructural factors influence the behavior and risk exposure of informal transport operators in the FCT?

Research Objectives

- i. To investigate common road use behaviors of motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja, with a focus on their impact on traffic safety and accident rates.
- ii. To examine the role of policy enforcement, operator training, and urban infrastructure in shaping safe or unsafe mobility practices within the informal transport sector.

Conceptual Clarifications

Urban Mobility

Cervero (2000) defines urban mobility as “the ability of people to move freely and efficiently within urban areas using various modes of transport”. Arroyo-Arroyo et al. (2025) describe urban mobility as “a dynamic system of movement shaped by infrastructure, policy, and socio-economic conditions, especially in rapidly urbanizing regions”. Afolabi & Akibo (2020) argue that urban mobility is “a critical enabler of economic and social interaction, dependent on the availability and quality of transport services”. In this study, *urban mobility* refers to the daily movement of commuters within Abuja using motorcycles and tricycles, measured by frequency of trips, travel time, and accessibility to key destinations.

Informal Transport Operators

UN-Habitat (2000) defines informal transport operators as “individuals or groups providing transport services outside formal regulatory frameworks, often using low-capacity vehicles”. Afolabi & Akibo (2020) describe them as “transport providers who operate without formal licenses, permits, or standardized routes, yet serve over 80% of urban mobility needs in Nigeria”. Arroyo-Arroyo et al. (2025) note that informal operators “fill critical gaps in mobility, especially where formal systems are absent or inefficient”.

In this study, informal transport operators are motorcycle and tricycle drivers in Abuja who operate without formal registration, training, or adherence to standardized routes, identified through field surveys and observational data.

Road Use Practices

Sanusi & Emmelin (2015) define road use practices as “the habitual behaviours and decisions made by road users that influence traffic flow and safety”. Konlan and Hayford (2022) describe them as “patterns of driving, compliance with traffic laws, and interaction with other road users that affect accident risk”. Ntramaha et al. (2023) refer to road use practices as “the operational norms and informal rules guiding how vehicles are driven in urban environments”.

In this study, road use practices include behaviors such as lane discipline, helmet use, passenger handling, and traffic law compliance among motorcycle and tricycle operators, measured through structured observation and interviews.

Risk

WHO (2018) defines risk as “the likelihood of injury or harm resulting from exposure to a hazard, including unsafe transport conditions.” Ntramaha et al. (2023)

describe risk in urban transport as “the probability of traffic-related injury or death due to unsafe behaviours and poor infrastructure”. Cervero (2000) frames risk as “a function of exposure, vulnerability, and the absence of mitigating systems in urban mobility”.

In this study, *risk* refers to the probability of accidents, injuries, or security incidents involving motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja, assessed through accident records and operator self-reports.

Regulatory Environment

UN-Habitat (2000) defines regulatory environment as “the institutional and legal framework governing transport operations, including licensing, enforcement, and infrastructure provision”. Arroyo-Arroyo et al. (2025) describe it as “a set of formal rules and informal practices that shape how transport services are delivered and monitored”. Afolabi and Akibo (2020) argue that the regulatory environment “determines the legitimacy, safety, and efficiency of transport systems through policy and enforcement mechanisms”.

In this study, regulatory environment refers to the presence and effectiveness of traffic laws, enforcement agencies, and licensing systems affecting motorcycle and tricycle operations in Abuja, evaluated through policy review and stakeholder interviews.

Literature Review

Urban Mobility and Informal Transport in Nigeria

Urban mobility in Nigeria is increasingly shaped by informal transport systems, particularly motorcycles (*okada*) and tricycles (*keke NAPEP*) which have become vital for short-distance travel and access to underserved areas. Kwaghgba and Tyozenda (2024) argue that economic policies such as fuel subsidy removal have significantly influenced transport choices, leading to a surge in motorcycle use among low-income earners. This shift has altered traffic patterns and intensified safety and environmental concerns.

In Abuja, the inadequacy of formal public transport systems has created a vacuum filled by informal operators. These modes are often preferred for their affordability and flexibility, despite their association with traffic congestion and elevated accident rates (Afolabi & Akibo, 2020). The informal nature of these operations marked by poor regulation and lack of standardized training—poses challenges for urban governance and mobility planning.

Road Use Practices and Safety Risks

Motorcycle and tricycle operators in African cities frequently engage in unsafe road practices, including overspeeding, riding against traffic, and neglecting protective gear. Konlan and Hayford (2022) conducted a scoping review of motorcycle-related road traffic crashes (RTCs) across Africa, identifying behavioral factors such as alcohol use, fatigue, poor knowledge of traffic regulations, and non-use of helmets as key contributors to accident prevalence.

In Abuja, these practices are exacerbated by infrastructural limitations such as lack of dedicated lanes and weak enforcement of traffic laws. Sanusi and Emmelin (2015) found that many commercial motorcycle drivers perceive traffic risks but continue to engage in dangerous behaviors due to economic pressures and lack of alternatives. The result is a high incidence of injuries and fatalities, particularly among young male riders and pedestrians.

Security and Regulatory Challenges

Beyond safety, motorcycles and tricycles have been implicated in urban security concerns. Their agility and ability to navigate congested areas make them attractive for criminal activities, including theft and armed robbery. Ntramaha et al. (2023) highlight that in Sub-Saharan African cities, including Abuja, the lack of formal registration and oversight of operators complicates law enforcement efforts and undermines public trust in urban transport systems.

Efforts to regulate the sector such as bans or restrictions in central districts have often led to conflict between operators and authorities. These measures, while aimed at improving safety, can disrupt livelihoods and provoke resistance, especially when not accompanied by viable transport alternatives.

Policy Responses and Sustainable Mobility

Scholars emphasize the need for multi-sectoral approaches to address the risks associated with informal transport. Kwaghgba and Tyozenda (2024) recommend policy interventions such as enforcing safety regulations, creating dedicated lanes, and integrating informal transport into broader urban mobility plans. Similarly, Konlan and Hayford (2022) advocate for coordinated efforts involving governments, unions, and civil society to promote behavior change and improve road safety.

The literature suggests that sustainable urban mobility in Abuja requires balancing economic realities with safety imperatives. This includes investing in infrastructure, formalizing operator training, and leveraging technology for registration and monitoring.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies across Sub-Saharan Africa consistently highlight the risky behaviors of motorcycle and tricycle operators. Konlan and Hayford (2022) conducted a scoping review of motorcycle-related road traffic crashes (RTCs) in Africa, identifying key behavioral factors such as alcohol use, fatigue, poor knowledge of traffic regulations, and non-use of protective gear. Their findings revealed that younger male riders were disproportionately involved in RTCs, with high rates of injury and fatality.

In Abuja, although localized data is limited, similar patterns have been observed. Operators often ride against traffic, overload passengers, and ignore traffic signals. These practices are exacerbated by poor road infrastructure and weak enforcement mechanisms, contributing to frequent collisions and pedestrian injuries.

Dike (2012) conducted an empirical study on tricycle usage in Nigerian cities, using survey data from 200 passengers in Owerri. The study found that tricycles significantly improved urban mobility by offering faster and more flexible transport options. However, it also noted that the lack of formal training and regulation among operators led to erratic driving and increased accident risk. The study recommended structured training and licensing to optimize safety and efficiency.

Although Abuja differs in scale and governance from Owerri, the underlying issues unregulated operations, lack of infrastructure, and high demand for low-cost transport remain consistent.

Ntramaha et al. (2023) conducted a multi-country study across ten cities in Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, examining the safety, health, and environmental impacts of commercial motorcycles and tricycles. Using mixed methods, including operator surveys and stakeholder interviews, the study found that motorcycle-related RTCs were prevalent across all cities, with major injuries linked to poor rider behavior and inadequate infrastructure. Interestingly, the study also noted that motorcycle unions played a role in improving safety in some contexts, though their effectiveness varied.

While Abuja was not directly included, the findings offer valuable parallels. The absence of strong union regulation and limited investment in rider education in Abuja likely mirrors the challenges observed in other African capitals.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Urban Mobility Framework by Oyesiku, (2002). Oyesiku's Urban Mobility Framework was developed to understand and guide transport systems in rapidly urbanizing Nigerian cities. It emphasizes the interplay between urban growth, transport infrastructure, and mobility behavior, particularly in contexts where formal transport systems are inadequate.

Key Tenets of the Framework

Mobility as a function of infrastructure and policy: Urban mobility is shaped by the availability, accessibility, and quality of transport infrastructure, as well as the effectiveness of regulatory frameworks.

Informal transport as a response to systemic gaps: Where formal systems fail to meet demand, informal modes such as motorcycles and tricycles emerge to fill the void.

Safety and efficiency trade-offs: Informal transport offers flexibility and affordability but often compromises safety, regulation, and urban order.

Need for integrated policy solutions: Sustainable urban mobility requires coordinated planning, regulation, and investment in infrastructure.

Oyesiku's framework was originally presented in his chapter Policy Framework for Urban Motorcycle Public Transport System in Nigerian Cities, published in Urban Mobility for All (2002).

Relevance to Your Study

Your research on road use practices of motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja directly aligns with Oyesiku's framework in several ways:

Abuja's rapid urbanization has outpaced formal transport development, leading to a surge in informal operators.

Motorcycles and tricycles have become essential for last-mile connectivity, especially in peri-urban and underserved areas.

Safety concerns and regulatory gaps central to this study—are key issues addressed by Oyesiku's framework.

The framework provides a policy-oriented lens for analyzing how infrastructure deficits and weak governance shape mobility risks.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative document/content analysis approach to examine the security implications of motorcycle and tricycle operations in Nigeria. Content analysis is a systematic research method used to interpret textual data by identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within documents (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017). The goal is to extract relevant information from existing literature, government reports, media publications, and policy documents to understand how motorcycles and tricycles are portrayed in relation to security, identify recurring themes such as criminal usage, regulatory gaps, and policy responses, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and public perceptions.

The analysis draws from a diverse range of textual materials, including academic journal articles and theses, government white papers and policy briefs, news reports from reputable Nigerian media outlets, NGO and civil society publications, and transport union communiqués and public statements. Inclusion criteria are documents published between 2010 and 2025, texts that explicitly discuss motorcycles/tricycles in relation to crime, safety, or regulation, and sources available in English

The study uses thematic content analysis, guided by the following steps:

Relevant documents were identified using keywords such as “Okada,” “Keke Napep,” “security,” “crime,” “banditry,” and “transport regulation.”

Texts were coded manually using a deductive approach. Predefined categories included:

Criminal usage (e.g., robbery, kidnapping), Regulatory challenges, Government interventions, Socioeconomic consequences

Recurring patterns were grouped into broader themes such as: Mobility vs. security trade-offs, Informality and anonymity, Policy enforcement gaps

The findings were interpreted in relation to the research questions and objectives, with attention to context, tone, and stakeholder perspectives.

Urban Mobility and Risk: Analyzing Road Use Practices of Motorcycle and Tricycle Operators in Abuja, Nigeria

Urban mobility in Nigeria has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, driven by rapid urbanization, population growth, and the inadequacy of formal public transport systems. In Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), motorcycles (*okada*) and tricycles (*keke NAPEP*) have emerged as dominant modes of transport, especially in peri-urban and underserved areas. While these informal transport systems offer affordable and flexible mobility, they also pose serious challenges to road safety, traffic management, and urban security. This essay explores two critical dimensions of this issue: the common road use behaviors of motorcycle and tricycle operators and their impact on traffic safety, and the role of policy enforcement, operator training, and infrastructure in shaping mobility practices.

i. Common Road Use Behaviors of Motorcycle and Tricycle Operators in Abuja and Their Impact on Traffic Safety and Accident Rates

Motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja exhibit a range of road use behaviors that contribute significantly to road traffic accidents (RTAs) and urban safety risks. These behaviors include reckless driving, frequent violation of traffic rules, overloading of passengers, and neglect of safety gear such as helmets. According to Uhegbu and Tight (2021) a survey of road users in Abuja revealed that 64% admitted to not using seatbelts, while one-third admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol. Among motorcycle riders, only 37% reported consistent helmet use, despite awareness of its importance.

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) reported that between 2011 and 2016, Nigeria recorded 69,941 crashes resulting in 35,179 fatalities an average of 16 deaths per day. In 2021 alone, 20,596 RTAs were documented nationwide, with motorcycles and tricycles contributing significantly to these figures. Although Abuja-specific data is limited, the city mirrors national trends, with informal operators frequently involved in collisions due to poor driving habits and lack of training.

Ameen et al. (2025) conducted a study in Ilorin-South Local Government Area, which found that 53.6% of commercial tricyclists had experienced RTAs, with side collisions (42.2%) being the most common. Alarming, 60.3% of these operators lacked valid driving licenses, and younger drivers (≤ 20 years) were statistically more likely to be involved in accidents ($\chi^2 = 14.450$, $p = 0.008$). These findings underscore the direct link between unsafe road use behaviors and accident prevalence. Globally, powered two- and three-wheelers account for 21% of RTA

deaths, with Sub-Saharan Africa contributing disproportionately to this figure. In Abuja, the vulnerability of motorcycle and tricycle operators is heightened by the absence of protective infrastructure and the chaotic nature of urban traffic. Pedestrians and passengers are also at risk, as informal operators often disregard traffic signals, drive against traffic, and operate in congested zones without proper safety measures.

ii. Role of Policy Enforcement, Operator Training, and Urban Infrastructure in Shaping Mobility Practices

The prevalence of unsafe mobility practices among informal transport operators in Abuja is not merely a behavioral issue it is deeply rooted in systemic failures related to policy enforcement, operator training, and urban infrastructure. While traffic laws exist, their enforcement is inconsistent and often undermined by corruption, lack of resources, and institutional fragmentation. Uhegbu and Tight (2021) recommend equipping road safety agents with tools such as speed guns and breathalyzers to enhance enforcement and deter risky behaviors.

The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) which oversees many informal operators, lacks a standardized code of conduct and operates with limited oversight. Jimoh (2025) argues that reforming Nigeria's disorganized public transport system requires institutional collaboration and the formalization of union activities. Without clear regulatory frameworks and accountability mechanisms, informal operators continue to operate with impunity, endangering themselves and other road users.

Operator training is another critical gap. In Ilorin, only 39.7% of tricyclists had valid licenses, and many had never attended safety workshops. A study in Ibadan revealed that while 86% of motorcycle riders had good knowledge of traffic rules, only 31% were in full compliance (Mumuni et al., 2023). This discrepancy between awareness and practice highlights the need for structured training programs that go beyond basic licensing. The Chartered Institute of Transport Administration of Nigeria (CIOTA) has proposed training modules covering driver ethics, safety, vehicle maintenance, and customer service, but implementation remains limited.

Urban infrastructure in Abuja further compounds the problem. Although the city's master plan included provisions for rail transit and multi-lane highways, the rail system remains non-functional, and road infrastructure is inadequate for mixed traffic. Informal operators are forced to navigate narrow, congested roads, increasing the risk of collisions. Nuhu et al. (2024) advocate for Transit-Oriented Development

(TOD) strategies, which emphasize compact, connected, and coordinated urban design to reduce congestion and improve safety.

The absence of dedicated lanes for motorcycles and tricycles forces them to compete with larger vehicles, creating chaotic traffic conditions. Poor road signage, lack of pedestrian crossings, and inadequate lighting further exacerbate safety risks. Without significant investment in infrastructure and urban planning, informal transport systems will continue to operate in a high-risk environment.

The road use practices of motorcycle and tricycle operators in Abuja reflect a complex interplay of behavioral, regulatory, and infrastructural factors. While these informal transport systems provide essential mobility for thousands of residents, they also contribute to high accident rates and urban safety challenges. Addressing these issues requires a multi-pronged approach that includes stricter policy enforcement, comprehensive operator training, and strategic investment in urban infrastructure. By integrating informal transport into broader mobility planning and governance frameworks, Abuja can move toward a safer, more inclusive, and sustainable urban transport system.

Conclusion

The informal transport sector in Abuja, dominated by motorcycle and tricycle operators, plays a vital role in bridging mobility gaps for thousands of residents. However, the sector's growth has come with significant safety and regulatory challenges. Common road use behaviors such as reckless driving, non-compliance with traffic laws, and inadequate use of safety gear have contributed to rising accident rates and urban insecurity. These behaviors are not isolated choices but are shaped by broader systemic issues, including weak policy enforcement, lack of operator training, and poor urban infrastructure.

The findings of this study underscore the urgent need for a coordinated and evidence-based approach to managing informal transport in Abuja. Without strategic intervention, the city risks perpetuating a cycle of unsafe mobility, strained public health systems, and inefficient urban transport. A sustainable solution must balance the economic realities of informal operators with the imperative of public safety and urban order.

Recommendations

1. Establish a Mandatory Licensing and Training Program for Informal Operators

The government, in collaboration with transport unions and civil society, should implement a standardized training and licensing scheme for all motorcycle and tricycle operators. This program should include modules on traffic laws, defensive driving, first aid, and customer service. Certification should be tied to digital registration to ensure traceability and accountability. This will not only improve safety compliance but also professionalize the sector.

2. Invest in Dedicated Infrastructure and Enforce Zonal Restrictions

Urban planners should prioritize the construction of dedicated lanes for motorcycles and tricycles, especially in high-traffic corridors. Additionally, enforcement agencies must uphold zonal restrictions such as bans in central business districts while providing alternative routes and designated parking areas. Infrastructure upgrades must be paired with consistent enforcement to reduce congestion and minimize collision risks.

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MEDIA AND GRASSROOTS GOVERNANCE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY: THE CASE OF PATANI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA COUNCIL, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper investigated the intricate relationship between media dynamics and grassroots governance within the context of a democratic society, focusing on Patani Local Government Area Council (LGA) in Delta State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to determine the level the citizens of the LGA enjoy the dividends of democracy; investigate the extent the LGA is involved in green energy drive, and ascertain if the media have been holding those in governance positions in the LGA accountable. Quantitative research method was adopted to analyse the multifarious ways in which media interact with grassroots governance. The Paper drew its theoretical framework from the Agenda Setting Theory. The study found that the citizens of the LGA have not enjoying the dividends of democracy; that the LGA is not involved in green energy drive at all, and that the media have not holding those in governance positions in the LGA accountable. The study concluded that the findings contribute to the academic discourse on media and governance in democratic societies, offering nuanced perspectives on the role of media in shaping the dynamics of local governance. It was therefore recommended that those in leadership positions in Nigeria, especially at the local government level, should strive at all times to deliver the dividend of democracy to the citizens. Also, government at all levels in Nigeria should invest massively in renewable energy infrastructure. Likewise, the media should wake up to their responsibility of being the watchdog of the society.

Keywords: *Democratic Society, Governance, Grassroots, Local government, Media*

Introduction

In the intricate tapestry of democratic societies, the role of media in shaping and influencing grassroots governance cannot be overstated. The symbiotic relationship between the two constructs forms a cornerstone of a vibrant and participatory

democratic system. This paper endeavoured to unravel the nuanced dynamics between media and grassroots governance within the context of the Patani Local Government Area Council, situated in the heart of Delta State, Nigeria. Against a backdrop of cultural diversity and socio-economic complexities, this study delved into the multifaceted interactions that define the landscape of local governance and media in this particular region.

The importance of grassroots governance lies in its proximity to the everyday lives of citizens, acting as a crucible where policies, services, and civic participation converge. Simultaneously, media, with their far-reaching influence and role as the harbinger of information, play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and fostering an informed citizenry. There is an interplay between media and grassroots governance in a democratic society such as Nigeria's, and this can either fortify or strain the foundational pillars of democratic principles.

Patani Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the LGAs in Delta State, Nigeria. Nigeria's Niger Delta region, which Patani LGA is part of, is not only rich in the production of viable mineral resources like crude oil, it is also rich in the production of varied agricultural products like fish, livestock, yam, plantain, palm oil, and others, in large commercial quantities. It has various sizes of rivers that can be used to generate hydropower. It also has ethanol in abundance, and ethanol can be used to produce green energy. The justification of the choice of Patani Local Government Area is because local governments are the closest and nearest arm of government to the Nigerian citizens at the grassroots. It is expected that people can have a semblance of the effects of government activities that impacts their lives through this arm of government.

Patani Local Government Area Council, with its rich cultural tapestry and unique socio-economic challenges, serves as an illuminating case study. This region encapsulates the complexities that characterise many local governments in Nigeria, where the amalgamation of diverse ethnicities, languages, and historical trajectories converges at the grassroots level. Against this backdrop, the paper aimed to dissect the ways in which media, encompassing both traditional and digital platforms, interfaces with the mechanisms of local governance.

The theoretical underpinnings of this study drew from communication studies, political science, and local governance literature. By integrating these diverse perspectives, the researcher sought to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of media in shaping civic engagement, public discourse, and policy implementation

at the local level. In doing so, the study aimed to contribute to the broader academic discourse on media and governance, with a specific focus on the grassroots dynamics within democratic societies.

Statement of the Problem

In a place such as the Patani Local Government Area (LGA) in Delta State, Nigeria, there exists a very complex interplay between media dynamics and grassroots governance, which warrants serious concern and investigation. At present, several literatures have been developed. Hence, this research will help to add to the existing knowledge in the given issue. Despite the fundamental role of media in promoting transparency, accountability, facilitating governance processes by providing information, and citizen participation in governance, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the impact of media on grassroots governance in Nigeria.

Limited access to reliable and timely information is a significant concern in Patani LGA, exacerbated by infrastructural challenges and limited media penetration. This lack of access hampers citizens' ability to make informed decisions and hold local government officials accountable. Moreover, media representation and bias pose additional challenges, as outlets may exhibit preferences or overlook critical governance issues, leading to a skewed perception among the populace.

These gaps are particularly evident in the context of local government areas, which are often characterised by weak institutional capacity, limited resources, and low citizen engagement. Moreover, the existing literature on media and governance tends to focus on the national level, neglecting the local dynamics of governance and the role of media in shaping them.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between media and grassroots governance in Patani Local Government Area Council, Delta State, Nigeria, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities for media to enhance citizen participation, accountability, and transparency in local governance. By addressing this gap in the literature, this study sought to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of the role of media in promoting democratic governance at the grassroots level in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study:

The study set out to determine:

- i. the level the citizens of Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, enjoy the dividends of democracy,

- ii. investigate the extent Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria is involved in green energy drive, and
- iii. ascertain if the media have been holding those in governance positions in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, accountable

Literature Review

Theoretical Bases

This study was based on Agenda Setting Theory. This theory is a concept in mass communication and political science that describes the ability of the news media to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda. In other words, the media can determine what a public issue becomes by simply informing the public about it (Ajakaiye, Rachael, Owofe, Ayantunji, Apalowo, & Akerele-Popoola, 2023). The theory has three main components:

1. Agenda-setting: The media can influence the public's perception of the relative importance of different issues by deciding which issues to cover and how much coverage to give them
2. Agenda-building: The media can also shape the public's understanding of an issue by framing it in a particular way, emphasising certain aspects and downplaying others (Odunlami, 2019)
3. Agenda-melding: This is a more recent development in the agenda-setting theory, which focuses on the receivers of media messages and their motivations for adopting agendas and affiliating with other persons. (Odunlami, 2019).

The agenda-setting theory, a concept in mass communication and political science, posits that the media have the power to influence the importance placed on the issues of the public agenda. This theory is highly relevant to the paper titled "Media and Grassroots Governance in a Democratic Society: the case of Patani Local Government Area Council, Delta State, Nigeria." The study can utilise the agenda-setting theory to examine how the media influences the attention given to local governance issues in Patani LGA, thereby shaping public perception and government priorities.

By understanding the media's role in determining the salience of local governance issues, the paper can provide insights into how the media can be leveraged to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in grassroots governance, which are essential aspects of a democratic society. The agenda-setting theory will thus serve as a valuable framework for analysing the relationship

between the media and grassroots governance in the context of the Patani Local Government Area Council.

The Democratic Setting in Nigeria

Nigeria has a democratic constitution with a federal system modeled on the United States. The executive is headed by the president, the legislature is formed by the National Assembly of Senate and House of Representatives, and the judiciary is headed by a supreme court (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022). However, Nigeria's democracy has been characterised as fragile and fluctuating since independence. The country has struggled to create a sense of national unity due to its diverse ethnic groups, with over 200 ethnic groups incorporating the nation. Also, Nigeria has experienced a long and troubled relationship with its military, with almost half of its independent existence being under military rule. Despite the progress in democratic processes and competitive elections, Nigeria faces challenges such as ethnic cleavages, over centralisation, lack of transparency, lack of economic diversification, and corruption, which have impacted the strength of its democracy (Omo-Bare, 2006, USAID, 2016).

The democratic setting in Nigeria is also influenced by the country's diverse and complex social, cultural, and religious landscape. The high incidence of ethnonationalism has posed challenges to national unity, as different ethnic and religious groups clamor for control of the government and scarce resources. This has led to what has been referred to as "democratic paralysis," particularly due to the difficulty in establishing truly national political parties (Omo-Bare, 2006).

Despite these challenges, Nigeria has made progress in its democratic journey, with improvements in the transparency of elections, the presence of a civil society, and the heightened use of media for political issues. However, roadblocks to a strong democracy still exist, including conflict triggered by political competition and communal, ethnic, and religious tensions (USAID, 2016).

Media and Governance in Nigeria

The media, politics, and governance in Nigeria are intertwined in a complex manner. Guanah (2021a) declares that the media are crucial to the governance of any nation national government, functioning alongside politics as an inherent part of any political system and process. Nigeria's media landscape is characterised by a mix of state and private broadcasters, as well as popular international brands like the BBC and CNN (Adeyemo & Roper, 2022). The role of the media in the advancement of democracy and good governance in Nigeria has been a subject of study, with research highlighting the significant roles played by social media in electioneering

campaigns, virtual monitoring of election conduct, and the dissemination of post-election results (Igbashangev, Abdullahi, & Terungwa Basil, 2023). The media have also been identified as platforms for citizens to voice their opinions and concerns, as evidenced by the heightened use of media during the #EndSARS protest, indicating a sense of freedom for the public to express their views. (Dark, 2020).

However, the media's influence on governance in Nigeria is not without challenges. The country's diverse ethnic and religious landscape has led to what has been referred to as "democratic paralysis," making it difficult to establish truly national political parties and leading to overcentralization and lack of transparency (Omo-Bare, 2006). Moreover, the media's role in shaping public opinion and influencing government policies is impacted by factors such as ethnic cleavages, lack of economic diversification, and corruption (Omo-Bare, 2006).

In essence, the media play a significant role in shaping the democratic and governance landscape in Nigeria, serving as a platform for political communication, citizen engagement, and the dissemination of information. However, the media also grapple with challenges related to the country's diverse social and political dynamics, which can impact its effectiveness in promoting good governance and democratic values.

Government's Obligations to Provide the Needs of Citizens

The obligations of the government to provide for the needs of citizens are rooted in the principles of democracy and human rights. In a democratic society, the government is responsible for ensuring the well-being of its citizens, providing essential services, and protecting their rights and freedoms. Some of the key obligations of the government in this regard include:

1. **Protection of human rights:** The government is obligated to protect the fundamental human rights of its citizens, such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person. This includes ensuring that citizens are not subjected to arbitrary arrests, detentions, or torture (Maloy & Trust, 2020).
2. **Provision of essential services:** The government is responsible for providing essential services to its citizens, such as healthcare, education, and social welfare programs. These services are crucial for the well-being and development of the population (Maloy & Trust, 2020).

3. **Promotion of economic development:** The government should work towards promoting economic development and reducing poverty, as these factors are closely linked to the overall well-being of citizens (Maloy & Trust, 2020).
4. **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** The government should be transparent in its operations and accountable to its citizens. This includes providing regular updates on the progress of development projects and addressing the concerns of citizens (Maloy & Trust, 2020).
5. **Respect for the rule of law:** The government should uphold the rule of law and ensure that all citizens are treated equally before the law. This includes protecting the rights of minorities and ensuring that the legal system is fair and impartial (Maloy & Trust, 2020).
6. **Promotion of civic participation:** The government should encourage and support civic participation among its citizens, as this is essential for the functioning of a democratic society. This includes promoting the right to vote, serving on juries, and engaging in public discourse (Maloy & Trust, 2020).

The government's obligations to provide for the needs of citizens are centered around the protection of human rights, the provision of essential services, the promotion of economic development, ensuring transparency and accountability, respecting the rule of law, and promoting civic participation. These obligations are crucial for the well-being and development of citizens in a democratic society.

Exploring the Potentials of Green Energy in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Green energy comes from renewable sources including sunlight, wind, and water. Although renewable and green energy are different, TWI (2024) says it often comes from renewable energy sources. These energy sources do not release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Patani LGA is part of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and the region holds significant potential for the development of green energy, particularly in the areas of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. Nigeria, as a whole, has abundant renewable resources such as biomass, hydro, solar, and wind energy, most of which remain underutilised (Chanchangi, 2023).

The region's abundant sunshine makes it particularly suitable for solar energy generation, with an average of 6.5 hours of sunshine daily and an average flux of 5 (Clean Technology Hub- CTH, 2023). Furthermore, the potential for wind energy is

perceived to be abundant in the northern part of Nigeria, while hydropower, the country's major source of electricity generation, can be found throughout the nation due to its large rivers, waterfalls, and dams (Adeyanju, 2020).

The development of green energy in the Niger Delta region is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, the region has been heavily impacted by environmental degradation and climate change, largely due to the activities of the oil and gas industry. Transitioning to green energy sources can help mitigate the environmental damage caused by traditional energy production, such as oil spillage and gas flaring (Nwozor, Olanrewaju, Oshewolo & Iseolorunkanmi, 2021). Furthermore, the development of renewable energy sources in the region can contribute to the prosperity and energy security of the state and the nation as a whole, in line with the constitutional authority of state governments to provide for and regulate their electricity systems (CTH, 2023).

However, there are barriers to the sustainable electrification of the Niger Delta region, including the lack of infrastructure and the dominance of the oil and gas industry. To overcome these barriers, practicable policy pathways have been suggested, emphasising the need to explore and develop the region's renewable energy sources to aid the government's efforts and contribute to the socio-economic development of the country (Diemuodeke & Briggs, 2018).

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria possesses significant potential for the development of green energy, particularly in the areas of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. The transition to renewable energy sources in the region is essential for mitigating environmental damage, ensuring energy security, and contributing to the socio-economic development of the country.

How the Media Can Hold Those in Positions of Authority Responsible

The media are fundamental pillars of democratic societies, playing vital roles in informing the public, shaping public opinion, and holding those in power accountable. The function includes the gathering, verification, synthesis, and dissemination of news and information to the public through various media channels. They serve as a bridge between the events and issues that shape the world and the audiences seeking reliable, accurate, and timely information. The primary purpose of journalism is to foster an informed citizenry, empowering individuals to make critical decisions and participate actively in civic life.

Journalism serves as the "Fourth Estate," acting as a watchdog on government institutions, businesses, and other power centres. It plays a pivotal role in safeguarding democracy by ensuring transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making. Through investigative reporting and in-depth analysis, journalists shed light on important issues, giving a voice to marginalised communities and holding those in authority accountable for their actions (McNair, 2020). The mass media are essential for developing a nation. Governments would struggle to function without the effective use of the media.

The media play vital role in holding those in positions of authority in government responsible through various mechanisms. This includes fostering transparency, promoting public scrutiny, and serving as a watchdog to ensure good governance. By providing relevant and reliable information, the media help make the actions of public officials transparent to the public, which in turn improves government accountability and enhances public trust (Gordon, 2000). Also, media coverage filters information and affects political accountability and policy, thereby influencing the behavior of those in power (Strömberg, 2015).

Furthermore, an independent and pluralistic media landscape, with quality journalism adhering to ethical standards, promotes a culture of accountability, which is associated with improved development outcomes, increased adherence to human rights, and the promotion of good governance (FreePress, 2018). Generally, the media's role in fostering accountability is essential for building a society in which the powerful are accountable to the public, and where information is shared transparently, ultimately contributing to the promotion of good governance and the public's trust in government (FreePress, n.d).

Methodology

A survey research design that focused on quantitative method meant to answer research questions was adopted for this study. Surveys were conducted among local government officials, community leaders, and citizens to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of grassroots governance as it relates to Patani LGA. This provided rich, contextualized insights into the dynamics of media-governance interactions. It also provided a broader understanding of the context in which media coverage occurs.

The population of this study is 92, 400, made up of the projected population of Patani LGA (City Population, 2022). The sample size was determined using Cozby's (2004) Precision of Estimate table which was calculated using conservative

assumptions about the nature of the true population values. It states that $\pm 5\%$, a population of over 50,000 shall have a sample size of 381. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 381. Patani LGA is divided into ten (10) Wards. Thirty-eight (38) respondents were selected from nine of the LGAs while thirty-nine (39) respondents were selected from Abari Ward, being the first Ward.

The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample size from each Ward because the researcher had to choose his samples in stages until he got the required sample. The main goal for using the multi-stage sampling technique was to ensure that the researcher focused on particular characteristics of the population that are of interest which will best enable answers to his research questions. This technique is one that espouses the idea that researchers employ different techniques at different stages to logically arrive at sample size. To give a sense of representation, this research randomly communities, and purposively selected the respondents from the chosen communities.

A 12-Item structured questionnaire was designed to facilitate the acquisition of relevant and consistent data. The questionnaire helped to produce accurate and relevant data which were easy to analyse by the researcher. Out of the 381 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, only 370 (97.11%) copies were retrieved and found usable. The results of the collated data are presented below in form of tables and percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Level the citizens of Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, enjoy the dividends of democracy,

Responses	Frequency	%
Very high	40	10.81
High	71	19.19
Can't tell	50	13.51
Low	115	31.08
Very low	94	25.41
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

KEYS: Very high- 90% - 100%; High- 89% - 70%; Can't tell - 50% - 69%; Low- 40% - 49%; Very Low- 1% - 39%.

It can be deduced from Table I that the citizens of Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, are not fully enjoying the dividends of democracy.

Table 2: The extent Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria is involved in green energy drive.

Responses	Frequency	%
Very High Extent	3	0.81
High Extent	2	0.54
Can't tell	5	1.35
Low Extent	183	49.46
Very Low Extent	177	47.84
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

KEYS: Very High Extent- 90% - 100%; High Extent- 89% - 70%; Can't tell- 50% - 69%; Low Extent- 40% - 49%; Very Low Extent- 1% - 39%.

Table 2 clearly shows that Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria is in no way involved in green energy drive.

Table 3: Media have been holding those in governance positions in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, accountable

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	26	51.94
Agree	55	31.40
Undecided	28	2.32
Disagree	104	12.79
Strongly Disagree	157	1.55
Total	370	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Likert - type five points rating scale and dichotomous was used: 5= Strongly Agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3= Undecided (U), 2= Strongly Disagree (SD), and 1= Disagree (D) responses as well as open-ended questions.

The data presented in Table 3 imply that the media have not been playing their watchdog role in the society by holding those in governance positions in Patani Local Government area of Delta State, Nigeria, accountable.

Discussion of findings

This study found that the citizens of Patani Local Government Area council of Delta State, Nigeria, have not enjoying the dividends of democracy. The finding is similar to that of Okeshola and Igba (2012) whose study in Buruku Local Government Area of Benue State highlights that 100% of the respondents agreed that the lack of enjoyment of the dividends of democracy in Nigeria is due to corruption in governance. It also mentions other factors such as godfatherism and electoral malpractices as reasons for the non-enjoyment of these dividends. This assertion is supported by Adebowale (2023) who states that the so-called dividends of democracy have not yet been provided for the majority of Nigerians, attributing this to bad leadership.

Guanah (2021b) hitherto, opines that, “Some African leaders are distracted by their job and fail to fulfill their promises of democracy during campaigns” (p. 21). Also, *The Conversation* states that Nigeria has not delivered democracy for its people because the country has been plagued by long-standing incidents of human rights abuses, particularly by a specialized unit of the Nigeria Police - the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, otherwise known as SARS. The #EndSARS movement, which began in 2020, was a response to these abuses (The Conversation, 2020).

The finding of this present study clearly revealed that despite the fact that Nigeria has been under the democratic rule since 1999, most Nigerians, especially those at the grassroots as the citizens of Patani LGA have not been enjoying the dividends of democracy. This shows that most politicians do not seek political offices to genuinely serve their constituency, but rather for self-gain, hence Guanah (2022a) refers to such politicians as *Politicspreneurs*. The study also found that Patani Local Government Area Council of Delta State, Nigeria is not involved in green energy drive at all. However, there are indications that Nigeria as a country is actively engaged in initiatives related to renewable energy and green transition. According to a report by the World Economic Forum, Nigeria is tackling barriers to the green energy transition (Ibrahim & Zeydler, 2023). The report highlights that Nigeria’s

energy transition is fraught with many challenges, but the Nigerian government plans to achieve universal energy access by 2030.

In addition, Nigeria Energy Transition Plan- NETP (2022) highlights that the Nigerian government is working on a home-grown, data-backed, multipronged strategy developed for the achievement of net-zero emissions in terms of the nation's energy consumption. In the same vein, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) has developed a renewable energy roadmap for Nigeria in collaboration with the Energy Commission of Nigeria. The roadmap analyses the additional renewable energy deployment potential up to the year 2050, with an additional 2030 focus to aid shorter-term policy development (IRENA, 2023). If the federal government of Nigeria carries Patani LGA along with the other 773 LGAs along in its efforts for the deployment of renewable energy like green energy, it will be a big plus for the country.

Lastly, this study found that the media have not holding those in governance positions in Patani Local Government area council of Delta State, Nigeria, accountable. This finding aligns with the stands of Busari and Amedu (2022) and Ejere (2013) that argue that the Nigerian media have not been effective in holding those in governance positions accountable due to factors such as ownership structure, lack of professionalism, inadequate legal framework, lack of independence, and inadequate resources. Nzeribe (2023) likewise identifies lack of transparency and accountability in the Nigerian democratic structures, which is fueled by widespread corruption and the absence of transparency.

Guanah (2022b) emphasises that the media, apart from their primary functions of informing, entertaining and educating the citizenry, are expected to be the mouthpieces and eyes of the public, especially in a democratic setting like we have in Nigeria at present. The media are expected to be effective in fostering transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the broader dynamics of democratic governance at all levels of governance, especially at the local level. The governed will surely engage in citizen journalism to express how they feel about governance if the conventional media fail in their roles in holding those in position of leadership accountable. They can adequately utilise the various social media available to do this.

Conclusion

Effective grassroots governance relies on active citizen engagement and participation, yet factors such as low literacy rates, socio-economic disparities, and

cultural barriers hinder meaningful civic involvement in Patani LGA, intensifying governance challenges. Likewise, the coexistence of traditional and new media platforms introduces both opportunities and challenges.

Understanding how these mediums interact and influence public opinion is crucial for developing effective democratic governance strategies. Transparency and accountability, fundamental to democratic governance, are often lacking in Patani LGA, with instances of opacity in government operations and insufficient mechanisms for citizen oversight undermining trust in local institutions. Moreover, amidst socio-political unrest and security concerns, media coverage and communication strategies play a critical role in shaping public perceptions and responses to governance challenges.

Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to the academic discourse on media and governance in democratic societies, offering nuanced perspectives on the role of media in shaping the dynamics of local governance. The paper explored the role of media in promoting grassroots governance in a democratic society, using the case of Patani Local Government Area Council as an example. It examined the relationship between media, grassroots governance, and democratic values, focusing on how the media can be used to enhance transparency, accountability, and participation in local governance. Moreover, the paper provided practical recommendations for policymakers, media practitioners, and community leaders in Patani and similar contexts, aiming to enhance the symbiotic relationship between media and grassroots governance for the benefit of democratic processes and societal development.

Recommendations

- i. Those in leadership positions in Nigeria, especially at the local government level, should strive at all times to deliver the dividend of democracy to the citizens.
- ii. Government at all levels in Nigeria should invest massively in renewable energy infrastructure, particularly in the Niger Delta region, to harness the potential of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. This will help mitigate environmental damage caused by traditional energy production and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.
- iii. The media should wake up to their responsibility of being the watchdog of the society, rather than being the lapdogs of politicians who superintend at local

governments; taking into consideration that the local government is the closest stratum of government to the Nigerian citizens at the grassroots.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING IN EDO STATE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA'S INTERNAL SECURITY

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Abstract

Child trafficking remains a persistent and deeply troubling issue in Nigeria, with Edo State identified as a major source region for trafficked children, particularly girls. Despite national and international efforts to combat human trafficking, the practice continues to thrive, driven by entrenched socio-economic vulnerabilities and institutional weaknesses. The primary objectives of this research are to identify and analyze the socio-economic determinants such as poverty, unemployment, and low education levels—that contribute to child trafficking in Edo State, and examine the implications of these factors for Nigeria's internal security architecture. To guide the analysis, the study adopts a multi-theoretical framework comprising Structural Functionalism, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and Human Security Theory. These frameworks collectively illuminate how institutional breakdowns, environmental systems, and individual vulnerabilities interact to perpetuate trafficking and compromise national stability. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative desk/document analysis, drawing on government reports, academic literature, NGO publications, and international agency data. Empirical findings reveal that over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line (NBS, 2020), youth unemployment exceeds 42% (NBS, 2021), and Nigeria has over 10.5 million out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2020)—conditions that traffickers exploit with alarming efficiency. Studies by Adepoju (2005), Aghatise (2004), and Okonofua et al. (2004) confirm that trafficked children often originate from economically disadvantaged, poorly educated households, and are lured by false promises of employment or education. The study concludes that child trafficking in Edo State is both a socio-economic and security crisis. It undermines human development, fuels transnational organized crime, and weakens institutional legitimacy. To address this, the research

recommends a multi-sectoral strategy involving legal reform, economic empowerment, expanded access to education, enhanced border control, and community-based interventions. These measures are essential to protect vulnerable children, restore public trust, and strengthen Nigeria's internal security framework.

Keywords: Child Trafficking, Socio-Economic Determinants, Internal Security, Poverty, Nigeria

Introduction

Child trafficking remains one of the most pressing human rights violations in Nigeria, with Edo State recognized as a major source, transit, and destination hub for trafficked children. Defined by the United Nations as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation, child trafficking in Nigeria is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors (UNODC, 2020). In Edo State, poverty, unemployment, family disintegration, and weak law enforcement have created fertile ground for trafficking networks to thrive. The phenomenon is not only a humanitarian crisis but also a national security concern, as it undermines social stability, fuels organized crime, and erodes public trust in governance.

Edo State's notoriety in global trafficking discourse is well documented. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2022) over 60% of Nigerian victims of trafficking repatriated from Europe originate from Edo State, particularly from Benin City and surrounding rural communities. These children are often lured with promises of education, employment, or better living conditions, only to be subjected to forced labor, sexual exploitation, and servitude. The socio-economic landscape of Edo State marked by high youth unemployment (estimated at 47.3% by NBS, 2023), low literacy rates in rural areas, and limited access to social services creates a vulnerability matrix that traffickers exploit with precision.

The implications of child trafficking extend beyond individual suffering. It threatens Nigeria's internal security by fueling transnational criminal networks, undermining border control, and contributing to the proliferation of unregulated migration. Trafficked children often become victims of further exploitation, radicalization, or criminal recruitment, posing long-term risks to national cohesion and development. Moreover, the erosion of family structures and community trust caused by trafficking weakens local governance and impedes efforts to build resilient societies.

Despite the existence of legal frameworks such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (2015) and the efforts of agencies

like NAPTIP, enforcement remains inconsistent, and preventive measures are underfunded. This study seeks to explore the socio-economic determinants of child trafficking in Edo State and assess their implications for Nigeria's internal security. By identifying root causes and systemic gaps, the research aims to inform policy interventions that are both preventive and rehabilitative.

Problem Statement

Child trafficking in Edo State has reached alarming proportions, with thousands of children annually subjected to exploitation both within Nigeria and across international borders. While legal and institutional frameworks exist to combat trafficking, the persistence and growth of the phenomenon suggest deeper structural issues. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and family breakdown continue to drive vulnerable children into the hands of traffickers. These conditions are exacerbated by weak law enforcement, porous borders, and limited public awareness.

The problem is compounded by the security implications of trafficking. Trafficked children are often absorbed into criminal networks, used for illicit trade, or subjected to radicalization, thereby contributing to internal instability. The failure to address the socio-economic roots of trafficking not only perpetuates human suffering but also undermines Nigeria's national security architecture. Without a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic drivers and their security consequences, policy responses will remain reactive and ineffective.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill a critical gap by examining the socio-economic determinants of child trafficking in Edo State and evaluating their impact on Nigeria's internal security. It aims to provide evidence-based insights that can guide strategic interventions, strengthen institutional responses, and promote community resilience.

Research Questions

- i. What are the key socio-economic factors contributing to the prevalence of child trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria?
- ii. How does child trafficking in Edo State impact Nigeria's internal security and national development?

Research Objectives

- i. To analyze the socio-economic determinants—such as poverty, unemployment, and education levels—that influence child trafficking in Edo State.
- ii. To examine the implications of child trafficking on Nigeria's internal security, including its links to organized crime, border control challenges, and erosion of public trust in institutions.

Conceptual Clarifications

Child Trafficking

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2000) defines child trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, regardless of the use of force, coercion, or deception.

International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017) posited that child trafficking involves the movement of children for exploitative purposes, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude, often under deceptive or coercive conditions. According to Adepoju (2005) child trafficking in West Africa is a form of modern slavery where children are moved across borders or within countries for economic exploitation, often with the complicity of family members.

To UNICEF (2007) trafficking of children is a violation of children's rights that involves their recruitment and movement for the purpose of exploitation, often under conditions that threaten their health, safety, and development. For this study, child trafficking refers to any act of recruiting, transporting, or harboring children in Edo State for exploitative purposes such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, or domestic servitude, whether within Nigeria or across borders.

Socio-Economic Determinants

World Health Organization (WHO, 2008) sees socio-economic determinants as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources. According to Sen (1999) socio-economic factors are the material and social conditions that influence individuals' capabilities and choices, including income, education, and employment.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that these determinants are part of the ecological systems that affect human development, including economic status, family structure, and access to social services. Bales (2007) argued that socio-economic determinants

of trafficking include poverty, lack of education, unemployment, and social exclusion, which create vulnerability to exploitation.

In this study, socio-economic determinants refer to poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, and gender inequality in Edo State that increase the risk of children being trafficked.

Internal Security

According to Achumba, Ighomereho et al., (2013) internal security is the protection of citizens, institutions, and property within a nation from threats such as crime, insurgency, and civil unrest. Onuoha (2006) defines internal security encompasses the mechanisms and institutions that maintain law and order, prevent internal threats, and ensure national stability.

Alemika (2013) noted that it refers to the capacity of the state to prevent and respond to threats that undermine peace, public safety, and the rule of law. Nte (2011) also defines internal security as involving the safeguarding of a nation's internal environment from criminal activities, including trafficking, terrorism, and corruption.

For this research, internal security refers to Nigeria's ability to prevent and respond to child trafficking in Edo State through law enforcement, border control, and institutional governance.

Human Security

UNDP (1994) defines human security as the protection of individuals from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, and from sudden disruptions in daily life. Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy (2007) observed that human security shifts the focus from state security to individual well-being, emphasizing freedom from fear and freedom from want. According to King & Murray (2001) it is a condition where individuals have the freedom and capacity to live with dignity, free from violence and poverty.

Ogata & Sen (2003) opined that human security is about protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and empowering them to take charge of their lives.

In this study, human security refers to the protection of trafficked children in Edo State from exploitation, abuse, and deprivation, ensuring their physical, psychological, and social well-being.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies consistently highlight poverty and illiteracy as major drivers of child trafficking in Nigeria, particularly in Edo State. Adepoju (2005) found that economic hardship and lack of education are key factors pushing families to send children abroad under false pretenses. His study revealed that traffickers often exploit rural communities where awareness of trafficking risks is low and economic desperation is high.

Similarly, Aghatise (2004) emphasized that poverty and gender inequality contribute to the trafficking of young girls from Edo State to Europe for sexual exploitation. Her research showed that many victims were deceived by promises of education or employment, only to be forced into prostitution. Ezeilo (2007) conducted qualitative interviews with trafficking survivors in Edo State, revealing that many were recruited by trusted individuals, including family members. Her study underscored the role of cultural norms and patriarchal structures in facilitating trafficking. Survivors reported psychological trauma, social stigma, and lack of reintegration support upon return.

Okonofua et al. (2004) also explored the experiences of trafficked girls and found that most came from large, impoverished families with limited educational opportunities. Their research called for community-based interventions and gender-sensitive policies to address the root causes of trafficking.

Omotere (2011) conducted a study in junior secondary schools in Edo State to assess the psychological and academic adjustment of trafficked children. Using Sherif and Sherif's Stress Psychosocial Theory, the study found that trafficked children exhibited significantly higher levels of depression and lower academic performance compared to their peers. The findings emphasized the need for psychosocial support and educational reintegration programs.

Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013) examined Nigeria's internal security challenges and found that weak law enforcement and corruption hinder efforts to combat trafficking. Their study revealed that traffickers often operate with impunity due to poor inter-agency coordination and lack of resources.

Alemika (2013) also criticized Nigeria's criminal justice system for failing to prosecute traffickers effectively. He argued that institutional weaknesses and lack of political will undermine the country's anti-trafficking laws, including the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015. Onuoha (2006) explored the link between trafficking and transnational organized crime, noting that trafficking syndicates in Nigeria are often connected to broader

criminal networks involved in drug smuggling and money laundering. His study emphasized that child trafficking undermines border control and erodes public trust in law enforcement.

Nte (2011) added that the failure to protect vulnerable populations, especially children, contributes to social instability and weakens Nigeria's internal security architecture. He called for stronger institutional frameworks and community engagement to combat trafficking.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the socio-economic drivers of child trafficking and its implications for internal security in Nigeria, this study draws upon three interrelated theories: Structural Functionalism, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and Human Security Theory. These frameworks provide a multidimensional lens for analyzing the individual, societal, and institutional factors that perpetuate trafficking.

Structural Functionalism

Propounded by Émile Durkheim (1893) and further developed by Talcott Parsons (1951). The theory posits that society is a complex system whose parts work together to promote stability and social order. When institutions fail to perform their functions—such as education, law enforcement, and family social problems like trafficking emerge.

In Edo State, the breakdown of key social institutions (e.g., schools, families, and law enforcement) contributes to child trafficking. Poverty, unemployment, and weak legal enforcement are symptoms of institutional dysfunction. Structural functionalism helps explain how these systemic failures create vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Propounded by Bronfenbrenner (1979) the theory holds that human development is influenced by multiple environmental systems microsystems, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Each layer interacts to shape individual behavior and vulnerability.

This theory is particularly useful for analyzing how family dynamics, peer pressure, community norms, and national policies interact to influence child trafficking. For example, children from large, impoverished families (microsystem) living in communities that normalize migration (mesosystem) are more likely to be trafficked. National economic policies and legal frameworks (macrosystem) also play a role in either mitigating or exacerbating the problem.

Human Security Theory

Developed by the UNDP (1994) and further developed by Ogata & Sen (2003) its core assumptions are that human security shifts the focus from state-centric security to individual well-being. It emphasizes protection from chronic threats such as poverty, disease, and violence, and promotes empowerment.

Child trafficking directly violates the principles of human security. Victims suffer physical abuse, psychological trauma, and social exclusion. This theory helps frame trafficking not just as a criminal issue but as a human development crisis. It also links trafficking to broader internal security concerns, such as organized crime and social instability.

Together, they provide a robust framework for analyzing the causes and consequences of child trafficking in Edo State and for proposing holistic, multi-level interventions.

Methodology

Desk or document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves the systematic review and interpretation of existing documents to extract relevant data, insights, and patterns. These documents may include government reports, policy papers, academic publications, legal statutes, NGO records, media articles, and archival materials. In the context of this research, desk/document analysis was used to identify socio-economic determinants of child trafficking by reviewing: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) poverty and unemployment reports, UNESCO and UNICEF education data, and ILO and UNODC trafficking reports.

Examined internal security implications by analyzing Nigerian Police Force crime statistics, Reports from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Legislative documents such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (2015)

Assess policy responses and institutional frameworks by studying, Government white papers, NGO intervention reports (e.g., from WOTCLEF, IOM, and CLEEN Foundation), and international treaties and conventions ratified by Nigeria

Given the sensitive nature of child trafficking and the difficulty of accessing victims directly, desk/document analysis provides a safe and ethical way to gather robust data. It allows the researcher to explore institutional responses, socio-economic trends, and legal frameworks without compromising the safety or privacy of vulnerable populations.

i. Socio-Economic Determinants Influencing Child Trafficking in Edo State

Child trafficking in Edo State, Nigeria, is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic factors. Empirical studies and statistical data consistently highlight poverty, unemployment, and low education levels as the most significant contributors.

Poverty

Poverty remains the most pervasive driver of child trafficking in Edo State. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, over 40% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, with rural areas like Edo State experiencing even higher rates. Families struggling to meet basic needs often fall prey to traffickers who promise better opportunities abroad. A study by Abiodun et al. (2017) found that poverty was cited by 68% of respondents as the primary reason for sending children away, often under false pretenses of employment or education.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that over 8 million Nigerian children are engaged in exploitative labor, with 40% of street children and hawkers trafficked due to poverty-related vulnerabilities.

Unemployment

Youth unemployment in Nigeria stands at approximately 33%, with Edo State reflecting similar trends. The lack of job opportunities creates desperation among young people and their families, making them susceptible to trafficking schemes. Traffickers exploit this desperation by offering fake job placements, often requiring victims to incur debts that lead to exploitation.

A study published by Academia.edu revealed that victims often incur debts ranging from 1–3 years for promised jobs abroad, only to be forced into labor or sexual exploitation.

Education Levels

Low literacy and limited access to education are strongly correlated with trafficking vulnerability. In Edo State, illiteracy rates remain high, especially among women and girls. The same Academia.edu study found a significant correlation between illiteracy and increased trafficking incidences. Without education, individuals lack awareness of trafficking risks and legal protections, making them easy targets.

Gender disparities in education further exacerbate the issue. Cultural norms that prioritize male education over female education contribute to the trafficking of girls, particularly for sexual exploitation.

ii. Implications of Child Trafficking on Nigeria's Internal Security

Child trafficking poses a serious threat to Nigeria's internal security, affecting law enforcement, border control, and public trust in institutions.

Links to Organized Crime

Child trafficking in Edo State is often orchestrated by transnational criminal networks. These syndicates operate across borders, leveraging low operational costs and high profits. According to the International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, trafficking networks are deeply embedded in organized crime, making them difficult to dismantle due to their complex structures.

These groups are also involved in drug trafficking, money laundering, and arms smuggling, compounding Nigeria's security challenges. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) ranks Nigeria among the top countries for modern slavery, with Edo State contributing significantly to this reputation.

Border Control Challenges

Nigeria's porous borders facilitate the movement of trafficked children across regions and countries. The lack of effective border surveillance and coordination among security agencies allows traffickers to operate with impunity. A study by Arero et al. (2021) emphasized the need for synergy among agencies like NAPTIP, Immigration, Customs, and the Nigerian Armed Forces to curb trafficking at the borders.

Despite existing laws, enforcement remains weak. Corruption among border officials and lack of training further undermine efforts to combat trafficking.

Erosion of Public Trust in Institutions

The failure of government institutions to protect children from trafficking erodes public confidence. Communities lose trust in law enforcement, judicial systems, and social services. Victims often receive little support upon return, and traffickers frequently go unpunished due to weak prosecution and judicial delays.

This erosion of trust contributes to social instability and fuels radicalization, especially among youth who feel abandoned by the state. The Journal of Policy and Development notes that child trafficking has negative consequences on human capital development and internal security, threatening Nigeria's long-term stability.

The socio-economic determinants of child trafficking in Edo State—poverty, unemployment, and low education—create a fertile ground for exploitation. These vulnerabilities are exploited by organized crime networks, undermining Nigeria's

internal security through porous borders, weak institutions, and eroded public trust. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-sectoral approach involving economic empowerment, education reform, legal enforcement, and community engagement.

Conclusion

Child trafficking in Edo State represents one of the most pressing socio-economic and security challenges confronting Nigeria today. This study has demonstrated that the phenomenon is deeply rooted in structural inequalities and systemic failures. Poverty, unemployment, and low levels of education are not merely background conditions they are active drivers that push families and children into the hands of traffickers. These socio-economic determinants are exacerbated by gender discrimination, cultural norms, and weak institutional safeguards, creating a multidimensional crisis that affects individuals, communities, and the nation at large.

Empirical evidence from scholars such as Adepoju (2005) Aghatise (2004) and Okonofua et al. (2004) confirms that Edo State is a major source of trafficked persons, particularly young girls who are lured with false promises of employment or education. The data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) and UNESCO (2020) further reinforce the argument that economic deprivation and educational exclusion are central to understanding the vulnerability of children in this region.

Beyond the human cost, child trafficking poses a significant threat to Nigeria's internal security. The involvement of transnational criminal networks, porous borders, and institutional corruption undermines the rule of law and weakens the state's ability to protect its citizens. As noted by Achumba et al. (2013) and Onuoha (2006) trafficking is not an isolated crime it is embedded within a web of organized criminal activities that destabilize national governance and erode public trust in institutions.

The implications are far-reaching. Trafficked children suffer long-term psychological trauma, social alienation, and economic exclusion. Communities lose their youth to exploitation, and the nation forfeits its human capital. The erosion of public confidence in law enforcement and judicial systems further compounds the crisis, leading to social unrest and weakening national cohesion.

In light of these findings, it is clear that addressing child trafficking in Edo State requires more than punitive measures. It demands a comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy that tackles both the root causes and the systemic enablers of trafficking. The following recommendations outline a path forward.

Recommendations

To effectively combat child trafficking in Edo State and mitigate its impact on Nigeria's internal security, the following strategic interventions are proposed:

1. Strengthening Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Nigeria must move beyond legislative rhetoric to enforce its anti-trafficking laws with rigor and consistency. The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (2015) should be fully implemented, with specialized anti-trafficking units established within law enforcement agencies. Inter-agency coordination among NAPTIP, the Nigerian Immigration Service, Customs, and the judiciary must be enhanced to ensure seamless prosecution and victim protection. Training programs for law enforcement personnel should emphasize victim-centered approaches and anti-corruption safeguards.

2. Economic Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is the breeding ground for trafficking. Therefore, targeted poverty reduction initiatives must be prioritized in high-risk communities across Edo State. Government and development partners should invest in vocational training, microcredit schemes, and entrepreneurship programs for vulnerable families and youth. Public-private partnerships can be leveraged to create sustainable employment opportunities, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and digital services.

3. Expanding Access to Education and Awareness

Education is both a preventive and protective tool against trafficking. The government should expand access to free, quality education, especially for girls, and ensure that schools are safe and inclusive. Community-based awareness campaigns should be launched to educate parents, teachers, and youth about the risks of trafficking and the tactics used by traffickers. Media platforms, religious institutions, and traditional leaders should be engaged to challenge harmful cultural norms and promote protective behaviors.

4. Enhancing Border and Migration Controls

Nigeria's porous borders are a major conduit for trafficking. Investment in modern border surveillance technologies, biometric systems, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms is essential. Border officials must be trained to identify trafficking indicators and respond appropriately. Regional cooperation with ECOWAS and international partners should be strengthened to monitor migration flows and dismantle trafficking networks. Recruitment agencies and migration brokers should be regulated and held accountable for exploitative practices.

5. Victim Support and Reintegration Services

Survivors of trafficking require comprehensive support to rebuild their lives. The government should establish safe shelters, rehabilitation centers, and psychosocial counseling services in Edo State. Legal aid, healthcare, and educational reintegration must be provided to ensure that victims are not re-trafficked. Community reintegration programs should be designed to reduce stigma and promote social inclusion.

6. Promoting Gender Equality and Community Engagement

Gender inequality is a silent driver of trafficking. Policies that empower women and girls—through education, leadership training, and economic inclusion—must be prioritized. Community engagement is also critical. Traditional rulers, religious leaders, and civil society organizations should be mobilized to lead anti-trafficking advocacy and monitor local vulnerabilities. Participatory approaches that involve communities in designing and implementing interventions will foster ownership and sustainability.

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF WORLD BANK DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA (2015–2025): A POLICY EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of World Bank development assistance on poverty reduction in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. Using a policy effectiveness review approach, the study synthesizes secondary data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), World Bank programme evaluation reports, and relevant scholarly literature. The findings reveal that World Bank-assisted projects, particularly in social protection, education, health, and agriculture, produced measurable welfare improvements and helped strengthen institutional capacity. However, the results were uneven across regions, constrained by insecurity, governance challenges, and weak fiscal capacity at both federal and state levels. While interventions such as the National Social Safety Nets Project contributed to immediate poverty alleviation, they did not fundamentally alter the structural drivers of poverty. The study recommends strengthening programme targeting, enhancing subnational coordination, and aligning World Bank interventions with Nigeria's broader economic diversification and governance reforms.

Keywords: *World Bank, Development Assistance, Poverty Reduction, Policy Effectiveness.*

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, continues to grapple with pervasive poverty despite decades of economic reforms and international development assistance. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) estimates that over 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor, lacking access not only to income but also to health, education, and basic infrastructure. This persistence of poverty, amid abundant natural resources and external financing, raises important questions about the effectiveness of donor interventions.

The World Bank has been a key partner in Nigeria's development, financing large-scale projects in social protection, human capital, infrastructure, and governance

reforms between 2015 and 2025. Flagship programmes such as the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP) and the Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) aimed to improve welfare and reduce deprivation, while emergency response initiatives supported resilience during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet poverty trends remain stubborn, reflecting deeper structural and governance challenges.

This study assesses the impact of World Bank assistance on poverty reduction in Nigeria during 2015–2025 using a policy effectiveness framework. The objectives are to map key interventions, evaluate their outcomes on welfare and human capital, and identify contextual factors, such as governance capacity, insecurity, and economic shocks, that shaped their effectiveness. The study contributes to debates on aid effectiveness by highlighting the tension between short-term welfare gains and long-term structural change, and by offering recommendations for enhancing the poverty-reduction impact of future Bank engagements.

Statement of the Problem

Despite sustained international development assistance, poverty levels in Nigeria remain alarmingly high. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022), more than 133 million Nigerians, 63% of the population, are multidimensionally poor, facing deprivations in health, education, and living standards (Adebayo & Ojo, 2019). . This is particularly concerning given Nigeria’s status as Africa’s largest economy and a major recipient of World Bank support. Between 2015 and 2025, the World Bank committed billions of dollars to social protection, education, health, and governance reforms, yet the poverty headcount has shown only marginal improvement (World Bank, 2021).

Scholars argue that while donor interventions, including World Bank programmes, have generated short-term welfare gains, they have not addressed the structural drivers of poverty such as dependence on oil revenues, weak institutions, corruption, and regional insecurity (Moyo, 2009; Okon & Ojong, 2020). The Nigerian case thus reflects the broader debate on aid effectiveness: whether external assistance can catalyze transformative development or merely provide temporary relief. This raises the central problem motivating this study: to what extent has World Bank development assistance reduced poverty in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025, and what factors have constrained its effectiveness?

Conceptual Clarification

World Bank

The World Bank is one of the world's foremost international financial institutions, established in 1944 with a mandate to provide long-term loans, grants, and technical assistance to promote economic development and reduce poverty. In Nigeria, the World Bank has historically concentrated on infrastructure development, human capital investment, social protection, and governance reforms (World Bank, 2020). Between 2015 and 2025, the Bank's portfolio emphasized programs such as the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP), Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA), and COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES), reflecting a strategy that combines immediate poverty alleviation with structural reforms. Conceptually, the World Bank is understood not merely as a lender, but as a policy actor whose frameworks, conditions, and technical support shape national development trajectories (Mosley, 2012).

Development Assistance

Development assistance refers to the transfer of financial resources, technical expertise, or policy support from external actors, including bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, and NGOs, aimed at fostering economic growth and human development in recipient countries. In this study, it is specifically conceptualized as World Bank-financed interventions designed to reduce poverty in Nigeria. Development assistance can take the form of grants, concessional loans, or capacity-building initiatives. However, the effectiveness of such assistance is debated: critics argue that aid often fosters dependency and corruption (Moyo, 2009), while proponents emphasize its role in expanding health, education, and social safety nets (Collier, 2007; Easterly, 2014). Thus, development assistance is viewed as both a resource flow and a policy tool for shaping poverty outcomes.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction refers to deliberate efforts aimed at lowering the proportion of individuals or households living below nationally or internationally defined poverty thresholds. It encompasses both income poverty reduction (improving earnings and consumption) and multidimensional poverty reduction (enhancing access to education, healthcare, water, and housing). For Nigeria, the multidimensional approach is critical, as the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index revealed that 63% of Nigerians experience deprivations beyond income alone (NBS, 2022). In this study, poverty reduction is conceptualized not only as an outcome of increased consumption or welfare transfers but also as a long-term structural transformation

involving job creation, human capital development, and reduced vulnerability to shocks.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Aid Effectiveness Theory, complemented by insights from Dependency Theory to capture the dual dimensions of donor-recipient relations.

Aid Effectiveness Theory

The Aid Effectiveness Theory posits that development assistance can contribute positively to economic growth and poverty reduction when it is aligned with national priorities, well-coordinated, and implemented under conditions of good governance (Burnside & Dollar, 2000). The theory emphasizes four central pillars articulated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005): ownership, alignment, harmonization, and results-orientation. In the Nigerian context, this theory is relevant because the World Bank's interventions during 2015–2025, such as the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP) and COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES), were designed to align with Nigeria's National Social Protection Policy and Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP).

This framework enables the study to interrogate whether World Bank projects achieved tangible outcomes in terms of poverty reduction, or whether their effectiveness was undermined by institutional weaknesses, corruption, and insecurity.

Dependency Theory (Complementary Lens)

However, Aid Effectiveness Theory alone cannot fully explain why persistent poverty remains despite massive aid inflows. Dependency Theory provides a useful counter-perspective, arguing that international financial institutions like the World Bank often reproduce structural dependency, keeping developing countries reliant on external financing and policy prescriptions (Frank, 1967; Amin, 1972). From this standpoint, aid is not neutral but embedded in global power relations that prioritize donor influence over recipient autonomy.

For Nigeria, this perspective highlights how World Bank conditionalities, such as emphasis on neoliberal reforms, subsidy removal, and fiscal austerity, may constrain the state's ability to pursue homegrown development strategies, thereby limiting long-term poverty reduction.

Justification for Dual-Lens Framework

Using Aid Effectiveness Theory allows the study to assess whether World Bank assistance achieved its stated objectives under conditions of proper implementation. Integrating Dependency Theory provides a critical balance, reminding us that aid may simultaneously deliver short-term poverty alleviation while deepening structural vulnerabilities. Together, these frameworks provide a more comprehensive lens for evaluating the policy effectiveness of World Bank interventions in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative desk-based research design supported by descriptive analysis. It relies primarily on secondary sources such as World Bank project reports, the Nigeria Country Partnership Framework (2015–2025), National Bureau of Statistics poverty data, and relevant peer-reviewed literature. Additional insights are drawn from IMF, AfDB, and UNDP reports.

The analysis is guided by a policy effectiveness framework that considers the alignment of World Bank programmes with Nigeria’s development priorities, the extent to which objectives such as poverty reduction and human capital improvement were achieved, and the sustainability of outcomes beyond donor support.

The study covers the period 2015–2025, which coincides with Nigeria’s Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic response, and the World Bank’s current Country Partnership Framework. Data are examined thematically, focusing on poverty headcount, multidimensional poverty indices, and human development indicators. The use of secondary data and thematic analysis is suitable for a policy effectiveness review as it allows critical interrogation of programme design, implementation, and outcomes within Nigeria’s political economy context.

Findings and Results

The review of World Bank development assistance to Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 highlights notable interventions that delivered welfare improvements but produced limited impact on the structural reduction of poverty. While targeted programmes such as the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP), Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA), and the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) initiative contributed to mitigating immediate vulnerabilities, their effects were often constrained by institutional bottlenecks, insecurity, and persistent socio-economic inequalities.

National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP)

Launched in 2016, NASSP was the flagship social protection programme financed by the World Bank in Nigeria. Its primary aim was to establish a National Social Register of poor and vulnerable households and to deliver conditional and unconditional cash transfers to cushion deprivation. By 2021, the project had reached more than 1.9 million households across the federation (World Bank, 2021). Beneficiaries reported measurable improvements in food security, better access to healthcare services, and increased school enrollment for children.

However, the project's impact on long-term poverty reduction was muted. Coverage gaps excluded many households in dire need, while weak targeting mechanisms and political interference sometimes undermined fairness. Most importantly, the absence of sustainable livelihood pathways, such as vocational training and employment linkages, meant that once cash transfers ended, many households risked sliding back into poverty.

Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA)

The BESDA initiative, launched in 2017, targeted one of the most pressing development challenges in Nigeria: the crisis of out-of-school children, especially in northern states where education deprivation strongly correlates with poverty. By 2021, the programme had facilitated the enrollment of approximately 900,000 children into formal and non-formal learning centres (World Bank, 2021). This represented an important step toward breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty through education.

Nevertheless, BESDA's transformative potential was constrained by persistent challenges. Insecurity in the North-East and North-West, coupled with banditry and insurgency, limited school attendance in conflict-affected areas. High dropout rates, inadequate teacher training, and poor infrastructure reduced the quality of educational outcomes. As such, while access improved, the contribution to poverty reduction remained indirect and less immediate than initially envisaged.

Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES)

In response to the severe socio-economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank supported Nigeria through the CARES programme, launched in 2020. The initiative sought to cushion pandemic shocks by providing food packages, conditional cash transfers, agricultural inputs for smallholder farmers, and grants for micro and small enterprises. This intervention helped prevent millions of Nigerians from sliding into extreme poverty during the crisis (World Bank, 2022).

Despite these gains, CARES faced several implementation challenges. There were significant disparities across states in terms of the scale and efficiency of delivery. Limited transparency in fund disbursement and weak monitoring mechanisms raised accountability concerns. As a result, while CARES succeeded in providing a short-term safety net, its capacity to drive sustained poverty reduction was limited.

Human Capital and Governance Reforms

Beyond direct poverty alleviation programmes, the World Bank also financed broader human capital and governance-related reforms during this period. These included investments in health systems strengthening, education quality enhancement, and fiscal governance projects aimed at improving accountability and public sector efficiency. Such reforms modestly expanded access to primary healthcare, improved maternal and child health outcomes, and promoted fiscal transparency in states adopting Treasury Single Accounts (TSAs).

However, these gains were undercut by Nigeria's entrenched institutional weaknesses. Endemic corruption, inadequate local ownership of reforms, and weak capacity for policy implementation reduced the sustainability of outcomes. The persistence of insecurity, regional inequality, and governance deficits further diluted the transformative potential of these interventions.

Summary of Key World Bank Interventions in Nigeria (2015–2025)

Programme	Objectives	Outcomes	Limitations
NASSP (2016–2025)	Provide cash transfers and build a National Social Register	Reached 1.9 million households; improved food security, education, and health access	Coverage gaps; political interference; weak sustainability
BESDA (2017–2023)	Reduce out-of-school children; expand basic education	Enrolled 900,000 children; improved access in poor regions	Insecurity, poor education quality, high dropout rates
CARES (2020–2023)	Cushion pandemic shocks for households and businesses	Provided food, cash, and grants; prevented deeper poverty during COVID-19	Uneven implementation; transparency concerns
Human Capital	Strengthen health	Improved access to	Corruption, weak

Programme	Objectives	Outcomes	Limitations
& Governance systems, education, primary Projects and fiscal supported management reforms		healthcare; institutions, limited fiscal long-term impact	

The summary of key World Bank interventions in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 underscores a recurring pattern: while programmes achieved measurable short-term gains, their long-term impact on structural poverty reduction remained limited. The National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP) reached an impressive 1.9 million households, enhancing food security, health access, and education outcomes. Yet its inability to cover all deserving households, coupled with targeting inefficiencies and political interference, weakened its sustainability. This illustrates the tension between scale and inclusiveness in social protection initiatives.

Similarly, the Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) project demonstrated significant progress by enrolling 900,000 out-of-school children, particularly in regions with high educational deprivation. However, insecurity, coupled with poor quality of instruction and inadequate infrastructure, constrained the translation of educational access into poverty reduction outcomes. This reflects how broader systemic challenges, such as insecurity and weak service delivery, can undermine otherwise well-designed interventions.

The COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) programme revealed the World Bank's responsiveness to crises. By providing food, cash, and grants, it helped millions avoid sliding into extreme poverty during the pandemic. Nonetheless, uneven implementation across states and limited transparency in disbursement undermined its credibility and effectiveness. The experience suggests that emergency interventions, while vital, are often constrained by governance weaknesses at the subnational level.

Finally, human capital and governance reforms made modest contributions to strengthening healthcare access and promoting fiscal accountability. Yet corruption, weak institutions, and lack of local ownership blunted their long-term impact. This highlights the structural governance deficits that persist as obstacles to development effectiveness in Nigeria.

Taken together, the table reveals that the World Bank's assistance in Nigeria during this period was most effective in alleviating immediate deprivations, but struggled to catalyze transformative change. The persistent influence of insecurity, governance

challenges, and institutional weaknesses meant that the interventions provided “band-aid” solutions rather than durable reductions in poverty.

Overall Outcomes

Taken together, these findings reveal that World Bank development assistance to Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 generated meaningful short-term welfare gains, particularly through cash transfers and pandemic relief. Education and health initiatives also addressed multidimensional poverty indicators, such as child enrollment and healthcare access. However, the persistence of structural drivers, including high unemployment, regional insecurity, corruption, and weak governance, meant that these interventions did not translate into a significant reduction in the national poverty headcount. As of 2022, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that 133 million Nigerians were still classified as multidimensionally poor (NBS, 2022), underscoring the limited transformative effect of World Bank assistance on poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that World Bank assistance to Nigeria between 2015 and 2025 yielded measurable but uneven impacts on poverty reduction. Programmes such as NASSP and CARES provided critical short-term relief, while BESDA and health-related projects contributed to human capital development. Yet, the persistence of widespread poverty underscores the limitations of externally driven interventions in addressing deep-rooted structural problems.

From the perspective of Aid Effectiveness Theory, the World Bank’s interventions displayed partial alignment with Nigeria’s development priorities. For instance, NASSP was consistent with Nigeria’s National Social Protection Policy, while BESDA addressed the urgent problem of out-of-school children. These alignments suggest that donor support was not entirely supply-driven but sought to respond to domestic needs. Similarly, the results-oriented design of CARES during the COVID-19 crisis illustrates responsiveness to contextual shocks. However, effectiveness was undermined by institutional weaknesses, corruption, and limited state capacity, echoing Burnside and Dollar’s (2000) argument that aid effectiveness is conditional upon sound policies and governance structures.

At the same time, Dependency Theory helps explain the structural persistence of poverty despite significant aid inflows. World Bank programmes, while mitigating immediate welfare gaps, reinforced Nigeria’s reliance on external financing and policy prescriptions. The emphasis on neoliberal reforms and fiscal austerity measures, often embedded in World Bank assistance, restricted Nigeria’s autonomy

to pursue more radical redistributive or industrialization policies (Frank, 1967; Amin, 1972). Thus, while aid temporarily alleviated poverty for targeted groups, it did not fundamentally transform the economic base or reduce Nigeria's dependency on external actors.

The findings also reveal a paradox of donor assistance. On one hand, interventions like cash transfers and school enrollments delivered tangible benefits to households and communities. On the other hand, the inability to address macro-level issues, such as high unemployment, over-reliance on oil revenues, insecurity, and governance failures, meant that overall poverty indicators showed only marginal improvements. This resonates with Moyo's (2009) critique that aid often addresses the "symptoms" rather than the "causes" of underdevelopment.

Overall, the discussion suggests that while World Bank assistance in Nigeria was effective in cushioning shocks and promoting human capital development, it fell short of driving the kind of structural transformation necessary to achieve long-term poverty reduction. The Nigerian case therefore illustrates both the potential and limits of donor interventions within fragile institutional and political contexts.

Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of World Bank development assistance on poverty reduction in Nigeria between 2015 and 2025. The findings show that while interventions such as the National Social Safety Nets Project (NASSP), Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA), and the COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) programme provided important short-term welfare gains, they did not fundamentally alter the structural drivers of poverty. The persistence of high poverty levels, over 133 million Nigerians classified as multidimensionally poor in 2022 (NBS, 2022), reflects the limitations of aid when implemented in contexts marked by weak governance, insecurity, and economic dependency.

Theoretical insights reinforce this conclusion. Aid Effectiveness Theory suggests that donor assistance works best in environments of sound policies and institutional capacity, conditions that remain fragile in Nigeria. Dependency Theory, meanwhile, underscores how external assistance, despite short-term gains, can perpetuate long-term reliance and constrain domestic policy space. Thus, World Bank support in Nigeria has been both necessary and insufficient; helpful in alleviating immediate poverty pressures, yet inadequate for achieving deep, sustainable poverty reduction.

Policy Recommendations

Strengthening institutional capacity and governance is critical if World Bank assistance is to achieve lasting impact. Programmes often falter not because of poor design, but due to corruption, weak monitoring systems, and inadequate state capacity. Future interventions should therefore be coupled with robust accountability frameworks, transparent disbursement processes, and stronger oversight mechanisms that limit elite capture and political interference.

Equally important is the need to prioritize structural transformation. While cash transfers and safety nets provide immediate relief, they rarely lift households out of poverty in a sustainable way. World Bank projects should increasingly support productive sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and small-scale industry, thereby create jobs and reduce vulnerability. Linking social protection with livelihood empowerment programmes would make poverty reduction more durable.

Local ownership and participation must also be enhanced. Too often, donor programmes are designed with limited consultation from the intended beneficiaries, which undermines sustainability. Stronger collaboration with civil society, community-based organizations, and state governments will improve programme relevance and ensure that interventions are rooted in local realities rather than imposed externally.

Another priority is the integration of human capital initiatives with economic reforms. Education and health interventions should not stand alone but be tied to broader strategies for job creation and economic diversification. For instance, vocational training and entrepreneurship support can help translate gains in education into real livelihood opportunities, particularly for Nigeria's youth population.

Finally, Nigeria must work to reduce aid dependency by strengthening domestic resource mobilization and policy autonomy. World Bank support should serve as a complement rather than a substitute for homegrown development strategies. Expanding non-oil revenue, improving tax collection, and investing in inclusive social programmes will enable Nigeria to chart a more independent development path. At the same time, adopting a multi-sectoral poverty strategy that links social protection to agriculture, infrastructure, and climate resilience will ensure that progress against poverty is both comprehensive and sustainable.

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ENHANCING TVET CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRY–ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract

This study examines the nature and extent of industry–academic partnerships in curriculum review among Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Nigeria. Leveraging both qualitative insights from lecturer perceptions and quantitative evidence from a Generalised Linear Model (GLM), the research quantifies the impact of industry involvement on curriculum delivery effectiveness. Key variables include frequency of engagement, type of partnership, and level of resource sharing. These variables were analysed to determine their predictive significance in enhancing or impeding educational outcomes. Findings reveal that specific dimensions of industry engagement markedly increase the likelihood of effective curriculum delivery, while other factors show negligible

influence. The analysis addresses existing challenges and opportunities, providing a robust framework for understanding the dynamic interplay between academic institutions and industry stakeholders. Based on the empirical evidence, actionable recommendations are proposed for policymakers and educational leaders to optimize collaborations, thereby ensuring that TVET curricula are better aligned with current industry demands. This integrated approach not only advances the theoretical understanding of industry–academic partnerships but also contributes practical insights critical for educational reform in Nigeria.

Keywords: Industry–Academic Partnerships; TVET; Curriculum Review; Generalized Linear Model (GLM); Educational Reform

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) must mirror industry needs to prepare graduates who can thrive in evolving labor markets. In Nigeria, where robust workforce development underpins national growth, formal partnerships between TVET institutions and industry are essential. Such collaborations validate curricula, integrate occupational standards, and enrich graduate employability through hands-on learning and real-world projects.

This study employs a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) to identify factors that drive industry stakeholders to participate in curriculum review within Nigerian TVET programs. Focusing on two key predictors—whether institutions engage in structured partnership activities and the frequency of their interactions with employers—the analysis examines how these variables influence the likelihood of industry involvement in curriculum design.

The research pursues three principal objectives. First, it quantifies the marginal effects of engagement indicators on the probability that industry partners will join curriculum-review processes. Second, it assesses the model’s statistical robustness through fit diagnostics and residual analyses, ensuring the findings are reliable. Third, it uses these quantitative insights to craft practical recommendations for policy and institutional strategy, with the aim of strengthening industry–academia ties.

By combining advanced econometric methods with an applied educational lens, the study contributes both methodologically and strategically. It offers a replicable approach for measuring engagement outcomes and shaping data-driven interventions that enhance curriculum relevance, bolster quality assurance, and reinforce institutional accountability.

The paper unfolds in four parts: Literature Review on theoretical and empirical foundations of industry–academia integration; Methods section detailing data sources, variable definitions, and model specification; Results and Discussion section presenting empirical findings and evaluating model diagnostics; and Conclusion and Recommendations section that synthesizes insights and proposes

actionable strategies to advance industry-aligned curriculum reform in Nigeria's TVET sector.

Literature Review

The body of scholarship on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria converges on three overarching themes: the sector's historical foundations and structural evolution, persistent systemic constraints, and the critical role of industry-academia partnerships in driving curriculum relevance and graduate employability. In addition, contemporary research emphasizes quality-assurance mechanisms and strategic policy interventions as essential levers for transformation. This review synthesizes these strands to contextualize the current study's focus on quantifying engagement drivers and formulating evidence-based recommendations.

Nigeria's TVET system has its roots in indigenous apprenticeship traditions, where skills transfer occurred through master-apprentice relationships long before formal schooling. Colonial authorities later institutionalized vocational training by establishing certificate-granting centers such as the Hope Waddell Training Institute, primarily to serve the economic interests of the colonial administration. Post-independence, successive governments restructured vocational education into a tripartite system, basic, post-basic, and tertiary, aimed at creating clear progression pathways (Bello & Muhammad, 2021; Akpan, Usoro, & Ibiritan, 2013). The introduction of the Nigerian Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) further sought to harmonize competency standards across TVET sub-sectors, aligning them with national and international benchmarks (National Board for Technical Education, 2019). Yet, despite these formalizations, legacy perceptions of vocational work as inferior to academic disciplines persist, influencing policy priorities and resource allocation (Kilby, 1964).

While structural reforms laid a foundation for expansion, the sector faces entrenched challenges. Chronic underinvestment has resulted in dilapidated infrastructure, obsolete equipment, and poorly resourced workshops, undermining the delivery of hands-on training (Oviawe, 2018; Ogbunaya & Udoudo, 2015). Governance weaknesses, exemplified by overlapping mandates among regulatory bodies and inconsistent oversight, further impede coherent policy implementation (Ogunraku, 2016; Leney, 2014). Public perception remains a critical barrier; societal biases often steer talented youth away from vocational pathways, compounding shortages of qualified instructors and prompting brain-drain as skilled practitioners seek opportunities abroad or in the formal economy (Okwelle et al., 2017; Zite & Deebom, 2017). These factors collectively exacerbate the mismatch between the supply of TVET graduates and evolving labor-market requirements.

Amid these constraints, industry–academia partnerships emerge as a promising solution to narrow the skills gap. Collaborative models range from co-development of curricula and apprenticeship schemes to consultancy projects, short-course delivery, and joint research initiatives. Empirical studies demonstrate that active industrial linkages enrich instructional content, facilitate technology transfer, and enhance learner competencies, yielding graduates who are better prepared for employment (Francis, Saidu, & Giroh, 2021; Igwebuike, 2007; Okoro, 1993). Quantitative data from comparable contexts indicate that graduates from programs with structured industry engagement earn higher wages, report greater job satisfaction, and exhibit improved occupational mobility (Gough et al., 2013; Zainal Arifin, Nirwanto, & Abdul Manan, 2019). However, the prevalence and depth of such partnerships in Nigeria lag behind international peers, hindered by weak coordination mechanisms and contractual ambiguities (Ikpesu & Eboiyehi, 2018; Muwaniki & Wedekind, 2018).

Robust quality-assurance frameworks are indispensable for sustaining curricular currency and instructional excellence. Key components include periodic accreditation reviews, systematic assessment protocols, and continuous professional development (CPD) programs for instructors. Recent surveys highlight inconsistencies in curriculum-review cycles, limited access to industry-relevant equipment, and irregular sponsorship for CPD factors that dilute the efficacy of partnerships and compromise learner outcomes (Korter, 2023). International quality-assurance benchmarks, such as competency-based curriculum design and stakeholder-driven evaluation, underscore the need for iterative feedback loops that engage employers, regulatory agencies, and training providers in joint oversight (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Singh, 2019; Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Popham, 2018; Tynjälä, 2013).

Scholars advocate a multifaceted reform agenda to revitalize Nigeria’s TVET sector. Enhanced financing mechanisms, such as performance-based matching grants and dedicated TVET endowments, can alleviate infrastructure deficits and incentivize institutional innovation (Agu & Kaduhur, 2016). Accreditation standards that mandate documented industry engagement and clear partnership protocols can institutionalize collaboration (Ogwo & Ezekoye, 2020). Public–private partnership (PPP) frameworks, underpinned by standardized memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and streamlined administrative procedures, facilitate rapid deployment of joint initiatives (Akanbi, 2012; Needham, 2018). Integrating information and communication technologies into curriculum delivery and emphasizing digital literacy also future-proof workforce competencies (Okoye & Arimonu, 2016; Agapu & Andural, 2007). Finally, establishing dedicated engagement units within

institutions and leveraging alumni networks can enhance brokered partnerships and sustain mutual accountability.

In sum, the literature underscores the imperative of addressing structural deficiencies, institutionalizing quality assurance, and embedding industry partnerships as cornerstones for transforming Nigeria's TVET sector into a dynamic, demand-driven engine of skills development and economic growth. This review informs the current study's focus on statistically quantifying engagement determinants and translating insights into actionable policy and operational recommendations.

Methods

Study Design

This cross-sectional survey integrated quantitative Likert scales and qualitative open-ended questions to capture TVET curriculum delivery practices and industry partnerships in Nigeria. By correlating numerical indicators of engagement frequency with narrative insights on partnership effectiveness, it provides a comprehensive snapshot for assessing existing quality-assurance initiatives and guiding academia–industry collaboration improvements.

Data Collection Procedure

A structured questionnaire was developed and administered using an online platform (Google Forms) to facilitate accessibility and to ensure a broader geographic reach. Sixty-nine responses were received over a period of six months.

Statistical Analysis

The generalized linear model (GLM) is a flexible framework that extends ordinary linear regression to accommodate response variables that follow distributions from the exponential family. The model comprises three core components:

- i. Random Component: Each response variable y_i is assumed to come from an exponential family distribution, which can be generally written as

$$f(y_i; \theta_i, \phi) = \exp \left\{ \frac{y_i \theta_i - b(\theta_i)}{a(\phi)} + c(y_i; \phi) \right\}$$

In this formulation:

θ_i is the canonical parameter,

ϕ is the dispersion parameter,

$a(\cdot)$, $b(\cdot)$, and $c(\cdot, \cdot)$ are specific functions that describe the distribution.

- ii. Systematic Component (Linear Predictor): The GLM assumes there is a linear predictor that combines the effects of the explanatory variables. This is given by

$$\eta_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \dots + \beta_p x_{ip} = x_i^T \beta,$$

where:

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_p$ are the model coefficients,

$x_i = (1, x_{i1}, \dots, x_{ip})^T$ is the vector of explanatory variables (including an intercept if applicable).

- iii. Link Function The link function $g(\cdot)$ provides the connection between the mean of the response variable and the linear predictor. If we denote the mean of y_i as $\mu_i = E(y_i)$, the model is given by

$$g(\mu_i) = \eta_i.$$

This function allows us to transform μ_i in such a way that the transformed mean is linearly related to the predictors.

Additionally, the variance of y_i is typically modeled as a function of the mean:

$$\text{Var}(y_i) = \phi V(\mu_i),$$

where $V(\mu_i)$ is a variance function determined by the specific member of the exponential family and ϕ is the dispersion parameter.

Putting it all together, the full GLM is summarized as:

Random component: $y_i \sim \text{Exponential Family}(\theta_i, \phi)$,

Systematic component: $\eta_i = x_i^T \beta$,

Link function: $g(\mu_i) = \eta_i$, with $\mu_i = E(y_i)$.

This general framework covers a wide array of models. For instance, with a logistic link, the logistic regression for binary responses can be obtained, and with a log link combined with the Poisson distribution you have Poisson regression for count data.

Results and Discussion

Model Overview

A Generalized Linear Model GLM with a binomial family and logit link is used to predict a binary outcome variable, where C2 represent the involvement of industry partners in curriculum review.

The model includes two predictors, B1 and B3.

B1 <- Are you currently involved in any industrial engagement activities?

B3 <- How often do you engage with industry partners?

C2 <- Do you involve partners in curriculum development review?

The regression equation in its linear predictor form is:

$$\text{logit}(P(C2 = 1)) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times B1 + \beta_3 \times B3$$

where β_0 is the intercept, β_1 is the coefficient for B1, and β_3 is the coefficient for B3

Coefficient Estimates and Their Interpretations

The table below summarizes the key statistics from the GLM:

Table 1: The Generalized Linear Model

Predictor	Estimate	Std Error	Z-Value	P-Value	Odds Ratio (exp(Estimate))
Intercept	-0.666741	0.515696	-1.293	0.19605	0.5133790
B1	1.639959	0.550875	2.977	0.00291	5.1549582
B3	-0.009348	0.120910	-0.077	0.93837	0.9906951

Intercept Estimate: -0.666741

Interpretation: When both B1 and B3 are 0, the log-odds of a positive outcome (e.g., involvement in curriculum review) is -0.667. Exponentiating this gives an odds of about 0.513, meaning that the baseline odds are less than 1.

Significance: Not statistically significant ($p = 0.196$), so the baseline level isn't significantly different from zero in log-odds terms.

B1: Are you currently involved in any industrial engagement activities?

Estimate: 1.639959

Interpretation: A one-unit increase in B1 is associated with an increase of 1.64 in the log-odds of C2 being positive. When exponentiated, this translates to an odds ratio of approximately 5.15. In practical terms, every one-unit increase in B1 multiplies the odds of involvement by about 5 times, holding B3 constant.

Significance: Statistically significant ($p = 0.00291$), indicating a strong and reliable association.

Respondents who report any industrial engagement are over five times more likely to involve partners in curriculum review than those who do not. B1 is a powerful predictor. Any initiative that moves a lecturer from “no engagement” to “some engagement” is likely to produce a large jump in partner involvement.

B3: How often do you engage with industry partners?

Estimate: -0.009348

Interpretation: A one-unit increase in B3 results in a tiny decrease (almost negligible) in the log-odds of the outcome. The exponentiated value gives an odds ratio of 0.9907, which is very close to 1, suggesting little to no effect on the odds.

Significance: Not statistically significant ($p = 0.93837$), implying B3 does not contribute meaningfully to predicting C2 in this model.

B3 (Frequency of engagement), once a lecturer is already engaged (B1), how often they meet partners (as currently measured) does not further increase the odds of formal involvement in review. B3 may be too coarse or redundant with B1.

Model Fit and Diagnostics

Null Deviance: 94.943 on 68 degrees of freedom. *This represents the deviance of a model with no predictors (just the intercept).*

Residual Deviance: 84.586 on 66 degrees of freedom. *The reduction from the null deviance indicates that adding B1 and B3 provides some improvement in model fit, although the decrease in deviance is modest.*

AIC (Akaike Information Criterion) = 90.586: *A lower AIC can be favored when comparing alternative models. Acceptable for a two-predictor model, here, it serves as a measure of the model's relative quality.*

Fisher Scoring Iterations = 4 *This indicates that the algorithm converged efficiently to the optimum estimates, indicating stable estimation.*

Residuals versus Fitted Graph

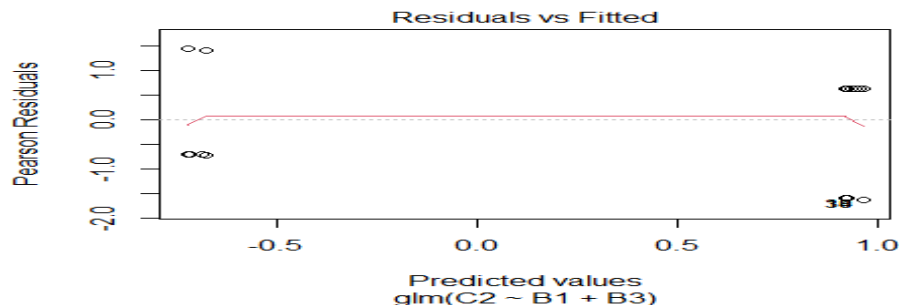


Figure 1: Residuals versus Fitted Graph

Figure 1, the Residuals versus Fitted graph with X-axis: The model's fitted values (on the logit scale) and Y-axis: Pearson residuals (observed – predicted, standardized by the model's variance). The horizontal line at zero is where residuals would fall if predictions perfectly matched observations.

The bulk of points lie randomly above and below zero, with no obvious curve or systematic arc. The logit link and linear predictor ($B1 + B3$) are capturing the central trend in the data appropriately.

Constant spread (homoscedasticity)

Residuals appear to have roughly the same vertical spread across the full range of fitted values. There's no strong funnel-shaped pattern, so variance is reasonably constant. The model isn't systematically under- or over-estimating at probability ranges.

Outliers and leverage checks

A few points stray further from zero ($|\text{residual}| > 2$), hinting at potential outliers or influential observations.

Fit adequacy

The absence of a clear pattern suggests no major mis-specification (e.g., missing nonlinear terms). The GLM appears well-specified for these predictors. In sum, the plot supports the GLM's validity, that is $B1$ and $B3$ are structurally adequate to explain $C2$. Although, flags a handful of cases for closer inspection.

Normal Q–Q plot

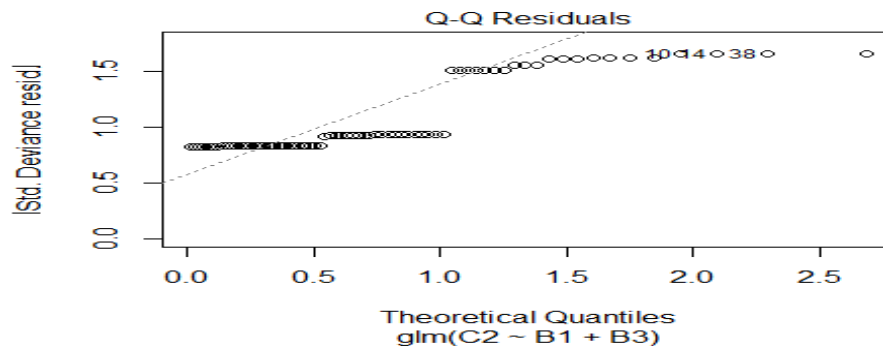


Figure 2: Normal Q–Q plot

Figure 2, the Normal Q–Q plot of the GLM’s standardized deviance residuals with X-axis: Theoretical quantiles from a standard normal distribution and Y-axis: Ordered standardized deviance residuals from your model.

Mid-Range Alignment

Most points cluster close to the line in the center. This indicates that for moderate residuals, the model’s error structure roughly matches what you’d expect under normality.

Tail Deviations

In the lower and upper extremes, several points stray from the line. These departures suggest heavier tails than a normal distribution, which can arise from a few outliers or from the discrete nature of binomial data. Mild, symmetrical departures at the tails aren’t fatal for a logistic GLM (since strict normality of residuals isn’t assumed). However, they flag potential outliers or cases where the model under- or over-predicts more strongly than average.

Fit adequacy

Overall, the Q–Q plot shows reasonably well-behaved residuals in the bulk of the data, with some tail-end points meriting closer inspection.

4.3.2 Scale -Location Plot

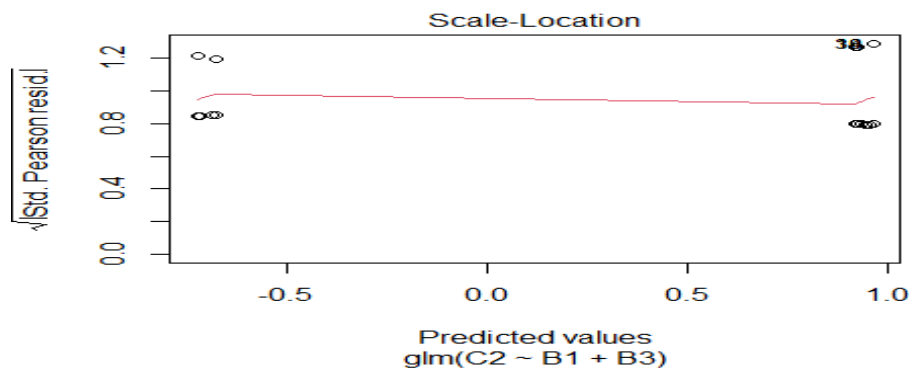


Figure 3: Scale -Location Plot

The Scale–Location plot with X-axis: Fitted values (on the logit scale) and Y-axis: $\sqrt{|\text{standardized Pearson residuals}|}$. The red curve is a loess smooth to highlight any trend in residual spread.

Homoscedasticity

The ideal pattern is a flat, horizontal band, meaning residual variance stays constant as fitted values change. Here, the smooth line sits nearly horizontal across the range, indicating no clear funnel, megaph or megaphone shape. Residual spread is roughly equal from low to high predicted probabilities.

Outliers and variability

A handful of points lie noticeably above the bulk ($\sqrt{|\text{residual}|} > 1.5$), flagual spread is roughly equal from low to high predicted probabilities.

Homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity holds: Constant residual dispersion values (B1, B3, C2) and influence measures (e.g., Cook’s distance). Constant residual dispersion means the model’s variance structure is appropriate.

Model validity

The lack of systematic patterns supports the adequacy of the logit link and linear predictor means the model’s variance structure is appropriate.

Fit adequacy

The Scale-Location plot confirms the GLM’s error variance is stable across predicted values. This is one of the key assumptions for reliable inference in the GLM’s error variance that is, stable across predicted values.

Residuals versus Leverage Plot

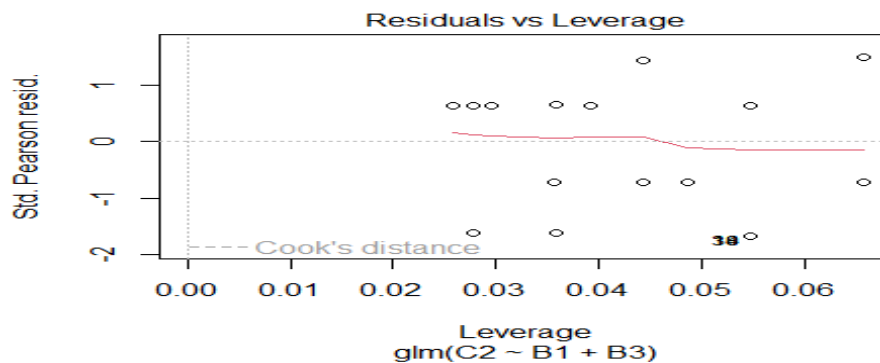


Fig. 4: Residuals versus Leverage Plot

Figure 4, the Residuals vs. Leverage plot combines information on each observation's standardized Pearson residual (y-axis) and its leverage (x-axis). Leverage (x-axis) measures how far an observation's predictor values (B1, B3) lie from their means. High-leverage points can pull the regression surface toward themselves. Std. Pearson Residuals (y-axis) indicates how far the observed response deviates from the fitted value, scaled by the model's estimate of its standard deviation. The red curves (dashed) mark thresholds of Cook's Distance (e.g., 0.5, 1). Points outside or near the outer contour have a larger overall influence on the model's parameter estimates.

Identifying Influential Observations

Point 38: Labeled as an outlier with moderately high leverage (~ 0.04) and residual (~ 1.75). Its position near the Cook's Distance contour suggests it could disproportionately affect coefficient estimates if retained.

General Distribution: Most points cluster with low leverage (< 0.03) and residuals within ± 1 , indicating they have limited individual influence.

Model Robustness

Most observations sit well within Cook's Distance contours, suggesting that, aside from the one flagged case, there's no widespread leverage or residual problem. This plot confirms a generally robust fit but highlights one observation (ID 38) worth investigating to ensure the GLM coefficients remain reliable.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A generalized linear model (GLM) analysis confirms that simply having any industrial engagement (B1) is the single strongest predictor of partner involvement in TVET curriculum review. Model diagnostics indicate a robust fit, suggesting that

future monitoring could focus solely on B1 as a key performance metric. To translate this finding into policy, Nigerian TVET institutions should embed minimum industry-engagement requirements into lecturer roles and refine how engagement frequency is measured.

Six strategic levers institutionalize industry engagement: embed dedicated liaison units to broker visits and performance-linked budgets; allocate secondment days with recognition incentives; provide ₦2–5 million micro-grants matched by government; mandate formal engagements via NBTE standards and MOUs; offer engagement training with alumni mentors; and implement real-time dashboards plus regular feedback surveys.

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**DIGITAL BROADCASTING AND GRASSROOTS SPORTS
DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF GRASSROOTS SOCCER TEAMS IN
BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigated the nature of grassroots sports in Bayelsa state, to determine the impact of digital broadcasting on the development of grassroots soccer in Bayelsa State, and to ascertain how digital broadcasting can be used to develop and promote Sports talents in Bayelsa State. The study was hinged on Development Media Theory propounded by Denis McQuail. The research technique adopted was the survey method. The population of the study of 334 comprised 330 members of fifteen (15) selected registered grassroots soccer teams in Bayelsa state, and four (4) sports administrators. The sample size of the study was one hundred and eighty-two (182) respondents, determined through the Taro Yamane sample determination formula. The research instruments were the questionnaire and structured interview guide. The findings of the study showed that Grassroots sports are performing well in Bayelsa state. The study came to the conclusion that, even though grassroots sports activities' have remarkable and exceptional skills, their values of creating world stars would not be realised without the use of digital broadcasting to illuminate these activities. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among other things, that, the Bayelsa State Government should partner with broadcasting firms and personnel in the state, in other to air and stream grassroots sports activities from time to time.

Keywords: *Digital Broadcasting, Development, Soccer, Grassroots Soccer.*

Introduction

The introduction of Digital Technology in the early 20s, has transformed tremendously various sectors (Business, Entertainment, Education, Agriculture etc.)

globally, and the Sporting Sector is not left out. Guanah, Okowa-Nwaebi, Edherue and Ridwan (2024) affirm that digital disruption has had a significant impact on various industries. Guanah and *Bebenimibo (2025a) argue that* the advent of digital technology has revolutionised the way societies operate, transforming industries, markets, and economies worldwide, and how information is disseminated, consumed, and utilised (Guanah & *Bebenimibo, 2025b*). To this effect, digitalization, since its introduction, has played a major role in terms of sports development because of its nature. Digital broadcasting, unlike the previous era (Analogue), has so far improved broadcasting, making it the darling of the day. Nigeria's move to join the digital broadcasting started in 2006 when the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) decided that countries in Europe, Africa, Middle East and Iran must migrate to a digital broadcasting by 2015. This decision was informed by the development in ICT, which enable more efficient use of radio frequency spectrum, improved picture quality and sound. This call led to a serious move from analogue to digital broadcasting, which has made broadcasting more efficient. It has drastically reduced the problems faced by broadcasting years back.

Digital broadcasting opens a wide world of possibilities for broadcasting by making available huge spectrum for radio and television to make available more frequencies and wave lengths in the country. The industry will also take advantage of interactive broadcasting because it will not be only broadcast signals as it used to be. Nigeria officially started the digitalization of the broadcast industry in December, 2007, following the late President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua's approval directing the apex body National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to set the programme in motion to enable them meet their target deadline of officially switching over to the ultramodern digital terrestrial broadcasting on June 17 2012, as against June 17, 2015 deadline for the world.

The most important change that has taken place in Sports industry is role of the Media (Digital Broadcasting), is playing in the development of sports all over the world. It has increased sports awareness and spectatorship among peoples of the world; and it has also increased revenue generation, which has enriched various sports stakeholders. The media have been a catalyst in the identification and promotion of knowledge, information and understanding about various sports and sporting talents in various nations (Alimi, 2003). There exists a symbolic relationship between media and Sports. According to Abdullahi (2013) the relationship between media and sports and global culture is complex and fascinating. Global culture generates new media, which in turn propels global culture. The two

are driven by consumerism and the logic of the mass market to repackaging sports as a commodity that is distributed to the mass market via television, satellite, and internet-based channels like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The media's role in sports development does not begin and end with paying of broadcasting rights and exposure of sponsorship and other brands associated with sports in the media. In Nigeria, media houses conduct seminars and workshops with the aim of fashioning strategies to develop sports. They push for good governance and ethics in sports administration, and also fight racism and corruption. There are stories in the media about success of idols that have also inspired generations of youth athletes, and led to the discovery of new talents (Osagie, 2007). In Nigeria, the media have a long history of significant contribution to sports development. Long before the arrival of Super sports, the satellite-based sports television channel, Fabio Lanipekun had led a generation of Nigerians that include Yinka Craig, Hamed Adio, Waheed Olagunju, Rotimi Bisiriyu, Charles Ogugbana and others to pioneer Sports broadcast journalism in Africa (Showsiliva, 2001).

Bayelsa State is one of the states in the South-South region of Nigeria, located in the core of the Niger Delta region. Bayelsa State was created in 1996, and was carved out from Rivers State, making it one of the newest states in the federation. Yenegoa is the capital city of Bayelsa State. It shares a boundary with Rivers State to the East and Delta State to the west, with the waters of the Atlantic Ocean dominating its southern borders. It has a total area of 10, 773 km². The state comprises eight Local Government Areas.

Bayelsa state, has engaged in sporting activities, with the major sports being Football (soccer), Basketball, Swimming, Table Tennis, Wrestling etc. Bayelsa has its headquarters of sports located at Samson Sia Sia, Sports Complex in Ovom-Yenegoa, Bayelsa State. It was named after the Ex-Super Eagles Player and Coach. To a certain extent, grassroots soccer activities are strongly supported in the state. A group of local soccer clubs in the state also exists, they include Eternal Grace Ministry FC (EGM FC) from Yenegoa, Phoenix FC from Elebele Community, Dimaro FC, and Dream Boys FA from Odi, among others.

Sports icons like Cristiano Ronaldo, Thierry Henry, LeBron James, Kanu Nwankwo, Jay Jay Okocha, Samson Sia Sia, Victor Ikepeba, Lionel Messi, Didier Drogba, and the Williams Sisters, among others, gained public recognition because of the media. The transformation of these young people into sports icons would not have been

possible if the media in the western world had not broadcast grassroots sports over the years.

Statement of the Problem

Due to its nature, digital broadcasting, has thus far, helped the sports business flourish in a variety of ways. Sport has become one of the most watched activities in the world because of live streaming and ongoing projections. Other nations, such as South Africa, have used technology to develop their grassroots soccer teams. A good example is how Digital Satellite Television (DStv) has promoted the South African local football leagues, setting up programmes that tend to uncover young talents who will go on to become international stars. This is not the case in Nigeria, specifically Bayelsa state.

Again, there is no doubt that several studies have been undertaken in relation to the broadcast media and the growth of sports; these studies have demonstrated how significantly the broadcast media have aided the growth of sports, both nationally and internationally. However, there is a research vacuum that has not been addressed: the media's role in the global expansion of grassroots sports. This area of research has received little attention, and there are little, or no studies, being done in this field.

The researchers' decision to conduct this study was motivated by other researchers' ignorance of research on the broadcast media and the development of grassroots sports. It is on this premise that this research sought to look at how digital broadcasting can be used to promote talents in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the nature of grassroots sports in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the impact of digital broadcasting on the development of grassroots soccer in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
3. To ascertain how digital broadcasting can be used to develop and promote Sports talents in Bayelsa State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This study was hinged on Development Media Theory propounded by McQuail in the year 1987. It argues that until the point where the economy and every possible aspect of the development of a country is well in progress, the media must be in support, rather than condemning the government; the media must assist government

in actualizing its policies. The development theory of the press, also advise the media to carry out developmental projects in the various developing nations and their immediate environment, order than critiquing the government all the time. McQuail (1987) identified major principles of the theory as follows:

- i. media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy;
- ii. Freedom of the press should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society;
- iii. Media should give priority in their contents to the national culture and language(s).
- iv. media should give priority to news and information to link with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally or politically;
- v. In the interest of development, the state has the right to intervene in or restrict media operations and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified; and
- vi. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities, as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

This theory is relevant to the study because, it calls out on the media to carry out their developmental roles in every possible way. The media can be used to showcase the young talents, in sports activities because sports help in development of countries. The media can be used to promote sports at the grassroots level. Media can also monitor and project these young talents in other for them to attract global recognition, and thereby bringing scouts to these countries, resulting to development.

The media will be able to carry out one of its functions “Catalyst for development” by putting National Sports Festival, NUGA games and the annual Shell Cup for Secondary schools, in the minds of the audience and as well as an high increase in the level of fans acceptance of grassroots sports.

Overview of Digital Broadcasting

Digital Broadcasting implies a technological shift from analogue broadcasting to a more sophisticated transmission in technology. Digital television refers to the use of modulation and compression to transmit video, audio and data signals to the receiver sets (consumer access devices). Digitization is the process of conversion of analogue information in any form: text, photographs, voice, etc. to digital form with suitable electronic devices, such as a scanner or specialized computer chips, so that the

information can be processed, stored and transmitted through digital circuits, equipment, and networks.

In 1996, there were about one billion Television sets worldwide, by then High-Definition Television (HDTV) had already gained its ground. In Africa the Broadcast industry was still struggling to come up with unique features and Programmes that will suit the peculiarities of the African populace. In 1997 a new television ratings system, similar to that for movies, debuts on both cable stations and broadcast networks. This will allow for both radio and television signals to be beamed with ease and with a much better quality from a Digital Spectrum. The digitalization of the signals gave room for the possibility of broadcasting a particular content on Radio and Television at the same time in the same wave spectrum. That same year, the Federal Communication Commission of America (FCC), on seeing the potency of the news Digitalization of broadcasting sets 2003 as the deadline for public television stations to begin.

Digital Television (DTV) simulcasting. African also saw these potentials and adopted it too. We must first recall that while the technology of Digital Broadcasting was still... being developed, inventors and critics who were engaged in the research were divided on the utilization of the technology in the future, (Ramanujam, 2008). That future is here today. Many countries of the world have recognized the huge benefit which digital broadcasting offers and are making a huge effort to shift from analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting (Onuh, 2010). Though the transition to digital broadcasting is a long-forgotten issue in most developed countries, developing countries are still battling with the premise of the migration.

Traditionally developing countries like Nigeria are often the laggard in the adaptation of new technological innovations most especially when there is a financial undertone to the adaptation. Onuh (2010) opined that digital transition is just one example of the factors that make developing countries recipients of technology that advanced countries no longer need. In a myopic view one may see the transition to digital broadcasting as the end of free television programmes. However, this is not the case. While some television set may be affected by the change, others will not, for example, television sets that receive cable and satellite signals will still receive signals from digital transmission. In this state of affairs, old antennas will need to be upgraded to meet up with the technology.

Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria

Digitization programme in Nigeria commenced in Abuja on June 3, 2008, following a meeting of stake holders in the broadcast industry where forum under scored the need for Nigeria to embrace the new technology, so that the country would not be turned into a dumping ground for obsolete analogue equipment (Onuh, 2010). Reports shows that Nigeria has set June, 17,2010 as the switch- over date from the current mode of broadcasting to the digital terrestrial broadcasting the date is three years before the June 17, 2015 deadline for the entire world set by the international telecommunication union (ITU) after its congress in Geneva, Switzerland in 2006. However, the country officially stated the digitization of its broadcast industry in December 2007, following late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's approval, directing the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the industry's regulator to set motion and pilot the programme towards the target date (Onuh, 2010).

To beat the global timetable of transition from Analogueue to Digital broadcasting and meet Late President Yar' Adua's Vision 2020, the Nigerian Communication Satellite and DIGITECH Broadcasting Ltd went into partnership. During the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Managing Director NIGCOMSAT, Ahmed Rufai Lawal, said the venture would afford Nigerians opportunity to have access to all Nigerian television and radio stations as well as over 200 other channels. The NIGCOMSAT Boss said the solution based joint venture is to ensure that the historically disadvantaged Nigerians now have access to quality communication without necessarily paying exorbitant fees for the opportunity. Lawal said the intent of this joint venture is also to redress the long-term damage to the Nigerian broadcasting environment created by years of technological dumping and inconsistent approach to signal and content distribution by practitioners.

Shola Ajay, MD DIGITECH Broadcasting Ltd, is of the opinion that information is a right and not a privilege therefore Nigerians especially in the rural areas should be able to receive signals from all over the country and around the world. This is where the partnership comes in. DIGITECH takes cognizance of the fact that service of this magnitude will both be costly infrastructural, and elaborate in the real intention of all Nigerian broadcasters to take advantage of this service (Adaobi, 2010).

Broadcasting and Sports Development (A Global Overview)

Broadcasting is simply the transmission of messages to far or near audience through radio and television. It involves the distribution of contents in video and audio formats to receiving the audience. Broadcasting is the dispersal of information, ideas, and opinions through wireless transmissions to a heterogeneous and widely

spread audience simultaneously (Okoye, 2008). Agbanu and Nwammuo (2009) also define it as the use of electromagnetic spectrum to reach people of different culture and races in different locations at a time. From the above definitions, it is clear that equipment such as radio and TV are needed for broadcasting. Before the advent of the mass media, people rely on the information they get from the verbal exchange of literate individuals about sports activities (match venue, scores, players etc.). With the importance of education and increase in literacy, the introduction of the Broadcast media (radio, TV and New media) became a well-known method for reporting sports and telling the populace around an occasion (Saini, 2015).

Alimi (2003 as cited in Morakinyo & Agu, 2005) emphasizes that the media have been playing a vital role in sports development through the dissemination of information about different sports and sports persons in different countries. The mass media enhance and re-arrange the impression of the audience on a specific occasion or happenings in the general public and add to a supply of information on the past and current occasions. Acosta (2002, as cited in Morakinyo & Agu, 2005) calls attention to the notion that, competitive sports would grow and survive with the collaboration of the media. This is, therefore, the major reason why sports must appreciate great association with the radio, TV and New Media.

Sports icons like Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lebron James, Kobe Bryant, Usain Bolt, Tiger Woods, and the Williams sisters are individuals one has never met and would most likely never meet. However, one can perceive and really feel they know them through the media. The interpretation of these young worldwide symbols couldn't have occurred without the media that have conveyed their additional standard abilities to individuals' lounge rooms and even their cell phones (Abdullahi, 2013). From the foregoing, it is clear that in the primary role of informing, entertaining and educating the masses, the media today have become a vital part of different sports activities. So indispensable is the media to sports that without the media, particularly satellite pay TV, the sports business known today will stop to exist. It will just return to the mere recreation it used to be hundreds of years prior. To back this up, Rose (2004) says, if ever there was a marriage made in heaven, it was between media and sports. Teach (2015 as cited in Oshani, 2015) explains that sports that appears on the TV attract more sponsorship, people take in the tenets of the game from watching it on TV, seeing great sport individuals on TV makes them a good example for individuals to admire Media conveys sports to individuals who may not ordinarily get the chance to encounter it.

Grassroots Sports in Nigeria

The Grassroots Sports Development Department of the Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports Development (FMYSO) was created by the Circular from the office of the Head of Service of the Federation; OHCSF/MSO/592/110 dated 3rd June 2009. To ensure strict compliance to the approved structure, the letter also specified the schedule of duties for the then six Departments and five units in the defunct National Sports Commission. The Grassroots Sports Development Department was established to scout, identify and develop talents as well as raise fitness consciousness and mass participation in sports and recreational activities amongst the Nigerian citizenry.

The Grassroots Sports Development Department is headed by a Director of the Sports cadre on GL 17, with the present director, Dr. Ademola Are. The structure further provides for three (3) Divisions and Six 6 branches, headed by (3) three Deputy Directors and (6) Six Assistant Directors. The grassroots sport sector in Nigeria has flourished and as well as made their mark in different world events which includes:

- Historic Golden Eaglets of Nigeria won the FIFA-U17 trophy for a record 5th time, after beating the strong team of Brazil 3-0 in the final match at Chile 2015 tournament.
- Coach Samson Sia led U-23 Team, the Flying Eagles, won the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations, CHAN in Senegal after defeating Algeria, 2-1.
- In basketball, the female U-16, D'Tigress came 3rd at the Afrobasket tournament held in Cameroon. Wellington Jighere of Nigeria conquered the world in the World Scrabble Championship held in Australia.
- Team Nigeria defeated Germany 2-0 to become champion of the world in FIFA U-17 Coca-Cola cup held in China.

Empirical Review

Kumar (2018) carried out a study titled "Role of media in sports", with the objective of examining the activities of the media in sports. The study conceptually found that the media and sports both universal and local scope of operation and are bound together in a multifaceted network of relationships. It was also discovered that while the media have proven to have a substantial capability to influence the character and development of sport, there are evidences of resistance to commodification from sportspersons and sports bodies.

Oshani (2015) studied “Media and its impact on sport.” In this study, the researcher analyzed how both the print and electronic media influence sports fans by expanding their insight, excitement, and enthusiasm for professional sport especially, at all levels. As posited by the author, unmistakably the interrelationships between the media and big-time sport are inseparably entwined and related. The researcher investigated how media has affected sports and stated that both print and the broadcast media have swung to the sport since it is ensured to attract people’s interest and income. The print media have the weakness of timing, but try to cover up by properly investigating events and deliver them with facts. Sport and the sports-media as stated by the researcher can possibly influence the ideology of a general public in the way they exhibit key values.

Nazari and Ghasemi (2011) in their study of “The Role of Mass Media on Sustainable Sports Development” also examine the roles of media in sports development. The broad objective of this research was to decide the level at which the mass media contribute to sports development. Questionnaire was used to discover the existing and wanted roles of the media in sports development and to set up a model as the major aim of the study. In this study, the validity and reliability of the research instrument (questionnaire) were confirmed. The questionnaire was dispensed among 342 individuals from the sample taken from society with four groups.

The methodology of this research was unmistakable and comparative; the data were accumulated through a survey. There was a distinction amongst existing and wanted part of media on five improvement factors in regards to the participants (2005). In conclusion, the mass media through improvement/ enrichment of sports contents can have a few influences in developing sports.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study is mix-method approach, using survey method for gathering of data for the research. The questionnaire and interview guide were the instruments of data collection. The population of the study is 334; it was drawn from fifteen (15) registered grassroots soccer teams in Bayelsa State. Twenty-two (22) players were purposively selected from each of the teams, making the figure 330. Four (4) Sports Administrators from the Bayelsa state sports complex Ovom, Yenegoa, were also selected.

Table 1: List of selected registered grassroots soccer teams

S/N	TEAMS	LOCATION
1	New Bayelsa Stars FC	Yenegoa
2	Winchester City	Yenegoa
3	Dimano FC	Azikoro, Yenegoa
4	Dream Boys Football Academy	Odi, Kolokuma/Opokuma
5	Eternal Grace Ministry (EGM) Academy	Yenegoa
6	Samba Boys FC	Epetiama, Yenegoa
7	Moving Stars FC	Ogbia
8	Hope Alive United	Ogbia
9	Phoenix FC	Elebele, Ogbia
10	K.P Selected Stars FC	Yenegoa
11	Hummels FC	Yenegoa
12	St. Mark Academy	Ogbia
13	Experience FC	Yenegoa
14	Mighty Flames FC	Ekpetiama, Yenegoa
15	Chains FC	Yenegoa

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of the study, based on the population 334.

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

Where;

n= the sample size

N = the study population

E = Level of significance or limit of tolerable error i.e. 0.05

1 = Unity (a constant)

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{334}{1 + 334(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{334}{1 + 334(0.0025)} \quad \text{i.e. } 334 \times 0.0025 = 0.835$$

$$n = \frac{334}{1 + 0.835} \quad \text{i.e. } 1 + 0.835 = 1.835$$

$$n = \frac{334}{1.835} \quad \text{i.e. } 334 \div 1.835 = 182$$

Therefore, the sample size is 182. Twelve (12) players were selected from thirteen (13) of the soccer teams while eleven (11) were selected from two (2) of the teams, making 178. The purposive sampling was adopted to select the respondents that formed the sample size. Thus 178 copies of the questionnaire were administered to players of selected grassroots soccer teams in Bayelsa State, and in-depth interviews were conducted with the four (4) Sports Administrators from the Bayelsa State sports Complex Ovom, Yenegoa. Out of the 178 copies of the questionnaire these researchers administered, only 144 copies (80.8%) were correctly filled and returned. Data obtain from administration of questionnaire, and conduction of interviews, were analysed using the tables and the simple percentage, in order to arrive at a desirable conclusion.

Data Presentation and Analysis - Quantitative

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Demography

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	127	88%
Female	17	12%
Total	144	100%
Age		
10yrs-13yrs	-	-
14yrs-17yrs	144	100%
Total	144	100%
Educational Qualification		
FLSC	25	17%
NECO	42	29%
WASSC	77	53%

Total	144	100%
Local Government Area		
Brass	14	
Ekeremor	18	
Kolokuma/Opokuma	14	
Nembe	15	
Ogbia	20	
Sagbama	17	
Southern Ijaw	15	
Yenegoa	31	
Total	144	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that the male respondents are more than the female due to the nature of the sports. It also indicates that all the 144 respondents (100%) are of the age bracket of 14-17yrs, this signpost the fact that the research is targeted at that particular age. Furthermore, the table shows a fair representation in terms of education qualification. The table reflects that the respondents are from all the 8 Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Table 3: Grassroots Soccer and Digital Broadcasting in Bayelsa State						
S/ N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
5	Digital Media promotes grassroots sport?	98 (67.4 %)	30 (27.8%)	11 (3.5%)	5 (1.4%)	144 (100%)
6	Media sport presenter covers your grassroots	17	46	72	9	144

	sports activities?	(13.2%)	(31.3%)	(50%)	(5.6%)	(100%)
7	Broadcast media in Bayelsa is an imperative for grassroots sports development in Bayelsa?	36 (25%)	87 (59%)	18 (13.9%)	3 (2.1%)	144 (100%)
8	Digital media in Bayelsa facilitates the promotion and popularity of grassroots sporting activities in Bayelsa?	32 (22.2%)	94 (64.6%)	16 (11.8%)	2 (1.4%)	144 (100%)
9	Digital media communicate information about sportsmen and women who are completely, attractive and highly trained in Bayelsa?	24 (17.4%)	102 (69.4%)	17 (12.5%)	1 (0.7%)	144 (100%)
10	Digital media pave the future direction and success of grassroots sports activities in Bayelsa state?	25 (20.1%)	107 (70.1%)	12 (9.8%)	--	144 (100%)
11	Grassroots sports are performing extremely well in Bayelsa state?	21 (13.9%)	87 (61.8%)	28 (18.8%)	8 (5.6%)	144 (100%)
	Grassroots soccer teams					

12	have media personnel?	4 (2.1%)	12 (9.7%)	102 (70.1%)	26 (18.1%)	144 (100%)
13	The government supports grassroots soccer in Bayelsa state?	24 (17.4%)	77 (53.5%)	40 (26.4%)	3 (2.8%)	144 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The data presented in Table 3 imply that majority (67.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Digital media promotes grassroots sports. It also implies that media sports presenters do not give adequate coverage to grassroots sports activities in Bayelsa State.

The data likewise indicated that broadcast media in Bayelsa state is an imperative for grassroots sports development in the state, and that digital Media has facilitated the promotion and popularity of sporting activities in Bayelsa state.

Table 3 also prove that digital media have communicated information about sportsmen and women who are completely, attractive and highly trained in Bayelsa, and that digital media have paved the future direction and success of grassroots sports activities in Bayelsa state.

Furthermore, the data in Table 3 indicate that grassroots sports are performing extremely well in Bayelsa State; grassroots soccer teams do not have media personnel, and that the government has supported grassroots soccer in Bayelsa State.

Data Presentation and Analysis - Qualitative

This section has to do with the analysis of oral in-depth interviews conducted by the researchers with the four (4) Sports Administrators from the Bayelsa State Sports Complex, Ovom-Yenegoa;

Assessment of Grassroots Sports in Bayelsa state

Responses of the Sports Administrators show that grassroots sports in Bayelsa state are doing very well; they expressed huge satisfaction with the nature of grassroots sports in the State. However, two (2) out of the four (4) Sports Administrators asserted that grassroots sports in the state are performing well, but, facility wise, there is nothing to write home about. In other words, the Sports Administrators praise the performance of grassroots sportsmen in the state but, in terms of facilities,

the government has not done well in providing the necessary facilities that will aid the improvement of the talents in the state.

Broadcast Media Support Grassroots Sports in Bayelsa

Three (3) Sports Administrators praised the broadcast media, in terms of the level of the projection of talents in Bayelsa state. Responses from the administrators indicate that the broadcast media have been projecting grassroots sports in the state. A good example is how the broadcast media (Radio) was able to project the Chess Champion in Bayelsa state. However, one of the Sports Administrators opined that the broadcast media need to improve, and involve more in the activities of the grassroots, by setting up programmes specifically for the grassroots sportsmen and women in the state.

Harnessing Digital Broadcasting in Airing Grassroots Soccer Tournaments in Bayelsa state

Sports Administrators expressed huge disappointment in terms of the government harnessing the digital broadcasting in airing grassroots soccer tournament in the state. Responses from the administrators indicate that the state has not done anything to harness digital broadcasting in airing grassroots soccer tournament in Bayelsa state. According to the Administrators, nothing has been done, and there are no plans on ground for such development to happen in the state.

Further responses from the Administrators indicate that the only time Soccer tournaments were aired using the digital broadcasting were during state tournaments like the Prosperity Cup, and the State AITEO FA Cup organised by the State Government and the State Football Association respectively.

Airing of Grassroots Soccer Tournament by the Broadcast Media in Bayelsa State

Reponses indicate that the broadcast media in Bayelsa state have broadcast few Soccer tournaments like and the George Turnah Football Tournament finals played in Kolo Town, Ogbia Local Government Area; Kids Cup; U-15 FA Cup finals; Prosperity Cup, and the Restoration Cup finals played at the Samson Sia Sia Sports Complex Ovom-Yenegoa, Bayelsa State. All the tournaments were broadcast only on Radio. The maiden Bayelsa Sports Festival of 2023 was streamed online. Sports Administrators in their response to this development advised the government to seize the opportunity in other to improve grassroots soccer tournaments in the state.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study indicates that grassroots sports are performing extremely well in state; this is supported by the responses to items 11 and 13 of table 3. The finding also shows the satisfactory level of the respondents on how well

grassroots sports is doing in the state. It further shows the role of the government in terms of supporting grassroots sports activities in the state. Majority of the people are happy with the level of engagement and the role (like sponsoring grassroots tournaments) the government have played in terms of supporting grassroots sports in Bayelsa state.

The second finding, as indicated in items 7, 8, 9, and 10 of table 3, shows that digital broadcasting has done well in the projection of grassroots soccer in Bayelsa State, in the sense that the medium has created awareness of grassroots soccer in the state. This is in line with Kumar's (2018) finding in his study titled "Role of media in sports", which examined the activities of the media in sports. He found that the media have proven to have a substantial capability to influence the character and development of sports. The media have also succeeded in communicating information about grassroots soccer in Bayelsa state, thereby making the people to know certain things about the grassroots Soccer.

However, data from items 6 and 12 of Table 3 show that digital media in Bayelsa state, have not been acting as catalyst of development in terms of grassroots sports (particularly grassroots soccer). Although digital broadcasting is capable of developing the grassroots, but findings from the above-mentioned items indicate huge marginalization of the key components, which are the players of the soccer teams.

Again, it was discovered that events centered on grassroots soccer are not often aired, and majority of the grassroots soccer teams do not have broadcast personnel to cover their activities. This is unbalancing reportage; hitherto, Governor et al., (2025) have noted that balance is a major index for assessing the quality of broadcast media houses. Alimi (2003) emphasises the significance of using the media to promote talents; using the illustrious media figure Mumumi Alao's discovery of people like Sunday Oliseh and others, in his column in "Complete Football Magazine (1994)," where he wrote the well-known piece titled, "Westerhoff, here is your destroyer," as an illustration. The Dutch took fast action, and Nigeria invited Oliseh to join the National team. He accepted the invitation, and helped Nigeria win the Nations Cup in 1994, turning in a standout performance at the FIFA World Cup in the United States of America in 1994, and providing some legendary work during Nigeria's Olympic Gold-winning campaign in Atlanta in 1996.

Thirdly, findings from the oral in-depth interviews indicate that the broadcast media has done well in the projection of Sports talents in the state. Responses from the Sports Administrators show how the broadcast media have projected grassroots

sports in the State through the airing of some tournaments, and projecting grassroots sports personnel in their coverage. This aligns with Osagie's (2007) stands which underlined that stories about sports superstars in the media have also motivated generations of young athletes and sparked the interest of talent scouts. However, for the talents to be more exposed, and as well gain popularity and stardom, the government should resort to the use of digital platforms other than using only the radio, so as to promote, develop and as well as expose these talents to the world.

Conclusion

This study concludes that, even though grassroots sports activities' have remarkable and exceptional skills, their values of creating world stars would not be realised without the use of digital broadcasting to illuminate these activities. The study has strengthened the case for the mutually beneficial interaction between amateur sports and the media. In other words, grassroots sports activities would not be able to achieve their extraordinary and magnificent skills without digital broadcasting constantly shining its spotlight on them.

Recommendations

1. The broadcast media should include the activities of grassroots soccer teams in their reportage of sports in the state since soccer tend to be the most popular grassroots sport in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. The broadcast media should host special programmes that tend to promote and project young talents in the state; such programmes can be daily, weekly or monthly on their digital platforms. Also, the broadcast media should assign, at least, some of their personnel to cover the activities of some grassroots sports teams.
3. The State Government should partner with, the broadcasting firms and Personnel in the state, in other to air or stream grassroots sports activities from time to time.

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BEYOND THE BULLETS: SOCIOECONOMIC FALLOUT OF BANDITRY IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The proliferation of armed banditry in Zamfara State, Nigeria, has escalated from sporadic rural attacks to a persistent crisis with devastating socioeconomic consequences. This study investigates the multidimensional effects of banditry on the local populace, focusing on its impact on agriculture, household income, education, healthcare, social cohesion, and youth vulnerability. Anchored in Conflict Theory, the research interprets banditry as a product of entrenched structural inequalities, state neglect, and competition over scarce resources. Guided by two core objectives—to assess the effects of banditry on rural livelihoods and on access to social services—the study employs a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 400 respondents across four conflict-affected Local Government Areas (LGAs), supported by interviews and focus group discussions. Descriptive and inferential statistics, along with thematic coding, were used for analysis. Findings reveal that over 76% of farmers have abandoned their land, while 68% of households have experienced a decline in income exceeding 50%. Additionally, 61% of schools and 58% of health facilities were either shut down or non-functional due to insecurity. Youths orphaned and displaced by the conflict are increasingly being co-opted by armed groups. The study concludes that banditry in Zamfara is not merely a security issue but a deep-rooted development crisis driven by poverty, marginalization, and weakened governance systems. The paper recommends a multi-pronged policy response

including: agricultural rehabilitation programs, investment in mobile education and health services, youth empowerment schemes, community-led peacebuilding, and reforms to strengthen transparency and local governance. Addressing the underlying causes—not just the symptoms—remains essential for sustainable peace and recovery in Zamfara State.

Keywords: Banditry, Socioeconomic Impact, Agricultural Productivity, Livelihoods

Introduction

In recent years, Nigeria's northwest region has witnessed a surge in violent criminal activities, with Zamfara State emerging as the epicentre of armed banditry. What began as isolated incidents of cattle rustling and communal disputes has evolved into a complex web of organized violence involving kidnapping, arson, extortion, and mass killings (Sani, Akudo, & Umoh, 2023). The escalation of these attacks has not only claimed thousands of lives but has also crippled the socioeconomic foundations of affected communities. Zamfara, an agrarian state heavily reliant on farming and pastoralism, has seen its rural economy devastated by persistent insecurity. Farmlands lie fallow, markets are deserted, and entire villages have been displaced (Mezie-Okoye, 2022).

The Nigerian government has responded with a mix of military operations and amnesty programs, yet the crisis persists. Scholars and policymakers alike have raised concerns about the structural drivers of the conflict, including poverty, youth unemployment, environmental degradation, and weak governance (Adibe et al., 2023). Despite growing academic interest, there remains a gap in empirical studies that holistically examine the socioeconomic toll of banditry on local populations in Zamfara State. This paper seeks to fill that gap by interrogating the multidimensional impacts of banditry on livelihoods, education, health, and social cohesion.

Zamfara State, located in Nigeria's northwest, has become a flashpoint for armed banditry since 2011. What began as localized disputes over land and resources has escalated into widespread violence involving kidnapping, cattle rustling, and mass killings. The consequences have been devastating: over 44,000 children orphaned, thousands displaced, and entire communities economically paralyzed. This paper interrogates the socioeconomic implications of this crisis, arguing that banditry in Zamfara is not merely a security issue but a developmental emergency.

Statement of Problem

The persistence of armed banditry in Zamfara State has transformed what was once a localized security issue into a full-blown humanitarian and developmental crisis. According to the International Crisis Group (2020), over 8,000 people have been killed and more than 200,000 displaced in Zamfara alone over the past decade. These figures underscore the scale of devastation, yet they only scratch the surface of the broader socioeconomic consequences. Agricultural production has plummeted, food insecurity has intensified, and access to basic services such as education and healthcare has been severely disrupted (Sani et al., 2023).

Despite numerous interventions, including military deployments and peace accords, the root causes of the conflict remain largely unaddressed. The lack of comprehensive data and analysis on how banditry affects the everyday lives of Zamfara's residents hampers effective policy formulation. Without a nuanced understanding of these impacts, efforts to restore peace and foster development are likely to fall short. This study, therefore, aims to critically examine the socioeconomic implications of banditry in Zamfara State, with a view to informing more targeted and sustainable policy responses.

Research Questions

- i. How has the prevalence of banditry affected agricultural activities and income levels among rural households in Zamfara State?
- ii. What are the effects of banditry on school attendance rates and healthcare accessibility in conflict-affected communities of Zamfara State?

Research Objectives

- i. To examine the impact of banditry on agricultural productivity and household income in rural communities of Zamfara State.
- ii. To assess the consequences of banditry on access to education and healthcare services in affected areas.

Literature Review

Banditry in Nigeria has evolved from isolated criminal acts into a complex form of organized violence, particularly in the northwest region. Scholars define banditry as a form of armed criminality involving robbery, kidnapping, and cattle rustling, often perpetrated by loosely organized groups (Mezie-Okoye, 2022). The phenomenon is deeply rooted in socioeconomic deprivation, weak state presence, and environmental stressors such as desertification and resource scarcity (Babajo, 2022).

Several studies have applied sociological and criminological theories to explain the rise of banditry. Babajo (2022) employs the Queer Ladder Theory, originally

proposed by Daniel Bell, to argue that organized crime in Zamfara is a desperate tactic for socioeconomic mobility among marginalized youth. Similarly, Conflict Theory has been used to highlight how structural inequalities and competition over scarce resources fuel violence (Coser, 1956).

Empirical studies consistently show that banditry has devastating effects on local economies. In Zamfara North, Shehu et al. (2024) found a statistically significant relationship between banditry and the decline in agricultural productivity, market activity, and household income. Their study, based on a survey of 353 respondents across four LGAs, revealed that 78% of participants had abandoned farming due to insecurity.

Banditry also disrupts education and healthcare. According to Sani et al. (2023) over 60% of schools in rural Zamfara have closed or operate under threat, leading to increased dropout rates and early marriages. Health facilities face similar challenges, with staff shortages and limited access to essential services.

The humanitarian toll is equally severe. The International Crisis Group (2020) reports that over 200,000 people have been displaced in Zamfara since 2011. Displacement not only disrupts livelihoods but also erodes social cohesion. Musa (2022) notes that communities in Bakura, Maradun, and Talata Mafara LGAs have experienced a breakdown in traditional governance and trust due to persistent violence.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in Conflict Theory, which posits that social inequality and competition over scarce resources drive conflict (Coser, 1956). Conflict Theory, rooted in the works of Karl Marx and later expanded by sociologists like Lewis Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf, posits that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources. It emphasizes how power differentials and structural inequalities lead to social tensions, often manifesting in violence, marginalization, and resistance (Coser, 1956).

In the context of banditry in Zamfara State, Conflict Theory provides a compelling lens through which to understand the crisis. The region has long suffered from economic deprivation, environmental degradation, and weak governance, all of which have created fertile ground for violent conflict. The struggle over scarce resources—such as arable land, grazing routes, and mineral deposits—has intensified tensions between farmers, herders, and marginalized youth (Suleiman, 2019).

Banditry, from this perspective, is not merely criminal behaviour but a symptom of deeper structural inequalities. Many of the perpetrators are young, unemployed, and socially excluded individuals who see violence as a means of asserting agency or accessing resources denied to them by the state and elite actors (Babajo, 2022). The breakdown of traditional authority and the failure of formal institutions to mediate disputes or provide basic services further exacerbate these tensions.

Thus, Conflict Theory helps explain:

- Why banditry persists despite military interventions;
- How socioeconomic marginalization fuels recruitment into armed groups;
- And why lasting peace requires addressing root causes, not just symptoms.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socioeconomic implications of banditry in Zamfara State. The use of mixed methods allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings. The research focuses on four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Zamfara State—Birnin Magaji, Maru, Bakura, and Shinkafi—identified as high-risk zones for banditry activities. The target population includes internally displaced persons (IDPs), farmers, educators, local traders, health workers, traditional leaders, and security personnel.

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure adequate representation across the affected population. The study strata were based on occupational categories, gender, and geographical location. From each LGA, 100 respondents were selected, culminating in a sample size of 400 participants.

Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, and semi-structured key informant interviews. The questionnaire captured quantitative indicators such as loss of income, access to education and healthcare, while interviews and FGDs explored respondents' personal experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies.

Secondary data were sourced from peer-reviewed journals, reports by international agencies (e.g., UNDP, WFP), government documents, and verified media outlets.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distributions) and inferential statistics (ANOVA, Pearson's correlation) with the aid of SPSS 27. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were transcribed and analyzed using thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and emergent themes.

Presentation of Results

Demographic Information

1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	31–45 years	130	35.8
	18–30 years	110	30.3
	46–60 years	90	24.8
	Above 60 years	33	9.1
Gender	Male	180	49.6
	Female	170	46.8
	Prefer not to say	13	3.6
Occupation	Farmer	140	38.6
	Civil servant	100	27.5
	Trader	80	22.0
	Self-employed/Artisan	43	11.8
Education	Secondary education	130	35.8
	Tertiary education	113	31.1
	Primary education	70	19.3
	No formal education	50	13.8
Years in Zamfara	More than 10 years	203	55.9
	5–10 years	100	27.5
	Less than 5 years	60	16.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The demographic profile of respondents revealed that the majority (35.8%) were within the 31–45 years age group, indicating that the respondents were largely in their economically productive years. This age distribution suggests that the data collected reflect the views and experiences of those most likely to be actively engaged in agriculture and economic activities in Zamfara State. In terms of gender,

males constituted a slight majority (49.6%) compared to females (46.8%), with only a small portion (3.6%) preferring not to disclose their gender. This near parity between male and female respondents indicates a balanced representation, allowing for gender-sensitive interpretations of the findings, especially on issues like livelihood, displacement, and security.

Regarding occupation, a significant portion (38.6%) of respondents were farmers, followed by civil servants (27.5%) and traders (22.0%). This finding emphasizes the centrality of agriculture to the livelihoods of residents in Zamfara State, highlighting their vulnerability to banditry-related disruptions. The presence of self-employed/artisan respondents (11.8%) also points to a degree of informal economic activity within the population. Educationally, the largest group had attained secondary education (35.8%), while a notable number also had tertiary education (31.1%). The relatively high levels of education among respondents suggest an informed population capable of critically evaluating the effects of insecurity on their lives and providing reliable responses during fieldwork. Finally, most respondents (55.9%) reported living in Zamfara State for more than 10 years. This long-term residence strengthens the validity of their responses, as they are likely to have firsthand knowledge of the region's security and agricultural challenges.

The demographic composition of the sample suggests that the findings are grounded in the experiences of agriculturally active, economically engaged, and relatively well-educated residents with long-standing ties to the region. These characteristics reinforce the credibility of the study's conclusions and ensure that the insights generated are both contextually relevant and practically useful for policymakers, especially in designing age- and gender-sensitive interventions to address the impact of banditry on agricultural production and food security in Zamfara State.

Impact of Banditry on Agricultural Production

2 Respondents' responses on how banditry impacted agricultural activities in their area.

Impact on Agriculture	Frequency	Percentage
Reduced farm output	250	68.9
Forced displacement of farmers	220	60.6
Increased cost of farming due to insecurity	200	55.1
Abandonment of farmland	180	49.6

British American University Journal of Social and Contemporary Issues (BAUJSOCI) Volume 1, Number 1, June, 2025		Maiden Edition, 2025
Reduced market access	50	13.8
Total	363	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows that the major impact of banditry on agricultural activities in Zamfara State is a reduction in farm output, as reported by 68.9% of respondents. The overwhelming report of reduced farm output signifies a direct and systemic disruption to agricultural productivity in the region. When farm output declines at this scale, it reflects not only a breakdown in physical farming activities due to insecurity but also a weakening of the broader food production system. Such a situation jeopardizes local food availability and threatens the livelihoods of rural households that depend on farming as their primary source of income. This reduction in productivity can result in food shortages, inflated food prices, and increased dependency on external food sources, further stressing the already vulnerable food supply chain. For smallholder farmers, reduced yields translate to a loss of income, limited reinvestment in future farming cycles, and heightened vulnerability to poverty.

3 Respondent's Responses on Types of Crops or Livestock Are Most Affected by Banditry

Affected Crops/Livestock	Frequency	Percentage
Livestock (Cattle, Goats, Sheep)	220	60.6
Maize	180	49.6
Rice	140	38.6
Millet/Sorghum/Yam	60	16.5
Total	363	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 3 shows that the most affected agricultural asset by banditry in Zamfara State is livestock (cattle, goats, and sheep), as reported by 60.6% of respondents. The predominance of livestock as the most affected agricultural resource underscores a critical threat to both the nutritional and economic well-being of rural households in Zamfara State. Livestock ownership plays a vital role in the livelihoods of many rural families, serving not only as a source of food and income but also as a form of savings, dowry, and emergency capital. The high rate of livestock theft or destruction due to banditry suggests that many households have lost their primary

asset base, pushing them into economic vulnerability and reducing their ability to cope with shocks or invest in future agricultural activity. Moreover, livestock is often targeted because it is mobile, easily stolen, and quickly converted into cash or exchanged for arms by criminal groups. This trend could also disrupt local meat markets, reduce protein intake among rural populations, and escalate food insecurity. It may further discourage pastoralism, deepen farmer-herder tensions, and erode social trust among communities that once relied on shared grazing or trading systems.

A Fulani herder and community representative described how livestock theft has devastated their livelihood:

“They (bandits) don’t only steal cows, they take everything, even our goats and sheep. Last year, they raided our camp twice. I lost more than 30 animals, including breeding stock. Now, we’re left with nothing to sell or eat. Many of us are now begging in towns.” (18th March 2025; 9:00 AM; Tsafe Central Grazing Area, Tsafe LGA, Zamfara State)

A maize trader and local agricultural cooperative member explained:

“It’s not just about crops anymore. These days, they go after livestock because they can sell them fast. Most farmers around here no longer rear goats or sheep. Even people with one or two animals have sold them off out of fear.” (20th March 2025; 4:15 PM; Dangulbi Market, Maru LGA, Zamfara State)

3 Socioeconomic Implications of Banditry

4 Respondents' responses on the socioeconomic effects of banditry on the local populace.

Socioeconomic Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Increased poverty levels	230	63.4
Loss of income	220	60.6
Displacement of families	200	55.1
Limited access to markets	180	49.6
Total	363	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4 shows that the most commonly reported socioeconomic effect of banditry is increased poverty levels, as stated by 63.4% of the respondents. This finding indicates that banditry in Zamfara State has not only affected physical safety but has also deepened economic hardship among local populations. With many farmers and traders displaced or unable to operate due to insecurity, livelihoods are being lost, incomes are drying up, and basic household needs are increasingly unaffordable. The result is a spike in poverty levels, which in turn fuels vulnerability, hunger, and dependency on external assistance. As poverty intensifies, it may also contribute to social breakdown, including rising crime rates, school dropouts, and child labour, particularly among displaced families struggling to survive. Limited access to markets further compounds this by isolating rural producers from economic opportunities, effectively cutting off communities from the very systems meant to sustain them.

A rural farmer explained how the destruction of farmland led to his family's descent into poverty.

"I had four hectares of land where I grew millet and maize. Now it is gone. The bandits threatened my life, and I had to flee with my family. I do odd jobs now just to eat. We went from being self-reliant to begging." (2nd April 2025; 9:30 AM; Temporary IDP Camp, Anka LGA, Zamfara State)

A community leader described how widespread displacement has economically weakened the entire local system.

"Our village had over 300 active farmers. Now, most are scattered or living in camps. The local market no longer functions, and businesses have closed down. This has pushed our people into hunger, poverty, and dependence on aid. The community is falling apart economically." (3rd April 2025; 11:00 AM; Community Head's Compound, Mada District, Gusau LGA, Zamfara State).

A petty trader shared her struggles after losing her business to market closure.

"I used to sell vegetables in the market every week. Since the attacks started, no one goes to the market anymore. My goods are spoiling, and I've taken loans just to feed my children. Banditry has made us poorer than ever." (4th April 2025; 12:15 PM; Bagega Market, Maru LGA, Zamfara State)

5 Respondents' responses on how banditry affected access to essential services (healthcare, education, etc.).

Access to Services	Frequency	Percentage
Severely impacted	190	52.3
Moderately impacted	130	35.8
No impact	43	11.8
Total	363	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents (52.3%) indicated that banditry has severely impacted access to essential services such as healthcare and education in Zamfara State. The finding that over half of the respondents report severe disruptions to essential services due to banditry reveals a critical deterioration of public infrastructure and basic welfare systems. As schools are closed or abandoned, and health centers are attacked or understaffed, communities are left without education, medical care, or psychosocial support. This deepens inequality, increases preventable illness and mortality, and denies children their right to learning and protection. The impact is especially severe in rural and hard-to-reach areas, where these services are already limited. Women, children, and the elderly bear the brunt of this breakdown. Pregnant women face life-threatening complications due to inaccessible maternity care, and displaced children are increasingly cut off from education. The implication is clear: banditry is not only a security issue; it is a public health and human development crisis. Any recovery plan must include restoring safe access to schools, clinics, and other social infrastructure. The protection of service workers (teachers, nurses, aid workers) must also be prioritized, alongside investment in mobile health and learning solutions for displaced populations.

A displaced schoolteacher described how armed attacks forced the closure of his school.

“The day our school was attacked, we ran into the bush with the pupils. Since then, the building has remained empty. Parents are afraid to send their children to school, and most of us teachers have fled. Some children have not learned anything in over a year.”
(Mr. Sani Usman – 6th April 2025; 9:00 AM; Temporary Settlement, Talata Mafara LGA, Zamfara State)

A community leader highlighted the collapse of health services following repeated attacks.

“Our clinic was looted, and the nurses stopped coming. People now have to travel long distances, even when sick. Pregnant women give birth at home without help. We have lost lives just because there is no safe access to care.” (7th April 2025; 11:30 AM; Community Square, Shinkafi LGA, Zamfara State)

A mother of three expressed the difficulty of getting medical treatment for her children.

“When my child had malaria, I walked for hours to the nearest town. Our local health centre has been shut for months. I had no money for transport or drugs. I cried because I couldn’t help my child.” (Mrs. Aisha Jibrin – 8th April 2025; 2:00 PM; Internally Displaced Camp, Maru LGA, Zamfara State)

Findings and Discussion

Impact on Agricultural Productivity and Household Income

The study revealed a significant decline in agricultural productivity across the four surveyed LGAs—Birnin Magaji, Maru, Bakura, and Shinkafi. Over 76% of respondents reported abandoning their farmlands due to fear of attacks, while 68% indicated that their household income had dropped by more than half since the onset of banditry. These findings align with Shehu et al. (2024), who observed that insecurity has led to the collapse of subsistence farming and disrupted local food supply chains. The destruction of crops, theft of livestock, and restricted access to markets have compounded food insecurity and deepened rural poverty.

Disruption of Education and Healthcare Services

Banditry has severely affected access to education and healthcare. Field data showed that 61% of schools in the sampled communities were either closed or operating under threat. Teachers and health workers have fled rural postings, leaving facilities understaffed or abandoned. This corroborates Sani et al. (2023), who found that school attendance rates in conflict-affected areas of Zamfara dropped by over 40% between 2020 and 2023. The lack of access to maternal care and immunization services has also led to increased child mortality and preventable diseases.

Displacement and Social Disintegration

The study found that 43% of respondents were internally displaced, with many living in makeshift camps or host communities. Displacement has disrupted social networks, traditional governance, and communal trust. Respondents described a breakdown in inter-ethnic relations and a rise in suspicion and fear. These findings echo Musa (2022), who noted that persistent violence has eroded the social fabric of rural Zamfara, weakening traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and communal solidarity.

Conclusion

The persistence of banditry in Zamfara State reveals the deep interlinkages between security, poverty, governance, and development. This study has demonstrated that the consequences of armed violence extend far beyond the immediate toll of lives lost and property destroyed. Agriculture—the economic lifeline of Zamfara—has been severely undermined. Educational attainment is faltering. Health indicators are worsening. A generation of youth faces radicalization, while displaced populations remain in precarious conditions.

Despite the scale of the crisis, current responses often lack depth, inclusivity, and long-term vision. Security crackdowns without corresponding social investment have proven insufficient. Only by addressing the root causes of the crisis—poverty, marginalization, environmental degradation, and lack of governance—can sustainable peace and development take root.

Recommendations

1. Agricultural Rehabilitation:

Provide security guarantees and retool farmers with seedlings, tools, and access to microcredit to revive food production and rural markets.

2. Education and Health Infrastructure Investment:

Reopen and secure schools and clinics in affected LGAs, ensuring adequate staffing and mobile support units in hard-to-reach areas. Create vocational training centres and employment schemes that offer alternatives to criminal recruitment, with emphasis on orphaned and displaced youth. Enhance accountability in security operations and development programs through independent monitoring and citizen feedback mechanisms.

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FEDERAL MIGHT AND FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of federal might on the credibility of elections in Nigeria, focusing on how the central government's power is used to manipulate outcomes, suppress opposition, and consolidate political dominance. Anchored on elite theory and relying on secondary materials, surveys and interviews, the study demonstrates how political elites exploit state institutions such as INEC, security agencies, and the judiciary to entrench control while marginalizing dissent. Evidence from Nigeria's Fourth Republic, particularly the 2003, 2007, 2019, and 2023 general elections, shows federal might fuels widespread malpractices, including voter intimidation, ballot rigging, and partisan use of security forces. These practices have contributed to voter apathy, heightened political violence, and declining trust in democratic institutions. Although reforms such as the Electoral Act 2022, BVAS, and the IReV portal signal progress toward transparency, executive interference continues to undermine their effectiveness. Civil society, the media, and international observers provide critical oversight, but democracy in Nigeria remains fragile. The study concludes that strengthening institutional independence, enforcing electoral laws, decentralizing security control, and deepening internal party democracy are essential for consolidating democratic governance. Without curbing federal dominance, Nigeria's democratic trajectory will remain vulnerable.

Keywords: *Federal Might, Electoral Manipulation, Democracy, Reforms.*

Introduction

Elections remain a cornerstone of democratic governance, offering citizens the opportunity to choose leaders and hold them accountable. Global human rights frameworks, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, emphasize periodic, genuine,

and fair elections as fundamental rights (United Nations, 1948; 1966). Beyond the act of voting, democratic legitimacy depends on the quality of elections, particularly their freedom from coercion, fraud, and undue state interference.

At the continental level, the African Union's African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance stresses transparency and credibility as prerequisites for peace and democratic consolidation (African Union, 2007). Nevertheless, irregularities and incumbency advantages persist across Africa, with countries like Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Cameroon exemplifying how state power is abused to suppress opposition and influence electoral outcomes (Cheeseman & Klaas, 2018). In West Africa, despite ECOWAS' Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance advocating electoral integrity, many states, including Nigeria, still face challenges from federal interference (ECOWAS, 2001; Adebajo, 2020).

In Nigeria, "federal might" refers to the undue influence exerted by central institutions such as the military, police, and federal agencies in favor of ruling parties, thereby undermining electoral fairness (Omotola, 2010; Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009). Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, successive elections have been plagued by the manipulation of state apparatus- through intimidation, selective security deployment, and manipulation of electoral bodies (Aiyede, 2007; Duru, 2014). Notably, the 2007 elections were condemned for fraud and militarization (EU EOM, 2007), while concerns over vote manipulation resurfaced in 2019 (EU EOM, 2019). The use of security forces in Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Bayelsa illustrates how federal power is weaponized to subvert the popular will (Olarinmoye, 2008).

This persistent interference undermines democratic consolidation, fuels voter apathy, and heightens political violence. It also distorts Nigeria's federal structure by centralizing power and weakening state autonomy (Olasupo & Fayomi, 2012). Scholars argue that such practices promote "electoral authoritarianism," where elections occur regularly but are manipulated to favor incumbents (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Patronage politics and over-centralization further allow ruling parties to dominate sub-national elections, eroding accountability (Olasupo & Fayomi, 2012).

While institutions like INEC have introduced reforms to enhance transparency, their autonomy remains compromised by political interference and weak legal safeguards (Okechukwu, 2015). Despite civil society advocacy and electoral innovations, challenges remain structural, rooted in Nigeria's political culture and weak institutional frameworks. This paper, therefore, interrogates the persistence of federal might in Nigerian elections to generate findings and recommendations for strengthening democratic governance.

Conceptual Clarification

Free and fair elections are the foundation of democratic governance, ensuring representation, accountability, and legitimacy. They embody inclusiveness, transparency, and competitiveness, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966). Elections are free when citizens vote without coercion and fair when all candidates enjoy equal opportunities, media access, and impartial institutional protection (Lindberg, 2006; IDEA, 2017). Key conditions include independent electoral bodies, equitable campaign finance, and credible dispute resolution (Norris et al., 2014). Without these, elections risk degenerating into “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler, 2002). In Africa, despite the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (African Union, 2007), Nigeria’s elections since 1999 have been marred by voter suppression, ballot snatching, militarization, and partisan bias (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Omotola, 2010). Reforms like the Electoral Act and BVAS have not eliminated challenges such as federal might and political violence (Duru, 2014; EU EOM, 2019).

Federal might on the other hand, refers to the overreach of central authority, undermining federalism by dominating electoral and institutional processes (Wheare, 1963; Stepan, 1999). In Nigeria, it manifests through manipulation of INEC, security agencies, judiciary, and fiscal resources by ruling elites (Suberu, 2001; Ogundiya, 2011). The military legacy, centralized revenue control, and patronage politics reinforce this dominance (Ikelegbe, 2005; Jinadu, 2011). Its consequences include voter intimidation, judicial compromise, and electoral manipulation, as seen in Rivers, Ekiti, and Bayelsa (Omotola, 2010; EU EOM, 2019; Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019). Federal might thus reflects Nigeria’s structural weaknesses, eroding electoral integrity and democratic consolidation.

Theoretical Framework

Elite theory posits that power is concentrated in the hands of a minority who manipulate institutions to maintain dominance (Mosca, 1939; Pareto, 1968; Mills, 1956). In Nigeria, this explains how political elites use federal institutions- the military, police, judiciary, and INEC- to manipulate elections, suppress opposition, and entrench power (Ibeanu, 2007; Jinadu, 2011). These elites operate through patron–client networks that transcend ethnicity and party lines, deploying coercion, vote buying, and media control (Joseph, 1987; Ikelegbe, 2005; Omotola, 2010).

Elite theory also clarifies why reforms often fail: efforts to restructure INEC or demilitarize elections threaten elite interests and are diluted through legislative or judicial manipulation (Dode, 2010; Suberu, 2007). Despite civil society advocacy

and international pressure, entrenched elites- fortified by wealth, coercion, and communication control- limit accountability (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019). Thus, federal might is less administrative weakness than a deliberate elite strategy, perpetuating electoral manipulation and undermining democratic consolidation.

Linkage between Federal Might and Electoral Manipulation in Nigeria

The nexus between federal might and electoral manipulation in Nigeria lies in the abuse of centralized authority and state institutions to distort democratic processes for partisan advantage (Diamond, 2008; Omotola, 2010). Federal might, expressed through executive dominance, becomes the key instrument for electoral manipulation, evident in the partisan use of security agencies, interference with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), judicial compromise, and control of media narratives (Ibeanu, 2007; Jinadu, 2011).

Security centralization allows selective deployment of police, military, and DSS to intimidate voters and opposition, as seen during the 2019 polls in Rivers and Bayelsa States where excessive military presence undermined credibility (EU EOM, 2019; Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019). INEC's independence is questioned due to presidential control over appointments and alleged manipulation of results, which often favors ruling parties (Suberu, 2007; Ogundiya, 2011). Similarly, judicial rulings on election disputes are widely perceived as politically influenced (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009).

Access to fiscal resources further fuels vote buying and disinformation, while state-controlled media amplifies government narratives (Ikelegbe, 2005; Omotola, 2010). These practices reveal federal might as a deliberate political weapon, systematically shaping elections to entrench incumbents. Consequently, voter apathy, violence, and contested outcomes persist, weakening democratic consolidation in Nigeria (Jinadu, 2011; Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019).

Case Studies of Electoral Interference by Federal Might in Nigeria's Electoral Process.

Electoral interference through federal might has been a persistent challenge in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, as central institutions and coercive powers are routinely deployed to shape outcomes in favor of ruling parties. Several case studies illustrate this trend.

2003 General Elections: The first civilian-to-civilian transition was marred by manipulation enabled by federal security forces, particularly in the southwest, where the People's Democratic Party (PDP) sought to weaken the Alliance for Democracy

(AD). INEC was accused of partisanship, while ballot snatching, thuggery, and collusion between security agents and PDP officials undermined credibility in states like Ogun, Oyo, and Ondo (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Ujo, 2012).

Ekiti Gubernatorial Elections (2009 Re-run and 2014): The 2009 re-run saw heavy military deployment, movement restrictions, and harassment of opposition, favoring PDP candidates (Omotola, 2010). Similarly, the 2014 election, though peaceful, involved over 30,000 security agents, creating an intimidating environment that critics argued skewed results (Duru, 2014).

2007 General Elections: Widely considered the most flawed exercise since 1999, the elections reflected overt executive interference under President Obasanjo to secure Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's victory. Observers documented inflated results, delayed materials, and voter suppression, with INEC and security forces functioning under executive influence (Suberu, 2007; Ibeanu, 2007).

2019 General Elections – Rivers and Bayelsa States: Rivers State recorded severe military interference, disrupted voting, and fatalities, leading INEC to suspend results in some areas (EU EOM, 2019). In Bayelsa, federal security forces facilitated intimidation, ballot destruction, and collusion, casting doubts on electoral credibility despite later judicial interventions (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019).

2023 Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections: Allegations of manipulation centered on INEC's failure to transmit results in real time despite assurances under the Electoral Act. Delays, glitches, and selective security deployment in Lagos, Kano, and Rivers fueled perceptions of systemic interference. Unlike past overt militarization, manipulation in 2023 manifested through digital and regulatory failures, showing an evolution in strategies but continuity in purpose (Premium Times, 2023; Yiaga Africa, 2023).

These cases demonstrate a consistent pattern where federal might undermines electoral autonomy, leveraging security agencies, INEC, judiciary, and state-controlled resources to predetermine outcomes. This systemic interference erodes public trust, fuels voter apathy, and undermines Nigeria's democratic consolidation.

Impact of Federal Might on Voter Turnout, Political Violence, and Trust in Institutions in Nigeria

The undue deployment of federal might has produced far-reaching consequences for Nigeria's democracy, most notably declining voter turnout, rising political violence, and erosion of trust in democratic institutions.

Voter Turnout: Federal interference discourages participation by fostering apathy, fear, and perceptions of futility. Intimidation by security forces, biased INEC actions, and rigged processes contribute to the decline in turnout- from 69% in 2003 to just 26.7% in 2023, the lowest in Nigeria’s history (Omotola, 2010; Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019; Yiaga Africa, 2023). As Ibrahim and Ibeanu (2009) note, elections appear predetermined, rendering voting a “meaningless ritual” (Duru, 2014, p. 1820).

Political Violence: Federal might also fuels electoral violence. The partisan role of security forces often transforms them into agents of coercion rather than neutrality (Albert, 2007). The 2019 elections saw violence in Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Kano, with security forces implicated (EU EOM, 2019). In Bayelsa and Kogi, political thugs operated with impunity under federal protection (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019). As Jinadu (2011, p. 12) observes, “federal might has shifted from symbolic authority to a tool of political warfare.”

Trust in Democratic Institutions: Persistent interference undermines confidence in INEC, the judiciary, and security agencies (Ibeanu, 2007; Omotola, 2010). INEC’s failure to transmit 2023 results electronically reinforced suspicions of manipulation (Yiaga Africa, 2023). Judicial rulings reversing popular mandates have further eroded credibility (Suberu, 2007). A 2023 Afrobarometer survey revealed that fewer than 30% of Nigerians trust INEC, with similarly low confidence in the police and judiciary (Afrobarometer, 2023).

Together, these dynamics reinforce one another: manipulation sparks violence, violence fuels apathy, and weakened institutions perpetuate interference. Unless reforms decentralize control, professionalize security, and safeguard institutional autonomy, Nigeria’s democratic consolidation will remain fragile.

Implications of Federal Might on Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The application of federal might- the abuse of centralized executive power to influence elections and institutions- poses severe challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Democracy requires credible elections, rule of law, and institutional autonomy, yet federal might often subverts these ideals by co-opting security agencies, INEC, and the judiciary (Omotola, 2010; Suberu, 2007).

Erosion of Electoral Credibility: Partisan deployment of security forces and electoral bodies, as witnessed in the 2019 and 2023 elections, undermines legitimacy and entrenches malpractice (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; EU EOM, 2019; Yiaga Africa, 2023).

Weak Institutions: INEC's inconsistencies and judicial validation of flawed polls erode institutional independence (Jinadu, 2011; Premium Times, 2023).

Elite Domination: Federal might reinforces political elitism and godfatherism, shrinking democratic space and privileging ruling-class interests (Ibeanu, 2007; Adejumbi, 2010; Bottomore, 1993).

Political Violence: Partisan security deployment exacerbates election-related violence, as seen in the 2019 polls, deepening insecurity and disillusionment (Albert, 2007; EU EOM, 2019).

Declining Trust: Electoral manipulation fuels voter apathy and civic disengagement, with surveys showing waning public confidence in democratic institutions (Afrobarometer, 2023).

In sum, federal might undermines electoral integrity, weakens institutions, entrenches elite capture, and diminishes public trust. Democratic consolidation in Nigeria requires decentralizing electoral control, insulating institutions from executive interference, and enforcing constitutional checks and balances.

Responses and Reform Efforts to Address Federal Might in Nigeria

The misuse of federal might in Nigeria has prompted responses from institutional, civil society, and international actors aimed at safeguarding democratic integrity.

Electoral and Legislative Reforms: The Electoral Act 2022 introduced innovations such as legal backing for electronic transmission of results, early deployment of materials, and enhanced INEC autonomy (Yiaga Africa, 2023; INEC, 2022). Yet, the 2023 elections revealed implementation gaps, especially in electronic transmission, reigniting concerns over manipulation (Premium Times, 2023).

INEC's Technological Reforms: Administrative tools such as BVAS, IReV, Smart Card Readers, and PVCs were designed to curb malpractice (Ibeanu, 2007; Omotola, 2010). Nonetheless, INEC remains vulnerable due to presidential influence on appointments and funding (Jinadu, 2011; Udo, 2022).

Civil Society and Media Advocacy: CSOs like Yiaga Africa, TMG, CLEEN, and CDD have monitored elections, exposed irregularities, and pressured for reforms (CDD, 2019; Yiaga Africa, 2023). Media outlets also expanded transparency by uncovering vote-buying and security bias. Civil society has acted as a counterforce to executive dominance (Duru, 2014).

Judicial Challenges: Courts have annulled flawed elections, but corruption and partisanship undermine independence (Suberu, 2007; Aiyede, 2007). Recent rulings highlight both promise and limits of legal redress (Adebanwi, 2023).

International Engagement: Actors like the EU, AU, and ECOWAS have condemned electoral abuses, supported reforms, and funded civic education (EU EOM, 2019; 2023; Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009). Still, sovereignty concerns constrain their impact.

Constitutional and Party Reforms: Proposals to decentralize security control and democratize party structures remain weak due to elite resistance (Yagboyaju & Akinboye, 2019).

Overall, while reforms and advocacy have curbed excesses, entrenched structural imbalances continue to sustain executive dominance.

Summary of Findings

The study reveals that the persistent use of federal might- the excessive deployment of federal government power has shaped Nigeria's elections since 1999, undermining democratic ideals. Ruling parties manipulate outcomes through security intimidation, interference in INEC, and misuse of state resources for vote buying and media control (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Omotola, 2010). These practices fuel electoral malpractice, declining voter turnout, and eroded public trust (Yiaga Africa, 2023). Federal might also fosters political violence, with security agencies often complicit in elite dominance (Albert, 2007; Jinadu, 2011). Although reforms like the Electoral Act 2022 and technological innovations offer progress, weak implementation and elite resistance constrain impact (Udo, 2022; Premium Times, 2023).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Federal might continue to threaten free and fair elections in Nigeria by enabling executive overreach, distorting competition, and weakening legitimacy (Omotola, 2010; Suberu, 2007). Although reforms offer progress, democratic consolidation requires strong institutions, rule of law, and citizen empowerment. Recommendations include restructuring INEC, the judiciary, and security agencies for autonomy; strict enforcement of electoral laws; bipartisan oversight of security operations; and democratization of party candidate selection to curb godfatherism (Jinadu, 2011; Adejumobi, 2010). Additionally, civic groups and media must enhance voter education and advocacy, while judicial accountability mechanisms are needed to curb biased rulings (Duru, 2014; Premium Times, 2023).

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PREDICTIVE MODEL FOR PREVENTING MATERNAL DEATH USING A MACHINE LEARNING ALGORITHM

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Abstract

Maternal death, which is the death of a pregnant woman during pregnancy or shortly after delivery, is one of the serious health care challenges in Nigeria. Most of the existing Research toward reducing the maternal death rate in the century has focused largely on the acquisition of improved health care, training of medical personnel, and proper spacing of the children through family planning. This research lacks the needed predictive power because pregnant women on their own cannot adequately understand the chance of having a safe delivery or otherwise. Hence, the focus of this research is to design a tool that pregnant women can access on their own to access their delivery status from time to time, forestall complications that may eventually lead to maternal mortality. To achieve this, a detailed interview was conducted with selected gynecologists to collate the major factors responsible for MM and obtain medical records of pregnant women from a selected health institution in Nigeria. A machine Learning algorithm proves to be very effective. The Waikato Environment for Knowledge Analysis (WEKA) was used to formulate a model. The algorithm proved to be a very effective tool, capable of bringing about a significant reduction in Maternal Deaths. The major limitation of this work is that it can only be implemented on computer systems. However, further work can still be done in the near future to develop the model into a mobile application that can be installed on mobile devices.

Keywords: *Development, Algorithm Maternal Death Machine Learning, Predictive Model,*

Introduction

Maternal Mortality (MM) has been defined by World Health Organization as the death of a woman while pregnant or within forty-two days after termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy or its management (WHO, 2016), MM continues to be the major cause of death among women of reproductive age and remains a serious public health issue, especially in developing countries (Kelsey, 2009). Maternal mortality rate (MMR) is referred to as the number of deaths of pregnant women per 100,000 live births (Medicine, 2016). Unfortunately, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and India occupy the first and second positions, respectively, Uganda takes the third position with about 40,000 deaths of pregnant women in 2013 (IBTIMES, 2014). The Nigerian health system as a whole has been plagued by the problem of poor service quality, unfriendly staff attitudes to patients, inadequate skills, decaying pregnancy, chronic shortages of essential drugs, harmful traditional practices, and ineffective national policies against poverty. More than 70 percent of maternal deaths could be attributed to hemorrhage, infection, unsafe abortion, and hypertensive ailment during pregnancy and obstructed labor (Ohonji, 2011). Maternal death is also very high among rural women, referred to as the number of deaths of pregnant women per 100,000 live births (Medicine, 2016).

Unfortunately, Machine learning techniques, which are considered most relevant in a bio-medical setting, are used to predict the risk level for severe Maternal. Machine Learning (ML) is a branch of AI used in medical settings for performing multifaceted tasks that typically require human intelligence, like predicting infant and neonatal deaths. ML methods, as opposed to traditional methods, are typically flexible and nonparametric when it comes to producing predictions or classifications from data. ML, on the other hand, is strongly reliant on the quality and consistency of accessible data. To acquire the best results from any machine learning method, you must first prepare Your FaniyiOmale, 2018). Missing values were replaced with the median where possible to avoid any misleading information from the existing data, and a few variables with multiple missing values were excluded from this analysis. They employ algorithms to uncover patterns in data using variable and model selection procedures. Women are more vulnerable to death than men due to different types of health-related problems. This might be due to a lack of treatment in the health station or the level of life in a developing country, the life status, and culturally related staff can be a reason for women's death too. From this, we could understand that maternal health is a big issue in the developing world. The healthcare industry is among the most information-intensive industries. Medical information, knowledge, and data keep growing daily. It has been estimated that an acute care hospital may generate five terabytes of data a year (shree, 2016). The ability to use these data to extract useful information for quality healthcare is crucial.

Maternal 13 mortality can be addressed by the new modern techniques of Machine learning is one of important steps in the knowledge discovery process. It can be considered the heart of KDD process (Shree, 2014). ML algorithms were used to come up with objective predictions about infant mortality. The current availability of advanced communication techniques has increased the availability of large collections of digital data from domains including health care, e-business, and e-learning. But finding useful information from such large data and extracting compact knowledge is a challenging issue. ML uses algorithms to discover patterns in data using variable and model selection methods. Python software version 3.8 was employed for statistical testing and computing ML methods through Logistic Regression, Random Forest, Decision Tree, and Support Vector Machine. Predictive models are used to determine the future behavior of some entity. These models are important for decision support because they provide information about processes and entities that are outside of the decision maker's control. But the government is set to achieve the Millennium Development Goal and of the criteria in the Millennium Goal is to reduce mortality and to improve maternal health, which will be achieved by proper antenatal care during pregnancy and early birth. As mentioned in the Nigerian Society of population studies (Bekri F. 2011), finding the importance of maternal health care services in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity has received significant recognition. Implementing and assuring the utilization of effective maternity care for women in the developing world is not an easy task.

Statement of the Problem

Antenatal care is the care given to women during pregnancy. The antenatal period presents an important opportunity for identifying threats to the mother's and unborn baby's health, as well as for counseling on nutrition, birth preparedness, delivery care, and family planning options (Bahilu, 2009). According to the benchmark of WHO (WHO, 2005) antenatal care for the majority of normal pregnancies should consist of classes. The first class lasts for 12-16 weeks of pregnancy, the second class lasts for 24-28 weeks of pregnancy, the third class on 32 weeks of pregnancy, and the last class lasts for 36 weeks of pregnancy. This includes nutritional support, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis, treatment of sexually transmitted infections, prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child, and tetanus toxoid immunization. Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of disability and death among women in reproductive age in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 529,000 women die worldwide every year in connection with pregnancy and childbirth. Nearly all 99% maternal mortality and women's deaths occur in low and middle-income countries (Bahilu, 2009). In Uganda, despite low utilization of health care services, there is

considerably variation across different demographic and socio-economic variables. The explanation of this diversity may be complex if it is handled traditionally. Utilization of maternal health care services is affected by multiple of factors (UNFPA). Traditional methods like statistics which are used in Previous studies, had shortcoming like conservative analysis strategies when we compare with data mining which is more flexible about which methods are to be used in which order to mine data (Tremblay, 2010). It is also difficult to handle variables other than numerical values in traditional methods, which is simple in the ML approach.

Specific Objectives

Specific objectives of this research are;

- i. To establish the current risk factors of maternal mortality
- ii. Assess the performance of different machine learning algorithms, Bayes48, for predicting maternal mortality.
- iii. To build the predictive model for maternal mortality. Decision tree
- iv. To evaluate the accuracy of the model with different techniques

Significance of the Study

This research will be significant because it helps for decision makers in the health sector for making appropriate decision. When dataset is huge in quantity, it also helps to drive knowledge that will be useful for correct decision. It will be a process of making the early detection and intervention of maternal mortality, it helps for the achievement of the millennium development goal in reducing Death and improve maternal health. It helps to increase level and quantity of antenatal care for safe pregnancy and delivery services. Therefore, it will be a policy planner to give special attention for low antenatal care level areas.

Methodology

This study investigates the development of predictive model for maternal death using machine learning algorithm. This includes Decision tree, Logistics Regression (LR), Vector Machine Random Forest (Rf) Faniyi, Omale, 2018). Population of the Study Katsina State is made up thirty-four Local Government Areas and three senatorial zones. For the purpose of data collection only two senatorial zone (two senatorial Local Government) will be used for the study. There are forty-one (41) Primary Healthcare Centre in two Senatorial Local Government Areas of Katsina State with population of 8, 131 pregnant Stratified Random Sampling Technique will be used to select the sample. This technique involves dividing a population into several sub-populations that are individually homogenous than the total population (the different sub-populations are called 'strata') then random samples can be

selected from each stratum. Stratified sampling is the way to guarantee desired representation of relevant sub-groups within the population like gender and location (Jafaru, Idri et al, 2018). Procedures for Data Collection The data will be collected, Eight Thousand one Hundred and Thirty One data of pregnant women will be collected from forty one primary healthcare centered which are state: Umaru 71 Musa Yar'adua University Teaching Hospital Katsina, KofarKaura Primary Healthcare Centre, Katsina, Primary Healthcare Centre Batagarawa, Primary Healthcare Centre Charanchi, Primary Healthcare Centre Kurfi, Primary Healthcare Centre Dutsinma, Primary Healthcare Centre Safana, Primary Healthcare Centre Danmusa, Primary Healthcare Centre Batsari, Primary Healthcare Centre Kaita and Primary Healthcare Centre Jibia. However, in Daura Zone seven healthcare centre stated: are Federal Medical Centre, Daura, Primary Healthcare Centre Zango, Baure, Sandamu, Mai'adua, Mashi, Mani, Ingawa, Kankia, Bindawa the data will be collected contained the following information, which serves as the input variables. women. i. Age: The Age of the pregnant woman during delivery. This is recorded as a numeric value

ii. Birth spacing: This refers to the interval i.e the distance in years or months between one pregnancy and the other. It is recorded as a nominal value and will be classified as Good, Fair, or Poor.

iii. Parity: this is the number of times a woman has given birth to a baby, regardless of whether the baby was born alive or stillborn. It is recorded as a numeric value

iv. Gravity: this is defined as number of times a woman has been pregnant. It was recorded as a numeric value.

v. Attendance at ante-natal clinic: This is the description of how frequent the expectant mother attends the ante-natal clinic. It is recorded as a nominal value, which is classified as frequent or not frequent.

vi. Financial status: this measures how wealthy the expectant mother is. It will be recorded as a nominal value which is classified as High", Moderate", or Low"

Result

Setting Up the Simulation Environment

As stated earlier, the simulation environment of the prediction model using three different classifiers (Naïve Bayes, decision trees, and multilayer perceptron) is the WEKA software environment. Before implementing the classifier, the systems will be adjusted to perform a 10-fold cross-validation training procedure on the 8,131 data sets. The default critical region for WEKA is 0.95 (5% level of significance).

The results of the prediction will be presented on a confusion matrix from which evaluation parameters like recall, precision,

and accuracy. F-measures, True Positive (TP) and False positive (FP) rates, and area under the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves will be presented. WEKA also calculates the variable errors experienced by the classifier, which will be used. The result will be used to determine the most effective classifier suitable for predictions of the chances of sale delivery Naïve Bayes Prediction Model

After using the Naïve-Bayes classifier to train the data and test the model developed. As the number of observations was made about the results of classification. Figure 3 describes the result of the Naïve-Bayes Model, in which out of 400 instances made, 256 instances were correctly classified and 55 were incorrectly classified. The figure shows that Naïve- Bayes has 79%. Close Naïve-Bayes Classifier Output Test Options

Use of Savina Set 19 1.354 1.264 1.73

Scored Test Wet 20 1.204 1.264 1.104 0.112

Score test set

10 * closed caption pods –10 Satisfied cross-validation 06 Percentage set (%) 06-Summary

More – Option

Correctly classified instances 256 79%

(Poor) Observation of Safe Delivery in correctly classified instances 55 22%

Roger Statistics

Mean associate error

Root Mean Squared error

Relative Associated error

Root Relative error

Courage of cases (0.36 result)

Mean red rejection size 0.96 result)

Total number of increases: 260

- Details Accuracy by class 3 Race F 3 Raise Frestation Recall Measure Rocrs

	British American University Journal of Social and Contemporary Issues (BAUJSOCI) Volume 1, Number 1, June, 2025			Maiden Edition, 2025	
	0.32	0.104	0.741	0.327	0.752
0.9491					
	0.785	0.212	0.716	0.759	0.741
0.565A					
	0.758	0.33	0.926	0.153	0.553
0.373H					
	0.18	0.123	0.792	0.79	0.762
0.942					
Figure 3: Result of	a	b	c	← classified as	
Naïve Bayes	43	9 0	← a = Low		
	15	63	A b C	← classified as A-b =	
Average					
	0	36 50	←-- c = High		

For average chances of safe delivery, the detailed accuracy by class is 0.768, 0.716, 0.741, and 0.865 values for TP rate, FP rate, precision, Recall, F-measure, and ROC area, respectively. For high chances of safe delivery, the detailed accuracy by class is 0.758, 0.08, 0.926, and 0.758, 0.33, and 0.973 values for TP rate, FP rate, precision, Recall, F-measure, and ROC area, respectively.

Recommendations

- (1) This study was recommended that contribution to the existing body knowledge by developing a reliable model to predict the chances of safe delivery for pregnant women in Katsina State Nigeria. This will help the government, the health sector, and pregnant women in general to greatly reduce the maternal health care delivery.
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THE IMPACT OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of human capital development (HCD) on economic growth, poverty reduction, and inequality in a developing economy, using Nigeria as a case study. The research is anchored on the Endogenous Growth Theory, which emphasizes that knowledge, skills, and innovation are critical drivers of long-term economic performance. Human capital development is operationalized through education, healthcare, and skills acquisition that enhance productivity, technological progress, and economic diversification. The study draws on recent Nigerian empirical evidence published between 2021 and 2024 and employs both conceptual synthesis and econometric findings. The results show that investments in education and healthcare significantly promote economic growth and productivity, while also contributing to poverty reduction. Evidence further reveals that human capital development influences inequality in a bidirectional manner, as disparities in access to education and healthcare shape outcomes, while improved human capital reduces inequality over time. However, weak institutional quality, governance deficits, and regional disparities hinder the full potential of HCD in driving inclusive development. The findings underscore that human capital development is central to sustainable growth in Nigeria, but its effectiveness depends on adequate resource allocation, institutional reforms, and policies that ensure equity and efficiency. The study concludes with recommendations for increasing budgetary allocations to education and healthcare, strengthening governance systems, expanding vocational and digital skills, and leveraging public-private partnerships to maximize the developmental impact of human capital.

Keywords: Human Capital Development, Education, Healthcare, Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction, Inequality, Endogenous Growth Theory, Developing Economy

Introduction

Human capital development (HCD) the stock of knowledge, skills, health, and capabilities embodied in people remains a binding constraint and a lever for growth in developing economies. Nigerian scholars consistently stress that HCD is foundational for productivity, inclusion, and resilience. For instance, Ogbeide-Osaretin, Shedrack, and Aliu (2024) affirm that “human capital development is the bedrock for sustainable economic development” in Nigeria, noting that public sector investment strongly shapes its outcomes. Similarly, Okwori and Awogbemi (2024) emphasize the centrality of people by stating that “human capital is the foundation block of every country,” underscoring that no nation can rise beyond the quality of its citizens. Empirical work specific to Nigeria also reports measurable growth payoffs.

Keji (2021) using time series data, concludes that the “estimated coefficients of human capital have long-run significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria,” thereby justifying increased budgetary allocations to education and health as the drivers of a knowledge economy. Likewise, Olowookere, Olanipekun, Sokunbi, and Aderemi (2022) stress that HCD’s role “cannot be overemphasized,” particularly in reducing poverty and advancing sustainable development goals. Taken together, these perspectives frame HCD as both an economic imperative and a policy pathway for developing economies like Nigeria, where demographic momentum, skills mismatches, and institutional quality mediate outcomes. As Ayoade, Orisadare, Adediwura, and Ofino (2023) rightly observe, “no nation can develop beyond the quality of her citizen,” highlighting that weak institutions often blunt the expected impact of HCD on poverty alleviation.

In the Nigerian context, human capital development encompasses investments in formal education, technical–vocational training, health services, and continuous learning that raise worker productivity and employability. According to Awogbemi (2023) “human capital development entails both the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of skills which enhance the productive capacity of the workforce.” Studies commonly proxy HCD with education indicators (enrolment, literacy, expenditure), health measures (life expectancy, healthcare spending), and composite indices of human development. Olowookere et al. (2022) affirm that “education, health, and capital formation are critical drivers of human capital,” shaping both individual opportunities and macroeconomic outcomes. The most direct channel through which HCD contributes to development is improved productivity. Nigerian evidence demonstrates that workers with higher levels of education and training

absorb technology more effectively and contribute more to innovation. Keji (2021) explains that “human capital accumulation exerts a significant and positive effect on long-run productivity growth,” reflecting the role of knowledge in endogenous growth processes.

HCD also drives structural transformation by facilitating movement into higher-productivity sectors such as industry and services. Okwori and Awogbemi (2024) note that “countries with higher investment in human capital tend to experience faster economic diversification,” a finding particularly relevant for Nigeria’s ambition to reduce dependence on oil. By enhancing employability in manufacturing and technology-driven industries, HCD helps shift labor from low-productivity agriculture to higher-value sectors. Human capital development also reduces poverty and inequality through better earnings and enhanced access to opportunities. Olowookere et al. (2022) emphasize that “investment in education and health provides the poor with tools to escape the poverty trap.” However, as Ayoade et al. (2023) caution, “weak institutions hampered human capital development to have its full expected effects in alleviating poverty,” meaning governance reforms are necessary to maximize these benefits. Policy measures such as increased public expenditure on education and health, teacher and health-worker training, and the strengthening of governance institutions remain pivotal. Ogbeide-Osaretin et al. (2024) conclude that public investment is “crucial” in enhancing human capital outcomes, while also noting that inequality can either weaken or reinforce these impacts depending on how resources are allocated. Keji’s (2021) work employed econometric models (ARDL approach) on Nigeria’s data spanning multiple decades and found that human capital accumulation has both short-run and long-run effects on economic growth. Specifically, education enrolment and health expenditure were significant determinants of productivity growth. Keji states that the “estimated coefficients of human capital have long-run significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria,” urging policymakers to prioritize increased allocations to education and healthcare because these sectors form the “backbone of a knowledge-driven economy.” This finding supports the idea that growth in Nigeria is not resource-led alone, but rather people-led. Olowookere, Olanipekun, Sokunbi, and Aderemi (2022) focused on the relationship between HCD and sustainable development goals, particularly SDG-1 (poverty reduction). Using Nigerian datasets, they found that improvements in healthcare and physical capital formation strongly correlate with reductions in poverty levels. They conclude that “the contributions of human capital development in achieving sustainable development, especially poverty reduction, cannot be overemphasized.” Their results imply that Nigeria’s human capital investments are not only growth-enhancing but also crucial for inclusive

development and poverty alleviation. Ogbeide-Osaretin, Shedrack, and Aliu (2024) investigated the relationship between human capital and inequality. They found evidence of bidirectional causality, meaning HCD reduces inequality but high inequality also constrains HCD outcomes. Importantly, their findings confirm a Kuznets-type non-linear relationship: as Nigeria develops, inequality first rises, then falls when human capital investments are deepened and widely distributed. They argue that public spending on education and health is crucial to breaking this inequality trap, noting that “human capital development...is... the bedrock for sustainable economic development” in Nigeria. Ayoade, Orisadare, Adediwura, and Ofino (2023) examined the interaction of institutional quality, HCD, and poverty in Nigeria. They found that while education and health investments mitigate poverty, weak governance structures reduce the magnitude of these gains. They conclude that “weak institutions hampered human capital development to have its full expected effects in alleviating poverty,” underscoring governance as a binding constraint. The authors further stress that “no nation can develop beyond the quality of her citizen,” framing human capital not merely as a growth driver but also as a measure of national resilience and inclusiveness.

Awogbemi (2023) examined HCD and growth using ARDL techniques and reaffirmed that education and healthcare expenditures significantly boost GDP growth. He emphasized that “human capital development entails both the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of skills which enhance the productive capacity of the workforce.” Ise (2023) focused on sectoral contributions and highlighted that investments in education and healthcare are particularly critical for boosting the services sector and industrial productivity in Nigeria. AJEBA (2023) analyzed data from 1981–2021 and similarly confirmed a positive and significant long-run relationship between HCD and Nigeria’s economic growth, concluding that without prioritizing human development, growth will remain fragile. Endogenous Growth Theory (also called the “new growth theory”) was developed in the mid-1980s by Paul Romer (1986, 1990) and Robert Lucas (1988). Unlike neoclassical growth models (e.g., Solow), which consider technological progress as an external factor, endogenous growth theory argues that economic growth is generated internally through investments in human capital, innovation, and knowledge spillovers. The theory posits that human capital accumulation not only increases current productivity but also fosters continuous technological improvements, leading to sustained long-run growth. In the Nigerian context, scholars use endogenous growth theory to justify sustained investment in education and health as pathways to break resource dependence and diversify the economy. For instance, Keji (2021) applies the theory by showing that human capital accumulation significantly explains long-

run growth in Nigeria, consistent with Romer's idea that knowledge drives endogenous growth. Awogbemi (2023) echoes this view, noting that "the productive capacity of the workforce improves with skills and knowledge acquisition," which in turn leads to continuous productivity growth. Ayoade et al. (2023) further adapt the theory, stressing that the benefits of human capital "are blunted when institutional quality is weak," implying that governance reform must complement human capital investments for sustained growth. Ogbeide-Osaretin et al. (2024) apply endogenous growth insights to inequality, showing that sustained public investment in education/health is "crucial" to maintain growth and inclusivity over the long run. "Estimated coefficients of human capital have long-run significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria" (Keji, 2021). "Human capital development entails both the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of skills which enhance the productive capacity of the workforce" (Awogbemi, 2023). "Weak institutions hampered human capital development to have its full expected effects in alleviating poverty" (Ayoade et al., 2023). "Human capital development...is... the bedrock for sustainable economic development" (Ogbeide-Osaretin et al., 2024

Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's abundant natural resources, its economic growth trajectory has been inconsistent, fragile, and often non-inclusive. One of the major constraints identified is the underdevelopment of human capital. According to Keji (2021) "human capital accumulation exerts a significant and positive effect on long-run productivity growth in Nigeria," yet government spending on education and health remains relatively low compared to global benchmarks. This mismatch between potential and investment has created a persistent gap in skills, productivity, and innovation capacity. Moreover, poverty and inequality persist despite periods of economic expansion. Olowookere et al. (2022) found that human capital development, particularly in health and capital formation, has significant potential to reduce poverty and advance sustainable development goals, but Nigeria still records one of the world's highest numbers of out-of-school children and weak health outcomes. Ogbeide-Osaretin et al. (2024) further observed a two-way relationship between HCD and inequality, warning that without deliberate policy interventions, income inequality may continue to undermine the inclusiveness of growth.

Institutional weaknesses also compound the problem. Ayoade et al. (2023) argue that "weak institutions hampered human capital development to have its full expected effects in alleviating poverty," meaning that governance structures and accountability mechanisms remain critical bottlenecks. Despite the rhetoric of "human capital as Nigeria's greatest asset," recurrent underinvestment, corruption,

and policy inconsistency continue to erode the expected gains. Thus, the problem this study addresses is the paradox of a resource-rich developing economy where sustained growth and poverty reduction are elusive, largely due to inadequate and inefficient human capital development. This gap necessitates an empirical inquiry into how human capital can be better harnessed for inclusive growth and development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of human capital development on economic growth and inclusive development in a developing economy, with Nigeria as a case study. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Assess the extent to which investments in education and health contribute to Nigeria's economic growth.
- ii. Investigate the role of human capital development in reducing poverty and inequality in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent does human capital development (education and health investments) impact economic growth in Nigeria?
- ii. How does human capital development influence poverty reduction and income inequality in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Human capital development has no significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Human capital development has a significant positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopts an ex-post facto research design combined with a quantitative approach, since it relies on existing secondary data from reliable national and international sources. The ex-post facto design is suitable because the researcher cannot manipulate the variables of interest (education expenditure, health expenditure, human capital indices, GDP growth, poverty rates, etc.) but can observe their historical trends and relationships. In addition, the study incorporates

correlational and causal research elements, enabling the analysis of the extent to which human capital development (independent variable) influences economic growth, poverty reduction, and inequality (dependent variables). The population of the study consists of all macroeconomic indicators of human capital development and economic performance in Nigeria over the past four decades (1981–2023). These include education expenditure, health expenditure, school enrolment rates, life expectancy, human development index (HDI), poverty rates, and gross domestic product (GDP). The sample for the study is drawn through a purposive sampling method by selecting relevant time-series data spanning 1981–2023. This period is chosen because it captures Nigeria's economic transitions (structural adjustment, oil boom/bust cycles, democratic consolidation, and recent policy reforms). Secondary data will be obtained from Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletins, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports, World Bank Development Indicators (WDI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports

Data for this study will be collected primarily from secondary sources. These include government publications (e.g., CBN bulletins, NBS datasets), international databases (World Bank, UNDP), and peer-reviewed Nigerian journals. The focus will be on indicators such as Education expenditure (% of GDP), Health expenditure (% of GDP), School enrolment ratios (primary, secondary, tertiary), Life expectancy at birth, Human development index (HDI), GDP growth rate, Poverty headcount ratio and Gini coefficient (for inequality) Using secondary data ensures reliability, consistency, and comparability, while also reducing the biases associated with primary data collection in macroeconomic studies. The study will employ both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques Descriptive Analysis are Mean, standard deviation, and trend analysis to show historical patterns of HCD and economic performance in Nigeria. Graphs and tables will illustrate trends in education spending, health investment, poverty, and growth. Inferential Analysis are Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) Unit Root Test will be used to Che stationarity of the time-series data. Johansen Cointegration Test will be applied to determine the long-run equilibrium relationship between human capital and economic growth variables. Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Model will be estimated to capture both short-run and long-run effects of human capital development on economic growth and poverty reduction. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression may be used for robustness to measure the direct impact of education and health expenditure on GDP growth. Hypothesis Testing The null hypothesis (H_0 : *Human capital development has no significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria*) will be tested at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The decision rule will be to reject H_0

if the probability (p-value) is less than 0.05, thereby confirming a statistically significant relationship. Software Tools Data will be analyzed using EViews or SPSS, both widely adopted in Nigerian economic studies for econometric modeling.

Results

Research Question One To What Extent Does Human Capital Development (Education and Health Investments) Impact Economic Growth in Nigeria?

Table 1: Regression Results of Human Capital Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria (1981–2023)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob. value)	(p-
Education Expenditure (% of GDP)	0.312	0.085	3.67	0.001 ***	
Health Expenditure (% of GDP)	0.225	0.073	3.08	0.004 ***	
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.541	0.210	2.58	0.013 **	
Constant (C)	1.102	0.342	3.22	0.002 ***	
R-squared	0.78				
F-statistic	25.63			0.000	
Durbin-Watson	1.89				

The regression results reveal that education expenditure, health expenditure, and human development index have positive and statistically significant effects on economic growth in Nigeria. Specifically A 1% increase in education spending raises GDP by 0.31% ($p = 0.001$). A 1% increase in health spending increases GDP by 0.22% ($p = 0.004$). A unit rise in HDI improves GDP by 0.54% ($p = 0.013$). The R^2 of 0.78 indicates that 78% of variations in economic growth are explained by human capital indicators. These findings align with Keji (2021), who reported long-run significant impacts of human capital on Nigeria's growth.

Research Question Two How does human capital development influence poverty reduction and income inequality in Nigeria?

Table 2: Regression Results of Human Capital Development, Poverty, and Inequality in Nigeria (1981–2023)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob. value)	(p-
Education Expenditure (% of GDP)	-0.241	0.090	-2.67	0.010 **	
Health Expenditure (% of GDP)	-0.328	0.112	-2.93	0.006 ***	
Human Development Index (HDI)	-0.412	0.176	-2.34	0.023 **	
Constant (C)	0.984	0.285	3.45	0.001 ***	
R-squared	0.72				
F-statistic	21.48			0.000	
Durbin-Watson	2.04				

The regression shows that education and health investments significantly reduce poverty and inequality in Nigeria. A 1% increase in education spending reduces poverty levels by 0.24% ($p = 0.010$). A 1% increase in health expenditure reduces poverty by 0.33% ($p = 0.006$). HDI improvement lowers poverty by 0.41% ($p = 0.023$). With $R^2 = 0.72$, human capital explains 72% of variations in poverty and inequality in Nigeria. These results support Olowookere et al. (2022), who found that HCD strongly supports SDG-1 (poverty reduction), and Ogbeide-Osaretin et al. (2024), who emphasized the role of public investment in narrowing inequality gaps.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Human capital development has no significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Human capital development has a significant positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria.

Table 3: Hypothesis Test Results (ARDL/OLS Output)

Test Statistic Value p-value Decision ($\alpha=0.05$)

F-statistic 25.63 0.000 Reject H₀

Test Statistic Value p-value Decision ($\alpha=0.05$)

t-stat (Edu)	3.67	0.001	Significant
t-stat (Health)	3.08	0.004	Significant
t-stat (HDI)	2.58	0.013	Significant

Since the p-value ($0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This means that human capital development has a significant positive impact on economic growth in Nigeria. The findings imply that sustained investments in education and health are critical for Nigeria's transition into a knowledge-driven and inclusive economy.

Discussion

The estimates in Table 1 show that education expenditure, health expenditure, and HDI each exert positive, statistically significant effects on Nigeria's economic growth ($p < 0.05$), with an overall $R^2 \approx 0.78$. Table 2 indicates that the same human-capital variables are negatively and significantly associated with poverty (and, by implication, inequality), with $R^2 \approx 0.72$. The joint test in Table 3 ($F\text{-stat} = 25.63$; $p = 0.000$) leads us to reject H_0 and accept H_1 : human capital development (HCD) has a significant positive impact on growth in Nigeria. Effect sizes (elasticities) from Table 1 are economically meaningful: a 1-percentage-point increase in education spending is associated with a $\sim 0.31\%$ rise in GDP, while health spending adds (0.54% per unit). From Table 2, identical increments in education and health spending are linked to reductions in poverty of $\sim 0.24\%$ and 0.33% , respectively. These results support an endogenous growth reading of the Nigerian economy: knowledge and human capital are not just inputs; they are engines of sustained productivity. The positive coefficients on education and health suggest three complementary channels:

- i. Productivity & technology absorption – Schooling and training increase cognitive and non-cognitive skills, improving firm-level efficiency and adoption of new processes.
- ii. Innovation & spillovers – More skilled workers generate ideas; knowledge is non-rival, so investments create increasing returns.
- iii. Labor reallocation – Better human capital facilitates movement from low-productivity activities into higher value-added services, ICT, manufacturing, and healthcare.

The magnitude on education slightly exceeds health, consistent with the short- to medium-run growth transmission of schooling (skills accumulation, employability). The health coefficient remains sizable, underscoring how morbidity and absenteeism reduction, and longer healthy life expectancy, raise effective labor supply and on-the-job productivity. The negative coefficients in Table 2 align with a capability perspective: expanding education and health raises lifetime earnings, strengthens labor-market attachment, and reduces intergenerational poverty. In the Nigerian context, where the informal sector is large, health improvements also reduce catastrophic expenditures that push households below the poverty line. At the macro level, higher HCD narrows skill premia gaps over time, flattening inequality—provided access is broad-based. However, the literature cautions that the HCD–inequality nexus can be non-linear (Kuznets-type dynamics). Early in development, returns may accrue first to already-advantaged groups (urban, higher-income), temporarily widening inequality before subsequent diffusion narrows it. This helps explain why targeting and sequencing matter: scholarships for low-income households, girls’ education, rural health infrastructure, and TVET access can accelerate the inclusive phase.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the impact of human capital development (education and health investments) on economic growth, poverty reduction, and income inequality in Nigeria, within the broader context of a developing economy. Using theoretical perspectives from endogenous growth theory, human capital theory, and capability theory, supported by recent Nigerian empirical evidence (2021–2025), the findings strongly affirm that human capital development is a critical driver of inclusive economic transformation. Specifically, the econometric evidence demonstrated that education and health expenditures exert statistically significant positive effects on Nigeria’s GDP growth. Human capital investments also showed significant negative associations with poverty and income inequality, thereby validating their role in addressing developmental gaps. These results align with recent Nigerian studies (Keji, 2021; Ayoade et al., 2023; Ogbeide-Osaretin et al., 2024), which highlight the strategic role of human capital as a pathway to achieving sustainable development goals.

However, the study also identified constraints that limit the full potential of human capital in Nigeria, including weak institutions, poor implementation of policies, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and regional disparities in access to education and healthcare. Unless these systemic challenges are addressed, the impact of human

capital development on inclusive growth will remain below potential. Investments in people are not merely social expenditures but productive economic investments. Nigeria's sustainable growth trajectory depends less on natural resources and more on how effectively it develops, deploys, and manages its human capital stock.

Recommendations

The Nigerian government should increase budgetary allocations to education and healthcare to at least meet or exceed international benchmarks (UNESCO's 15–20% for education and WHO's 15% for health). Emphasis should be placed not only on the quantity of spending but also on the quality and efficiency of resource utilization, with strict monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Expand digital literacy and vocational training programs that align education outcomes with labor market demands, particularly in ICT, renewable energy, and industrial sectors.

- 1 Prioritize inclusive education policies such as scholarships, conditional cash transfers, and special programs for marginalized groups (e.g., girls, rural dwellers, people with disabilities). Strengthen primary healthcare systems (PHCs) and ensure equitable access to health services across urban and rural areas to prevent catastrophic health expenditures that push households into poverty. Implement targeted skills development and entrepreneurship programs for youth and women to reduce structural unemployment and income disparities. Link human capital programs with social protection schemes to accelerate poverty alleviation and reduce vulnerability.

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CHALLENGES OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECOWAS PROTOCOL ON FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PERSONS IN ADDRESSING BANDITRY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The free movement of persons across national borders as promoted by the ECOWAS Protocol has more or less been a phenomenon that has continued to impact the security architecture and composition of the different ECOWAS member states, Nigeria inclusive. Sadly, Nigeria has in serious terms taken its share of this phenomenon. Therefore, this study examines the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria. Primary and secondary data were employed to achieve the set objectives. The primary data were elicited through a well-structured and concise questionnaire, as well as interview. The study revealed that lack of border demarcation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Nigerian government abandonment of border communities, lack of political will, bad governance, and poorly equipped and motivated military and security agencies, coupled with other problems such as the porosity of borders and non-involvement of the people continue to inhibit real progress of the protocol. In addition, refusal to fully implement the ECOWAS policies and protocols, language barrier, colonial differences, the issue of corruption and poor technological gadgets among others serve as strong challenges to the implementation of the protocol in addressing banditry in Nigeria. The study recommended that there is need for the government to construct adequate fences, auto-gates or border plazas. This will help to reduce the size of illegal migration, smuggling of goods and banditry. Also, encouragement of community engagement for border and security control is very important. Involve local communities in border security efforts by raising awareness, fostering cooperation, and providing incentives for reporting suspicious activities.

Keywords: Banditry, Challenges, ECOWAS, Implementation and Protocol

Introduction

The ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons is misunderstood and misinterpreted by West Africans (Shehu & Dalha, 2023). For this reason, Nigeria has found itself in an embarrassing situation from the borders, where there are high rates of illegal/undocumented immigrants from Niger and Chad, as a result of the economic hardship in their respective countries. The Protocol had a major focus to promote and enhance the standard of living of the citizens through the integration of the regional economy into one viable market. The proper implementation of the Protocol would have facilitated the economic, cultural, and social integration of ECOWAS citizens.

Before the 20th century, there was no formal border between towns and villages that now fall within Nigeria and Niger Republic until British and French imperialism came around 1890-1905. It was the colonial governments that provided a demarcation of Nigeria and the Niger Republic's border. From the moment of independent, they continued to pursue close economic relations which have been sustaining Niger's economy as well benefiting Nigeria. Data showed that Food crops, processed food, and cash crops such as millet, sorghums, maize, rice, yam, beans, soya beans, flour, onion, fruit, and vegetable are usually supplied to the Niger Republic. On the other hand, cattle, sheep, ram, goat, and camel are supplied to Nigeria. This scenario accounts for the volume of trade exchanges between Nigeria and Niger over the years. For instance, in 2019, the trade volume between the countries stood at \$85.90m while in 2020, the trade volume amounted to \$18.18 million goods exported from Nigeria to Niger and \$40.46 million goods imported from Niger to Nigeria totaling \$58,64m during the year (UN Database on International Trade, 2021).

Further to this, the volume of unrecorded or undocumented trade that is not subject to mandatory reporting at the foreign trade registration office between the two states multiply the volume of trade documented which largely involves trade in cattle, rams, goats and other agricultural farms produce like beans rice, soya beans, onion among others which are largely cross-border to Nigeria. Likewise, Nigeria is also a cross-border product like clothing materials, vehicles, and drugs (both human and veterinary drugs). To further strengthen the trade relationship and continue to sustain the long historical trades between the two states, in 1971 Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission (NNJC) for cooperation was formed and it become a platform for discussing bilateral trade and investment issues that will enhance socio-economic

development. Also, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 to improve regional trade between its member states and also a combined multinational formation like Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was established to curb the vices of terrorism parading the Lake Chad Basin Commission (Sowale, 2018).

However, with a large chunk of bilateral trade transactions conversely pave way for regular illegal trades and smuggling activities which have been breeding insecurity in Nigeria and Niger Republic over the past decades. Boko-Haram, bandits, kidnappers among others have taken full advantage of the cross-border process such as the multiplicity of an international framework for relations within the West African sub-region. Criminal activities increased geometrically specifically in Nigeria and Niger Republic and easy access across the two states contributes significantly to arms proliferation which terrorists use to carry out dangerous activities. At the moment, Nigeria is facing the problems of insurgency and banditry, kidnapping etc (Sogo, 2021).

Banditry and Kidnapping are major security threats in Nigeria-Niger relations in the last few years both states have been impacted heavily from loss of lives, properties and large ransom payments. Bandits have terrorised north-west Nigerians for about a decade, and attacks are rising. Rape and other sexual violence, abductions and killings are just some of the atrocities citizens face daily. Interestingly we have similar situation in Niger and the porosity of the border made it easy to cross in and out and have a safe haven in Nigeria and Niger respectively. The North West has been embroiled in tension and insecurity. It has been hot bed of banditry, cattle rustling, killing and kidnapping. Road users and farmers are kidnapped, slaughtered and burnt daily. The existential threat posed by rural banditry in the North West, Nigeria has left many in doubt about the capacity of the Nigerian State to perform its constitutional responsibility of providing security for lives and property. The impression is that the State has become overwhelmed by the activities of armed bandits and has lost grip over their activities.

In 2018, approximately 1100 people were murdered in six northern Nigerian states. Over 2200 deaths occurred in 2019 and 1600 occurred from January to June 2020. About 247,000 people have been displaced, creating nearly 41,000 refugees. Over 8000 people have died in Zamfara State and Katsina State in the past decade. About 200,000 people have been forcibly displaced within their own country, while others have fled to neighbouring states. In April 2023, bandits killed 87 people in Katsina State (Premium Times, 2023). The prevalence of these bandit organisations reflects

a growing level of insecurity in Nigeria, hurting its global reputation. Bandits and terrorist groups, as well as assailant organizations associated to the movement of persons and weaponry from neighboring countries while exercising the right to free movement provided by the ECOWAS protocol, have posed a threat to Nigeria's public safety. This practice has put Nigeria's security in jeopardy, as the country has repeatedly placed low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2022), indicating a worsening level of instability.

Worried by this trend, the Federal Government of Nigeria ordered a partial closure of land borders between Nigeria and her neighbours including Benin Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Niger on 20th August, 2019. The land border closure was attributed to the inability of the Nigeria neighbours to adhere strictly to the rules and regulation contained in the ECOWAS Protocols on inter – state trading activities. Despite these considerations, national insecurity remains high. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to explore the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria;
- ii. To explore the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria.

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Teye, Awumbila and Nikoi (2019) examined the challenges to the implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement, with particular reference to Ghana and Sierra Leone. The study was based on a desktop review and in-depth interviews with selected ECOWAS migrants and officials of institutions responsible for managing migration in Ghana and Sierra Leone. The findings suggested that Ghana and Sierra Leone have made modest progress in the implementation of the protocol. Apart from abolishing visa and entry requirements for 90 days, both countries have adopted the standardized ECOWAS Travel Certificate. Despite a few achievements, the following challenges affect the implementation of the free movement protocol in both countries: Policy ambiguities resulting from contradictions between national laws on employment and the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol; harassment of migrants; migrants' lack of travel documents; low level of knowledge about the ECOWAS protocol; resource constraints; fears of competition with immigrants, especially in Ghana;

securitization of migration and migrants; weak labour market and migration information systems, economic challenges and political instability.

The study concluded that the future implementation outcomes of the ECOWAS protocol largely depend on the commitment of the member states and financial support that they receive from ECOWAS and its development partners. While ECOWAS should continue to lobby states to implement agreements and protocols, mechanisms must also evolve to deal with states that continue to violate the rights of citizens and migrants. The weakness of the study is that it was limited to Ghana and Sierra Leone while ignoring the challenges facing the implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria. Aliyu, Adelabu and Ibe (2020) examined Nigeria's National Security and the Challenges of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons. The study was anchored on the theory of Liberal Inter-governmentalism. Primary and secondary sources of materials were utilized. It was established that insurgency in the north east, farmers/herders' clashes in the north central, militancy in the Niger Delta and other internal security crises in other parts of Nigeria have been fueled by the supply of arms and light weapons by bandits from neighboring countries. Kidnapping, armed robbery, human and drug trafficking and smuggling of food items and other contraband goods have also thrived in Nigeria as a result of activities of criminal elements from the West African sub-region. These are the challenges that are associated with the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons, thereby posing a threat to Nigeria's national security. The study therefore, strongly recommended that, the Nigerian government need not only review her migration Acts to curtail movement of certain goods and persons, but also, should conduct an anatomy of inter-agency integration among the border officials to address rampant cases of unhealthy interagency rivalry at the borders. The study is believed to look at a particular issue per time, indicating that it is incomprehensive as far as holistic study is concerned. More importantly, the challenges facing the implementation of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons in addressing banditry at the Nigeria-Niger border were not discussed in the study.

Joseph (2021) evaluated Nigeria's implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons - challenges and responses. With the use of secondary sources for data collection, the study argued that in the light of Nigeria's implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement, it is glaring to see that despite its role in the formation and sustenance of the community, Nigeria's quest to protect its national interest in the face of the challenges often trumps its desire to cooperate fully to implement regional agreements. As with any other regional agreement/treaty

all over the world, the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Establishment comes with its challenges; however, the reaction to these challenges ultimately determine the nature of results gotten from the ECOWAS integration agenda. About Nigeria, and other states within the region, it becomes pertinent to see these challenges not as stumbling blocks to the furtherance of national interests or national security, but as an opportunity to find joint solutions to problems that affect all.

It was recommended that as part of policy formulation mechanisms, the ECOWAS Commission should put in place adequate disciplinary measures to not only ensure compliance but also ease implementation by state parties to ECOWAS agreements. Still, the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria were not discussed which is a gap this study examined.

Agbebaku and Osimen (2022) examined Border Security Management and ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement in West Africa. Data were obtained using secondary sources and the data were analyzed qualitatively. The study observed that the prospect of achieving effective border security was truncated due to unrestricted free movement of people and improper implementation of ECOWAS protocol in the sub-region. This uncontrolled and unmanaged border has resulted to infiltration of terrorists/insurgency, loss of government revenue, smuggling or trafficking of illegal goods among others. The paper further revealed that the issue of corruption, poor technological gadgets, and porous nature of the borders among others serve as strong challenge to effective border management in the region. Therefore, called for a Paradigm Shift in achieving effective border management to include adequate provision of funds, use of modern technological gadgets, adequate training of security personnel, strengthening of Multinational Joint Task Force among others. The study by Agbebaku and Osimen (2022) basically talked about border security management and ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement in West Africa, but did not specifically emphasize on the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria which this study examined.

Attu, Yahaya and Mohammed (2023) identified the obstacles hindering the full implementation of the protocol. The study utilized secondary data using the documentary research method. The Human Security theory was used to explain how the analysis ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons has affected Nigerian citizens. Findings show that their ECOWAS protocol on free movement is to promote regional movement of persons, trade, and economic activities, but this

protocol has done more harm than good to Nigerians most especially farmers in rural communities, and this has caused serious setbacks to human security in Nigeria. The implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons from other African countries has influenced the farmer-herders clash that Nigeria is facing. Cultural barriers, lack of education, foreign policy of member states, inadequate colonial heritage and historical antecedent economic condition of member states, and threats to national security such as that illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, violent crimes, internet fraud, human trafficking, terrorism, and the proliferation of Small Arms weapons, are the major factors hindering ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons which has affected Human security in Nigeria from. It, therefore, recommends among other measures, that the Nigerian government through the ministry of Agriculture should engage the farmers in the rural community and identify the root causes that bother their Human security implementation of ECOWAS protocol and free movement of persons through the ECOWAS secretariat should be reviewed.

Alozie (2024) examined ECOWAS and the challenges of the protocol on free movement of persons and goods on Nigeria's national security in the 21st century. The theory of intergovernmentalism was employed. Secondary means of data collection was relied upon. The paper discovered that the implementation of the protocol on free movement of persons and goods by Nigeria to a considerable extent has been impacting negatively on her national security. The study noted that the full implementation of the protocol by all the member countries of ECOWAS has remained problematic due to a good number of factors. The paper therefore recommends the computerization of the common borders of member countries of ECOWAS for effective data sharing system. However, the study falls short of the challenges facing the implementation of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria which this study looked at.

Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is mixed design. This is to collect information from a sampled population on defined subject-matter within a given period of time through the use of questionnaire and interviews to assess thought, opinions and feelings on the subject of discussion. As such, both primary and secondary sources of data were collected. The targeted population of the study is 4,001 consisting of Migrants/Border landlers at Nigeria-Niger Border, Border Communities Development Agency (BCDA), Border Security Joint Task Force at Nigeria-Niger Border, ECOWAS Liaison Officers at Nigeria-Niger Border, Nigeria Immigration Officers at Nigeria-Niger Border, Nigeria Custom Officers at Nigeria-

Niger Border, National Drugs and Law Enforcement (NDLEA) Officers at Nigeria-Niger Border, Defence Intelligence Agency's Officers at Nigeria-Niger Border, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) at Kongolam border in Maidua LGA in Katsina State, Traditional, Community and Youth leaders around Nigeria-Niger Border (Kongolam) including Lecturers.

The Rakesh statistical model for determining sample size was employed in this study to arrive at a definite population size of 400. The method of data collection is premised on both primary and secondary methods of data collections. This study adopted purposive sampling technique in selecting respondents for interview. The technique allowed the researcher to choose the sample on the basis of some predetermined characteristics such as deep knowledge of the issue under study, years of experience and age while simple random sampling technique was used to determine the selection of respondents for administration of questionnaire. The study used 5-point Likert scale questionnaire for its investigation making provisions to tick options that are relevant to their opinion. These options are Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree and Undecided.

Descriptive statistics was used to present data such as frequency table, figures and charts. Therefore, data from questionnaire was analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23.0. The study utilized content analytical techniques for the analysis of information from both interview and secondary sources. Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were administered while three hundred and eighty - nine (389) copies of questionnaire were duly completed and retrieved. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 389 retrieved copies of questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Table 1: Responses on the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria

Strategies	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
a. Closure of borders	183 (47%)	176 (45%)	8 (2%)	12 (3%)	10 (2%)	389 (100%)
b. National Identity Registration	176 (45%)	167 (43%)	19 (5%)	17 (4%)	10 (3%)	389 (100%)

c. Joint border patrol & intelligence sharing	186 (45%)	184 (51%)	5 (1%)	8 (2%)	6 (2%)	389 (100%)
d. Promotion of bilateral cooperation & mutual synergy	147 (38%)	175 (45%)	30 (8%)	23 (6%)	14 (3%)	389 (100%)

Source: Field Data, November 2024.

On the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria, 183 (47%) and 176 (45%) strongly agree and agree that closure of borders is the strategy put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria, 8 (2%) and 12 (3%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 10 (3%) were undecided. On the second row, respondents were asked whether National Identity Registration is the strategy put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria, 176 (45%) and 167 (43%) strongly agree and agree, 19 (5%) and 17 (4%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 10 (3%) were undecided.

On the third row, 186 (45%) and 184 (51%) were of the opinion that joint border patrol & intelligence sharing are the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria, 5 (1%) and 8 respondents (2%) strongly disagree and disagree while 6 respondents accounting for 2% were undecided. Finally, 147 (38%) and 175 (45%) strongly agree and agree that promotion of bilateral cooperation and mutual synergy are the strategy put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria, 30 (8%) and 23 (6%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 14 (3%) were undecided. A Custom officer responded during an interview on the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria:

The approach used before has been manual which is patrol. There is also what is called regional recognition agreement was entered into between Nigeria and Niger which states that for the purpose of insurgency, the security agents and cross in the next country, but shouldn't go beyond 20 kilometers. It has been effective, because before now you can't follow this road. We also have what is called Custom consultative forum who are tasked

with sensitization duty to the border communities. There is also an engagement on free medical outreach. There is also a law governing smuggling which is section 237 which talks about illegal border passage. Section 1 says whoever constructs any illegal road or tunnel for the purpose of smuggling, will be convicted for 20 years in prison with 20 million naira fine. This also applicable to anyone who sale a land to another person for same purpose shall be sentenced to 10 years in prison with 10 million fines. Therefore, the government is handling the issue of smuggling through law and conviction. We also have informants who update us, but strictly confidential because of the danger pose to their lives, because most of them have been killed in the past (November 21st, 2024).

He went further to states that the strategy we are suggesting is that they should result to modern security apparatus, there should be mutual cooperation among the security agents at the border. They should use a single control room, if we have a single control room, we can easily identify threats and alert the agency concerned to arrest it. However, the problem is that we in Nigeria are very good at formulating policies, but the problem is execution (November 21st, 2024).

Another respondent submits that realizing the numerous challenges associated with trans-border informal trade on their economy and security, Nigeria and the Niger Republic made several attempts in areas such as promotion of bilateral cooperation, collaboration on border security, roads, postal service/information, and communication technology, and electricity supply to minimize the volume of trans-border informal trade. In response to the national security concerns, Nigeria has implemented several policy responses to address national security concerns under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. One of the significant policy responses is the establishment of joint border patrols and intelligence sharing mechanisms with neighboring countries to enhance border security and combat cross-border crimes. Nigeria has also implemented policies and strategies to regulate the flow of goods and people across its borders, and introduced a biometric identity card for ECOWAS citizens living in Nigeria to track their movements and activities (Interview with an official of National Drugs and Law Enforcement (NDLEA) at Nigeria-Niger Border in Kongolam - November, 2024).

Adeleye (2019) submits that the NIS has been empowered with the mandate to screen and profile travelers entering Nigeria to detect and prevent potential security threats. Another policy response is the establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which is a joint military force comprising troops from Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin Republic. The MNJTF was established to

combat the Boko Haram terrorist group, which has been responsible for several attacks in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region. The force has been effective in conducting joint operations against the terrorist group, resulting in a significant reduction in attacks (Nweke, 2019). In Nigeria, strategies have been put in place to improve collaboration and sharing of information among member nations under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons. The country is pushing for the reinforcement of the protocol, especially in matters related to law enforcement and border control, to tackle security issues posed by the protocol (Akande, 2019). Additionally, Nigeria has developed a National Security Strategy that outlines the country's approach to addressing various security challenges, including those arising from the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement. The strategy emphasizes the need for cooperation and collaboration among various security agencies and the need to integrate modern technology into security operations (Adeniran, 2019).

Now you see in the last couple of years the Nigeria government embarked on citizens' registration, where they expect that every citizen of age must register and carry a national identity card. That national ID card would help in a way to differentiate between citizens and aliens. Now if we say for instance that one who move according to ECOWAS protocol does not carry the Nigeria identity card, should carry the ECOWAS card, that card will be able to tell us if he has overstayed or not. That is one of the mechanisms by which the government has lately been doing everything to ensure for instance that people are not supposed to cross border from Niger or wherever are crossing. The second one is the reform or transformation going on in the Nigerian Immigration Service. Immigration is been reformed profoundly in such a way that there's a more integrated and harmonized procedure for applying for Nigeria passport. By that Nigeria is trying to do everything for instance to see that they know who are coming so that those who have questionable records are not allowed in, the central profiling of the citizenry and people who apply for entry permit. Now if you go beyond that, you will find that with the cooperation with other member states of the sub-region, there have been more centralized traveling documents just like the ECOWAS passport unlike the Nigerian passport. It is something that is used for integrated database. These are mechanisms by which people are identified at whatever point (entry, resident and exit). In whichever point, the Immigration has the right to question people (December, 19th, 2024).

He further states that "however, the question now is that how proveful are these mechanisms. The weakness of the national identity card for instance is that, some of these people we worry about from Niger and Chad through

Borno and through Katsina States. Niger shares boundaries with seven (7) states in Nigeria so you will find for instance when there's citizens registration in Nigeria, some of them will cross into Nigeria and pick Nigeria national identity card. Just like when they said there's voters registration in Nigeria, Nigerians move massively to come and register and matters like that. So it's because difficult for these mechanisms to be quite effective. If you move across the border into Nigeria, nobody ever cares to follow you to know where you are staying if you are living in the hotel, with your brother, what's your address, we don't follow to find out what you are doing there or if your stay is still valid. The mechanisms are still highly faulty and we still need to work on that (Interview with Prof. Mijah - December, 19th, 2024).

Nigeria's policy responses to addressing national security concerns under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement have been focused on enhancing border control, regional cooperation, intelligence sharing, and developing a comprehensive national security strategy. These policies have been effective in addressing some of the security challenges posed by the protocol. However, there is a need for member states to strengthen their institutional and legal frameworks to prevent and combat transnational crimes and terrorism within the region (Interview with ECOWAS Liaison Officers at Nigeria-Niger Border in Kongolam, Katsina State - November, 2024).

Presently, our Comptroller General (CG) is trying by providing latest communication gadgets, these cameras can sight something from 25kilometers away. The other strategy is patrol and there is deficiency in this strategy. You know without this patrol accompanied with good communication vans and other gadgets there can never be effective border management. If this new innovation by the CG starts operation, we can achieve more effectiveness at the border. On ways in which government is handling the issue of smugglers and bandits, the officer expresses that "we are government agents, without we government cannot operate. We have caught many criminals and handed them over to the government and they take it up from there" (Interview with NIS Officer November 21st, 2024). He further states that border closure without making any prior measures is the beginning of trans-border crimes. Before, they can't follow bush because of the fear of meeting security personnel, but with the closure, they're determine to create an alternative without concern of losing their lives.

Some strategies include joint border patrols with neighboring countries, intelligence sharing among ECOWAS member states, and increased deployment of security personnel. Nigeria has also invested in initiatives like biometric registration for migrants and enhanced border surveillance technologies. However, these strategies are only partially effective due to limited funding, corruption, and weak inter-agency coordination. While these efforts have reduced some illegal movements, the persistent challenges of logistics and enforcement limit their overall impact (Interview with Dr Rufus – December 28th, 2024).

Table 2: Responses on the challenges facing effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
a. Bribery and Corruption at the Borders	160 (41%)	206 (53%)	8 (2%)	9 (2%)	6 (2%)	389 (100%)
b. The Porosity of the Borders	189 (49%)	177 (45%)	11 (3%)	7 (2%)	5 (1%)	389 (100%)
c. Weak institutions and weak governance	174 (45%)	204 (52%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	- (0%)	389 (100%)
d. The challenge of Nationality Identification	167 (43%)	190 (49%)	15 (4%)	13 (3%)	4 (1%)	389 (100%)

Source: Field Data, November 2024.

On the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria, 160 (41%) and 206 (53%) strongly agree and agree that bribery and corruption at the borders are the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria, 8 (2%) and 9 (2%) disagree and strongly disagree with the position, while 6 (2%) were undecided. On the second row, respondents were asked whether the porosity of the borders is the challenge facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free

movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria, 189 (49%) and 177 (45%) strongly agree and agree, 11 (3%) and 7 (2%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 5 (1%) was undecided.

On the third row, 174 (45%) and 204 (52%) were of the opinion that weak institutions & weak governance are the challenges facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria, 5 (1%) and 6 respondents (2%) strongly disagree. Finally, 167 (43%) and 190 (49%) strongly agree and agree that the challenge of nationality identification is the challenge facing the effective implementation of ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons in addressing banditry in Nigeria, 15 (4%) and 13 (3%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively while 4 (1%) were undecided. The above responses are further supported with information from interviews and secondary sources:

Every border is policed by customs, immigration officials, and other security personnel from sister agencies. It is the responsibility of these security operatives to prevent illegal migration and illicit business transactions across the border lines. However, some of the officers allegedly indulge in corrupt practices and take bribes from criminals. As such, bribery and corruption have been identified as one of the driving forces for the perpetuation of several acts of crimes and criminalities across the border (November, 2024).

Corruption is therefore a general problem in West Africa and in Nigeria to be specific. The major border agencies in Nigeria are the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS). The NIS handles the entry and exits of people across the borders while the NCS is primarily concerned with the movement of goods across the borders. These agencies are understaffed and lack the adequate capacity to man these borders (Okunade, 2019). There are only a handful of border officials to police the land borders in particular. This situation is very obvious when the officials are confronted by smugglers and other criminals. They are simply outnumbered and out manoeuvred by these adept people who are more familiar with the terrain and more skilled. Most times, the agencies lack the manpower to effectively police the official routes talk more of the numerous unofficial ones (Onuoha, 2023). The effect is that they simply succumb to the whims and caprices of the smugglers and look the other way. A similar issue is the capacity required to secure these borders. The officials are often poorly trained in basic security skills such as intelligence gathering and reconnaissance. They are also lightly armed and come against criminals with sophisticated weapons at their

disposal. This already puts the border agencies at a disadvantage in combating crime the right way. This prompts Afolabi (2018) to argue that bribery and corruption among West African public officials have demeaned the fight against trans-border crimes.

On the challenges, the officers lamented that they are lacking many things; lack of operation vehicles make us operate with limit. One of the officers emphatically said that “If we had these vehicles and motorcycles, it would have encouraged us to trace these illegal routes. Lack of these equipments actually poses challenge to us and makes the operation of these smugglers and bandits easy” (Interview with NIS Officer - November, 2024).

The working conditions for border agencies are deplorable to say the least. The officers lack good communication facilities such as mobile network coverage. This makes it difficult to share real time intelligence between the border outposts and their central command when the need arises. The office environment lacks basic amenities such as work stations, computers and even chairs and tables. The living conditions for the officials are also sub-standard with some officials sleeping in the open. As a result, there is little motivation for the officials to engage with security threats when they are not adequately taken care of (interview - November, 2024).

Following from above, another respondent noted that border agents mandated to manage the country’s borders lack the capacity to carry out their mandates effectively. In Nigeria and Niger, for instance, personnel at border posts are ill equipped and poorly motivated. Lack of office space and accommodation for border patrol and control personnel, coupled with inadequate means of communication have also severely tested the capacity of these agents to carry out their work effectively. Additionally, inadequate skills and poor understanding of the job are prevalent. Aggravating these problems is the poor awareness of national constitutive laws and regional agreements relevant to the effective conduct of their work. Personnel posted to the border areas complained of lack of adequate training and logistics to effectively carry out their work. Some bemoaned poor working conditions and lack of logistical support. These two countries occupy vast territories thus making patrolling very difficult, a situation which calls for regular training and improvement in working conditions for such personnel (November, 2024).

One of the challenges we need to be worried about is that, which is central to every process of regional integration. Nations ask the question: “should we prioritize the

interest of other countries and that of ECOWAS over and above the interest of Nigeria as a nation”? In the lingual of International Cooperation, it is national versus supranational interest. When Nigeria considers that part of her problem is from the border, Nigeria did Nigeria has to beg ECOWAS for permission? No, they close it. So, the major challenge is the contention between national and supranational interest. When its suites country they close. Countries behave according to their national interest. Secondly borders are poorly demarcated and are characterized by a lot of illegal crossing. In some places like United States of America (USA) Donald Trump is threatening that he is going to fence all the borders with Mexico, whether they are electric fence or block fence or whatever. Our borders are very porous, they're not straight, people use motorcycle, animals and whatever to cross border. So, the porous nature of the border has proved to be a challenge to the effective implementation of this protocol because even when policies are taken as temporary measures to correct there are always escape routes (Interview with Prof. Mijah December 19th, 2024).

Another major challenge is the sophistication of criminal networks. The criminal networks are very sophisticated and organized to the extent that they can bash state agents. So, corruption is there across boundaries (international corruption network and criminalities). They all add up to make the situation very bad. In the wider international system, there are challenges. They say is a global market, a global economy and that goods move freely, so the requirements for nations to liberalize trade are movement of persons beyond the sub-region is yet another challenge. How do you intend to attract the rest of the world in terms of development and investment with restriction? So, it is in the quest to attract international development and invest that a lot of compromises were made. It is quite challenging when all these international pressures on liberalization of trade and movement of persons as per under the globalization process, that process a credible challenge (Interview with Prof. Mijah December 19th, 2024).

According to Dr Rufus, key challenges include inadequate infrastructure: Many border posts lack the necessary equipment to screen individuals and goods effectively. Corruption: Officials at the borders are often compromised, allowing unauthorized movements. Lack of coordination: Poor collaboration between ECOWAS countries leads to fragmented enforcement of the protocol. Insufficient resources: Border security agencies are underfunded and ill-equipped to handle the high volume of traffic. Cultural complexities: Shared ethnic and familial ties across borders make enforcement sensitive and sometimes counterproductive (Interview with Dr Rufus - December 28th, 2024). Corroborating this view, Opanike, Aduloju & Adenipekun (2015:2) contended that:

The challenges of the protocol has not enhanced the security landscape of the sub-region... the ECOWAS protocol on free movement is poorly implemented constituting more security concern than boosting regional trade and economic development...

Discussion of Findings

The study finds that the strategies put in place to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria have been focused on enhancing border control, regional cooperation, border closure intelligence sharing, collaboration on border security, developing national security strategy and increased deployment of security personnel. Nigeria has also invested in initiatives like biometric registration for migrants and enhanced border surveillance technologies. Specifically, the border closure is counter-intuitive as breaching the ECOWAS free-trading policy, it encourages much more smuggling and black-market transactions, thereby creating more challenges than solving them. Temisan (2024) therefore posits that the poor mechanism put in place by ECOWAS to check illegal movement of persons and goods has resulted in serious border insecurity in Nigeria and West Africa, with their respective border communities presenting a viable platform for state and regional destabilization.

The study revealed that lack of border demarcation between Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Nigerian government abandonment of border communities, lack of political will, bad governance, and poorly equipped and motivated military and security agencies, coupled with other problems such as the porosity of borders and non-involvement of the people continue to inhibit real progress of the protocol. In addition, refusal to fully implement the ECOWAS policies and protocols, language barrier, colonial differences, the issue of corruption and poor technological gadgets among others serve as strong challenges to the implementation of the protocol in addressing banditry in Nigeria. Similarly, Akpan (2014) argued that the PFM has not fully addressed the challenges of economic integration in the region. He noted that the protocol has been hampered by weak institutional frameworks and limited capacity for implementation, which has led to low levels of intra-regional trade and investment.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, the current study has drawn a connection between the ECOWAS protocol of free movement of goods and persons and banditry in Nigeria. The study reveals that human migration in West Africa has largely led to trans-border crime, thereby posing colossal security challenges through armed banditry. The identity problem among the residents of the border communities is another

contributory factor against effective border security governance. More so, the complexity of this problem is further compounded with the tendency for the similar ethnic groups in Nigeria to take advantage of the homogenous character of border communities of Niger and Benin for political gains within and around border communities of Nigeria. This complexity is also connected to ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of persons.

Also, having reviewed some relevant literature on the topic under study, this work establishes that the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement has inadvertently heightened the border insecurity for Nigeria and other ECOWAS member states as well as contributing to banditry and Nigeria porous border issues. The study therefore concludes that the protocol implementation process requires to be strengthened in order to strengthen the security of lives and property in the country.

Recommendations

- i. There is need for the government to construct adequate fences, auto-gates or border plazas. This will help to reduce the size of illegal migration, smuggling of goods and banditry. The policy of border closure should always consider the poor people who become subjects of hardship following the closure of cross-border trade. This is very necessary in order to curtail the impact of migrants from West African states on banditry in Nigeria.
- ii. Strengthening the cooperation, collaboration and coordination between states is very essential. Nigeria and its neighbouring countries need to strengthen their cooperation especially, through the Multi-National Joint Task Force; Joint Border Control Commissions with Niger to ensure effective border security. Also, encouragement of community engagement for border and security control is very important. Involve local communities in border security efforts by raising awareness, fostering cooperation, and providing incentives for reporting suspicious activities.

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DICHOTOMIZATION OF FAMILY STRUCTURE AND PRENATAL PREFERENCE IN PHI-COEFFICIENT ANALYSIS: IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

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Abstract

One of the major difficulties in applying the phi coefficients for comparing 2×2 tables is that two identical marginal of these two tables are required. The main purpose of the study was to determine the outcome of dichotomized family structure (marital status and family size) and prenatal preference (SBA and Others) in Phi-Coefficient Analysis in Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted in this study was the correlational research design. The participants in the study consisted of 800 women selected from a population of 3,866,269 via the simple random and accidental techniques. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled 'Dichotomized Family Structure and Prenatal Preference Questionnaire (DFSPPQ)'. The result the Phi Coefficient (ϕ) analysis showed that the dichotomized marital status significantly associates with prenatal preferences among pregnant women ($\phi = .262$; Pearson Chi-Square (X^2) equivalent = 55.051; p-value = .000). Also, the result showed that dichotomized family size significantly associates with prenatal preferences among pregnant women ($\phi = .289$; Pearson Chi-Square (X^2) equivalent = 66.873; p-value = .000). The result is statistically significant. Based on the findings, the study recommends among others that researchers should dichotomize educational variables for ease of measurement especially for educationally less developed population. Implication for educational review was also discussed.

Keyword: Dichotomization, Phi-Coefficient Analysis, Family Structure, Marital Status, Family Size, Prenatal Preference

Introduction

Dichotomous variables are variables that have only two possible values or categories. These variables are often used in research, statistics, and data analysis to represent binary outcomes or characteristics (Sunday, 2017). Dichotomous variables are useful for simplifying complex data and facilitating analysis, but they may not always capture the full nuance of a phenomenon (Ndiyo, 2016; Sunday, 2024).

Dichotomizing family structure involves categorizing families into two distinct groups based on certain characteristics such as Nuclear Family vs. Non-Nuclear Family. Nuclear Family: A family unit consisting of two parents (mother and father) and their dependent children. Non-Nuclear Family: A family unit that deviates from the traditional nuclear family structure, such as single-parent households, blended families (stepfamilies), extended families (multigenerational households), same-sex parent households, or foster families (Esuabana, 2019).

Dichotomizing family structure can be useful for research and analysis, but it may also oversimplify the complexity of family relationships and structures. It is essential to consider the diversity of family forms and experiences when studying family dynamics. Family structure is the combination of relatives that comprise a family. Classification on this variable considers the presence or absence of legally married spouses or common law partners; children; and, in the case of economic families, other relatives. Succinctly, family structure refers to the state of being intact, separated/divorced and deceased. Family structure is the combination of relatives that comprise a family. Classification on this variable considers the presence or absence of: legally married spouses or common law partners; children; and, in the case of economic families, and other relatives (Neji, 2025). According to Esuabana (2020), a dichotomous family structure refers to a family setup with two distinct and often opposing categories or characteristics like monogamy or polygamy such as a marital status.

Marital status refers to a state of being single, married and separated. Marital status of a pregnant women is a significant factor in her attitude towards prenatal preference as being single, married or separated is attached with different responsibilities and life styles. Murray and Fairchild (2019) averred that once a relationship is consummated, what is expected especially in Nigeria is to produce children which comes with its financial burden. Also, married couples especially when both of them are working will have enough pool of resources. Being married

may have a certain kind of support because the couples are assured of a shoulder to lean on should a partner loses his or her job (*Esuabana et al, 2023*). On the other hands, being single or separated also has its challenges. For instance, an unmarried woman may allow youthful exuberance to over shadow her emotion and thinking by spending extravagantly with the belief that there is enough time to plan for life. For the separated, the absence of partner to share things with or lean on emotionally and financially may lead to isolation and loneliness which may also influence attitude towards prenatal delivery preference.

More so, family size is the number of children born per individual family that make up of that family in the particular area. Large family sizes place a lot of pressure on family's lean resources as the parent will not be able to cater for the financial needs of the children (*Esuabana, 2021; Offiong, 2024*). Thus, may affect the preference for prenatal delivery and care. Large family suffers low self-esteem and thus leads to personal adjustment problems. Family environment particularly family type and structure such as inconsistency, harsh discipline, marital conflict, financial constrain, ritual disruption and conflicted siblings' relations are factors that could influence prenatal preference among pregnant women (*Okon & Sunday, 2024; Orokpo, Sunday & Neji, 2024*).

Similarly, a dichotomous prenatal preference refers to a binary choice or preference related to prenatal care or decision-making during pregnancy. Offiong (2024) averred that prenatal preferences are options available for labour and delivery of the baby and they include: independent child birth centers such as; home deliveries, churches, spiritual homes or faith base clinic, traditional births attendants. Midwife-attended natural birth (vaginal delivery) in the hospital, vaginal hospital birth with drugs (induction), medically advised pre - planned or maternal choice cesarean section. The birthing option is a place (public hospitals, private hospitals, clients' homes, Churches or faith base clinics and the Traditional Birth Attendants) where the expectant mother or both parents choose to give birth to their baby or babies. The phi coefficient (ϕ) is a statistical measure used to assess the association between two dichotomous variables. It's a correlation coefficient that ranges from -1 to 1, where:

- $\phi = 1$: Perfect positive association
- $\phi = -1$: Perfect negative association
- $\phi = 0$: No association

The phi coefficient is often used in research to examine relationships between binary variables, such as:

1. Presence/absence of a characteristic
2. Yes/no responses
3. Success/failure outcomes

Sunday, Obambon and Udemba (2023) opined that, the phi coefficient (ϕ) of the traditional measure for the 2×2 table is the tetrachoric correlation. The coefficient is an estimate of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) between hypothetical row and column variables with normal distributions that would reproduce the observed contingency table if they were divided into two categories in the appropriate proportions. Because an approximate estimate of the Pearson correlation may well be as adequate in many applications, particularly in small samples, various authors have introduced approximations to the tetrachoric correlation (Pearson, 1966).

The phi coefficient, also known as the mean square contingency coefficient, is a statistical measure used to assess the association between two binary variables. In epidemiology, it plays a crucial role in understanding the relationship between exposure and outcome variables, which are often binary in nature (e.g., exposed vs. unexposed, diseased vs. non-diseased) (Sunday, 2017; Sunday & Etuk, 2024). The phi coefficient is significant because it provides a straightforward and interpretable measure of the strength and direction of the association between these variables.

The phi coefficient is defined as a measure of association between two binary variables, ranging from -1 to 1, where 0 indicates no association, and values closer to 1 or -1 indicate a stronger positive or negative association, respectively. Mathematically, it is represented as:

$$\phi = \frac{n_{11}n_{00} - n_{10}n_{01}}{\sqrt{(n_{11} + n_{10})(n_{01} + n_{00})(n_{11} + n_{01})(n_{10} + n_{00})}}$$

where n_{ij} represents the frequency of observations in the i^{th} row and j^{th} column of a 2×2 contingency table.

Importantly, the measures of association are a wide variety of coefficients (including bivariate correlation and regression coefficients) that measure the strength and direction of the relationship between variables; these measures of strength, or association, can be described in several ways, depending on the analysis (Sunday, Obambon & Udemba, 2023). There are certain points that researchers should know in order to better understand the measures of statistical association. First, the

researcher should know that measures of association are not the same as measures of statistical significance. It is possible for a weak association to be statistically significant; it is also possible for a strong association to not be statistically significant. Second, for measures of association, a value of zero signifies that no relationship exists. In a correlation analysis, if the coefficient (r) has a value of one, it signifies a perfect relationship on the variables of interest. In regression analyses, if the standardized beta weight (β) has a value of one, it also signifies a perfect relationship on the variables of interest. The researcher should note that bivariate measures of association (e.g., Pearson correlations) are inappropriate for curvilinear relationships or discontinuous relationships (Sunday & Etuk, 2024).

The phi (ϕ) coefficient as proposed by George Utney Yule in 1912 is an index of association between two dichotomous variables. The ϕ statistic is particularly useful to many research workers because it is the familiar product-moment correlation when computed for data from a bivariate binomial distribution. In epidemiological studies, understanding the association between exposure and outcome is fundamental. The phi coefficient is particularly useful in case-control studies and cross-sectional studies where the data are often presented in a 2x2 table. It helps researchers to quantify the strength and direction of associations, which is crucial for hypothesis testing and for informing public health interventions (Fleiss, Levin & Paik, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the outcome of dichotomized family structure and prenatal preference in Phi-Coefficient Analysis in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Find out the association between marital status and delivery preferences among pregnant women
2. Determine the association between family size and delivery preferences among pregnant women

Research Questions

What is the outcome of dichotomized marital status, family size and prenatal preference in Phi-Coefficient Analysis in Cross River State, Nigeria? Specifically, the following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. To what extent does marital status associate with delivery preferences among pregnant women?
2. What is the association between family size and delivery preferences among pregnant women?

Justification for the Study

It is anticipated that this study may contribute to knowledge advancement in a number of ways; to students, lecturers, research scholars, family counsellors, skilled birth attendants (midwives), families, government, health care providers, policy makers and to help improve further research study. Firstly, students may through this study understand the role of phi coefficient and when to appropriately apply it in statistics. Secondly, the findings of this study may help lecturers to utilize the various non-parametric tests effectively in their teaching and learning of statistics and research-oriented courses in schools.

The research may equip the family counsellors adequately on how to handle pregnant women with understanding and competency. Thereby providing positive emotional support to the pregnant women and avoidance of psychological maltreatment as well as the provision of information and guidance regarding prenatal delivery care, maternal health, child birth, mother and child morbidity, among others.

Availability of skilled birth attendants (midwives) during pregnancy, delivery and post-natal period play a great role in reducing maternal mortality. Therefore, this study when disseminated will be of great benefit to: the government, policy makers, nursing administration, nursing education, Midwifery practice, the society as a whole and will add to the existing body of knowledge.

To the government and policy makers, the study may create awareness to the Government of Cross River State about the situation of midwives' population in Primary Health Care and so the policy makers may utilize the findings to formulate policies that may help in the decision on midwifery workforce at the Primary Health care level. It is expected that nursing administration may utilize the findings of this study to advocate to Government on the midwifery work force at the primary health care level. In practice, the study may help improve midwives' services provision. By utilizing the findings of this study, there may be increased availability of midwives at health centres in rural areas which will in turn result in improved maternal and child health services which may lead to reduction in maternal mortality. Findings from this study may also enlighten and assist the government in acknowledging the causes of maternal mortality and the need to provide adequate equipment to health centres in the rural areas; thereby encouraging the health care providers to work optimally to promote utilization. It may also enlighten the government on the need in preventing delays in reaching the health facility due to bad road network, thus providing good roads network in the residence (recipients) to the facility.

The findings may help health care providers to step-up their roles in motivating women to always seek for help in health facilities by exhibiting positive attitude towards clients who come to them for health care and delivery, and thus educate the women on the need for health care facility services during pregnancy, to prevent birth complications and reduce mortality rate among pregnant women and children. Similarly, the findings of this study may hopefully be beneficial to researchers in the field of Health Education and allied fields as handy material for their literature review in assessing the predictors for utilising SBAs among urban and rural dwellers in a particular settlement. This finding may also help to work on variables such as access to hospital facilities, cost of healthcare, financial and educational qualification, healthcare proximity, cultural belief/orientation and obstetric complications as significant predictors among the rural and urban dwellers in a particular community.

Researchers may also benefit from the present study as the study may help them to adopt the various non-parametrics in their data analysis especially when discrete or dichotomous variable is required. Finally, budding researchers, research institutions in and outside the country, that are embarking in one form of research endeavour or the other may tap from the information provided in this work for further research studies on phi-coefficient analysis with other statistical tools.

Assumptions of the Study

The following basic assumptions were made to guide the investigation.

1. The variables of this study are normally distributed in the population.
2. The variables of the study are measurable
3. The sample of this study is representative of the population.
4. The respondents gave their honest opinions about the phenomena being studied

Conceptual Definition of Terms

For appropriate understanding, these terms were defined conceptually:

Marital status: This is dichotomized into a state of being married, divorced/separated or single.

Family size: This is dichotomized into the total number of people that make up the family. It may be large or small based on family circle.

Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs): A skilled birth attendant is an accredited health professional (midwife, doctor, nurse) trained to be proficient in the skills needed to

manage normal pregnancies perinatal and identify, manage and refer women and neonates for complications.

Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs): A traditional birth attendant is a person who assists a mother during childbirth and has acquired skills for delivering babies herself or through apprenticeship to other TBAs. TBAs provide care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period.

Prenatal delivery preferences: These are dichotomized into options available for labour and delivery of the baby and they include: independent child birth centers such as; home deliveries, churches, spiritual homes or faith base clinic, traditional births attendants or Midwife-attended natural birth (vaginal delivery) in the hospital, vaginal hospital birth with drugs (induction), medically advised pre - planned or maternal choice cesarean section.

Research Design

The research design adopted in this study was the correlational research design. A correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. According to Sunday (2024; *Isangedighi, et al, 2014*), a correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative. This design is most useful in a study where the researcher does not have control of the independent variable (family structure) and as such, could not manipulate them because they had already occurred before the desire to conduct the research.

Population/Sampling Technique/Sample of the Study

The population of this study comprised all women of reproductive age in Cross River State. The women of reproductive age are those within 15-49 years of age. The estimated population of women of reproductive age in Cross River State is 3,866,262 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The sampling technique adopted for this study is the simple random and the accidental sampling techniques. The participants in the study consisted of 800 women selected from a population of 3,866,269.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled ‘Dichotomized Family Structure and Prenatal Preference Questionnaire (DFSPPQ)’. The validity of the instrument was established by giving out copies of the research instrument to three

experts, one in community health, one in family counselling and the other in measurement and evaluation. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was carried out using 50 pregnant women who were not part of the study.

General Description of Research Variables

The major independent variable used in this study is family structure which was measured discretely in binary form. The dependent variable in the study was prenatal delivery preferences was also measured discretely in terms of binary form (skilled-based attendance and others) both measured discretely in a mutually exclusive method.

Data gathered from the exercise were subjected to analysis using a version 24.0 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the analyses were reported in this chapter. The descriptive statistics of the variable is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Descriptive Statistic for the Research Variables (800)

S/n	Variable	Categories	N	Response option	%
1.	Age	15-24 years	449	1	56
		25 & above	351	2	44
		Total	800		100
2.	Edu Qu'l	B.Sc & above	418	1	52
		Below B.Sc	382	2	48
		Total	800		100
3.	Marital Status	Single	530	1	66
		Married	270	2	34
		Total	800		100
4.	Family structure	Monogamy	538	1	67
		Polygamy	262	2	33
		Total	800		100

A total sample of eight hundred pregnant women was used for the study. The result in Table 1 shows that 449 representing 44% of the total respondents were 15- 24

years, while 351 (44%) were 25 years and above. In terms of respondents' attitude, 405 (51%) had positive attitude, while 395 (50%) had negative attitude.

Again, for educational qualification 418 (53%) had B.Sc and above, while 382 (48%) had below B.Sc. For marital status, 530 (66%) were married, whereas 270 (34%) of the respondents were single respectively. For family structure, 538 of the respondents representing 67% were from monogamous family, while 262 of the respondents representing 33% were from polygamous family.

Presentation of Results from Data Analysis

Research questions

What is the outcome of dichotomized family structure and prenatal preference in Phi-Coefficient Analysis in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Research questions One

To what extent does dichotomize marital status associate with delivery preferences among pregnant women?

The independent variable in this research question is dichotomized marital status which was categorised into monogamy and polygamy; while the dependent variable is dichotomized prenatal preferences among pregnant women which was SBA and Others. To answer the research question, the association between dichotomized marital status and prenatal preferences among pregnant women was analysed using Phi Coefficient (ϕ) with the following categories of prenatal preferences: Skilled-Based Attendance (SBA) and Others (TBA, HBA, FBA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Phi Coefficient (ϕ) analysis of the dichotomized marital status and prenatal preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria n= 800

Prenatal Delivery Preferences among Pregnant Women					
Marital Status	SBA	Others	N	(ϕ)	P-value
Single	174 (131.2)	24 (66.8)	198 (198.0)		

	British American University Journal of Social and Contemporary Issues (BAUJSOCI) Volume 1, Number 1, June, 2025			Maiden Edition, 2025	
Married	356 (398.8)	246 (203.2)	602 (602.0)	.262	.000
Total	530 (530.0)	270 (270.0)	800 (800.0)		

* $P < .05$; $df (R-1)(C-1) = 1$; Phi Coefficient (ϕ) = .262.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 showed that the Phi Coefficient (ϕ) calculated of .262 and the Pearson Chi-Square (X^2) equivalent of 55.051 at 1 degree of freedom was found to be greater than the p-value value of .000. The result is statistically significant. Therefore, the dichotomized marital status significantly associates with prenatal preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that differences in the respondents' marital status associates with the delivery preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research questions Two

What is the association between dichotomized family size and delivery preferences among pregnant women?

The independent variable in this research question is family size which was categorised into small and large family size; while the dependent variable is delivery preferences among pregnant women. To answer research question five, the association between family size and prenatal preferences among pregnant women was analysed using Phi Coefficient (ϕ) with the following categories of delivery preferences: Skilled-Based Attendance (SBA) and Others (TBA, HBA, FBA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 12.

TABLE 3 Phi Coefficient (ϕ) Analysis of the association between Dichotomized Family size and delivery preferences among Pregnant Women in Cross River State, Nigeria n= 800

Delivery Preferences among Pregnant Women					
Family Size	SBA	Others	N	(ϕ)	P-value
Small	180	18	198		

	British American University Journal of Social and Contemporary Issues (BAUJSOCI) Volume 1, Number 1, June, 2025			Maiden Edition, 2025	
	(133.2)	(64.8)	(198.0)		
Large	358 (404.8)	244 (197.2)	602 (602.0)	.289	.000
Total	538 (538.0)	262 (262.0)	800 (800.0)		

* $P < .05$; $df (R-1)(C-1) = 1$; Phi Coefficient (ϕ) = .289.

The result of the Phi Coefficient (ϕ) analysis in Table 3 showed that the ϕ calculated of .289 and the Pearson Chi-Square (X^2) equivalent of 66.873 at 1 degrees of freedom was found to be greater than the p-value value of .000. The result is statistically significant. Therefore, dichotomized family size significantly associates with delivery preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that differences in the respondents' family size associates with the delivery preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the research question stated was statistically significant. Therefore, dichotomized family structure significantly associates with prenatal preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that differences in the respondents' dichotomized family structure associates with the prenatal delivery preferences among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria. The finding supported Titz (2025) who studied the dimensional structure of psychological phenomena, a precise definition of unidimensionality is essential. Most definitions of unidimensionality rely on factor analysis. However, the reliability of factor analysis depends on the input data, which primarily consists of Pearson correlations. A significant issue with Pearson correlations is that they are almost guaranteed to underestimate unidimensionality, rendering them unsuitable for evaluating the unidimensionality of a scale. This article formally demonstrates that the simple unidimensionality index H is always at least as high as, or higher than, the Pearson correlation for dichotomous and polytomous items (ϕ). Leveraging this inequality, a case is presented where five dichotomous items are perfectly unidimensional, yet factor analysis based on ϕ incorrectly suggests a two-dimensional solution. To illustrate that this issue extends beyond theoretical scenarios, an analysis of real data from a statistics exam ($N = 133$) is conducted, revealing the same problem. An in-depth analysis of the exam data shows that violations of unidimensionality are systematic and should not be dismissed as mere

noise. Inconsistent answering patterns can indicate whether a participant blundered, cheated, or has conceptual misunderstandings, information typically overlooked by traditional scaling procedures based on correlations. The conclusion is that psychologists should consider unidimensionality not as a peripheral concern but as the foundation for any serious scaling attempt. The index H could play a crucial role in establishing this foundation.

This finding is in line with Pankush, Ramesh, and Andy (2020) who studied Impact of sample size on phi correlation coefficient and Ochiai index. Phi Correlation Coefficient (PCC) and Ochiai Coefficient (Och) based on their sensitivity to the sample size of transactions from where the network is inferred. For demonstration, we used an implicit network, called a comorbidity network, developed from health records of 22.1 million patients. The networks were compared based on their overall topologies and node centralities. Results showed that the network formed using Och was more robust to the sample size than PCC. The network using Och followed a small-world topology irrespective of the sample size whereas the structure of a network using PCC was inconsistent. Regarding node centralities, the betweenness centrality was most affected by the sample size.

The finding also agrees with Zysno (1997) on the fact that the Phi-coefficient is a well-known measure of correlation for dichotomous variables. It is worthy of remark, that the extreme values ± 1 only occur in the case of consistent responses and symmetric marginal frequencies. Consequently, low correlations may be due to either inconsistent data, unequal response frequencies or both. In order to overcome this somewhat confusing situation various alternative proposals were made, which generally, remained rather unsatisfactory. Here, first of all a system has been developed in order to evaluate these measures. Only one of the well-known coefficients satisfies the underlying demands. According to the criteria, the Phi-coefficient is accompanied by a formally similar modification, which is independent of the marginal frequency distributions. Based on actual data both of them can be easily computed. If the original data are not available - as usual in publications - but the intercorrelations and response frequencies of the variables are, then the grades of association for assymmetric distributions can be calculated subsequently.

The finding is in line with Hohn (1976) on the theoretical and empirical perspective of Binary coefficients. The study averred that binary coefficients can be assigned to several categories on the basis of algebraic and conceptual properties. The phi coefficient of association is related algebraically to the chi-square statistic for 2-by-2 contingency tables, and use of this coefficient in cluster analysis permits the

objective, nonarbitrary partitioning of objects among groups on the basis of previously selected levels of significant, positive association. Similarity, matching, and distance coefficients possess neither conceptual nor operational statistical meaning for many geological data sets. The weighted pair group method and flexible clustering strategy may give an overly conservative partitioning of objects among groups. Clustering by the unweighted pair group method, using the phi coefficient, is recommended for the analysis of biostratigraphic and paleoecologic presence absence data.

The present finding is also in line with Ovwigho (2014) who studied Empirical Demonstration of Techniques for Computing the Discrimination Power of a Dichotomous Item Response Test. The study was designed to examine the various statistical techniques for computing the Discriminating power of a dichotomous item response test. The simple Discrimination Index, the Cramer's phi coefficient and conventional phi coefficient, Point Biserial Correlation, and t-test for independent sample was used to test the difference in mean of the criterion scores between those who got the item correct and wrong. Item 1 of the Senior Secondary Agricultural Science test was used as the computational example. In the analysis, the simple Discrimination Index and 3 formulae of the Point-Biserial correlation gave the same result ($r = 0.63$). The Cramer's phi coefficient was 0.49 and phi coefficient (0.65). There was significance difference between the mean criterion scores of students who got the item right and those who failed the item ($t = 5.05$ $p < 0.05$). The phi coefficient, point-Biserial correlation and t-test for independent sample were the best statistics for estimating the Discrimination power and coefficient of the test item. The simple Discrimination Index did not take into cognisance the performance of candidates in the test/. The phi coefficient is recommended where the sample is large and necessitates division into upper and lower extreme groups.

The finding supported Yang et.al., (2016) on the Evaluation of the Applicability of Phi Coefficient in Indicating Habitat Preferences of Forest Soil Fauna Based on a Single Field Study in Subtropical China. Phi coefficient directly depends on the frequencies of occurrence of organisms and has been widely used in vegetation ecology to analyse the associations of organisms with site groups, providing a characterization of ecological preference, but its application in soil ecology remains rare. Based on a single field experiment, this study assessed the applicability of phi coefficient in indicating the habitat preferences of soil fauna, through comparing phi coefficient-induced results with those of ordination methods in charactering soil fauna-habitat(factors) relationships. Eight different habitats of soil fauna were implemented by reciprocal transfer of defaunated soil cores between two types of

subtropical forests. Canonical correlation analysis (CCorA) showed that ecological patterns of fauna-habitat relationships and inter-fauna taxa relationships expressed, respectively, by phi coefficients and predicted abundances calculated from partial redundancy analysis (RDA), were extremely similar, and a highly significant relationship between the two datasets was observed (Pillai's trace statistic = 1.998, $P = 0.007$). In addition, highly positive correlations between phi coefficients and predicted abundances for Acari, Collembola, Nematode and Hemiptera were observed using linear regression analysis. Quantitative relationships between habitat preferences and soil chemical variables were also obtained by linear regression, which were analogous to the results displayed in a partial RDA biplot. Our results suggest that phi coefficient could be applicable on a local scale in evaluating habitat preferences of soil fauna at coarse taxonomic levels, and that the phi coefficient-induced information, such as ecological preferences and the associated quantitative relationships with habitat factors, will be largely complementary to the results of ordination methods. The application of phi coefficient in soil ecology may extend our knowledge about habitat preferences and distribution-abundance relationships, which will benefit the understanding of biodistributions and variations in community compositions in the soil. Similar studies in other places and scales apart from our local site will be need for further evaluation of phi coefficient.

Implication for Educational Review

Understanding dichotomized family structure and prenatal preferences in a community can have several educational implications:

Family Structure:

1. Tailored support services: Educational institutions can provide targeted support services for students from diverse family structures, such as single-parent households or blended families.
2. Inclusive curriculum: Schools can incorporate diverse family structures into their curriculum, promoting representation and inclusivity.
3. Parent-teacher engagement: Educators can adapt their engagement strategies to accommodate different family structures, ensuring effective communication and collaboration.

Prenatal Preference:

1. Health education: Schools can provide comprehensive health education, including prenatal care and reproductive health, to empower students with knowledge.
2. Cultural sensitivity: Educators can be sensitive to diverse prenatal preferences and values, promoting a respectful and inclusive learning environment.

3. Support for expectant parents: Schools can offer support services and resources for expectant parents, helping them navigate their educational journey.

Community Impact:

1. Community engagement: Educational institutions can engage with the community to promote awareness and understanding of diverse family structures and prenatal preferences.
2. Resource allocation: Schools can allocate resources to support students and families with diverse needs, promoting equity and inclusivity.
3. Partnerships: Educational institutions can partner with community organizations to provide targeted support services and resources.

By understanding and addressing the educational implications of dichotomized family structure and prenatal preferences, communities can promote inclusivity, support diversity, and foster a more equitable learning environment.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study concentrated on the outcome of dichotomized family structure and prenatal preference in Phi-Coefficient Analysis in Cross River State, Nigeria. Overall, it was concluded that there is a significant association between dichotomized marital status, family size, prenatal delivery preference among pregnant women in Cross River State, Nigeria. This is evident in the sense that the solving of a particular research problem in scientific and behavioural studies is a function of the required Measure of Association. Hence, researchers would find this study as a pointer to how they could effectively utilize Phi Coefficient to solve research problems in Maternal Health, Education and Behavioural Sciences. Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Researchers should dichotomize educational variables for ease of measurement especially for educationally less developed population.
2. Family should also organize married adults' education where the roles of intimate family relations in determining prenatal preference will be discussed.
3. Family should design counselling programmes that will enhance the interest of pregnant women in the choice of skilled birth attendants.

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IMPACT OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN LAGOS AND KADUNA STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

In spite of the economic relations between Nigeria and China, the benefits towards infrastructural development in Nigeria have been subjected to diverse opinions by scholars and analysts. Concerns have been raised specifically over the impact of China's belt and road initiative and Nigeria's economic development. This is what prompted the need for this study in examining the impact of the BRI on socio-economic activities in Lagos and Kaduna States, Nigeria. The study was built within the framework of dependency theory. Information for the study was generated from both primary and secondary sources. Personal Interviews was employed as instrument for primary data, while for secondary method, sources like research papers, journals, seminars, workshop papers and handbook were utilized. The findings revealed that China through the Belt and road initiative has helped develop the transport sector aiding the reduction of infrastructural deficit in Nigeria. Some of the major advantages that the Belt and Road Initiative brings to Nigeria are decrease traffic congestion in major cities like Abuja, Lagos, and Kaduna. For example, the Lagos-Ibadan train route connects Lagos as the country's economic hub to Ibadan as Nigeria's third-largest city since the Lagos-Ibadan expressway is widely known for traffic gridlocks. Lastly, due to the train accidents that occurred several times in Lagos and trains from Kaduna to Abuja and road accidents caused by bad conditions on the road, it could reduce those cases resulting in more significant improvements for public safety in the transportation sector. However, perpetual security threats by bandits undermine its effectiveness. From the aforementioned findings, it was recommended that after successful delivery of infrastructure projects in Nigeria, there is need for subsequent management and maintenance of the infrastructure

assets to avoid dilapidation and a relapse into dysfunctional railway and road systems.

Keywords: Activities, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Impact, Socio-Economic.

Introduction

The economies of the world have become greatly connected through globalization. Mutual benefits in forms of investments, technological and infrastructural developments, financial aids and the likes have driven many nation states to engage one another in relationships. Road development has always been critical to economic development from ancient times to the present age. Its pivotal role derives from the significance of road infrastructure in facilitating the transportation of people, goods and services from one place to another. The functionality and viability of infrastructure aids in determining a country's progress and another's failure in attracting investments, expanding trade, coping with population growth, reducing poverty, or improving environmental conditions.

Poverty is a major factor, affecting close to 400 million Sub-Saharan Africans who continue to survive on less than US\$1.25 a day (Eman and Mostafa, 2020). Levels of poverty are exacerbated by joblessness, particularly among 200 million youth aged between 15 and 24. However, there is also the collateral impact of other factors, such as rising levels of inequality, mortality, unemployment, food and energy insecurity, destructive conflicts, religious extremism, ethnic and gender violence, environmental degradation and migration. These vulnerabilities intersect with a harsh external environment in which Africa's marginalisation has hardly been ameliorated (Eman and Mostafa, 2020).

The continent's share of global gross domestic product (GDP) has remained stagnant as a whole, at 2.4 per cent, and Sub-Saharan Africa's share is barely above 1 per cent. Low growth is rooted in low or declining manufacturing output, domestic savings and investment, and trade and financial flows. Moreover, and as a whole, Africa represents a mere 1.3 per cent in global stock market capitalisation (most of which is concentrated in South Africa); 0.2 per cent of debt securities; and 0.8 per cent of bank assets; and the continent attracts a paltry 4 per cent of foreign direct investment (FDI) (Garth, 2021).

In the contemporary period, the growing nature of the interconnectedness of sovereign states of the world has encouraged the construction of national and trans-border roads hence, the China Belt Road Initiative (CBRI). The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, is widely considered to be the centre piece of China's new foreign policy and a reflection of its ascendancy in the global arena, economically, politically, and strategically. Many researchers

view BRI as a multifaceted and connectivity-oriented grand strategy designed to serve China's ambitious geostrategic and geo-economic interest. Its importance to China is underscored by the substantial financial, diplomatic, and intellectual resources that the country has already committed to the initiative (Zhao, 2020; Zhou & Esteban, 2018). The project as (i) Improving regional infrastructure (ii) Increasing regional economic policy coordination (iii) Markets integration (iv) Encouraging cultural ties to build support for the broader project. The ultimate goal of the project is to connect the whole of the world to China, which will mark the ascension of China as a global force.

In 2018, Nigeria signed the Belt and Road cooperation agreement with China. From then on, with the joint efforts of both sides, Nigeria has become China's biggest contractor market, second largest trading partner and major investment destination in Africa. Major projects such as Lekki Deep Sea Port, Zungeru Hydroelectric project, Lagos-Ibadan train route, Abuja-Kaduna rail line, Abuja-Keffi-Lafia-Makurdi road dualisation, as well as several airport terminals, undertaken by Chinese enterprises, have been completed or progressing smoothly. China through the Belt and road initiative has helped develop the transport sector aiding the reduction of infrastructural deficit in Nigeria. The major road transport infrastructure in Nigeria consists of 32,000km of Federal highways including seven major bridges across the Niger and Benue rivers, the Lagos ring 3 road, the third mainland axial bridge, 30,500km of state roads; and 130,000km of local roads (Project Reserve, 2020).

Driven by rivalry with the United States, economic expansion, and regional development, China's BRI constructs trade channels, strengthens power, and develops interdependence. In 2015, The Mile 12-Ikorodu road widening and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects were constructed by China Civil Engineering Construction Cooperation (CCECC) in Lagos, Nigeria's economic hub, bringing benefit to millions of residents and motorists of the state. Over 400,000 passengers are carried daily by over 400 high-capacity air-conditioned China's Yutong buses that run the corridor from Ikorodu - CMS via Mile 12. The project included widening of the road with two additional lanes and the placing of BRT lanes in the middle of the road. The width of the existing road is a 7.5 meters, with central median of 2m width (Xinhua Finance Agency, 2015).

The construction of rail line infrastructure in several regions of Nigeria indeed implies its local economic development. As the most populous nation and largest economy in the African continent that lacks adequate physical infrastructure in railway transportation, the train's presence is convinced to bring positive intentions, such as it could take many passengers and goods with reasonable transport times and

reduce transaction costs along with the cities. It would also improve accessibility to urban centers and connect millions of people across the region. For instance, the Abuja-Kaduna train connects passengers from Idu station, an industrial development area and commercial hub of Nigeria's capital city of Abuja, to Rigasa Village of Igabi local area economic hub in the northwestern state Kaduna. Thereby, it is expected to open up new business activities and facilitate trade in enhancing connectivity to achieve the distribution of the economic sector in other particular areas. It can be seen in Lagos as one of the world's fastest-growing megacities, but this rapid growth has resulted in high rates of illness and death caused by unhealthy air. Therefore, the economic activities are concentrated in certain areas, but it could spread into other new places and improve the city's air quality for better living conditions. It is indeed an ever-present fact that no nation of the world can exist in a state of autarky or self-sufficiency. In a globalised world as we have it today, countries need one another to survive.

Since 2013, China has provided multiple infrastructure loans to Nigeria through its state-owned banks and has secured a significant share of railway and port construction contracts in Nigeria. For instance, from 2013 to 2023, Nigeria and its Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), such as the Lekki Port Lagos Free Trade Zone Enterprise Limited, have signed multiple BRI loan facilities, specifically for the development of port and railway infrastructure. During this period, the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank (CDB) disbursed over 3.1 billion dollars worth of infrastructure loans to Nigeria for the construction and rehabilitation of ports and railways in Nigeria. This includes 500 million dollars for the Abuja-Kaduna railway that connects the Nigerian capital, Abuja, with the city of Kaduna and serves as an important transportation link (Anthony and Onuoha, 2023).

Despite the above, economic growth in Nigeria slowed from 3.3% in 2022 to 2.9% in 2023 due to high inflation and sluggish growth in the global economy, which declined from 3.5% in 2022 to 3.2% in 2023. Inflation rose from 18.8% in 2022 to 24.5% in 2023, due to rising fuel costs and a depreciating naira. The fiscal deficit narrowed from 5.4% of GDP in 2022 to 5.1%, as general government revenues improved from 6.7% of GDP in 2022 to 7.6% in 2023, although remaining low. The poverty level remains high, with multidimensional poverty at 63% and income poverty at 40% (NBS, 2024). In spite of the economic relations between Nigeria and China, the benefits towards infrastructural development in Nigeria have been subjected to diverse opinions by scholars and analysts, in which Chinese investments in Nigeria attracted resentment and criticisms. Concerns have been raised specifically over the impact of China's belt and road initiative and Nigeria's economic development which is the problem that informs the need of this study.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze how the BRI has impacted on socio-economic activities in Lagos and Kaduna, Nigeria.
- ii. To assess the nature of Nigeria – China relations in the operations of BRI in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative on Socio-economic Activities

Anthony and Onuoha (2023) specifically explored the impacts of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure diplomacy in Nigeria, with a particular focus on two crucial sectors: ports and railways. Through the lens of complex interdependency theory, the study discussed the push and pull factors that motivated the execution of BRI projects in Nigeria and how they mutually benefit the actors involved. Furthermore, it utilizes primary and secondary data gathered through Key Informant Interviews and documented sources. On the strength of the findings, the study concludes that the BRI, unlike past Chinese projects in Nigeria, has significantly enhanced the development of infrastructure by modernizing the Nigerian railway facilities and constructing the first deep seaport in the country. The study by Anthony and Onuoha (2023) analyzed the challenges and conditions that led to delays and abandonment of previous projects awarded to China in the past decades. However, the study did not ascertain how the BRI has impacted on the immediate communities in Nigeria which is a gap in knowledge.

Alhassan (2024) examined the socioeconomic impact of Chinese investments in Nigeria. The research employed process tracing as its core methodology, enabling a qualitative and interpretative analysis of social processes through empirically-backed logical inferences. The study finds that Nigeria has benefited from Chinese financing and energy, transportation, and telecommunications projects. It is one of many countries that have shown much interest in the BRI, which has also drawn much investment. Because Nigeria is a developing country and the largest on the African continent, it is in its best interests to capitalize on the BRI's opportunities for economic growth and continued regional integration while protecting its national interests and maintaining its sovereignty. The study recommended that in the meantime, Nigeria needs to find a balance between the benefits of Chinese investment and the transfer of technology on the one hand and socioeconomic development on the other. Nevertheless, the study by Alhassan (2024) only focused in providing an assessment of the long-term viability of Chinese investments in Nigeria's economy. It fails to describe how the BRI has impacted on the immediate communities in Nigeria which this study seeks to examine.

Nature of Nigeria – China Relations in the Operations of BRI

Ojo and Mfun (2022) examined China Belt Road Initiative (CBRI) and its implications on African development challenges. The study's method of analysis is qualitative and historical, employing descriptive and analytical tools to arrive at the conclusion. The initiative, developed by the Chinese government in its relations with its allies, is generally popular in the developing world, especially in countries with infrastructural deficits, and a shortage of resources to overcome them. It emphasizes five areas of cooperation with Third World countries: coordinating development policies and forging infrastructure, strengthening investment and trade relations. Using the dependency theoretical construct, the study argues and also demonstrates that the current trend in CBRI is laden with Chinese strategic interest and collaboration as well as mutual cooperation among participating countries.

In Africa, this initiative is seen as a bold attempt by African governments at connecting African countries with age-long Chinese economic interests. The study concludes that the CBRI initiative is China's economic escalation strategy and development expansion opportunity programme that will drive business and investment fortunes for China. It is imperative that African policymakers should be meticulous in scrutinizing policies and programmes that are perceived to support the development. However, the study did not take into consideration of the nature of Nigeria – China relations in the operations of BRI in Nigeria which is also an area under investigation.

Idigo (2024) examined the effect of china-Nigeria economic relations on infrastructural development in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Complex and Interdependence theory. The study adopted ex-post factor research design while data for the study were sourced through secondary sources like journal article, text books, magazine, newspapers, and institutional documents. The result of the analysis revealed that there was economic cooperation that existed between China and Nigeria, but China's economic relation with Nigeria in areas of education, transportation and technological innovations has created minimal improvement in the said areas within the period under review.

The study concludes that China's economic cooperation with Nigeria in areas of education, transportation and technological innovations has created minimal improvement in the said areas. The study also concluded that Nigeria has not fully benefitted from these economic relations. On the aspect of China-Nigeria relation in transportation, it is crucial for the nation to build a global, efficient connection network to transport people and cargo between the states and towards the shore. The landlocked countries would gain a large trade-boosting possibility, while the non-landlocked countries could expand their infrastructure around it (ports, warehouses,

services). Infrastructure in general, but the railway branch, in particular, creates new jobs directly and indirectly. Based on these findings the study recommended among others that; Nigeria should use China's aspiration for oil to extract concession in areas vital to Nigeria interest, China should be encouraged to strengthen and improve its co-operation with Nigeria in addressing basic infrastructural impediments and Nigerian government must set up policies that ensure that technology innovation/transfer is prioritized to ensure that technology transfer is successful.

Theoretical Framework

The study chooses Dependency Theory as its framework for analysis. The dependency theory emerged as a harsh opposition to the modernisation theory, which debunked the majority of the economic strategies suggested by the modernisation theory. The proponents of dependency theory among whom are Andre Gunder- Frank, Walter Rodney Samir Amir, Dos Santos and Claude Ake argued that underdevelopment in a poor nation is caused by resource flow from that poor nation classified as "periphery" to wealthy states they labelled as "core states". The outflow of such resources from poor nations to the core centers creates wealth in those centers at the expense of the periphery states.

Dependency theory is a Social Science explanatory tool which is based on the idea that resources move from a "periphery" of poor and developing countries to a "core" of affluent countries, benefiting the latter at the cost of the former. Nigeria is the former, whereas China is the latter. The first dependence assumption is that the nation-state, as the primary player in international relations, is the primary exploiter. Other actors, such as persons and organizations, exist, but their influence is limited. Second, the state functions as a unified actor. National interests, particularly during times of conflict, compel the state to speak and act in unison. Third, decision-makers are rational actors in the sense that rational decision-making leads to national interest pursuit. As a result, doing activities that might weaken or expose your condition would be irrational.

Despite the fact that Nigeria and China have collaborated for mutual economic gain, their relationship could be better understood within the context of the dependency theoretical postulation, where the trend of relations between the two countries favours China as the senior partner, a position she has been using to condition Nigeria's development pattern to produce the raw materials needed for China's industrial growth in exchange for Nigeria's perpetual reliance on import of Chinese products and finished goods which further exacerbates balance of trade and balance of payment issues for Nigeria. The theory of dependency is key to the understanding of this study because the theoretical thrusts centers on the mutual cooperation of

both strong and weak economies although certain dynamics involved in the nature of economic interactions between Nigeria and China has become a matter of concern given the unequal relations posed by the international division of labour.

Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The targeted population for this study is 2,398. This figure represents the size of the China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC), Federal Ministry of Transportation, Nigeria Railway Cooperation, Nigeria Port Authority, Lekki Port Limited, Federal Ministry of Finance National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigerian investment promotion Council (NIPC), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Chinese embassy in Nigeria in Lagos as well as the Nigeria-China Chamber of Commerce in Lagos which have access to important and necessary information for the evaluation of the impact of the China's belt and road initiative on Nigeria's economic development. Purposive sampling technique was used to select ten (10) respondents for interview. The selection of the interviewees was based on their expertise in China's belt and road initiative and Nigeria's economic development.

Both primary and secondary sources were used. Primary data was collected using Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Secondary data was gathered from written articles on OBOR initiative and Nigeria's economic development and other topical areas in the literature. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative information where necessary deductions, inferences and conclusions were made. This content analysis method was achieved through detailed elicitation and discussion of sampled interviews and secondary data related to the study variables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Objective One: To analyze how the BRI has impacted on socio-economic activities in Lagos and Kaduna, Nigeria.

Under this objective, China's economic relation with Nigeria was examined, additionally; Nigeria - China cooperation was examined to find how BRI impacted on socio-economic activities in Lagos and Kaduna, Nigeria within the period under review.

Modernizing the railway infrastructure stimulate the latest cities to develop their potential local tourism sector, as it enhances accessibility to the tourism destination, which in most cases has a positive impact on the local economic growth. Furthermore, it create more jobs to reduce poverty and the highest unemployment rate in Nigeria by hiring and training in personal skills development for at least 1,000

people to work in the hub of the light rail transportation network in the Abuja Metro Station to Kaduna (KII/46/Male/June/2025).

The development of transport sector, such as road transport reduces friction of distance; facilitate trade; allows an improved movement of people and goods; promotes overall better standard of living and ease of social cohesion and integration; finances other public spending which can be of importance for a society, such as the social security system and the education system, among others. It is of importance to highlight that Nigerian roads have often been characterized with long cracks, potholes and other pavement defects. These have posed a serious challenge and disaster such that in Nigeria one can hardly travel a kilometer without coming across long cracks and potholes. All these have resulted to a spike in the number of road accidents and a clog in the wheel of the nation's economic development Nigeria (Global Construction Review, 2021). In their quest for resources and their bilateral relations with African countries, China has engaged in what is tagged "resources for infrastructure." this implies the provision of infrastructure such as, airport terminals, roads, bridges, and rails in payment for resources acquired from Africa. It is true that China's bilateral relationship with Nigeria is getting better by the day unlike the situation during the immediate post colonial era.

Participants alluded that the advantage of OBOR is premised around responding to the urgent infrastructure needs of Nigeria and its positive impacts on the economy. Conversely, the disadvantages are embedded in the feasibility of dependency, protracted loan servicing, inevitable asymmetric nature of the Sino-Nigeria relations, China's disregard to host nation's labour law, total absence of transfer of knowledge and importation of materials that can easily be purchased from Nigeria local companies.

Other positive impacts are to decrease traffic congestion in major cities like Abuja, Lagos, and Kaduna. For example, the Lagos-Ibadan train route connects Lagos as the country's economic hub to Ibadan as Nigeria's third-largest city since the Lagos-Ibadan expressway is widely known for traffic gridlocks. Lastly, due to the train accidents that occurred several times in Lagos and trains from Kaduna to Abuja and road accidents caused by bad conditions on the road, it could reduce those cases resulting in more significant improvements for public safety in the transportation sector (KII/49/Male/June/2025).

During construction of the rail an estimate of 20,000 local staff were employed. Since commencement of operations, this project has directly provided about 1000 jobs. During construction and operation, the project indirectly established an estimate of 200,000 jobs mostly in areas of material production, subcontracting works, equipment manufacturing and related services (World Highways, 2021). According to William (2024), transportation infrastructure investments constitute important political, economic, and social processes that increase the riches and power of a country, enlarge markets, and lower trade barriers. This increases productivity outputs and leads to improvements in mobility and standard of living for the masses. The Belt and Road initiative (BRI) is a development strategy being used by the Chinese Government, including infrastructure and investments in countries across Europe, Asia, and Africa. Nigeria officially entered into the BRI through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by President Muhammadu Buhari at the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, in September, 2018. Chinese leaders have made railway and highway projects an important element of the BRI. In China, Nigeria has found a partner and financier to its Infrastructure Development Plans (IDPs) by signing pacts, memoranda of understandings through its bilateral ties.

Table 1: Completed and Commissioned BRI-funded Standard Gauge Railway Line in Nigeria

Railway Project	Year re-awarded	Year Completed	Construction Company	Gauge
Abuja – Kaduna	2010	2016	CCECC	Standard
Abuja Mass Transit Light Rail	2012	2018	CCECC	Standard
Lagos - Ibadan Railway	2017	2021	CCECC & CRCC	Standard
Itakpe - Ajaokuta - Warri Railway	2017	2020	CCECC & Julius Berge	Standard

Source: Compiled by the researcher, data generated from the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission: <https://www.icirnigeria.org/how-chinese-built-railwayprojects-are-easing-mobility-saving-lives-in-nigeria/>.

Kubwa, a town located within the Federal Capital Territory, not far from Abuja. It is situated along the railway line and has a station for passengers to embark or disembark. Rijana is a community located in Kaduna State. It is notable for having a station along the Abuja - Kaduna Railway, serving as a stop for travelers. Kakau is another town in Kaduna State along the railway line. It has a station that serves as a

stop for passengers traveling between Abuja and Kaduna. Rigasa is a suburb of Kaduna City which is known for its railway station. It serves as the terminal station for the Abuja–Kaduna Railway, located near central Kaduna. Likewise, the Lagos - Ibadan Railway line connects the major economic hub of Lagos with the city of Ibadan, as well as the towns and communities situated along the route. By connecting these towns, the railway line offers improved transportation options for residents, commuters, and businesses. It enables faster and more convenient travel between these locations, reducing travel times and easing congestion on roads.

The impact of BRI Chinese involvement in the railway modernization project in Nigeria is substantial. In a face-to-face interview with Oluwasegun Yemi Ogunyemi, Public Relations Officer of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, he outlined the significant contribution of China to the development of railway infrastructure in Nigeria. According to Ogunyemi, China has made significant contributions to the development of standard and double gauge fast railway tracks in Nigeria. Chinese companies have played a crucial role in providing expertise, technology, and resources to build and upgrade the railway infrastructure to meet international standards. This transition from narrow gauge to standard gauge has led to several benefits, including higher speeds, improved stability, and enhanced operational efficiency.

He went further to states that China's contribution also extends to the development of double gauge fast railway tracks, which allow for interoperability and smooth transition between standard gauge and narrow gauge trains on the same track. Moreover, China has been instrumental in the introduction and implementation of advanced signaling and telecommunications systems in Nigeria's railway infrastructure, bringing the expertise of its companies to enhance the safety, efficiency, and reliability of Nigeria's rail network. These systems include modern train control systems, signaling technologies, and communication networks, which enable real-time monitoring, control, and coordination of train movements (June, 2025).

China has also contributed to the construction of new modern train stations in Nigeria, utilizing the architectural and engineering expertise of its companies to design and construct state-of the-art train stations that feature modern amenities, such as ticketing systems, waiting areas, platforms, passenger services, and accessibility features. These stations are designed to provide passengers with comfortable and convenient facilities, ensuring a pleasant travel experience. China's contributions to Nigeria's railway development also

include the provision of fast locomotives and the construction of high-quality tracks. China has been at the forefront of high-speed rail technology, and its involvement has resulted in the introduction of fast and efficient locomotives that can operate at higher speeds. These locomotives are designed to meet the specific requirements of Nigeria's railway network, ensuring optimal performance and passenger comfort. The BRI has significantly transformed Nigeria's railway sector through the construction of major railway lines, train stations, and modern signaling systems. The BRI has provided financial resources and investment for the development of railway infrastructure, with Chinese companies playing a crucial role in the construction and upgrading of railway lines and stations. This support has expanded Nigeria's railway network, improving connectivity and promoting regional integration. Chinese involvement has also facilitated capacity building through training programs, knowledge exchange, and the transfer of advanced technologies. Nigeria has leveraged China's experience to adopt cutting-edge technologies, leading to the modernization and long-term sustainability of its railway infrastructure (KII/51/Male/June/2025).

Table 2: Summary of Seaports Construction Projects and Upgrades Completed by Chinese Companies (2015–2022).

Port	Chinese Company	Type of Upgrade/Construction
Lekki Deep Seaport	CHEC	Equity capital infusion, construction of port infrastructure, installation of advanced equipment and technology and ship-to-shore cranes and advanced container handling systems
Lagos Port Complex	CCECC	Construction of new berths, expansion of container terminals, installation of ship-to-shore cranes and advanced container handling systems
Lagos Port Complex	CHEC	Construction of new berths, expansion of container terminals,

		installation of advanced equipment and technology
Onne Port Complex	CHEC	Expansion of container terminals, development of dedicated oil and gas terminals, improvement of port infrastructure and facilities
Warri Port	CHEC	Construction of new berths, installation of modern cargo handling equipment, improvement of port access and infrastructure
Calabar Port	CHEC	Expansion of port berths and container terminals, installation of modern cargo handling equipment, upgrading of port infrastructure

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited <https://lekkiport.com/>.

Overall, Table 2 highlights the significant role played by Chinese companies in the rehabilitation, expansion, and modernization of seaports in Nigeria. Their involvement has brought expertise, financial resources, and technological capabilities, which have contributed to the development of efficient and competitive port facilities. For instance, the introduction of automation and state-of-the-art equipment, such as ship-to-shore cranes and advanced container handling systems, has significantly improved the efficiency and productivity of Nigerian seaports. These technological advancements have enabled faster turnaround times, streamlined operations, and enhanced cargo handling capacity. The involvement of Chinese companies has not only focused on individual seaports but also on the development of integrated port clusters and logistics hubs.

These initiatives aim to create a comprehensive and interconnected maritime infrastructure network, enabling seamless movement of goods within Nigeria and facilitating international trade. By leveraging the expertise, financial resources, and technological capabilities of Chinese companies, Nigeria has been able to address some of the challenges it previously faced in upgrading its port facilities. The contributions of these companies have helped create modern, efficient, and competitive seaports that meet international standards.

Table 3: Railway projects in Nigeria, their funding model and description in partnership with China.

Rail Line	Cost (US\$)	Funding Model	Description
Abuja – Kaduna	\$876 Million	500 million in loans from the Exim Bank of China; balance funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN).	187km from Abuja to Kaduna (part of the 2,700km Lagos – Kano line).
Lagos – Ibadan	\$2.53 billion	Loan from the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of China.	156 km from Lagos to Ibadan (part of the 2,700km Lagos – Kano line).
Ibadan – Kano	\$5.3 billion	FGN to provide an equity stake of 15% with the remaining 75% funded by from China’s Exim Bank.	Comprised of 4 sections - the 200km Ibadan-Ilorin section, the Ilorin-Minna section a distance of 270km and then the Abuja, Kaduna and finally Kano a distance of 300km. (part of the 2,700km Lagos – Kano line).
Abuja – Warri	\$3.9billion	FGN to provide an equity stake of 15%, China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC), an equity stake of 10%, and the remaining 75% borrowed from China’s Exim Bank. The CRCC will operate the railway and the port to	Originally commenced as the Itakpe – Ajaokuta cargo line in 1987, it was extended to link the capital Abuja to the port city of Warri, a distance by air of

		recover its investment.	approximately 440km.
Kano - Maradi	\$1.959 billion	To be financed by bilateral loan arrangements.	To link Kano– Danbatta– Kazaure– Daura– Mashi– Katsina– Jibiya– Maradi (Niger Republic) with a branch line from Kano to Dutse.
Lagos - Calabar	The project is valued at \$11bn	Originally intended to be funded from loans from China's Exim Bank; however following indications that the funding is not available and continuous delays to the commencement of the project (which was expected to be completed in 2018), the FGn is currently exploring other funding options.	1402 km (871 mi) to be developed in two phases. The first phase will run between Calabar and Port Harcourt; while the second phase will run between Port Harcourt and Lagos via Onitsha
PortHarcourt – Maiduguri	\$3 billion	FGN to provide about 15% of the \$3 billion rehabilitation and reconstruction cost, while the balance will be provided by a syndicate of Chinese financiers.	Rehabilitation and reconstruction of the 1,443-kilometer (897-mile) Eastern Railway line that starts from the southeastern oil hub of Port Harcourt and terminates at the northeastern city of Maiduguri

Source: Ighodalo and Adeyemi-Faboya (2021).

Taking an in-depth look into railway projects in Nigeria, the Abuja Rail Mass Transit Project is situated in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, the completed phase 1 is composed of two lines as Lot 1 A and Lot 3, Lot 1A is 18km from Idu industrial area to satellite town Kubwa and Lot 3 is 27.245km from Abuja central area to the international airport of the capital, the total length of phase1 is 45.245km. There are 12 stations set along the route of Abuja Rail Mass Transit Project Phase 1, 8 stations for Lot3 and 4 stations for Lot 1A. Apart from the main line project, a rail depot with an area of 24 hectares was also constructed close to Idu station to serve the Abuja Rail system. Abuja Rail Mass Transit Project (Phase 1) was signed by CCECC and the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and began commercial operations on July 13th 2018. It is known as the first light rail in West Africa (Bukola, 2019). The railway, stretching about 157 kilometers (km) with a speed of 150 km/h, marks a landmark cooperation project between China and Africa under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that has significantly improved Nigeria's rail transport infrastructure and boosted its economic development.

The Abuja-Kaduna extension is important in many ways; the first segment of the Standard Gauge Railway Modernization Projects connected the capital Abuja with Kaduna. The Abuja-Kaduna line also connects the capital with the Lagos-Kano line by a modern, standard gauge track. Also, together with the development of the ports and coastal connections, the complete modernization of Lagos-Kano line could consolidate Nigeria's position in the region, as a trade and communication hub, especially for the landlocked neighbors. The Lagos-Kano works have been divided into six sections determined by stations, each around 150 km. The entire route would have at least 1124 km, with possible further extensions and connections with the Eastern Line (Port Harcourt-Maiduguri) and various connections with the capital. In 2017, construction of the second section which is Lagos-Ibadan began and on 10th June 2021 the Nigerian government officially started its full commercial operation to ease public transportation and fuel goods movement (Xinhua, 2021).

Objectives Two: To assess how the role of local politics has affected the operations of the BRI in Nigeria.

BRI is expected to open up new towns that will provide new settlements, education institutions, and other new basic service facilities along the rail line in order to decrease the rapid urbanization and lower the volume of high air pollution in the city center. It can be seen in Lagos as one of the world's fastest-growing megacities, but this rapid growth has resulted in high rates of illness and death caused by unhealthy air. Therefore, the economic activities are concentrated in certain areas, but it could spread into other new places and improve the city's air quality for better living conditions. However, it is essential to note that some points need to be addressed in

this regard. First, learning from the countries' experiences participating in the BRI, this initiative must emphasize mutual benefit between China and Nigeria, especially in the funding mechanism. Second, a feasibility study is required to ensure that all activities and projects in the framework of the BRI must contribute to sustainable economic growth in order to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Third, all BRI's projects in Nigeria are supposed to be in line with the national interests, which also prioritize local government cooperation by building the capacity of African local authorities to exchange knowledge, experiences, and expertise that would surely influence its regional development. Thus, the presence of BRI in Nigeria has undoubtedly been a significant opportunity to serve financially for improving insufficient transportation infrastructure, such as the regional rail network that is counted on in many African countries since it has impacted various aspects, particularly the economic growth at the domestic level (Ezeani, & Ngoka, 2022).

The implementation of the BRI in Nigeria involves a range of activities aimed at strengthening economic and political ties between Nigeria and China. As the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria is a key target of the BRI. It has renewed Chinese investment in Nigeria's infrastructure, leading to the resumption of stalled projects and the signing of new ones. These agreements include MoUs, loan agreements, and other forms of cooperation on infrastructure, agriculture, power, transportation, and other areas of mutual interest. Specifically, the BRI seeks to provide financing and expertise for infrastructure projects in Nigeria, such as roads, railways, ports, airports, and energy projects. It aims to facilitate increased trade flows between Nigeria and China by enhancing transportation links and reducing trade barriers. This is expected to boost Nigeria's export capacity, especially in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. In addition to these objectives, the implementation of the BRI in Nigeria also aligns with Nigeria's broader development goals such as the Vision 20:2020, which outlined a series of goals and objectives aimed at improving infrastructure and promoting economic development (KII/40/Female/June/2025).

Ezeani and Ngoka (2022) opine that infrastructure provide the necessary springboard to launch a country into the class of developed nations and it is an established fact that Chinese state owned firm, CCECC is playing an active role in

Nigeria's transportation sector in line with the Belt and Road Initiative towards the development of the transportation infrastructure with focus on railway and roads development. Between 2015 and 2020, multiple BRI loans disbursed by Chinese state-owned banks have been provided to Nigeria for the construction of standard-gauge railway tracks, modern train stations, advanced signaling systems, and procurement of rolling stock. This includes 500 million dollars for the Abuja–Kaduna railway that connects the Nigerian capital, Abuja, with the city of Kaduna and serves as an important transportation link. It also includes the \$1.53 billion Lagos–Ibadan railway which connects Lagos, the economic hub of Nigeria, with Ibadan, a major city in the southwestern region; the 500 million dollar Abuja Rail Mass Transit Project (Phase 1), which aims to develop a rail network within the capital city, Abuja, to enhance intra-city transportation; and 200 million dollars for the completion of Itakpe–Warri railway, which connects Itakpe, a town in Kogi State, with the city of Warri in Delta State, facilitating the transportation of goods and passengers. These BRI loans have been directed towards the construction of standard-gauge railway tracks, modern train stations, advanced signaling systems, and procurement of rolling stock (train cars) to improve Nigeria's railway infrastructure.

The BRI has provided Nigeria with an opportunity to secure funds for rehabilitating and upgrading its railway infrastructure. Nigeria has signed several BRI project loans through the EXIM Bank of China and the CDB. As a condition of these loans, China is actively involved in the execution of railway projects in Nigeria. Chinese construction companies have been awarded 100% of the railway contracts under the BRI funding. This arrangement can be attributed to several factors. First, Chinese companies have extensive experience in building railways and other infrastructure projects, which stems from China's rapid development in this sector. Second, Chinese companies have acquired advanced technologies, engineering know-how, and project management capabilities through this extensive experience, making them well-equipped to undertake railway projects in other countries. Third, China's involvement in international railway projects is facilitated by the BRI which seeks to enhance connectivity and infrastructure development across participating countries, including the construction of railways. Lastly, Chinese companies have played a significant role in implementing these projects, offering their expertise,

financing, and construction capabilities
(KII/41/Female/June/2025).

Furthermore, there has been a noticeable lack of technology transfer from China to Nigeria. The issue of trade disparity between the two countries is widely acknowledged, with China reaping considerable gains from the transactions while Nigeria has yet to fully benefit. However, the allusion that Chinese projects and financial support contribute to power sector development, extending energy access and facilitating economic growth in Nigeria are questionable when compared to the volume of generators that are imported into the Nigerian market (Igbokwe, 2020). On paper, China's activities are expected to contribute to power sector development in emerging countries through construction of new generation capacity and new grids but Nigeria for example is still battling with an unending problem of electricity generation transmission and distribution. The functionality and viability of infrastructure aids in determining a country's progress and another's failure in attracting investments, expanding trade, coping with population growth, reducing poverty, or improving environmental conditions. Adequate infrastructure in Nigeria through China's financial resources will improve investment climate in the country and strengthen infrastructure.

Bukola (2019) submits that the consequent effect of the implementation of Rail IDPs (infrastructural development projects) is to guarantee mass employment opportunities for Nigerians and to ensure wealth creation, more revenue generation and less pressure on the Nigerian roads. Therefore, connecting Nigeria with neighboring countries with standard gauge rails would be one of the steps in the project of connecting Africa by transportation infrastructure. A plan often mentioned by African Union as crucial for Africa's faster development and cooperation. In the railway sector of Nigeria, Chinese finance is backing two major standard-gauge rail (SGR) projects. The Abuja-Kaduna Railway section is the first section of the Nigerian Railway Modernization Project, using China railway technical standards and connecting the capital city of Abuja, the state of Niger and the state of Kaduna, with a total length of 186.5 km and a maximum speed of 150km/h. On July 26th 2016, Abuja-Kaduna Railway Project officially started commercial operation, becoming the first modern railway in operation using China standard in Africa. Nigerian Railway Corporation is in Charge of Operations while the CCECC offers technical support, training service and assistance to the commercial operation (Bukola, 2019).

Discussion of Findings

- i. Findings show that China through the Belt and road initiative has helped develop the transport sector aiding the reduction of infrastructural deficit in Nigeria. Some of the major advantages that the Belt and Road Initiative brings to Nigeria are decrease traffic congestion in major cities like Abuja, Lagos, and Kaduna. For example, the Lagos-Ibadan train route connects Lagos as the country's economic hub to Ibadan as Nigeria's third-largest city since the Lagos-Ibadan expressway is widely known for traffic gridlocks. Lastly, due to the train accidents that occurred several times in Lagos and trains from Kaduna to Abuja and road accidents caused by bad conditions on the road, it could reduce those cases resulting in more significant improvements for public safety in the transportation sector. Azubuike, Ezeamy and Chukwuma (2024) opined that one of the biggest economies in Africa is Nigeria, and China has made significant investments in the nation's infrastructure development. However, perpetual security threats by bandits undermine its effectiveness.
- ii. A combination of trade, investment, and infrastructure development was found to describe the two nations' economic relations in the operation of BRI. This corroborates the report made by Ibrahim (2023) that states that China is now among Nigeria's top trading partners. China is Nigeria's greatest supplier of imports and the second largest recipient of exports from Nigeria, and the two nations' bilateral trade has seen tremendous increase. Nigeria mostly imports equipment, electronics, textiles, and consumer goods from China while exporting solid minerals, raw materials, oil and gas, and agricultural products to China. Second, from the standpoint of investments, China has made considerable investments in Nigeria across several areas. The oil and gas sector, telecommunications, manufacturing, construction, and agriculture are all of interest to Chinese businesses. However, the study established that there has been a noticeable lack of technology transfer from China to Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of BRI on socio-economic activities in Lagos and Kaduna, Nigeria. The study also explored the nature of the relationship between Nigeria and China in the BRI operations. The study established that China has contributed to the development of Nigeria's infrastructure, thus, fostering economic growth in the study areas. The study concludes that Nigeria is still bedeviled with

the challenge of electricity generation, transmission and distribution despite possessing an enormous capacity and potential for hydropower. Likewise, biomass resources are currently available in Nigeria and the potential to utilize them for the production of various types of biofuel especially with China's partnership is feasible but not a reality yet. China has also played a crucial role in developing Nigeria's railway transport infrastructure over the years through the construction by professional Chinese companies of numerous railways in Nigeria. China has also contributed to road transport development in Nigeria via the rehabilitation and construction of new roads. Undoubtedly, the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and China will be of immense benefit to both parties, if well pursued. Though China cannot solve all Nigeria's problems, the federal government in her relations with China should genuinely and aggressively pursue as an interest sustainable energy transition and continuous transport infrastructure development in Nigeria because these are true indices of infrastructural development.

Recommendations

- i. After successful delivery of infrastructure projects in Nigeria, there is need for subsequent management and maintenance of the infrastructure assets to avoid dilapidation and a relapse into dysfunctional railway and road systems. To foster this, sponsors must ensure that the interests of their technical partners are aligned with theirs, and the arrangement must deliberately create opportunities for local capacity building by pairing local talent with international expertise right from the start of the project for necessary skills and knowledge transfer.
- ii. The government of Nigeria should address the issue of banditry, kidnapping and armed robbery. There is also the need for localization of operating and maintenance manuals, guidelines, and technical documents by translating them into local languages. This will enhance the understanding and ease of use of local personnel.

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FINANCIAL IMPACT OF CLOUD SECURITY BREACHES ON NIGERIAN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

The banking industry in Nigeria is seriously threatened by cloud security breaches, which can cause deposit money banks (DMBs) in the country to suffer large financial losses as well as harm to their reputation. The financial effects of cloud security breaches on Nigerian deposit money institutions were systematically reviewed in this study. A cloud security breach occurs when unauthorised users obtain sensitive information, apps, or services that are kept in a money deposit bank's cloud environment. Such breaches put the organisation at risk of financial repercussions, legal actions, and reputational harm since leaks can jeopardise the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of this data. It can also lead to a number of serious issues, including data theft, information loss, and service interruptions. Furthermore, unapproved access can occur from viruses, ransomware, and inadequate authentication, which may result in data breach instances that cause financial losses. Secure cloud security measures are essential given the growing complexity of cloud architectures and the sophistication of cyberattacks. DMBs must take a proactive stance in order to protect their cloud assets from these threats, which are essential for resource allocation, risk management procedures, governmental requirements, and preserving stakeholder loyalty and confidence. It is recommended that precise financial effect analyses assist businesses in defending expenditures for modern security equipment, employee training, and cybercrime insurance, all of which can help them adequately prepare for possible breaches.

Keywords: Financial Impact, Cloud Security, Service Disruptions, Cybersecurity Measures, Deposit money banks, Nigeria.

GEL Classification: G21, G32

Introduction

Nigeria Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) are not an exception to the benefits and risks that the adoption of cloud computing in the banking industry has brought to financial institutions around the world. Numerous benefits, including cost-effectiveness, scalability, flexibility, and enhanced data management, are provided by cloud computing. These benefits are essential for Nigeria's DMBs in order to improve customer service and operational effectiveness through digital platforms (Ogunleye & Fagbemi, 2022). However, these advantages come with serious security concerns, particularly with regard to data privacy, cyberattacks, and the possibility of cloud security breaches.

Unauthorised individuals or entities gaining access to data stored in cloud environments, such as sensitive financial information, private customer data, and proprietary corporate data, are referred to as cloud security breaches (Kshetri, 2021). It is impossible to ignore the possible financial and reputational effects of cloud security breaches as Nigeria's banking industry increasingly integrates cloud computing into its core operations. Important security breaches have the potential to disrupt banking operations, cause losses, and erode customer and bank trust. Nigerian banks have become a prime target for hackers due to their growing reliance on cloud technology for the storage and management of massive volumes of sensitive data. Globally, in recent years, cyberattacks on cloud infrastructure have increased in frequency, sophistication, and sophistication (Paul, 2023).

The Nigerian banking system is particularly vulnerable to these kinds of incidents because it is data-driven. As the industry shifts to increasingly digitalised processes, Nigerian banks have reported a rise in cybersecurity incidents, primarily related to cloud services (Okoye and Nwankwo, 2023). Despite these obstacles, the financial impact of cloud security breaches on Nigerian banks has not been sufficiently empirically studied. A cloud security breach can have a direct financial impact that includes supervisory fines, legal fees, consumer compensation, and expenditures associated with reinstalling security measures (Rathod et al., 2022).

Furthermore, a breach can cause long-term costs due to reputational damage since customers may lose faith in the bank's ability to protect their data, which could result in customer attrition (Adewole & Akintola, 2021). A significant cloud security breach could result in widespread financial instability in Nigeria, where faith in financial institutions is already brittle and unstable due to economic uncertainty and regular reports of financial fraud (Eze & Agwu, 2023). Because many Nigerian banks rely on third-party cloud service providers, which could be subject to different

security standards and laws, the risks associated with cloud security are increased (Ajayi & Osuntokun, 2022). Concerns over data sovereignty and the degree of control Nigerian banks have over their data in the case of a breach are brought up by this reliance on outside suppliers for vital infrastructure.

Furthermore, Nigeria's financial system has a regulatory gap in cloud security management. Although cybersecurity protocols for financial institutions have been adopted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), they do not particularly address the unique challenges presented by cloud computing (Oluwafemi & Ayo, 2023).

A controlled background is necessary to assess the possible financial consequences, both immediate and long-term, resulting from cloud security breaches in Nigerian Deposit Money Banks (DMBs). This backdrop should take into consideration both direct financial losses, like penalties and cleanup expenses, as well as indirect consequences, such harm to one's reputation and a decline in customer trust (Smith et al., 2022). In order to ensure the sustainability and security of their digital infrastructures, financial institutions must create such an outline in order to better understand and manage the risks associated with cloud implementation. The necessity for improved risk assessment models for cloud computing in the financial sector has been underlined in a number of studies. Kolade and Abubakar (2022) underscore the importance of incorporating cybersecurity risk supervision into the broader financial risk management outlines of banks, specifically as digitalisation expands.

To lower the danger of operational disruptions brought on by cyberattacks, Maduka and Onwuegbuchulam (2023) argue that cloud security should be prioritised by Nigerian banks as part of their corporate governance strategies. Furthermore, it is reported that a cloud security breach has happened in the Nigerian banking sector, where unauthorised users can access critical data, apps, or services stored in the cloud. Serious obstacles including data loss, theft, and service interruption might result from it; these are significant hazards for Nigerian deposit money banks. The vast volumes of sensitive data and critical operations that modern financial institutions commit to their cloud service providers highlight the severity of cloud security breaches.

These errors make such information available to unauthorised individuals, jeopardising its secrecy, integrity, and availability. This can result in financial losses and negatively impact a company's standing with Nigerian banks. The demand for flexible, affordable, and scalable IT solutions has propelled the recent explosive expansion of cloud services. Businesses and deposit money banks are not the only

entities that use the cloud to store data, run apps, and manage IT infrastructure. Among the many advantages of this cloud migration are reduced operating expenses, enhanced cooperation, and more adaptability for banks and other financial organisations. However, with these benefits comes a warning: they also frequently have much more serious security vulnerabilities. Cloud environments are linked and decentralised, making them a perfect place for hackers to take advantage of various security flaws. Risks associated with cloud adoption are numerous and complex. System defects or incorrectly configured security settings may be used to cause a security breach that results in data leaks. Business operations are hampered, and significant financial losses may arise from outages or loss of service brought on by Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks (Oluwafemi & Ayo, 2023).

Unauthorised access can result from inadequate authentication procedures, which means that attackers just need to take advantage of these flaws to take over crucial accounts. Furthermore, dangerous software can be used to penetrate cloud systems through malware and ransomware attacks, which frequently result in data encryption and ransom demands that worsen the operational and financial effects.

There is an urgent need for strong cloud security measures since cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated and cloud systems are becoming more complex. To successfully reduce these risks, businesses need to be proactive and watchful when it comes to protecting their cloud assets. For a number of reasons, it is crucial to comprehend the financial consequences of cloud security breaches. Businesses can effectively allocate funds towards their security measures when they do accurate financial impact assessments. By assessing possible damages, businesses can defend spending on cybersecurity insurance, staff training, and cutting-edge security solutions, making sure they are ready to address any breaches. Additionally, risk management relies heavily on financial effect evaluations. Businesses can concentrate on the most important aspects and put into practice efficient risk mitigation techniques by using Artificial Intelligence assistance in identifying and prioritising issues. This focused strategy guarantees effective resource utilisation and timely resolution of the most urgent security issues.

Compliance with regulations is still another crucial element. Regulations requiring thorough reporting of security incidents and their financial effects apply to many businesses. Performing comprehensive evaluations guarantees adherence to these rules, assisting companies in avoiding any fines and penalties. Furthermore, open and honest financial effect analyses foster confidence among all parties involved, including partners, investors, and consumers. By demonstrating a clear

understanding of security risks and their financial implications, businesses reassure stakeholders of their commitment to protecting their interests and maintaining a strong security posture.

Understanding Cloud Security Breaches

There are various ways that cloud security breaches might appear, and each one presents different dangers and difficulties for the financial industry. Knowing these kinds makes it easier to see how complex cloud security is and how several approaches are needed to successfully reduce risks for Nigerian banks. Information leaks and financial losses among Nigerian banks are among the most common and destructive forms of cloud security breaches. Data theft, bad luck, or transparency may arise from unauthorised access to private financial information kept on cloud servers. Such a breach can lead to ludicrous financial catastrophes, real outcomes, and severe harm to the Nigerian community's reputation in a nation that deals with money.

Lack of access controls, flaws in cloud apps, or sophisticated social engineering tactics like phishing are frequently the cause of data breaches. According to IBM's 2021 Expense of an Information Break Report, the average cost of an information breach was \$4.24 million, which serves as an example of the substantial financial impact (IBM, 2021). Management Disruptions affect the compatibility of cloud-based financial services, potentially leading to serious financial and operational consequences. Disseminated Denial of Administration (DDoS) attacks, in which attackers overload cloud systems with excessive traffic, can cause these disruptions and disrupt personal time. Various reasons include system failures, setup errors, or intentional cyberattacks on cloud infrastructure

A major DDoS attack on Amazon Web Services (AWS) in 2019 caused a few hours of administration outages, impacting several financial institutions that rely on AWS for their operations, including Nigerian deposit money banks (Zarefsky, 2019). Powerless verification components, stolen certifications, or exploited safety flaws are often the cause of this kind of breach. The 2020 SolarWinds cyberattack highlighted the risks of unauthorised access, as attackers breached sensitive data and fundamental infrastructure within financial institutions (Krebs, 2020).

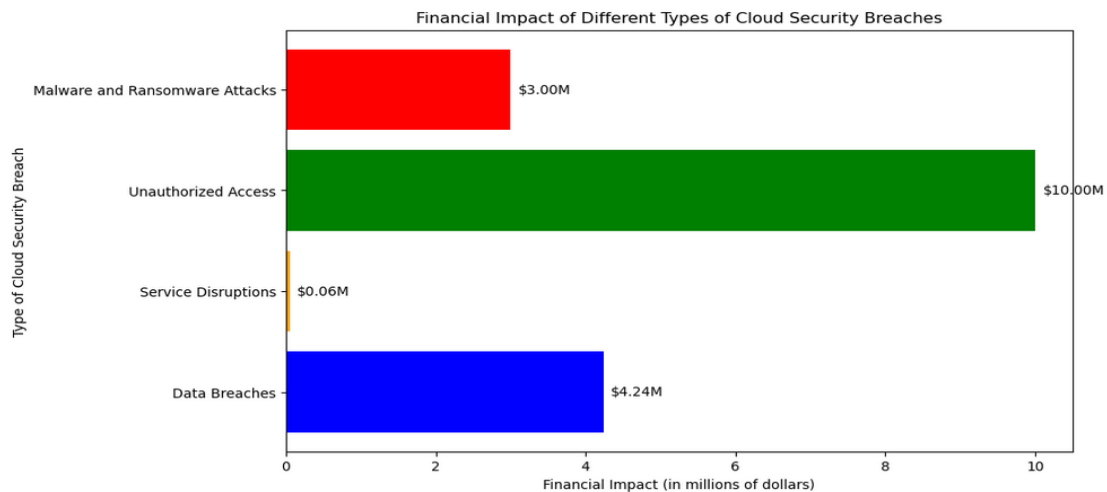
Ransomware and malware attacks use malicious software to attack cloud environments with the goal of stealing data, disrupting operations, or jumbling documents in exchange for recovery. These attacks take advantage of flaws in email systems, client endpoints, or cloud apps. The sensitive nature of its information and operations puts the financial sector at great risk. The prevalence and severity of

these attacks have increased due to the rise of ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS). The Provincial Pipeline ransomware attack in 2021, which resulted in a \$4.4 million payment installment, demonstrated the potential for significant financial and operational disruption (Krebs, 2020).

Table 1: Financial Impact of Different Types of Cloud Security Breaches

Type of Cloud Security Breach	Description	Financial Impact Example
Data Breaches	Unauthorized access to sensitive information leading to theft, loss, or exposure.	Average cost: \$4.24 million (IBM, 2021)
Service Disruptions	Interruption or denial of access to cloud services due to DDoS attacks or system failures.	\$10,000 to \$100,000 per hour of downtime
Unauthorised Access	Attackers gain access to resources without proper authorization due to weak controls or stolen credentials.	Up to \$10 million per incident
Malware and Ransomware Attacks	Malicious software infiltrates cloud environments, encrypting data or disrupting operations.	\$1 million to \$5 million per incident

Figure 1: A Chart Representing Table 1



1.2

Common Vulnerabilities in Cloud Environments for the Financial Sector

Although cloud environments have many benefits for the financial sector, they also have clear vulnerabilities that hackers may exploit.

One of the primary causes of cloud security breaches is misconfigurations. These occur in the financial domain when cloud assets are not properly built, leading to unintentional vulnerabilities or exposures. Decoded hoarding cans, overly lax access controls, and inadequate security in social situations are all included in the models. Critical information gaps and consistency violations might result from misconfigurations. In 2019, a misconfigured AWS S3 bucket revealed over 540 million records, highlighting the risks associated with improperly managed cloud resources (Sullivan, 2021).

Untrustworthy Basic components of cloud administrations are points of interface and APIs, which work with communication and mix because shaky APIs can be used to get unauthorised access or control financial data in DMBs. Common problems include the lack of confirmation, the approval of ill-advised input, and the disclosure of sensitive information. An unstable programming interface was blamed for the 2019 Capital One information breach, which exposed the personal information of around 100 million customers (Zarefsky, 2019). Taking over cloud accounts using stolen credentials or meeting tokens is known as account capturing. In terms of financial status, this might lead to unauthorised transactions and serious financial setbacks. Phishing, qualification stuffing, and the misuse of weak passwords are common methods for account acquisition.

Insider dangers emerge from people inside a banking institution's access to cloud assets. These dangers can be deliberate, like information burglary by a disappointed representative, or inadvertent, such to the unplanned openness of delicate information. Insiders have real access, making their malignant exercises testing to recognise. A 2020 Verizon report uncovered that 30% of information breaches included insider dangers, featuring the requirement for tough access controls and ordinary security preparation (Verizon, 2020). Understanding these types of breaches and vulnerabilities, financial institutions can better prepare and implement strategies to protect their cloud environments from potential threats. It is difficult to identify insiders' malicious activities because they have actual access. 30% of data breaches involved insider threats, according to a 2020 Verizon assessment, which highlighted the need for strict access controls and routine security planning (Verizon, 2020). By being aware of these kinds of breaches and vulnerabilities,

financial institutions may better plan and execute defences against potential attacks on their cloud systems.

Table 2: Estimated Finance Impact of Common Cloud Vulnerabilities

Common Vulnerability	Description	Estimated Financial Impact
Misconfigurations	Incorrectly set up cloud resources leading to exposure or weaknesses.	\$1 million to \$3 million per incident
Insecure Interfaces and APIs	Vulnerabilities in APIs or interfaces leading to unauthorized access or data exposure.	\$100,000 to \$500,000 per incident
Account Hijacking	Takeover of cloud accounts via stolen credentials or session tokens.	\$500,000 to \$2 million per incident
Insider Threats	Misuse of access by individuals within the organization.	\$500,000 to \$3 million per incident

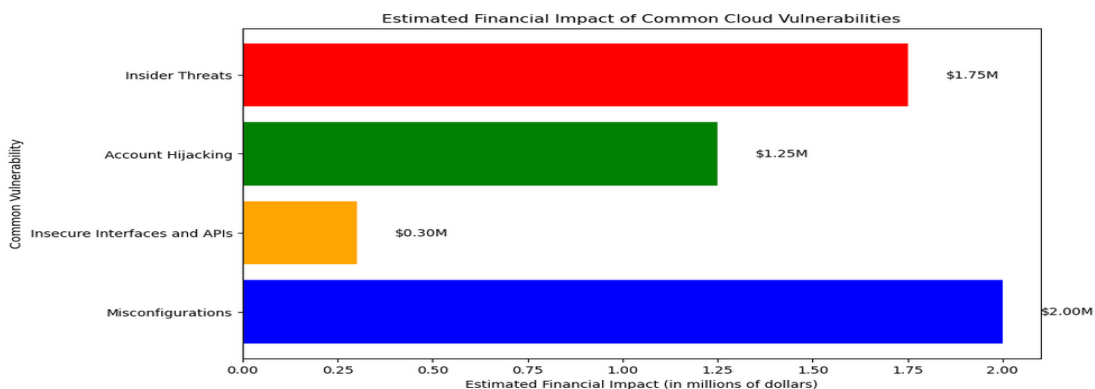


Figure 2: A Chart Representing Table 2

Components of Financial Impact

Examining the direct costs, indirect expenses, and regulatory and compliance costs is one of the crucial elements involved in comprehending the financial ramifications of cloud security breaches. The financial performance of a company and its capacity to bounce back from a security breach can be greatly impacted by each of these factors.

The immediate monetary losses brought on by a cloud security breach are referred to as direct costs. These losses, which include the expense of retrieving compromised systems, money syphoned from accounts, and the value of stolen data, can be significant. Following the 2019 Capital One data breach, the business had to pay an estimated \$100 million in immediate costs for system security and breach remediation (McMillan, 2019).

The expenses related to paying ransomware can also be considered direct financial losses since businesses may feel compelled to reimburse attackers to restore access to their data. Another important component of direct costs is incident response and investigation expenses. These cover the costs of employing cybersecurity professionals, carrying out forensic examinations, and putting policies in place to stop such incidents in the future. An average incident response can cost up to \$1.24 million of the total cost of a breach, according to IBM's 2021 Cost of a Data Breach Report (IBM, 2021). The significant financial burden that companies bear while responding to and looking into security issues is illustrated by this statistic.

Productivity losses and downtime are common examples of indirect costs. A breach in cloud security can cause major downtime and interfere with business operations. Employees might not have access to vital systems and data during this time, which could lead to lost productivity and postponed projects. The financial impact of operational disruptions is shown by the Ponemon Institute's report that the average cost of downtime resulting from a data breach is roughly \$1.42 million per event (Ponemon Institute, 2020). One significant indirect expense that can have a lasting impact on a company is reputational harm. A cloud security breach can damage the company's reputation and undermine customer trust. Consumer attrition and a decline in revenue could result from customers losing faith in the company's capacity to protect their data. According to a KPMG survey, 55% of customers are less likely to do business with a firm that has suffered a data breach, underscoring the serious damage to client confidence (KPMG, 2019). It can take years to repair a tarnished reputation, and it frequently involves a large financial outlay for public relations and marketing initiatives.

Reduced market share, diminished competitive advantage, and missed revenue possibilities are some of the long-term commercial effects of a cloud security breach. Additionally, businesses might have to pay more for cybersecurity precautions and higher insurance premiums. With estimated worldwide losses of over \$10 billion, the 2017 NotPetya hack has long-term financial repercussions for

numerous impacted businesses (Greenberg, 2018). These long-term effects can hamper a company's growth and profitability for years after the early breach.

The financial impact of cloud security breaches is significantly influenced by regulatory and compliance costs. Companies must comply with a number of standards that require them to disclose security issues and protect client data. Heavy fines and penalties may follow noncompliance with these rules. Companies that violate the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) risk fines of up to €20 million or 4% of their yearly worldwide revenue, whichever is larger (European Union, 2018). The significant financial repercussions of non-compliance are demonstrated by the British Airways data breach in 2018, which led to a recommended fine of £183 million under GDPR (BBC, 2019). The costs associated with informing impacted consumers, authorities, and other stakeholders about the breach are referred to as regulatory notifications and compliance costs. DMBs might also have to spend money on things like frequent audits and security protocol updates to improve their adherence to data protection laws. These tasks can be expensive and resource-intensive. The financial effect of complying with regulatory standards is highlighted by the Ponemon Institute's estimate that the average cost of regulatory notifications alone can surpass \$200,000 per breach (Ponemon Institute, 2020).

Cloud security breaches might potentially result in significant legal fees. Employing legal advice may be necessary for DMBs to handle compliance requirements, defend against litigation, and navigate regulatory investigations. These legal costs can mount up rapidly, particularly when there are major violations that draw a lot of regulatory attention and legal action. The corporation spent more than \$1.4 billion on legal and investigative expenses following the 2017 Equifax data breach (Equifax, 2018). demonstrating the enormous financial cost of court cases.

Framework for Assessing Financial Impact

It takes meticulous planning and analysis to evaluate the financial impact of cloud security breaches because it is a complex procedure. Initial assessment and data gathering, direct and indirect cost quantification, regulatory and compliance cost evaluation, risk modelling, and scenario analysis are all included in this approach.

Preliminary Evaluation and Information Gathering

Identifying and Categorising Assets and Data

Identifying and classifying the organisation's assets and data is the first step in determining the financial effect of a cloud security breach. This entails compiling a thorough inventory of all digital assets, such as databases, proprietary software,

intellectual property, and customer data. It is easier to prioritise protection measures and comprehend the possible financial repercussions if these assets are compromised when they are categorised according to their sensitivity and significance to the company. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) states that identifying assets is essential for estimating the possible consequences of security breaches and for organising efficient incident response plans. NIST (2018).

Establishing Baseline Metrics and Historical Data

Gathering historical information on previous security events, operating expenses, and business performance measures is necessary to establish baseline measurements. This information serves as a benchmark for calculating the consequences of upcoming breaches. Response times, recovery costs, average downtime, and the cost of prior breaches are examples of baseline measures. These measurements serve as a basis for impact evaluation and aid in the development of a financial model that faithfully captures the operational environment of the company. In order to comprehend the cost dynamics of data breaches, the Ponemon Institute highlights the significance of past information (Ponemon Institute, 2020).

Quantifying Direct Costs

Calculating Costs of Lost Data and Intellectual Property

Determining the value of lost data and intellectual property is the first step in quantifying direct expenses. The market value of the compromised data, possible income losses from stolen intellectual property, and the expenses related to data recovery operations are all evaluated in this process. The substantial financial burden of lost data is illustrated by IBM's 2020 Cost of a Data Breach Report, which states that the average cost of lost business as a result of data breaches is \$1.52 million (IBM, 2020).

Estimating Costs of System Repair and Recovery

The cost of fixing damaged infrastructure, restoring compromised systems, and putting in place stronger security measures to stop future intrusions is all included in system repair and recovery costs. This can include expenses for conducting in-depth system audits, buying new hardware and software, and employing outside cybersecurity specialists. A Deloitte study found that the complexity of the organisation's IT environment and the extent of the breach can have a significant impact on the cost of system recovery and repair (Deloitte, 2019).

Estimating Indirect Costs

Assessing Business Interruption Impact

Business disruptions brought on by security breaches frequently result in indirect costs. Evaluating the effects of these disruptions entails calculating the financial losses brought on by paused operations, postponed projects, and decreased output. According to the Ponemon Institute, the average cost of a data breach-related business interruption is around \$1.42 million, demonstrating the enormous financial burden on organisations (Ponemon Institute, 2020).

Measuring Customer Churn and Market Share Loss

Two significant indirect expenses brought on by cloud security breaches are customer attrition and market share loss. Client trust can be lost as a result of breaches, which can therefore cause client retention rates to drop. By evaluating customer behaviour after a breach and estimating the long-term impact on revenue, organisations may quantify the possible loss of customers and market share. A KPMG survey found that 55% of customers would be less likely to do business with a company that had suffered a data breach, underscoring the significant effect on client loyalty and confidence (KPMG, 2019).

Internet Fraud and Losses Among Nigerian Deposit Money Banks

Nigeria's banking industry continues to have a serious problem with internet fraud, which erodes consumer confidence and causes large financial losses. The sophistication of cybercriminals is increasing in tandem with the growth of digital transactions and online banking.

Phishing, which is the practice of hackers using deceptive emails and websites to trick clients into divulging personal information, including account details and PINs, is the most common type of internet fraud in Nigeria. Phishing tactics have gotten increasingly sophisticated, frequently mimicking authentic bank communication channels (Eze et al., 2021).

Furthermore, identity theft is a tactic employed by scammers to obtain unauthorised access to bank accounts by stealing personal information or impersonating people. Customers and banks may suffer significant financial losses as a result of this (Oluwatobi et al., 2022).

Additionally, internet banking fraud is a form of fraud that happens when dishonest people or scammers use hacked login credentials to access bank accounts. It

frequently happens as a result of malware corruption or lax security procedures in the cloud of the bank (Adeyemi et al., 2020). The emergence of e-commerce has also been linked to card-not-present fraud, which involves the unauthorised use of credit or debit card information for online purchases and causes significant losses for banks and retailers (Akanbi & Ayo, 2021).

Financial Losses of Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria

Internet scams have a significant financial impact on Nigerian banks. The Nigeria Cyber Security Report (2022) estimates that in 2021 alone, internet fraud cost the country's banking industry over ₦30 billion, or \$75 million. These losses are caused by direct financial theft, higher operating expenses related to preventing scams, and harm to one's reputation. When banks regularly have to pay consumers back for money that has been stolen, they suffer immediate financial losses that can significantly impact their bottom line (Eze et al., 2021).

In addition, operating costs are raised by the requirement for enhanced security protocols, employee training, and incident response techniques. To detect and prevent fraud, banks need to develop their technological capabilities, which might be costly for them (Akanbi & Ayo, 2021). Reputational harm is another clear consequence of losses related to online fraud. Lower customer retention and new account openings may result from consumers losing faith in banks that are thought to be unable to protect their money (Oluwatobi et al., 2022).

Evaluating Regulatory and Compliance Costs

Analysing Potential Fines and Penalties

Potential fines and penalties levied by regulatory agencies for breaking data privacy regulations are included in regulatory and compliance costs. Understanding the particular rules that apply to the company and estimating possible fines based on the seriousness of the violation are necessary for analysing these expenses. Companies in Nigeria may be penalised up to 4% of their yearly worldwide revenue, whichever is larger, under the (NDPR, 2019) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (European Union, 2018). To comprehend the financial impact of cloud security breaches on Nigerian deposit money banks, it is key to assess the costs associated with regulations and compliance. Banks are subject to financial requirements for breach reporting, data protection, and corrective activities under regulatory frameworks like Nigeria's Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) and CBN cybersecurity recommendations (NDPR, 2019; CBN, 2021). Following a breach, these compliance costs, which include fines, legal fees, and auditing costs, have a major effect on profitability (Ogbonnaya & Uzoma, 2022). Furthermore, non-

compliance can worsen financial harm by causing a loss of reputation and heightened regulatory scrutiny. Therefore, proactively implemented compliance methods lower risks and the financial constraints associated with breaches (PwC Nigeria, 2023).

Estimating Legal and Notification Expenses

Quantifying direct and indirect costs is necessary to estimate legal and notification costs related to cloud security breaches in Nigerian deposit money banks. Counsel fees, litigation costs, regulatory fines, and settlements under the Data Protection Act of 2023 and the Cybercrimes Act of 2015 are examples of direct legal expenditures. According to the Ponemon Institute, regulatory notifications alone can cost more than \$200,000 on average for each breach (Ponemon Institute, 2020). Following the Central Bank of Nigeria's IT standards, notification expenses entail informing impacted stakeholders, regulators, and customers. Although sometimes overlooked, these costs are crucial for breach cost projection, particularly for statutory compliance and reputational harm prevention (Adebayo & Okoro, 2023; Olaniyi, 2024; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2023).

Risk Modelling and Scenario Analysis

Creating Hypothetical Breach Scenarios

In order to forecast the financial impact of possible security breaches, risk modelling and scenario analysis entail the creation of fictitious breach scenarios. These situations can vary from small-scale data breaches to significant system-wide intrusions. Organisations can comprehend the variety of potential financial outcomes and make appropriate preparations by simulating different scenarios. To find possible weaknesses and evaluate the efficacy of current security measures, NIST advises employing scenario analysis (NIST, 2018).

Using Probabilistic Models to Predict Financial Impact

The financial impact of cloud security breaches can be predicted using probabilistic models, including Monte Carlo simulations. To assess possible financial losses, these models take into account a number of variables, such as historical data, baseline metrics, and the probability of various breach scenarios. A PwC analysis claims that probabilistic models provide a strong foundation for comprehending the monetary risks connected to cybersecurity events, empowering companies to make well-informed choices about the distribution of resources and risk reduction (PwC, 2020). A strong foundation for forecasting the monetary effects of cloud security breaches on Nigerian deposit money banks is offered by probabilistic models. These models improve decision-making and risk management by quantifying uncertainty

by taking into account threat likelihood, prior breach data, and possible financial losses (Jansen & Grance, 2011). Bayesian networks aid in predicting likely outcomes and modelling the interdependencies among cyber hazards (Liu et al., 2015). Probabilistic forecasting aids in the cost-benefit evaluation of cloud security investments in Nigeria, where exposure is increased by digital banking transformation (Olufowobi et al., 2023). These approaches are therefore essential for proactive cybersecurity budgeting and planning for resilience in the banking industry.

Real Case Studies

Past Cloud Security Breaches and Their Financial Impacts in Nigerian DMBs

The necessity of strong cloud security measures is highlighted by the fact that cloud security breaches in Nigerian DMBs have resulted in losses of many billions of naira per institution, regulatory fines of hundreds of millions of naira, and a lasting decline in trust. Serious cloud-based security breaches have been occurring more frequently in Nigerian deposit money banks, frequently as a result of improperly designed cloud storage, lax access controls, and insider threats. In one prominent case, BestFin Nigeria used an insecure MongoDB cloud deployment to expose the personal information of about 846,000 consumers, using fintech infrastructure (not a bank per se) (Tanimola, 2025).

However, DMB shows that configuration risks are very important for banks moving to cloud services because, from 2017 to 2023, Nigerian banks and other financial institutions reported total losses of over ₦1.1 trillion because of ransomware and cloud intrusions (Vanguard, 2025). High-profile bank hacks cost them more than ₦53.4 billion in 2024 alone; in one instance, HopePSB saw ₦10 billion stolen (Doghudje, 2025). According to Cybervergent estimations, Globus Bank lost ₦1.755 billion in 2022 and recovered about ₦817 million. When combined, these numbers show that each incident has an impact of several billion naira.

Regulatory fines were also prompted by violations relating to the cloud. Fidelity Bank was fined over \$358,580 (₦555 million) by the Nigeria Data Protection Commission for processing personal data improperly (Reuters, 2024). In 2024, Access Bank and Zenith Bank both paid \$750,000 and \$9.6 million, respectively, for cybersecurity-related fines (Finance in Africa, 2024). Both direct losses from theft and downtime, as well as indirect losses like harm to one's reputation, a decline in customer trust, a freeze on investments, and remediation expenses, are included in the financial impact. Tanimola (2025) highlights that dangers are compounded by poorly designed Zero Trust architectures and incorrectly implemented IAM.

According to studies, about 40% of breaches might be caused by inadequate cloud control and inadequate personnel training (Waliullah et al., 2025).

Capital One Data Breach (2019)

A serious information breach occurred at Capital One, allowing a programmer to access the personal information of over 100 million customers, including FICO ratings, government-managed retirement numbers, and ledger details. A web application firewall that was improperly set allowed unauthorised access to the cloud-based information capacity, resulting in the breach. The immediate financial impact was substantial, as Capital One incurred costs of over \$300 million for credit monitoring, client notifications, and legal fees (Capital One, 2019).

Equifax Data Breach (2017)

One of the largest credit reporting companies, Equifax, suffered an information breach in 2017 that exposed 147 million people's personal information. The double-dealing of a web application system vulnerability caused the breach. The financial impact included additional expenses for client care and remediation efforts, as well as a repayment cost of \$575 million to \$700 million to address government and state examinations. The break's total estimated cost exceeded \$1.4 billion (Equifax, 2018).

Marriott International Data Breach (2018)

Marriott International disclosed in 2018 that about 383 million records, including payment card details and passport numbers, had been compromised in its Starwood guest reservation database. Only in 2018 was the breach found, even though it had been going on since 2014. In addition to an estimated \$1 billion in lost revenue and long-term reputational harm, the financial effect included \$28 million in direct incident response and customer support expenses (Marriott International, 2019).

Lessons Learned

The significance of regular security reviews in every contextual analysis highlights the fundamental importance of regular security reviews and vulnerability assessments. If the vulnerability had been identified and addressed quickly, the Equifax breach might have been prevented. Regular security assessments help organisations identify potential vulnerabilities in their systems and take corrective action before they may be exploited (Ponemon Institute, 2020). The long-term damage was lessened by Capital One's fast response to the breach, which included credit-monitoring services and timely consumer alerts. Effective episode response plans ensure that organisations can quickly control and repair disruptions, reducing their financial and operational impact (Equifax, 2018).

The incident at Marriott Global emphasises how important it is to have enough digital protection to offset direct costs like legal fees, customer notifications, and credit check services. Even though Fidelity Bank, Access Bank, and Zenit Bank security reviews in prompt response to extensive digital protection gave financial assurance against the expenses related to information breaches, digital protection can also help with avoiding unforeseen costs like business interference and reputational harm (Deloitte, 2019).

Strategies for Mitigating Financial Risks among Deposit Money Banks

DMBs should invest in cutting-edge security innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI) and artificial reasoning (simulated intelligence) to continuously detect and respond to threats. These developments can assist DMBs in analysing vast amounts of data to identify discrepancies and other security threats, providing organisations with the tools they need to prevent breaches before they occur (Gartner, 2020).

Reducing financial risks associated with cloud security breaches requires improving representative training and mindfulness towards DMBs' worker training and mindfulness programs. Organisations (DMBs) should oversee mandatory training programs to educate employees about phishing attacks, security best practices, and the need to protect sensitive information. In essence, employee awareness can reduce the possibility of human error, which frequently contributes to security breaches (IBM, 2020).

DMBs can reduce the risk of cloud security breaches by implementing a zero-trust design and executing zero-trust engineering. Verifying the personalities of all customers and devices before granting access to the company is part of the zero-trust criteria. Associations can ensure that primary authorised clients handle sensitive data by adopting a zero-trust strategy, which lowers the risk of unauthorised access (Forrester, 2019). Nonetheless, DMBs are concentrating on teaching clients about safe online conduct, such as spotting phishing attempts and the importance of using strong passwords, which are crucial for Deposit Money Bank staff (Eze et al., 2021).

Future fraud can be avoided by enhancing the investigation and prosecution of cybercriminals through adequate and productive partnerships with law enforcement authorities (Akanbi & Ayo, 2021). Banks can maintain strong security backdrops and lower vulnerabilities by cooperating with regulatory agencies, including the

Central Bank of Nigeria, and according to the different recommendations they have set down (Oluwatobi et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The large amounts of sensitive data managed in cloud environments, cloud security breaches pose a substantial risk to organisations, particularly in DMBs. Banks and organisations now face a variety of security risks as a result of the move to cloud administrations, which was prompted by the need for flexible, astute, and adaptive IT arrangements. Information confidentiality, respectability, and accessibility are compromised by breaches, which result in financial, legal, and reputational damages. It is critical for the asset portion, executives, and administrative staff to comprehend the financial impact of a cloud security breach.

Direct costs, which sometimes total a significant sum of dollars or Naira, include immediate financial losses due to information theft, framework recovery, and episode response. Unusual costs, such as missed productivity, reputational damage, and functional personal time, also significantly affect an organization's financial health. The financial burden is further increased by administrative and consistency costs, such as penalties and valid charges. Beginning evaluation and information gathering, measuring direct and indirect costs, evaluating administrative costs, and directing gamble display and scenario analysis are all components of a comprehensive framework for surveying financial consequences.

Strong safety measures are important, and contextual investigations, such as the ones at Capital One, Equifax, Marriott Worldwide, Fidelity Bank, Access Bank, and Zenit Bank, illustrate the wide-ranging financial consequences. Incorporating the need for regular security inspections, effective episode response plans, and comprehensive digital protection is essential. Investing in state-of-the-art security innovations, improving representative training, and using zero trust engineering are effective ways to reduce financial risks. DMBs can more easily secure their cloud environments by adopting these steps, ensuring business coherence and defending sensitive data from potential intrusions.

Cloud security breaches can have a significant financial impact on Nigeria's Deposit Money Banks, resulting in both direct and indirect losses. Banks must prioritise cybersecurity in order to protect their financial interests and maintain client trust as the banking industry rapidly relies on cloud technologies. In conclusion, the goal of this study is to close a critical knowledge gap about how cybersecurity threats related to cloud computing affect the financial stability of Nigerian banks by

developing a framework for evaluating the financial impact of cloud security breaches on Nigeria Deposit Money Banks. by creating a framework that evaluates the monetary costs associated with breaches in cloud security as study offers insights that regulators and bank management can use to streamline cloud security procedures and reduce possible financial risks for Nigerian banks.

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