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CONFLICT-SENSITIVE REPORTING AND THE 2025 STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study analyzed conflict-sensitive reporting of post state of emergency declaration as conflict-management mechanism in Rivers State, Nigeria. It examined how media coverage shaped narratives during the declared state of emergency, drawing from the theoretical frameworks of Situational Crisis Communication Theory, (SCCT), and Framing Theory and employed a qualitative method. Data were sourced from both traditional and digital media outlets. Through content analysis of news reports and articles by national and local media platforms, the Study identified dominant frames and patterns, and their effects on conflict escalation or de-escalation. Findings revealed that while some media outlets emphasized constitutional legality and democratic accountability, others framed the emergency as security imperative, highlighting different reporting slants, with some outlets fueling political tensions while others followed conflict-sensitive reporting parameters. Findings further showed significant reportage that amplified government narratives while under-reporting dissenting alternative voices. Recommendations were made for more proactive, and inclusive reporting during future emergency situations, anchored on strengthening of journalistic capacity and enhanced training in conflict-sensitive reporting to mitigate consequential adverse outcomes and to support democratic stability and effective conflict management.

Keywords: Conflict-sensitive Reporting. State of Emergency Declaration. Rivers State, Nigeria

Introduction

Historically and through the passage of time, the interface of media and society has been profound, pervasive and symbiotic in terms of effect and consequence. Banjac (2019), explains that situations within society impact media, just as media outcomes, influence the society. According to Breckett (2016), across all spheres, the media have become a barometer to gauge, and understand various societal engagements; politics, culture, the economy, governance, leadership and much more. Also, Adedeji & Kafayat (2020), observe that the power and influence of the media, can be both detrimental and beneficial. In crisis situations, especially within the public space, media outcomes or narratives, depending on how framed and perceived, can either lead to resolution or escalation. To this extent, media reportage before, during and post crisis situations, remain crucial and a constant trigger of societal concern. This scenario, played out in the 2025 state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Against this background, this Study, focused on conflict-sensitive reporting of emergency declaration in Rivers State and specifically, how conflict-sensitive reporting, shaped narratives around the post-state of emergency declaration. This is based on the expected roles of the media in conflict zones, given the potential to inflame or mitigate tensions. The thrust of the paper is in the context of the problem of palpable tensions in Rivers State, occasioned by escalating crisis, political feuds, disrupted institutions, and infrastructure vandalism, experienced prior to the declaration of the state of emergency. This thrust, is justified by the urgency of applying conflict-sensitive principles in volatile political environments. In the case of Rivers State, further justification of the thrust of the paper, is derived from its pristine position as strategic oil producing area of Nigeria with significant threat factor for national economic well-being.

This is more so as media coverage, in conflict atmospheres, often risked exacerbating conflict by presenting polarized or sensationalized narratives, and thus raises the need to scrutinize whether Nigerian media, applied conflict-sensitive frameworks in the post-state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is underpinned by the thrust of the paper, assessing the presence of conflict-sensitive elements (e.g., balance, context, avoiding inflammatory language), among other elements of CSR. Despite its critical importance during crises, conflict-sensitive reporting remains under-explored in Nigeria's media landscape.

The 2025 emergency exposed media deficiencies—including sensationalism, lack of context, and insufficient civic engagement—that potentially deepened polarization and eroded democratic trust. This raises urgent questions: To what extent did media

coverage reflect conflict-sensitive norms? How did such coverage influence public perceptions and institutional responses during the emergency?

It is equally important to state that the Study, is with the understanding that conflict-sensitive reporting, is an increasingly crucial genre of contemporary journalism with significant role in the existential goal of peace and stability in society by highlighting the centrality of responsible, wholistic, contextual and ethical reporting in an atmosphere of turmoil or potentially, grievous situations as that surrounding the state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Essentially, the paper targets, as its objectives, to:

i. Analyze elements of conflict-sensitive reporting of the post state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria.
ii. Determine the effects of conflict-sensitive reporting on the political and security in Rivers State, Nigeria.
iii. Propose how Conflict-Sensitive reporting can be mitigated for peace and cohesion in the study area.

Conceptual Framework

Conflict-Sensitive Reporting

Conflict-sensitive reporting (CSR) can be conceptualized as journalism that avoids exacerbating tensions and instead encourages understanding, reconciliation, and conflict transformation. It calls for balanced narration, context-rich content, and careful language (Tella, 2022; Jev et. al., 2022). CSR contrasts with war journalism, which prioritizes sensational conflict and division. In the context of Rivers State, CSR would comprise reporting that situates the emergency in legal, historical, and democratic frameworks, while amplifying voices pushing for constitutional order. Conventionally, in any crisis situation, media coverages (reportage) play the dual roles of informing the public and also generating the avenue for the required feedback mechanism, especially for policymakers and other critical stakeholders (Ire & Eke, 2025).

However, Okoye & Nwafor (2019), observe that where not conducted with the pre-determined sense of responsibility, media reporting can exacerbate tensions, undermine public trust, and even fuel conflict. This underscores the need for conflict-sensitive reporting, which Mbanefo (2020), defines as a journalistic approach that acknowledges the dynamics of conflict and strives to avoid narratives that inflame divisions. In the context of the scenario surrounding the 2025 State of emergency declaration in Rivers

State, Nigeria, media coverage, became a crucial arena of contestation and place for public scrutiny as to whether the coverage adhered to conflict-sensitive reporting standards in a way that amplified diverse perspectives and avoided escalation (Jev, Torwel, & Ciboh (2022).

According to Bassey (2021), journalistic reporting in conflict situations, is a delicate undertaking, requiring a conscious balancing between the technicalities of functional practice, ethics, and sensitivity to the sensibilities of parties involved. From the occurrence of conflict through the actions, initiatives and processes towards a resolution, including, the use of emergency instruments like SoE as a last-resort conflict management mechanism, the media, are always critical part of the engagement. This is primarily on account of the fact that conflict, is an attraction to journalism as a major News tangent but also because, conflict actors, deploy the media to press on or amplify their respective interests (Adetunji, 2022).

Arising from the controversial circumstances that surrounded the 2025 state of emergency declaration in Rivers State that generated heightened political tensions, security challenges, and institutional breakdowns, it created a unique test case for the media's role in shaping narratives in reporting on the situation. This is more so that conflict-sensitive reporting, emphasizes unbiased, accurate, and wholistic contextual reporting focused on promoting avenues for conciliation and peace rather than sensationalism and incitement of violence. In emergency contexts, journalism's role shifts from routine reporting to emergency communication. It must clarify situations, dispel rumors, and guide public action, balancing speed with accuracy. it is to be noted that in a democratic setting, where the role of media is critical, conflict-sensitive reporting, may help mitigate tension, while partisan or sensational framing, may inflame conflict (IFJ Port-Harcourt Resolution, 2000).

State of Emergency Declaration

A state of emergency is the political cum legal declaration in a situation of national danger or disaster in which a government suspends normal constitutional procedures and normal working of political and socio-economic life in order to regain control. Iloh & Omisores (2021), explain that it can be declared or imposed or activated within national territory, sub-national component or within a smaller confine or sector. It can also be defined as a condition, declared and enforced by a political authority or single prerogative source of authority.

A state of emergency, is often declared in times of strife or serious civil unrest as well as insurgent and active terrorist activity that create real or potential threat to public order or challenges the authority of the State in which case, martial law applies. Such a

state of emergency can come to force in situations of natural occurrences or disaster like earthquake, thunderstorm, flooding, wildfire or typhoon. According to Desmet (2020), under a state of emergency, government, is empowered to put through policies and actions that under normal circumstances, it would not be permitted to take, in order to reinstate safety and protection for the citizens, which otherwise, may be impeded by disruptive occurrence (Adebodun, 2025). Brooks (2023), observes that in normal times, governments are held to certain democratic standards to ensure the rule of law, is respected. However, when faced with emergency, these democratic checks and balances, can hamper the government when they need to act quickly and as such, deploy emergency declaration, albeit, as life-saving political and legal mechanism. In Nigeria, the Constitution provides for this State action in section 305.

2025 Rivers State of Emergency Declaration

March 18, 2025, Nigeria's President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu invoked and proclaimed a State of Emergency (SoE) on River State, one of the 36 federating States in Nigeria and a critical economic hub, being an oil-producing area where any prolonged disruptive crisis, has direct impact on the national economy. A day later, the country's two-chambers national legislature, the Senate and House of Representatives, ratified the proclamation. Citing "intense political instability" and pipeline attacks, the action, suspended from office, the sitting Governor and Deputy Governor, along with all members of the legislative arm of Rivers State, in the coastal riverine region of Nigeria and in their places, appointed and imposed, a Sole Administrator to hold the reins for an initial six months period (AP News, 2025).

Thus, with the stroke of Presidential executive fiat, the proclamation inadvertently, suspended, the democratically elected leadership of two of the three arms of the conventional structure of representative democratic government. The move, triggered widespread debate about democratic principles, constitutional legitimacy, and federal executive overreach (Financial Times, 2025).

The renewed intense discourse generated over the regime of emergency rule in Rivers State within the broad Nigerian public space, was about the use of emergency instrument in conflict management in a democratic setting like Nigeria. For instance, data from a Public Sentiment Survey by Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID), showed that 68.2% of Rivers State residents, opposed the emergency and 65.1% considered the suspension illegal (Premium Times, 2025). Emergency declarations in democratic societies paradoxically, serve both as legal instrument for crisis management but also, a potential flashpoint for political and social unrest. According to Rilwan (2019), state of emergency, is not new to Nigeria, nor is it

unique to any one administration. From the First Republic to the present, various leaders, have invoked emergency powers as instruments to manage political crises, violent conflicts, security threats, and as a last resort to prevent anarchy. In fact, Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (Section 305), permits emergency declarations under exigent circumstances but its application, is often contested. Peterside (2025), notes that among the most contentious debates, is the reach of Section 305(1), which grants the president the power to declare state of emergency, questioning whether the mandate extends to the unilateral removal of democratically elected state officials and highlighting the pressing need for judicial clarity to prevent arbitrary use of emergency powers, which, if unchecked, could be used as a political weapon against opposition-controlled States. From antecedents, while it is regarded a constitutional provision designed to protect the country from lawlessness, state of emergency in Nigeria, has tended to historically generate apprehensive suspicion, debate, and intense media scrutiny, particularly when perceived as politically motivated.

Arguably, views against a state of emergency, are mostly political in that, critics advance that it could be used as a tool to undermine opposition figures or impose federal control on a state government. While these concerns are valid, they must be weighed against the dangers of allowing crises to fester since the primary aim of government, is to protect lives and ensure stability, a goal that may call for tough decisions when necessary. Indeed, scholars argue that emergency powers in Nigeria, tend to be politically motivated rather than purely security-focused (Mbah, 2014).

Agbo (2019); Ajie & Emenike (2022), further note that emergency rule, has a fraught history in post-independent Nigeria. Mbah, (2014) also points out that from the 1962 crises and the various interregna of successive military regimes to the 1976–79 and 1993 coups, and state emergencies imposed under Olusegun Obasanjo administration, the first constitutional rule of the subsisting democratic order of Nigeria's fourth Republic Previous resort to declaration of state of emergency to restore order under Nigeria's 4th Republic include Plateau State in North-Central Nigeria (2004) and Ekiti State in South-West Nigeria (2006) and again in plateau State, same 2006. A similar action, was taken in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States, all in North-East Nigeria by President Goodluck Jonathan due to the Boko Haram insurgency, initially in 2013 and later in 2014 (Pen global, 2025).

The March 2025 declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State, marked the fourth time by a sitting President since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. Due to what appeared like a conceptual contradiction of a military-style marshal regime in the form of an executive fiat-induced emergency proclamation as conflict mitigation mechanism within a civil and elective representative polity, the situation can be regarded to be at

variance with the cardinal attributes of democratic governance, raising fundamental questions of whether emergency rule, is an effective conflict management mechanism in a democratic setting or whether emergency instrument, has implications in relation to conflict management in a democratic setting (Adedeji & Kafayat, 2020).

Methodology

The study, adopted a qualitative research design, using content analysis across selected media and statements. The qualitative approach enabled in-depth exploration of the practices regarding conflict-sensitive reporting. This method of qualitative content analysis, focused on: Language and tone used in headlines and lead paragraphs, sources quoted (government, opposition, civil society, international actors), and presence or absence of peace-promoting frames versus conflict-escalating frames.

Content Analysis: Articles from national newspapers (First News, Premium Times, ThisDay, The Vanguard, the Guardian) and Port Harcourt–based newspaper, The Tide, were sampled between March–June 2025.

The thematic coding framework used, categorized the narratives presented in media reports, focusing on themes, language, balance of viewpoints, context depth. and framing techniques that reflect conflict-sensitive reporting practices, i.e. accuracy, context, balance, non-inflammatory language, inclusion of civil society voices presence or absence of peace-promoting frames versus conflict-escalating frames. Coding frames included sources cited, (supportive, neutral, critical), and framing topics (security risks, constitutional legitimacy, economic impact). Coding categories were developed based on indicators that included emphasis on causes versus symptoms of conflict, use of polarizing versus conciliatory language and inclusion of multiple perspectives. Below is the coding schema of the content analysis and thematic analysis discussed in the paper
.

Table 1: Media Content Analysis – Coding Framework for Framing Themes

Frame Category	**Definition**	**Indicators / Keywords Code**
Security & Stability	Emphasizes the emergency as necessary for public safety and national stability	"insecurity", "violence", "pipeline vandalism", "restore order", "security threat"
Legal-Constitutional	Focuses on legal basis or constitutional challenges to the emergency	"Section 305", "rule of law", "unconstitutional", "due process", "federalism", "court"

Political Motivation	Suggests emergency is politically motivated or partisan	"Power grab", "2027 elections", "opposition crackdown", "Tinubu loyalists", "partisan agenda"
Democratic Implications	Discusses emergency's implications for democracy and civic rights	"democracy", "civil liberties", "freedom of speech", "assembly suspended", "governance failure"
Economic Disruption	Emphasizes the economic costs or risks of the emergency	"Oil production", "investment decline", "pipeline closure", "economic sabotage"

Source: Author's Field work, 2025

Sources of Data

Primary data was sourced from news articles, editorials, and broadcast segments related to and published during the state of emergency in Rivers State (e.g., Premium Times, The Vanguard, Guardian, ThisDay, Daily Post).

Data was also sourced from Press releases and Statements from civil society bodies (CHRICED, NBA, CSO coalitions) in addition to Government and legal texts (President Tinubu's broadcast and the Nigerian Constitution, Section 305). A total of 30 articles (5 from each outlet), were purposively sampled over the six-month period.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory (Entman, 1993): This theory posits that how an issue, is framed in the media, influences how it is understood by the audience. Media frames shape public perception and policy reactions by highlighting specific aspects of events. Framing Theory relates to how media select and present aspects of a perceived reality to promote certain problem definitions, moral evaluations, and treatment recommendations. This theory, was used to understand whether media framed the state of emergency in Rivers State as a legitimate governance action or an executive overreach. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT); SCCT examines how authorities, communicate in crisis situations to manage reputational threat. Originally developed in organizational communication, it is applied in this paper to analyze government messaging versus journalistic counter-frames. Coombs (2007) posits that institutional responses to crisis

depend on perceived responsibility and stakeholder expectations. Applied to media, coverage can mediate or amplify trust in institutions during emergencies. Together, these frameworks, provide a lens to assess whether Nigerian media coverage of the state of emergency declared in Rivers State, Nigeria, adhered to conflict-sensitive reporting parameters in manner as to engender resolution or exacerbated the concomitant tensions that trailed the declaration.

Findings

The analysis revealed several patterns relative to the objectives 1, and 2 of the paper, which then informed the mitigations with regards to objective No. 3 of the article. The findings reveal critical CSR gaps.

In terms of elements of conflict-sensitive reporting in the post state of emergency declaration in River State, findings showed framing bias such that Government-aligned outlets, framed the emergency as a necessary intervention to restore order, while opposition-leaning outlets, framed it as an abuse of executive power. Also, the result showed that Government-aligned frames (security, pipeline vandalism) dominated national media, especially foregrounding the President's justification. While some media framed the state of emergency declaration as necessary intervention; others as executive overreach undermining democracy. Local Rivers State domiciled media, were dominated by frames relatively more critical, highlighting constitutional concerns and civil society objections (e.g., First News, Premium Times). Independent outlets, led in conflict-sensitive framing. Similarly, the result showed an oscillation between conflict-sensitive and conflict-intensifying reports in the media coverage of the declared state of emergency in Rivers State where for instance, the Guardian and Premium Times included multiple perspectives and focused on structural issues contributing to the crisis.

On the other hand, *Vanguard* and *ThisDay* occasionally used alarmist language and partisan quotes without contextual balance. Also, few reports explained the historical roots of the crisis in Rivers State, such as electoral violence and oil-related conflict. This suggests a lack of contextual reporting, which is a key element of Conflict-Sensitive reporting and thus, gauged, that is, determined the extent to which media reports adhered to conflict-sensitive journalism principles. In the same breadth, the under-representation of civil voices, was evident. Although some civil society voices (CHRICED, NBA, Situation Room), offered counter-frames on constitutionality and democratic norms, the civil society actors and conflict resolution experts, were rarely cited, limiting the diversity of views and peace-oriented solutions presented. Most national stories cited government spokespeople and Tinubu's broadcast; fewer included

voices from civil society, opposition, or directly affected residents while local outlets included statements from the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, Senator Ojudu, and survey findings.

Conflict-Sensitive Reporting and 2025 State of Emergency Declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria

The findings indicate that while some media platforms made efforts to report the state of emergency declaration in Rivers State responsibly, the overall reportage, showed limited use of conflict-sensitive techniques and the tendency towards politicization, sensationalism and polarized narratives. The framing of the Rivers State emergency largely mirrored political allegiances, and partisan divisions rather than adopting peace-enhancing coverage with implications for public trust in media and state institutions. The analysis revealed diverse reporting patterns, and the coverage tended to swing between responsible journalism and the dissemination of fear-inducing content. While some media coverage adhered to Conflict-Sensitive practices that prioritized balanced reporting and the human impact of the state of emergency in Rivers State, several instances of sensationalism were identified, of media narratives, amplifying tensions rather than mitigating them.

Imbalance in Framing: While some local outlets provided critical angles, national media largely reproduced government framing thus, revealing a tendency to project government justification (national security, pipeline sabotage) at expense of counter-narratives. This mirrors patterns seen in other crisis coverage where official frames, overshadow grassroots voices.

Sensitivity gaps: Conflict-sensitive journalism demands reporting that acknowledges complexity, historical grievance (e.g. Niger-Delta environmental and political struggle), and avoids framing peaceful political disputes as existential security threats. Many outlets failed by not contextualizing the longstanding oil-region tensions or citing local organizations such as Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, MOSOP.

By failing to apply CSR practices, media contributed to a crisis of legitimacy: citizens felt disenfranchised, misinformed, and alarmed despite limited direct security threats. The media's reactive posture—aligned with SCCT critiques—undermined its credibility and democratic stewardship.

Additionally, the sidelining of civil society voices and legal discourse truncated democratic dialogue. Emergency coverage became a monologue of power—rather than a platform for civic negotiation. These outcomes reaffirm the importance of peace

journalism and the media's ethical responsibility in conflict-prone situation within a democratic setting which ideally, requires a leaning towards mutual engagement and inclusivity in public matters.

This is more so that the media's role goes beyond merely to report events but to rationally, shape narratives that are adequately conducive to peace and democratic stability within the public domain. Where media adopted conciliatory tones and included broader perspectives, public discourse appeared more measured and constructive. In contrast, incendiary reporting exacerbated increased online hostility and misinformation. When considered from the lens of situational crisis communication theory, SCCT, government communication was reactive, relying heavily on fear/security frames—journalists that echoed executive messages, may have reinforced executive crisis framing (as noted by Opeyemi et al., 2025). Conversely, gauged by the Framing implications, media outlets that engaged in contestatory frames, helped stimulate civic debate and resistance while those that reinforced executive narratives, risked suppressing democratic scrutiny. Media coverage prioritized immediate security frames over democratic context and inclusion. This reinforced public skepticism toward government motives and deepened distrust in both media and institutions.

Effects of Conflict-Sensitive Reporting in the Aftermath of State of Emergency Declaration in Rivers State

Following the 2025 state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, the effects of conflict-sensitive reporting were evident in the media coverage of the crisis. The broad expectation was for responsible reportage to play the crucial role in providing accurate information to the public, promote dialogue and understanding between the conflicting parties, and ultimately, generating conditions that could contribute the resolution of the crisis. The Rivers State emergency revealed a shortfall as many narratives prioritized drama over democratic substance. This bears a degree of democratic implications, especially, considered against the background of the citizens perception of the state of emergency in Rivers State (by Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development, CJID), referenced by this article, which reported that 68% of residents opposed the emergency. Media silence on the public view, undermines democratic accountability.

Dissenting opinions, were underplayed even as civil society demanded reversal and apology while State-owned outlets, like The Tide, sometimes avoided open criticism, reflecting structural tensions in local journalism. The potential consequences of these, are the undermining democratic resilience and legitimizing suspension of institutions. As also noted by Danaan (2017), reporters have a responsibility to report on conflicts in a fair, and balanced manner, and be mindful of the impact of media coverage on the

outcome of conflicts. Conflict-sensitive reporting (CSR) demands journalists portray conflict in a way that avoids inflaming tensions and helps sustain peace. Similarly, conflict-sensitive reporting (CSR) demands that journalism avoid inflaming tensions and instead contributes to de-escalation and public understanding. In the case of 2025 Rivers State's emergency declaration, CSR was notably lacking as Media coverage frequently adopted sensationalist angles, emphasizing executive overreach and democratic erosion rather than probing nuances or long-term reconciliation. Media coverage however, gravitated toward sensational framing or partisan slants rather than contextual analysis. These submissions are reinforced by finding in the study by Eguruze, Akarika & Mboho (2025), which highlighted further insights into the effects to include:

1. **Heightened Polarisation**

Media echoed conflicting political messages. While the presidency framed the move as safeguarding stability, opponents described it as undemocratic. As Eguruze et al. found: 70% of media outlets aligned with NGOs to promote peace, but that leaves a huge 30%—and a general media environment—dominated by sensational and partisan reporting.

2. Democratic Trust Undermined

In public opinion, trust eroded. Although a recent survey isn't cited here, critics persistently framed the content as unconstitutional and undemocratic, deepening skepticism towards both media and institutions.

3. Public Confusion and Disengagement

Without coherent, context-rich reporting, citizens lacked clarity on legal avenues and the scope of institutional rights—leaving democracy less resilient. Indeed, conflict-sensitive reporting in the post 2025 state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria, highlighted the crucial role of responsible journalism in promoting peace, reconciliation, dialogue and democracy in an atmosphere of professionalism.

Mitigating Conflict-Sensitive reporting in Post State of Emergency Declaration in Rivers State

In the aftermath of the state of emergency declaration in Rivers State, Nigeria, there is a challenge of mitigating conflict sensitive reporting as a priority among Journalists and Media Organizations. The study adopts the insight given by Okoye & Nwafor (2019),

into how journalists can mitigate conflict-sensitive reporting in post-conflict situations, ranging from the adoption of ethical guidelines and standards in Journalism, promoting responsible and unbiased reporting that prioritizes peace and reconciliation. The importance of media literacy and training for reporters to effectively navigate conflicts and promote peace since peace and understanding in society, are paramount.

Conclusion

Media responses to the declaration of state of emergency in Rivers State, were mixed, with limited uptake of conflict-sensitive reporting principles. Overall, Media coverage of the Rivers State emergency fell short of conflict-sensitive standards. The lack of consistent adherence to peace journalism principles suggests a gap in training and editorial guidelines regarding conflict-sensitive reporting. This reinforces risks of democratic erosion in crisis contexts, particularly when citizens' voices and dissenting views, are marginalized. However, while civil society interventions provided important counterbalancing narratives, as a conclusion, it is key to highlight the media potential to either exacerbate conflicts or foster resolution through thoughtful, responsible journalism and thus, the necessity of conflict-sensitive reporting during emergency as the case in Rivers State, Nigeria. As such, institutions in Nigeria must reinforce the principles of ethical journalism, particularly in volatile contexts. It is thus instructive to draw a conclusion that there are embedded opportunities for the media to serve as critical watchdog, pivot toward mediation, hold government accountable while maintaining public peace.

Recommendations

Media Training: Implement regular training workshops for Journalists, focused on Conflict-Sensitive reporting techniques and ethical frameworks, ensuring they are equipped to handle sensitive topics during emergencies.

Equally, Journalism schools, NGOs, and Press organisations, should provide dedicated training in Conflict-Sensitive and Peace Journalism for reporters covering political emergencies. Such institutional collaboration/partnerships between media, CSOs, and academia can help to monitor and support ethical crisis reporting. Source Mandate: Editors, should enforce balanced sourcing that integrate official, civil-society, opposition, and affected residents as stakeholders in given circumstances. This entails appropriate editorial guidelines including frameworks for reporting during states of emergency, ensuring constitutional context, multiple voices, and non-inflammatory language.

Contextual Depth and Public Engagement: Reports need historical context on regional political conflict, resource extraction issues, and environmental grievances. It also entails actions by media outlets to engage community leaders and conflict resolution experts to provide diverse and alternative perspectives to help frame narratives that promote understanding and peace. In this context, it is pertinent to educate citizens to critically assess media narratives during crises. Along this line, Media should regularly survey and report local public opinion, especially during democratic crises as way public sentiment inclusion.

Regulatory Support/ Policy Advocacy: Media regulatory bodies should promote standards for emergency reporting that guard against overreach and bias. Establishing and developing comprehensive national guidelines for news outlets on how to report during states of emergency, is recommended with emphasis on balanced narratives and the importance of context. It is also recommended that a regulatory mechanism, be established to monitor media coverage during emergencies, and provide feedback to media outlets.

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MARITIME PIRACY IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA: AN EXAMINATION OF ITS IMPACT ON SECURITY, ECONOMY, AND ENVIRONMENT, 2005-2015

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Abstract

Maritime piracy in Bayelsa State waters between 2005-2015 was very dynamic and sophisticated. The types of automatic weapons and high-tech gadgets, as well as the various types of vessels attacked by pirates, attest to the above assertion. Maritime piracy drastically destroyed the tranquility, economy, environment, and development of Bayelsa State. The study critically examines the impact of maritime piracy on security, economy, and the environment of Bayelsa State from 2005 to 2015. The study adopted the theory of failed states to explicate the motivations for maritime piracy. Secondary source of data was exhaustively used to underpin the discourse. The study reveals that maritime piracy made seafood prices skyrocket and increased shipping costs because shippers began to factor in higher insurance premiums. The fishery industry was grossly affected as the activities of pirates created unrest and insecurity in maritime communities in Bayelsa State. It also increased economic losses and exacerbated environmental degradation. Thus, the study noted that multiple factors were responsible for the formation of maritime piracy in Bayelsa State: lack of government political will, corruption, environmental degradation, social acceptance, etc. The study concludes that the upsurge of piracy in Bayelsa State was borne out of the failed nature of the Nigerian state. As a way to nip the bud, the study suggests that the federal and state governments should adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing piracy, involving stakeholders, enhancing security measures, creating jobs for the youth, and promoting sustainable livelihoods in Bayelsa State.

Keywords*:* Maritime Piracy, Bayelsa State, Security, Economy, Environment

Introduction

The increasing global pirate attacks are overwhelming, posing significant threats to maritime security, international maritime trade, and human security. The activities of pirates have evolved and become more widespread and complex. Bayelsa State, which is located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, has continually had its share of maritime piracy from the late 1990s to date, which has affected the security, economy, and environment of the state. Thus, the issue of maritime piracy has developed into a multifaceted transnational security challenge that threatens lives, livelihoods, and global welfare (UNCTAD, 2014).

Piracy gives rise to considerable direct and second-order costs that also have broad repercussions at the local, regional, and global levels. In the early 2000s, while piratical activities relatively decreased in regions that were noted to be piracy hotspots in the world, the piratical attacks drastically increased in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which is located in the Gulf of Guinea maritime domain. Nigeria became the central point of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in the 2000s. Just as Somalian Pirates were creating havoc and damage not only in Somalian territorial waters but also their attacks covered a vast area, which includes the Gulf of Aden, the Southern Red Sea, off Yemen, off Oman, the Arabian Sea, off Kenya, and many areas (IMB, 2015). Nigerian Pirates not only perpetrated their attacks in Nigerian rivers but ventured into other Gulf of Guinea states territorial waters (Bridger, 2013).

Out of the 196 piratical attacks that occurred in the Gulf of Guinea between the period of 2013 to 2017, 132 took place in Nigerian waters. While in some other states in the Gulf of Guinea, there were just a single occurrence, and those occurrences were attributed to having been perpetrated by Pirates from Nigeria (IMB 2013 - 2017 Reports). In 2016, according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), 33 piratical attacks occurred in Nigeria's territorial waters. The majority of these attacks happened in Bayelsa, Rivers, and Cross River marine spaces (IMB Report, 2016). The violence and the speed associated with these attacks led Onuoha (2012) to posit that piracy in the Nigerian Niger Delta waters increased both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, pirates acquired the weaponry and high-tech gadgetry that enabled them to expand the range of their attacks. They were fully armed with automatic rifles (AK47), rocket launchers, ability to operate high-speed boats filled with satellite phones and Global Positioning System, rocket launchers. Vertically, all kinds of vessels, such as general cargo, barges, fishing trawlers, and oil vessels, were increasingly targeted and attacked.
Piracy disrupts maritime transportation and the economy, as well as economic activities such as fisheries and energy production. Thus, potentially jeopardises the development prospects of both coastal and landlocked economies in affected regions. The objective

of the study is to critically examine the impact of maritime piracy on the security, economy, and environment of Bayelsa State from 2005-2015.

Conceptual Framework

Maritime Piracy

According to the United Nations Law of the Sea, piracy consist of the following acts; (a) Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any acts of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) On the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; (ii) Against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any state; (b) Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft; (c) Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b) above. According to Dillion, cited in Francois (2009), maritime piracy could be categorised into the following forms: (a) Corruption: acts of extortion or collusion against marine vessels by government officials or port authorities; (b) Sea robbery: attacks that take place in port while the ship is berthed or anchored; (c) Piracy: actions against ships underway and outside the protection of port authorities in territorial waters, straits, and on the high seas. The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) defined maritime piracy as an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intent or capability to use force in the influence of the act. For the sake of analytical convenience, maritime piracy includes the following acts on the marine space: boarding, extortion, hostage taking, kidnapping, murder, theft, armed robbery, seizure of items or the ship, and shipwrecking done intentionally.

Types of Maritime Piracy

According to Jacobson and Nordby (2021), three types of piracy dominated Bayelsa State and the entire Niger Delta marine domain:

Deep Offshore Pirates: Deep Offshore Pirates are capable of operating far from the coast of West Africa and target international shipping traffic. Deep offshore pirate groups have become increasingly sophisticated, as seen in their ability to take more hostages per attack. These groups have expanded their geographic reach further into the Gulf of Guinea, where incidents were previously concentrated in Nigerian waters. The number of Deep Offshore pirate groups is estimated to be between four and six.

Coastal and Low-Reach Pirates: Coastal and Low-Reach Pirates operate up to 40nm from shore, primarily targeting local vessels. These groups usually operate close to their hideouts or bases onshore and have a limited operational range. The targets are mainly fishing vessels operating along the coast, oil and gas support vessels, cargo vessels, and tankers engaged in cabotage operations. Their modus operandi includes looting, racketeering, and kidnapping for ransom, and they focused more on local crews than on foreign seafarers.

Riverine Criminals: Riverine criminals are often referred to locally as 'pirates', though their criminal activity does not fall under the UNCLOS definition of piracy, as they operate in the waterways deep within the Niger Delta, where they target local passenger vessels, as well as engage in other crimes. Some arrests of 'pirates' reported by Nigerian agencies and media are highly likely of riverine criminals and illegal oil bunkers arrested in the creeks of Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region. These groups pose a more immediate security threat to the indigenous peoples of Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region than to international vessels and their crews.

Bayelsa State

Bayelsa State is located in the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria. The state was created out of old Rivers State by the General Sani Abacha military regime on October 1st, 1996. The acronym of the name is derived from Ba (Brass local government area), Yel (Yenagoa local government), and Sa (Sagbama local government area), with the state headquarters located in Yenagoa town. Thus, the state is blessed with natural and man-made resources across its eight local government areas, which are Yenagoa, Sagbama, Ekeremor, Southern Ijaw, Ogbia, Nembe, Kolokuma/Opokuma, and Brass. The people are predominantly farmers and fishermen, and women in the rural areas, due to the deltaic terrain of the state. Ethnic groups in the state are Ijo, Isoko, Urhobo, Epie-Atissa, and Ogbia. The Ijo ethnic group is the majority and most populated in Bayelsa State, and the indigenes of the state are called Bayelsans.

Security

The term security is a contested concept and has no generally accepted definition around the globe. Thus, security is conceived as a holistic phenomenon that is not restricted to military matters but rather broadened to encompass political, social, economic, and environmental issues (Asanebi & Otoo, 2018). Security refers to the protection of citizens and their property by a sovereign state government from dangers and attacks within its territorial boundaries (Asanebi, 2023). However, in this study, security refers to the protection of individuals, communities, organizations, and nations

from internal and external threats, risks, and vulnerabilities that could jeopardise their safety, well-being, stability, and interests. It is categorised into various types, including: Human Security: The primary objective of human security is to protect individuals and communities from threats such as poverty, environmental degradation, and violence.

National Security: Protecting a country's interests, territorial integrity, and sovereignty from external dangers is the core objective of national security.

Economic Security: The goal of economic security is to safeguard financial interests, including infrastructure, trade, and investment, against threats such as smuggling, piracy, and unstable economies.

Economy

Economy refers to the system of production, distribution, and exchange of goods and services within a society aimed at satisfying human needs and wants. It is essential to note that the economy involves the allocation of scarce resources to meet unlimited wants and needs, encompassing the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. In the Niger Delta region and Nigeria at large, the economy is driven by oil and gas, as well as the informal economy. These resources form the major contributors to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and government revenue.

Environment

The environment to be discussed below is the core Niger Delta region, which is analogous to the Bayelsa State environment. Therefore, in examining the core Niger Delta region (which is Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States), the study has examined the Bayelsa State environment. The Niger Delta environment refers to the ecological and socio-economic system of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. The core Niger Delta environment is home to a range of plant and animal species, mangrove forests, wetlands, creeks, rivulets, seas, rivers, and marine life, which makes agriculture easy and was the primordial occupation before the discovery of oil and gas in Bayelsa State.

Theoretical Framework

Failed State Theory

The theory emerged during the tail end of the 20th century to describe the internal and external dynamics, as well as the centrifugal forces that incapacitated some states like Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and even Nigeria in the 1990s to stop functioning

responsibly as a state in the international system (Yonmo & Adausu, 2019). At the emergence of the theory, scholars tagged states that have collapsed institutions as failed states. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, diverse failed state theory explanations emerged. The Rotberg's indicators of a failed state best capture the Nigerian insecurity scenario in these contemporary times. According to Rotberg (2004), a nation-state fails when it loses legitimacy. Its nominal borders become irrelevant; groups within the nominal border seek autonomous control within one or more parts of the national territory. Once the state's capacity to secure itself or to perform as expectedly recedes and once a little capacity that remains is devoted almost exclusively to the fortunes of a few or a favoured ethnicity or community, there is every reason to expect less and less loyalty to the state on the part of the excluded and disenfranchised. Rotberg further stated that when the rulers of a state are perceived to be working for themselves and their kinsmen and not for the state, their legitimacy and the state's legitimacy plummet, and the state would be increasingly conceived as being owned by an exclusive class or group, with all others pushed aside. In effect, various sets of citizens will cease trusting the state. Citizens then naturally shift their allegiance to their community, where they are sure of solace in times of insecurity and economic opportunity. Thus, they transfer their allegiances to clan and group leaders; some of them become warlords. These warlords can derive support from external as well as indigenous supporters (Rotberg, 2004). The incapacity of the federal government of Nigeria to control parts of its territories, coupled with the conditions enumerated above, allows for the emergence of "safe havens" or uncontrolled/ungoverned spaces in which violent extremist organisations (VEOs) and transnational organised crime groups (TOCGs) operate freely. During the period of militancy in the Niger Delta, when militants were aggressively agitating for resource control, the marine space became uncontrollable by the federal government. Different militant groups recruited the disenchanted and economically alienated groups to protest their plight. Then, making the marine space insecure for socio-economic activities was a tool in the hands of militants to achieve their political goals and objectives.

The Evolution of Maritime Piracy

Early Militant Phase

The early phase of piracy in the Niger Delta region was motivated by the perceived injustices of the federal government and multinational oil companies (MNOCs) operating in the Niger Delta. The extensive environmental degradation, poverty and harmful oil exploitative practices caused by the oil extraction industries, which as a result harmed the lifestyles of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta, including Bayelsans, and the oppressive tactics of the federal government in administering and exploiting the

region's resources, mostly oil, made different militant groups adopt piratical tactics and approaches to combat these injustices on behalf of the people of the Niger Delta. One of the most vibrant, leading militant groups at the forefront of the struggle was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). MEND was created in 2005. Shortly after MEND was formed in 2005, the group launched attacks on multinational oil companies to attract attention from policymakers and demand that conditions of poverty and unemployment in the Niger Delta region be addressed. MEND incorporated words with action by attacking onshore and nearshore, and merged with maritime attacks. According to the IMB Report (2006-2008), from January 2006 onwards, MEND claimed several maritime attacks, including:

1. 10th January 2006: attack against a support vessel en route to Shell's Exploration Asset (EA/SEA EAGLE) offshore field off Nigeria, Niger Delta region. Four foreign workers were kidnapped, and the offshore field was temporarily shut down.
2. 15th January 2006: MEND militants attacked a SHELL flow station, killing 53, including 14 soldiers, and reducing oil production by more than 75%.
3. 2nd June 2006: militants boarded the semi-submersible rig BULFORD DOLPHIN 35 nm from shore, abducting eight oil workers and halting operations, which in turn contributed to a 1.5% rise in the global price per barrel.
4. 22nd November 2006: FSPO MYSTRAS was boarded by MEND militants south of Rivers State, resulting in the kidnapping of seven oil workers. During transit to the hostage camp, the militants' speedboat was intercepted and engaged by the Nigerian Navy, resulting in crossfire that killed one oil worker and injured another. Most abductions in the Niger Delta between 2006 and 2008 occurred onshore, making it difficult to disaggregate onshore and offshore kidnappings for the period. Of the 59 maritime incidents recorded in Nigerian waters in 2008 by the IMB, 32 occurred in the creeks and riverine areas of the Niger Delta region (mainly Warri, Bayelsa waterways, Brass, Bonny, and Calabar rivers) (IMB Report, 2006-2008). During this period, these attacks targeted unprotected vessels. The practice of using security escorts only emerged starting in 2008 and was limited to transits within main rivers such as the Bonny or Calabar. Pirate groups were not very structured and often acted under the influence of drugs or alcohol during attacks, as reported by captains following such incidents. Between 2006 and 2009, an early militancy group conducted constant attacks on oil infrastructure (offshore and onshore), reducing Nigeria's oil output by one-third. The succession of attacks was particularly important because these events shaped Nigerian authorities' responses to piracy. Arguably, this period was crucial in establishing a pattern of offensive military operations in response to

violent maritime criminality. Notably, Nigerian authorities created the Joint Task Forces (JTF) in May 2009—a team of air force, army, and navy staff to provide security in the Niger Delta, focused on oil bunkering, piracy, and offshore attacks (Jacobson & Nordby, 2021).

Post -Amnesty Phase

The year 2009 was marked by a peak in early militancy group activism, with numerous attacks against multinational oil companies' vessels and installations, notably in Bayelsa and Delta States. Nigerian oil production dropped significantly, and a MEND attack on the Atlas Cove terminal in Lagos on 11 July 2009 brought the group's pressure to Nigeria's economic capital. Compelled to act in the face of this increasing threat and economic impact, then-President of Nigeria, Umaru Yar'Adua, proposed a ceasefire agreement. By early October 2009, key militant group leaders had accepted the amnesty offer. Part of the amnesty program was disarmament, whereby most central militants agreed to hand over their weapons, including AK-47s and rocket launchers, to the Nigerian government, while President Yar'Adua promised to prioritise economic development in the Niger Delta region.

The amnesty program did not result in a definitive end to militancy in the region. Militant groups like MEND continued to threaten new attacks in 2010 and 2011, and because some of the main militant groups—such as the Niger Delta Liberation Force—refused to join the program, attacks continued. Even those who accepted the amnesty offer did not necessarily abandon their involvement in various illegitimate businesses. It is noted that little progress has been made on the promise of economic development in the Niger Delta region: "the government is nowhere present; they left a vacuum both in terms of development and in terms of security." This sentiment, felt among much of the Niger Delta population, threatens an already tense situation. During the period 2010-2015, some pirate groups mixed kidnapping and hijacking, targeting tankers loaded with refined products. However, the hijacking of tankers decreased over time and essentially disappeared by 2016, due to the cumulative effects of hijacking failures, the global crash of oil prices ($120/barrel in 2013 to $30/barrel in 2016), and the investigation by Nigerian authorities of some kingpins, which increased the risk associated with piracy (Jacobson & Nordby, 2021).

Kidnapping for Ransom (KFR) Phase

One of the goals of this type of piracy is primarily kidnapping for ransom. It is hunger and greed-induced and not militancy-driven. The initial types of piracy were deliberately motivated by insurgency, and pirates concentrated their attacks mainly in

Nigerian territorial waters. Since 2015, pirate attacks have increasingly taken place outside of Nigerian waters. Pirate groups have significantly improved their capacity to operate deep offshore. In March 2021, the tanker DAVIDE B (March 11) and BOURBON EVOLUTION 802 (March 14) were attacked more than 210 nm south of the Republic of Benin's coast and 220 nm west of the Bayelsa coast in international waters (Jacobson & Nordby, 2021). To reach this range, pirate groups have acquired specific resources, including speedboats (vessel arrangements, engines, and Premium Motor Spirits (PMS) reserves) that can remain offshore for longer periods and the ability to navigate using instruments like Thuraya (a satellite phone that allows communication deep offshore and is also fitted with a global positioning system (GPS) receiver that can be used for navigation). This shift outside the Nigerian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is not without exception. All piracy attacks in December 2020 occurred within Nigerian waters.

Selected Incidents of Piratical Attacks Around Bayelsa Waters

On 30 April 2019, a Panamanian-flagged product tanker, MT Vemahope, was attacked by armed pirates while underway at position latitude 03:29.99 North and longitude 003:50.17 East, around 127nm southwest of Bayelsa. Ten crew members were kidnapped. (IMB Report, 2019).

On 17 July 2019, a Liberian-flagged product tanker, MT Curacao Trader, was attacked by armed pirates while underway at position latitude 02:57 North and longitude 002:46 East, around 196nm southwest of Bayelsa. 13 crew members were kidnapped. The 13 kidnapped crew members were released safely on August 19, 2019. (IMB Report, 2019).

On November 16, 2019, a Ghanaian-flagged general cargo ship was attacked by armed pirates while underway at position latitude 03:32.7 North and longitude 006:09.4 East, around 45 nm southwest of Bayelsa. The pirates stole the ship and the property and kidnapped five crew members. (IMB Report, 2019) On November 20, 2019, a St. Kitts and Nevis-flagged general cargo ship, MV Milan, was attacked by armed persons while underway at position latitude 04:28.15 North and longitude 005:31.17 East, around 10nm southwest of Bayelsa. They kidnapped ten crew members and left the ship drifting (IMB Report, 2019).

The Impact of Maritime Piracy in Bayelsa State

Economically, the costs imposed by maritime piracy are significant. The International Maritime Bureau estimated that maritime piracy in the world resulted in more than $13

- $15 billion a year (IMB Report, 2016). This awesome cost imposed by piracy stems from stolen goods, cargoes, and sometimes the theft of the ship itself, delay in ports, as well as an increase in insurance rates when transiting through known pirate-infested waters like Bayelsa waters and the entire Niger Delta marine space. For instance, Nigeria accounts for over 60 percent of the total seaborne traffic for the 16 nations in the West Africa sub-region. As warnings to mariners in and near the Niger Delta water, including that of Bayelsa marine space, become more common, increased shipping costs for such destinations are likely as shippers begin to factor higher insurance premiums into their pricing. Given that increased shipping costs are typically passed on to consumers. The reasons for inflationary pressures on vital goods and services throughout the Niger Delta, including Bayelsa State, since 2015 until now are not far from the increased insurance premiums. Economists stated that sustained attacks in Bayelsa State and the region translated to serious financial consequences (Balogun, 2012).

The Niger Delta, including Bayelsa, felt the pinch in terms of increased cost for imported goods like fish, poultry products, and electronics. At the micro level, constrained economic activities due to pirate attacks and their ripple implications limit employment opportunities as well as the income-earning potential of the coastal population in Bayelsa and neighbouring littoral villages. Unemployment and low wages further exacerbate human security concerns in Bayelsa State.

Sardonically, insecurity caused by piracy is one of the reasons many maritime investors and entrepreneurs showed relatively little interest in the Bayelsa State and the region's potential and lucrative tourism industry. The safety of shipping routes is important because an overwhelming proportion of trade in the region (Bayelsa waters leading to the other Niger Delta states in Nigeria and major states in the Gulf of Guinea) traverses the maritime domain. Insecurity constraints in trading activities raised both transport costs and insurance premiums. These pirate attacks within the Bayelsa State maritime domain have resulted in the death and destruction of property of many and exacerbated the security of maritime communities and the state at large.

Furthermore, at the peak of piracy in the early 2000s, piracy was also seen by perpetrators as an economic avenue. The influx of capital gained from stolen oil creates economic prosperity for local communities, which in turn leads to the creation of employment opportunities. Socially, pirates seem to garner support from local communities by fulfilling roles the state cannot provide or has neglected. Petroleum product theft from vessels and oil-carrying pipes has been used to provide electricity, especially when most of the littoral villages in the state are not connected to the national grid. Stolen oil from vessels was distributed into local markets. The fishing industry, as

part of Nigeria and Bayelsa's agricultural sector, is among the top non-oil foreign exchange earners in Nigeria. The industry is worth over 364 billion Naira, and it employs over 500,000 unskilled and skilled workers in Nigeria, including Bayelsa (Onuoha 2011). Pirate attacks on fishing trawlers reached the point that many fishing boat captains refused to sail. Seafood prices skyrocketed in Bayelsa due to the scarcity of fish caught by fewer fishing trawlers that were not afraid to set out for fishing, as a result, placing this important source of protein out of the reach of average Bayelsans.

Environmentally, environmental degradation made farming and fishing in Bayelsa State less attractive, and this made many people join pirate gangs to survive hunger (Yonmo & Adausu, 2019). Piracy has the potential to trigger a major environmental catastrophe, especially if an attacked vessel is left to drift in a congested water lane of communication in Bayelsa State. Not only would the resulting discharge of petroleum cause irreplaceable damage to offshore resources and marine life, but it also has the potential to degrade long stretches of fertile coastal lowlands if the oil is allowed to drift. In terms of energy, specifically, states in Nigeria, including Bayelsa State, depend on oil exportation for their survival. Oil remains the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, contributing about 55% to the GDP, 95% of export earnings, and about 70% of governmental revenue (Ekpo, 2012). A preponderant proportion of Nigeria's oil is produced in shallow or deep waters, of which Bayelsa territorial waters are known for this. Accessing and maintaining a presence in these areas is facilitated by marine craft, such as supply boats, tugboats, and barges. Piratical activities ranging from the kidnapping of offshore oil company workers, sabotage on offshore oil facilities, theft of oil vessels, killing of government and private security personnel on offshore duties, and theft of offshore oil installations during the period between 2005-2015 crippled Nigerian oil production and caused a significant loss of revenue. Over 50 years, the value of oil stolen or wasted in Nigeria has amounted to between US$300 and $400 billion (UNCTAD Report, 2014). Most of these losses were borne by oil companies operating in Bayelsa State and the Nigerian federal government. The loss in revenue during the scope of study was tantamount to the availability of resources that could drive socio-economic programs in Nigeria, including Bayelsa State. The additional costs (provision of security to protect oil installations, to protect oil exporting vessels, paying of ransom, procuring sophisticated security gadgets) borne by oil companies operating in Bayelsa State drove away many companies from Bayelsa State. So many investors and potential investors in the oil sector lost interest at the time, while many Bayelsans working in the oil companies were relieved of their jobs.

Factors Responsible for the Incessant Maritime Piracy during the Period of 2005 to 2015 Corruption

Corruption in governmental institutions ripped the essence of the establishment of such institutions in Nigeria. Systematic corruption in government agencies made piracy thrive in the Nigerian waters. The cause of the Niger Delta region's underdeveloped and pitiable situation cannot be dissociated from the corrupt practices of government officials. The unprecedented corruption made people in the region remain in perpetual poverty, hopelessness, and misery. The federal government and the Bayelsa State government meant to provide the basics of life; security, welfare, and social amenities are very active in exploiting the region's wealth with impunity, without giving back an equivalent return to the people. The following has been the order in Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region: mismanagement of resources, nepotism, bribery, and stifling economic development.

Economic Deprivation

Economic deprivation in Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region refers to a state of economic hardship, scarcity, or disadvantage characterised by limited access to resources, reduced economic opportunities, a lower standard of living, and social exclusion and marginalisation. Thus, economic deprivation in Bayelsa State is caused by over-reliance on crude oil from the federal and Bayelsa state governments, leading to neglect of other sectors; environmental degradation caused by multinational oil companies operating in the state and the region; inadequate governance from the federal and Bayelsa state, which has resulted in weak and corrupt institutions; poor policy and its implementation; limited access to necessities of life, such as education, good roads, a sound hospital, and piped water, etc.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a significant issue in Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region, with rates higher than the national average. The unemployment situation is exacerbated by the multinational oil companies, and the state and federal government have limited job opportunities for locals, despite Bayelsa State's rich natural resources. Thus, the unemployment in the state and the region has created increased inequality and poverty, which has given birth to militia groups that have adopted sea pirates and other means of criminality to create social unrest and exacerbate the peace enjoyed by the state.

Sea Blindness and Lack of Political Will

The Nigerian government is engulfed by land-centered issues and challenges, coupled with the fact that most political leaders lack knowledge of maritime opportunities. This explains why the presence of the government is very remote from the littoral villages and towns. For instance, naval formations are sporadically located in the region. The interior waterways that link the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean are not well policed. Given the foregoing, a vacuum was created in the marine space to be governed by criminals and warlords that were usurping the responsibility of the government by collecting taxes from foreign fishing vessels and cargo ships (Yonmo & Akinselure, 2021). Thus, Jacobson and Nordby (2015) noted that the intractability of maritime security challenges in the region was magnified by what might be described as a long history of policy blindness towards coastal waters.

Social Acceptance

The inability of the government to provide the necessities of life to the people of Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region at large led to criminal gangs executing government functions. This made it attractive to become a member of such criminal groups. The sales of stolen oil and funds obtained from kidnapped crew members illegitimately made the riverine villages boom economically. It stimulated an inflow of capital that made the local industries thrive. The locals provided safe havens for pirates away from government security forces (Yonmo & Paul, 2021).

Poor Security Presence in the Maritime Space

Lack of adequate military and paramilitary personnel securing the maritime space of Bayelsa State gave rise to pirate activities and operations. The few security personnel securing the maritime space do so with weak arsenals and poor technological boats. Many of the security personnel don’t know how to swim or drive these maritime boats or ships. They lack the understanding of the maritime terrain, which is an advantage to these pirates in executing their activities and operations. Thus, there are cases of poor working synergy between security personnel in securing the maritime space of Bayelsa State.

Niger Delta Crisis

The Niger Delta region is the bulk of crude oil deposits in Nigeria and serves as the nation's livewire of sustainability (Asanebi, 2016), yet there is nothing to show for decades of oil exploitation and exploration by the Nigerian government and

multinational oil companies (MNOC) in the region (Asanebi, 2024). The effects of oil exploitation and exploration on the environment have resulted in the accumulation of poverty, economic losses, occupational displacement, and frustration among Niger Deltans. The Nigerian government and multinational oil companies failed to honour the yields and aspirations of the Niger Delta people towards their region and resources (Asanebi, 2024). Not comfortable by these developments, underdevelopment and massive poverty seen in the region, etc some youths adopted maritime piracy for kidnapping of local and foreign multinational oil companies' personnel, local and international ships and boats for financial benefits and as a medium of responding to the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies (MNOCs) deafness over their resources, plight and development of their region.

Environmental Degradation

The unbridled oil exploration and exploitation caused colossal damage to the ecosystem of Bayelsa State. This made life unbearable for the locals. Oil spillage, destruction of farmlands and human settlements as a result of oil exploration, and environmental pollution disenchanted the people from their source of livelihood and also rendered their communities inhabitable. This singular act of destruction of their sources of livelihood led many of the locals to search for alternative sources of livelihood, even if it is a crime like engaging in maritime piracy. For them, their source of survival has been affected and almost gone into extinction; therefore, they must survive anyway and anyhow, and the Bayelsa State, Nigeria government, and Multinational Oil companies and ships applying their maritime routes must pay the price.

Conclusion

The discourse examined the impact of maritime piracy on security, economy, and environment in Bayelsa State, 2005-2015. Maritime piracy in Bayelsa State was at its zenith during the early 2000s and has been an option for a few aggrieved and jobless youths of Bayelsa State and the region. Activities of pirates disrupted trade-related endeavours, oil production and distribution, human security, fishing activities, and the environment in Bayelsa State. The upsurge of piracy in Bayelsa State was borne out of the failed nature of the Nigerian state. The incapability of the state to perform its vital responsibilities, including the provision and maintenance of security, social welfare, and facilitation of development, largely led citizens to de-emphasise their reliance on the Nigerian state. Thus, citizens transfer their allegiance to leaders of criminal networks that can provide services that ought to be provided by the state. The deliberate alienation of the citizens and marginalisation of the region in which Bayelsa State is inclusive made the people engage in piracy for survival. As a way to nip the bud, the

study suggests that the federal and state governments should adopt a comprehensive approach to addressing piracy, which involves all stakeholders, enhancing security measures, creating jobs for the youth, and promoting sustainable livelihoods in Bayelsa State.

Recommendations

The federal government of Nigeria should succinctly address the root causes of the Niger Delta region's issues. The federal government of Nigeria, Bayelsa State, and MNOCs should create employment for citizens to enable the militias and sea pirates to pull out of crime and criminality in the maritime domain of the state and the region The federal government of Nigeria should train and retrain the Nigerian Navy on modern maritime security and technology. Community leaders and paramount rulers should work hand in hand with the state and federal government, and also with all security institutions, to eradicate maritime piracy in the state and the region. The federal government of Nigeria and Bayelsa State should continually support the Nigerian Navy financially to enable the Nigerian Navy to acquire modern satellite surveillance equipment, marine patrol boats, vessels, and radar systems to monitor and track maritime activities in real time. The Bayelsa State government should foster partnerships with private sector companies to support maritime security initiatives.

The federal government of Nigeria should collaborate with international partners, such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to share intelligence and best practices in combating piracy in Bayelsa State and the entire maritime domain of the country. NIMASA and the Nigerian Navy should engage with communities, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), the Ijaw National Congress (INC), paramount rulers, and the state governor to raise awareness and educate them on the dangers of maritime piracy and insecurity to the state, region, and nation at large. The federal government should provide training and capacity-building programs for law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and other critical stakeholders to enhance their skills and knowledge in combating piracy. The Nigerian government should enact a law, if there is none, that provides a legal framework for addressing maritime piracy and insecurity in Nigeria's maritime space. This law should empower law enforcement agencies to investigate, prosecute, and punish perpetrators of maritime crimes.

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UNLOCKING ACCESS: OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) AS A CATALYST FOR THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Abstract

This paper assessed how educational inequalities persist globally, Open Educational Resources (OER) offer a transformative pathway toward democratizing knowledge and fostering inclusive education systems. This paper is a desk review which investigates the role of OER in bridging access gaps and promoting equity in education, with a specific focus on the Global South. The study explores how OER initiatives have empowered educators and learners by removing financial and geographical barriers to quality learning materials. It draws on secondary data from Nigeria, India, and Brazil to examine how OER are being localized, adapted, and integrated into formal and informal learning environments. The paper highlights successful models of co-creation between universities, civil society organizations, and technology platforms in developing context-relevant content that reflects local knowledge systems and linguistic diversity. Through a critical policy and pedagogical lens, the paper also engages with challenges such as digital infrastructure deficits, content quality assurance, and intellectual property concerns. It argues that for OER to truly democratize knowledge, efforts must move beyond mere access and focus on community participation, sustainability, and curriculum relevance. By proposing a framework for inclusive OER implementation aligned with UNESCO's recommendations and Sustainable Development Goal 4, this presentation will offer educators, institutions, and policymakers' actionable insights into creating open, equitable, and collaborative learning environments that respond to 21st-century educational needs.

Keywords: *Open Educational Resources, equity in education, knowledge democratization, Global South, inclusive pedagogy, digital access, education policy.*

Introduction

In recent decades, the global movement toward equitable access to education has gained momentum, largely fueled by advances in digital technology and collaborative knowledge-sharing initiatives. Among these, Open Educational Resources (OER) have emerged as a transformative force in addressing educational inequalities by offering free and openly licensed teaching, learning, and research materials. Originally conceptualized by UNESCO in 2002, OER are designed to reduce barriers to knowledge by promoting access, adaptation, and redistribution of educational content globally (UNESCO, 2002). The need for such democratization is especially pressing in the Global South, a term used to describe regions historically marginalized in global economic and knowledge systems, including much of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Dados & Connell, 2012). Despite considerable progress in expanding primary and secondary education, many countries in these regions continue to face persistent challenges such as underfunded institutions, limited access to up-to-date learning materials, and an over-reliance on imported curricula that often lack cultural and linguistic relevance (Czerniewicz et al., 2017).

OER offer an opportunity to disrupt this status quo by not only enhancing access but also enabling localized knowledge production that reflects the diverse realities of learners in the Global South. Through collaborative content development and open licensing, OER promote a participatory learning culture and offer an alternative to the traditionally hierarchical global knowledge economy (Amiel, 2013). Moreover, when implemented with attention to local context and infrastructure, OER can empower educators and students to become co-creators of knowledge, fostering autonomy, critical thinking, and sustainable educational practices (Hodgkinson-Williams & Trotter, 2018).

Aims of the Paper

1. To examine the role of Open Educational Resources (OER) in increasing access to quality education across selected countries in the Global South.
2. To assess how OER support localized knowledge creation and culturally relevant pedagogy within under-resourced educational systems.
3. To identify key institutional, infrastructural, and policy-related barriers to the effective adoption and sustainability of OER in the Global South.
4. To explore the potential of OER to foster equity, inclusion, and participatory knowledge production in higher education and community-based learning environments.

This paper explores how OER are contributing to the democratization of knowledge in the Global South by examining practical case studies, policy frameworks, and pedagogical implications. It also engages critically with the limitations and power dynamics embedded in the OER movement, proposing strategies for more equitable and context-sensitive adoption.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative case study design to examine how Open Educational Resources (OER) contribute to the democratization of knowledge in three selected Global South countries—Nigeria, India, and Brazil. The choice of a comparative approach allows for the identification of shared patterns, contextual differences, and localized innovations in OER adoption and use across diverse socio-cultural and policy environments.

Data Analysis

A thematic content analysis method will be employed to analyze the secondary data. The analysis will focus on identifying recurring themes and patterns related to:

- Accessibility and reach of OER
- Localized content development and cultural relevance
- Institutional and government support
- Technological enablers and constraints
- Equity, inclusion, and participatory learning practices

The findings will be categorized under these themes and comparatively analyzed across the three countries to highlight both commonalities and differences.

Conceptual Clarification

This study explores Open Educational Resources (OER) as a tool for democratizing knowledge in the Global South. Key concepts include OER, knowledge equity, access to education, and the Global South, all pivotal in understanding how OER can transform education in regions like Nigeria, India, and Brazil.

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Open Educational Resources (OER) represent a significant departure from traditional educational models by emphasizing openness, accessibility, and collaboration. As

defined by UNESCO (2019), OER includes a wide array of materials—such as textbooks, videos, software, courses, and research tools—that are freely available for use, adaptation, and redistribution. This broad definition highlights the versatility of OER, offering an alternative to conventional educational resources that are often constrained by high costs, intellectual property restrictions, and limited availability.

Characteristics of OER:

Open Licensing: The open license, usually provided under Creative Commons (CC), allows for the unrestricted use, modification, and redistribution of educational materials. This principle of open licensing fosters an environment of collaboration where educators, students, and researchers can contribute to and benefit from a global repository of knowledge. Cost-Free Access: A primary benefit of OER is their cost-free access, which directly addresses the issue of education affordability, particularly in the Global South where high tuition fees and textbook costs often create significant barriers to education. Adaptability and Localization: OER can be adapted to meet specific educational needs, including the translation of materials into different languages or modification to better suit the cultural context of learners. This feature makes OER particularly valuable in countries like Nigeria, India, and Brazil, where education systems often struggle to provide materials that are locally relevant or culturally sensitive. Collaboration and Co-Creation: OER foster an open, collaborative environment that encourages knowledge sharing and co-creation. Educators can collaborate to improve existing materials or develop new resources, which not only enhances the quality of the educational content but also ensures that it is relevant and effective in diverse learning contexts. Technological Infrastructure: OER leverage technological advances to overcome traditional barriers to education. With internet access becoming more widespread, particularly in mobile formats, OER can be accessed by learners in remote areas, thus promoting digital equity. However, challenges still exist in regions with poor connectivity or inadequate technological infrastructure.

OER's Role in the Global South

The significance of OER in the Global South cannot be overstated. In countries such as Nigeria, India, and Brazil, where educational inequalities often stem from economic, political, and social factors, OER can help democratize education. They reduce dependency on costly, imported textbooks and educational tools, offering a more inclusive educational experience. By improving access to quality materials, OER contribute to bridging the education gap between the Global North and South. In Nigeria, OER is particularly important in overcoming geographic disparities between

urban and rural areas, where educational resources are often limited. Similarly, in India, OER has the potential to address the language barrier by providing resources in multiple local languages, thus reaching learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In Brazil, the emphasis on open education supports social inclusion, providing marginalized communities with access to learning materials that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Challenges and Opportunities

While OER presents immense opportunities for enhancing educational equity, their widespread adoption in the Global South is hindered by various challenges: Digital Divide: Limited access to reliable internet and devices in rural and underserved areas can impede the effective use of OER.,Institutional Resistance: Some educational institutions may be hesitant to adopt OER due to concerns about quality control, copyright, and the perceived lack of authority of freely available resources, and Lack of Awareness: In some regions, there is insufficient awareness or understanding of OER, which hinders their integration into the formal education system. . However, these challenges also present opportunities to innovate. By creating localized OER platforms and ensuring that internet access is expanded to underserved regions, the Global South can benefit greatly from open education initiatives. Additionally, strengthening the policy framework around OER and increasing collaboration between governments, NGOs, and educational institutions can accelerate their adoption.

OER holds transformative potential for the Global South, making education more accessible, affordable, and relevant to local contexts. Their integration into national education systems can help achieve greater educational equity, foster inclusivity, and provide a platform for ongoing collaboration. As more countries and institutions commit to the principles of openness and accessibility, OER will undoubtedly continue to play a crucial role in the democratization of knowledge.

Democratization of Knowledge

The democratization of knowledge represents a critical shift towards making education and learning accessible to a broader and more diverse range of people. Traditionally, knowledge has been concentrated within privileged, often elite groups, creating barriers that prevent marginalized and underserved communities from accessing quality education. These barriers include economic constraints, limited access to technology, geographical isolation, and linguistic challenges. As such, the democratization of knowledge advocates for the redistribution of educational resources, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic background, geographic location, or

technological access, have the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to society.Access to Knowledge as a Right:

The democratization of knowledge is rooted in the belief that education is a fundamental human right. UNESCO and other global institutions emphasize that access to quality educational resources should not be confined by one's social class, location, or economic status. In the context of OER, this concept challenges traditional education models that rely on costly textbooks, tuition fees, and proprietary content. Instead, open educational materials are provided for free, making it possible for individuals in under-resourced regions to obtain the same knowledge and skills as those in more affluent areas.

Inclusivity is central to the democratization of knowledge. It seeks to ensure that all voices, perspectives, and ways of knowing are represented within the educational landscape. This is particularly important in the Global South, where traditional educational materials often reflect the experiences and viewpoints of the Global North. OER enables the co-creation of materials that are more culturally relevant, localized, and diverse, thus creating a more inclusive learning environment. This inclusivity promotes cultural pluralism, ensuring that education reflects a wide array of perspectives, languages, and lived experiences. Breaking Down BarriersThe democratization of knowledge aims to break down multiple barriers:

Economic Barriers: In many parts of the Global South, the high cost of textbooks, course materials, and tuition fees limits educational access. OER helps to eliminate these financial barriers by providing free and open access to a wealth of educational resources (Mishra, 2017). Geographical Barriers: Many rural and remote communities in the Global South lack access to physical schools or libraries. OER, available online, allows these communities to bypass geographical isolation and access quality educational resources, often for the first time. Linguistic Barriers: The dominance of English and other Western languages in traditional educational materials has often left students in the Global South with limited resources in their native languages. OER, by being adaptable and modifiable, can be translated and localized, helping to bridge the language gap and cater to a multilingual, multicultural learner base. Technological Barriers: Although there is an increasing push towards digital learning, technological limitations remain a challenge in many parts of the Global South. Nonetheless, OER can be formatted to accommodate various technological contexts, including mobile phones and low-bandwidth connections, making it more accessible to individuals with limited technological resources.

Participation and Co-Creation:

The democratization of knowledge is not just about access but also about participation. It invites all stakeholders—students, educators, researchers, and communities—to actively contribute to the creation and sharing of knowledge. OER allows for collaborative, participatory learning environments where learners can modify, remix, and build upon existing content, fostering a culture of knowledge-sharing and empowerment. This process of co-creation is crucial for transforming passive recipients of knowledge into active contributors. Empowerment through Education: Knowledge, when democratized, becomes a tool for empowerment. In the Global South, empowering local communities with the tools to educate themselves and address their specific challenges is essential for long-term development. By making educational materials freely available, OER empowers individuals with the knowledge to advocate for their rights, participate in economic activities, and engage with their governments and societies more effectively.

Improving Educational Outcomes:

The democratization of knowledge also contributes to improving educational outcomes, especially in regions with constrained resources. OER provides opportunities for both formal and informal learners to access updated, high-quality educational content that would otherwise be unavailable. By engaging with diverse learning materials, students are exposed to different teaching styles and knowledge sources, which can improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Democratization of Knowledge in the Context of OER in the Global South:

OER plays a critical role in leveling the playing field for learners in the Global South. It enables governments, NGOs, and educational institutions to provide high-quality, affordable education on a larger scale. Countries like Nigeria, India, and Brazil have begun to realize the potential of OER as part of their educational reform efforts. For instance, initiatives like National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) in India and Open Education Resources in Brazil aim to make educational resources available to a wider audience, especially those in underserved regions.In Nigeria, where the education system faces challenges like overcrowded classrooms, insufficient educational resources, and poor infrastructure, OER can be a transformative tool. They can help fill the resource gap by providing digital and printable materials, accessible on mobile phones, thus reaching communities with limited access to traditional education resources. Similarly, in Brazil, OER has been used to democratize knowledge in

subjects like healthcare and technology, empowering marginalized populations to improve their socio-economic conditions.

The democratization of knowledge is essential for promoting equity, social justice, and empowerment in the Global South. By making educational resources freely accessible, adaptable, and culturally relevant, OER plays a pivotal role in dismantling the traditional barriers that have kept vast sections of the population from fully participating in educational and socio-economic development. Through OER, individuals in the Global South can access, engage with, and contribute to a global knowledge economy, fostering more inclusive and sustainable development.

Global South

The term "Global South" broadly denotes countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania that are historically marginalized in the global economic and political order. It reflects both geographic and socio-economic divisions and often includes postcolonial nations facing development challenges. In educational discourse, it signifies regions grappling with systemic inequalities in access to knowledge and technology (Dados & Connell, 2012).The Global South refers to a group of countries primarily located in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania, which have historically been marginalized within the global economic, political, and social frameworks. The term emerged during the mid-20th century as a way to describe the vast disparity in wealth, development, and power between the more industrialized, wealthy nations of the Global North and the poorer, less industrialized nations of the Global South. It is crucial to note that the term is not purely geographical; it also encompasses deep-rooted socio-economic and political inequalities.

Features of the Global South

Historical Marginalization:

The Global South includes countries that were once colonies of European powers and, as a result, have faced systemic economic and political exploitation. The legacy of colonialism continues to affect these nations today, contributing to economic underdevelopment, political instability, and the unequal distribution of resources and wealth. This historical context is critical to understanding why many of these countries remain marginalized in the global economic and political system.

Postcolonial Nations:

Many countries in the Global South are postcolonial, meaning that they gained independence from colonial powers during the 20th century, often through struggle and resistance. These nations, while officially sovereign, continue to grapple with the challenges of building stable, democratic systems, developing their economies, and overcoming the lasting effects of colonial rule. The postcolonial condition is a significant factor in understanding the challenges faced by countries in the Global South, including issues related to education, healthcare, governance, and technology access (Dados & Connell, 2012).

Development Challenges:

The Global South is often characterized by poverty, inequality, low levels of industrialization, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited access to education and healthcare. These challenges are compounded by a reliance on primary exports (such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products), which often leaves these countries vulnerable to global market fluctuations and hinders long-term economic growth. In education, systemic challenges include overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula, inadequate teacher training, and a lack of access to quality resources and technology.

Systemic Inequalities:

Systemic inequalities in the Global South often manifest in the form of unequal access to knowledge, education, and technology. Access to education is deeply affected by socio-economic status, gender, location (urban vs. rural), and ethnicity, creating a stratified educational landscape where privileged groups have greater access to opportunities and resources than marginalized communities. In many parts of the Global South, technology and digital education remain out of reach for large portions of the population, further exacerbating educational inequities. This results in lower literacy rates, less engagement in global knowledge economies, and a continued cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

Geographical and Socio-Economic Divisions:

The division between the Global South and the Global North is not just geographic, but deeply tied to socio-economic status. While the Global North (comprising developed countries like the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan) tends to have strong educational systems, advanced technology infrastructures, and higher levels of income

and wealth, the Global South continues to experience challenges related to poverty, access to resources, and the overall quality of education systems.

Understanding the Global South in Educational Discourse

Empowering Marginalized Communities:

Educational resources that acknowledge and reflect the unique needs and contexts of the Global South are vital for empowering local communities. Culturally relevant materials, accessible to people in different regions and languages, can foster a sense of ownership and self-determination, enabling communities to take charge of their educational and development futures.

Creating Global Solidarity:

The recognition of the Global South's challenges in the global educational landscape can foster greater global solidarity and collaboration. OER and other global initiatives can provide a platform for South-South collaboration, where nations of the Global South can share their knowledge, experiences, and educational innovations, building a more equitable and just global knowledge economy.

Inclusive and Sustainable Development:

As countries in the Global South increasingly embrace digital technologies and open resources, they have the opportunity to leapfrog traditional development barriers and create more inclusive and sustainable educational systems. The spread of OER can be a tool for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.
The Global South encompasses a diverse set of nations and regions that face shared challenges, particularly in terms of educational equity, development, and access to knowledge. The concept underscores the need for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to addressing global educational disparities. OER serves as a critical tool in this context, offering the potential to democratize education and make knowledge accessible to the communities in the Global South, ultimately fostering greater socio-economic and cultural empowerment.

Access to education involves the opportunity for individuals to obtain, participate in, and benefit from educational programs. It includes physical access (availability), economic access (affordability), and cultural access (relevance and inclusion). The expansion of OER contributes to increased educational access by offering free and

adaptable learning materials to diverse populations (Hodgkinson-Williams & Trotter, 2018).

Access to education is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of social and economic development. It encompasses not only the availability of educational opportunities but also the ability of individuals to engage meaningfully with them. The notion of access goes beyond mere physical presence in a classroom—it requires a comprehensive understanding of the barriers and enablers that determine whether learners can truly participate in and benefit from education.

Barriers to Access in the Global South

Despite significant progress in improving literacy and school enrollment rates, many countries in the Global South continue to struggle with: Gender disparities, where girls are disproportionately excluded due to cultural norms, early marriage, and unpaid labor burdens. Disability exclusion, where persons with disabilities often lack accessible learning environments, assistive technologies, or trained educators. Conflict and displacement, which disrupt education for millions of children and youth in war-torn regions. Digital divide, were unequal access to internet and devices limits opportunities for online learning and open education. These multifaceted barriers require tailored interventions that recognize the intersecting dimensions of marginalization and the structural nature of educational exclusion.

The Intersection of OER and Equity in Education

While OER are a powerful enabler of access, their equitable impact depends on complementary factors such as: Digital infrastructure: Without reliable internet access or electricity, the benefits of OER cannot reach many rural or disadvantaged communities. Language inclusivity: Most OER are produced in English and other dominant languages. For them to be inclusive, translation into local and indigenous languages is essential. Capacity building: Educators must be trained to effectively find, adapt, and use OER, and institutions must support policies that encourage open practices. Policy frameworks: National and institutional policies that promote open licensing, funding for OER creation, and curriculum integration are necessary for systemic change.

Knowledge Equity

Knowledge equity refers to the just and inclusive recognition, production, and sharing of knowledge from all communities, especially those that have been historically

marginalized or excluded from dominant educational and epistemological systems. It challenges the unequal hierarchies of whose knowledge is considered legitimate, valuable, or authoritative in global education systems, which have long privileged Western, Eurocentric frameworks over indigenous, local, and alternative ways of knowing (Wilson-Strydom, 2015).

Structural Dimensions of Knowledge Inequity

Inequities in knowledge production and access are shaped by systemic issues such as: Language hegemony: Dominance of English and a few other global languages marginalize those who speak and learn in indigenous tongues. Academic gatekeeping: Elite publishing systems, paywalled journals, and Western-centric research funding exclude Global South scholars. Technological exclusion: Limited access to digital platforms restricts participation in global knowledge exchange. These barriers perpetuate a situation where knowledge from the Global South is underrepresented in curricula, research outputs, and international dialogue.

Open Educational Resources (OER) and Knowledge Equity

OER play a pivotal role in advancing knowledge equity by offering an open, participatory, and inclusive model of knowledge creation and dissemination: Co-creation and localization: OER allow educators and learners to adapt materials to local contexts, languages, and cultures, thereby integrating marginalized perspectives into mainstream education. Democratization of authorship: Unlike commercial publishing, OER enables a wide range of contributors—including students, teachers, and community members—to author and share educational resources. Breaking access barriers: OER remove paywalls and institutional restrictions that often limit knowledge access for underfunded institutions and learners in the Global South. This open model counters the concentration of intellectual authority and promotes a horizontal exchange of knowledge, where all communities are seen as equal contributors to the global knowledge commons.

From Open Access to Open Participation

True knowledge equity is not achieved simply by making content free (open access), but by ensuring open participation in knowledge creation, review, and distribution. This involves: Empowering underrepresented voices to shape educational narratives. Training educators and learners in open pedagogy and collaborative content development. Establishing inclusive platforms where community knowledge is valued and validated alongside academic knowledge. In this regard, open education is both a

practice and a philosophy—it invites learners and educators to challenge dominant paradigms, deconstruct biases, and co-create a more inclusive intellectual ecosystem.

Knowledge Equity in the Global South

In Nigeria, India, and Brazil—three diverse and populous Global South nations—the movement for knowledge equity through OER has taken different forms: Nigeria: Efforts to digitize and localize educational materials in indigenous languages (e.g., Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) support cultural inclusion, though infrastructure gaps remain a challenge. India: Government-led platforms like NPTEL and SWAYAM provide open courses across disciplines, many in regional languages, bridging linguistic and geographic divides. Brazil: The REA (Recursos Educacionais Abertos) movement promotes open content rooted in social justice, and emphasizes community-based content creation and public policy for OER.

These examples highlight how OER can be leveraged to amplify marginalized voices, localize curricula, and challenge epistemic inequality, though their success depends on active policy support, investment in digital access, and capacity building. Knowledge equity reframes education as a collaborative, inclusive space where all forms of knowledge are respected and represented. By facilitating co-creation, adaptation, and dissemination of educational content, OER act as both a tool and a philosophy for redressing global educational injustices. In doing so, they help to shift the center of knowledge production from a few privileged regions to a globally distributed, pluralistic, and participatory model of learning.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Critical Pedagogy Theory, primarily advanced by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), as its theoretical framework. Critical pedagogy emphasizes the role of education in liberating oppressed communities and challenges traditional, hierarchical models of knowledge dissemination. Freire argued that education should not be a process of depositing information (what he called the "banking model") but rather a dialogical and participatory practice where learners and educators co-create knowledge. This perspective aligns with the philosophy of Open Educational Resources (OER), which promotes participatory knowledge creation, free access, and the localization of educational content—especially within marginalized regions of the Global South. Strengths of Critical Pedagogy lie in its transformative approach to learning. It empowers learners to question power structures, promote social justice, and engage critically with their reality. It also supports the democratization of knowledge by fostering learner agency and collaboration. However, a key weakness is

its limited practical applicability in under-resourced settings, where digital divides, lack of teacher training, or authoritarian educational policies may hinder critical engagement and openness. Furthermore, critics argue that its emancipatory goals may be too idealistic in highly constrained educational environments.

Despite these challenges, the relevance of Critical Pedagogy to this research is substantial. It provides a robust lens for understanding how OER can challenge epistemic injustice, decentralize traditional knowledge systems, and foster equitable education across Nigeria, India, and Brazil. It situates OER not just as tools for access but as instruments for critical consciousness, localization of knowledge, and educational justice in the Global South.

Findings

The findings from secondary data sources drawn from Nigeria, India, and Brazil provide rich insights into the transformative role of Open Educational Resources (OER) in democratizing education across the Global South, based on the four key research objectives. Increasing Access to Quality Education
OER has significantly contributed to expanding access to quality education in the Global South. In India, initiatives like the National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) and SWAYAM have provided millions of learners, especially in rural areas, with free access to high-quality content. Brazil's open government policies and platforms like REA (Recursos Educacionais Abertos) have supported the distribution of Portuguese-language OER. In Nigeria, although adoption is slower, universities such as NOUN (National Open University of Nigeria) and efforts by NGOs are beginning to use OER to reach underserved communities. These examples affirm that OER bridges educational gaps created by financial, geographical, and social barriers. Supporting Localized Knowledge and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
OER fosters contextualized learning by enabling the adaptation of content to local languages and cultural contexts. In Brazil, OERs are increasingly used in indigenous communities and by Afro-Brazilian educators to reflect local identities in curricula. India's state-level repositories offer materials in various regional languages, promoting culturally inclusive pedagogy. In Nigeria, some efforts have been made to integrate Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo into open content, although systematic localization remains limited. These trends show that OER is a vehicle for preserving local epistemologies and decolonizing knowledge systems.

Identifying Barriers to OER Adoption and Sustainability
Despite the potential, numerous barriers hinder OER implementation. These include lack of digital infrastructure, inconsistent policy frameworks, limited awareness, and

inadequate institutional support. For instance, while India has strong national OER policies, the digital divide persists in rural areas. In Nigeria, erratic internet access, low digital literacy, and lack of governmental commitment impede broader adoption. Brazil faces challenges in policy enforcement and insufficient funding for OER initiatives. These findings indicate that infrastructure and institutional readiness are crucial for OER to thrive Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Participatory Knowledge Production OER enhances educational equity by allowing learners and educators to co-create and share resources, particularly in community-based and higher education settings.

In Brazil, participatory OER projects have enabled marginalized communities to contribute to content creation. India's grassroots digital literacy campaigns empower rural teachers to use and remix OER. In Nigeria, there is growing interest among youth-led initiatives and open access advocates to use OER for inclusive education. The participatory nature of OER challenges traditional top-down knowledge dissemination and promotes equity and inclusion in meaningful ways. Across Nigeria, India, and Brazil, OER is emerging as a catalyst for reimagining education—making it more accessible, inclusive, and context-sensitive. While infrastructural and policy challenges remain, the potential of OER to empower learners, educators, and communities across the Global South is evident.

Conclusion

Open Educational Resources (OER) present a transformative opportunity for democratizing knowledge across the Global South by expanding access to quality, affordable, and culturally relevant education. As demonstrated in the cases of Nigeria, India, and Brazil, OER can bridge educational inequalities by enabling inclusive, participatory, and localized learning. Despite challenges such as digital divides, policy gaps, and limited infrastructure, the use of OER fosters equity and empowers communities to co-create and adapt knowledge to their own contexts. OER not only offer open access to learning materials but also challenge the dominance of traditional knowledge hierarchies by promoting pluralism and the integration of indigenous and marginalized voices. The sustainability and scalability of OER initiatives in the Global South depend on strategic investments in infrastructure, supportive policy environments, and collaborative efforts among governments, institutions, and communities. Ultimately, OER serve not only as educational tools but as instruments of social justice—unlocking pathways to lifelong learning, empowerment, and equitable development across diverse societies.

Recommendations

Enhance Infrastructure and Digital Access

Governments and educational institutions in the Global South, particularly in countries like Nigeria, India, and Brazil, should invest in robust digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity, hardware, and electricity access, to support equitable engagement with OER platforms. Promote Localization and Culturally Relevant Content Stakeholders should prioritize the creation and adaptation of OER in local languages and cultural contexts. This involves involving local educators, scholars, and communities in content development to ensure the materials are pedagogically relevant and socially inclusive. Establish Supportive Policies and Institutional Frameworks National and institutional policies should explicitly promote OER integration through open licensing standards, funding incentives, and professional development programs for educators. Ministries of education should develop national OER strategies that align with broader educational goals. Encourage Collaborative and Participatory Knowledge Production

OER initiatives should foster partnerships between universities, NGOs, and communities to promote participatory approaches in knowledge creation. This includes supporting community-based repositories and collaborative authoring tools to diversify knowledge sources and practices. Monitor and evaluate impact on ongoing research and evaluation mechanisms should be established to track the usage, effectiveness, and challenges of OER implementation. Data-driven assessments will help refine strategies and ensure OER initiatives meet their equity and access objectives.

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BRIDGING ETHNIC DIVIDES THROUGH EDUCATION: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR POST-ELECTION CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined how ethnic tensions and electoral violence continue to undermine Nigeria's democratic consolidation, particularly in Lagos State where ethnic identity fundamentally drives political mobilization patterns. This study examines digital civic education's efficacy in mitigating electoral violence and fostering interethnic understanding following the 2023 general elections. Employing a mixed-methods approach across six ethnically diverse local government areas, we analyzed responses from 400 participants using correlation and regression analyses to assess the impact of digital engagement on electoral peacebuilding. Statistical analysis reveals that digital civic education significantly reduces electoral violence ($r = 0.42$, $\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$) and ethnic tensions ($r = 0.38$, $\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.15$), explaining 18% and 15% of variance respectively in peacebuilding outcomes. Technology utilization, particularly social media platforms accessed by 69% of respondents, demonstrates substantial predictive power for inter-ethnic understanding ($r = 0.41$, $\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$) and peaceful electoral participation ($r = 0.37$, $\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.13$). High digital accessibility, evidenced by 90.5% smartphone ownership

facilitates widespread civic engagement across ethnic boundaries. The moderate correlation coefficients indicates that while digital interventions significantly impact electoral peacebuilding, comprehensive approaches combining technological solutions with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms remain essential. Findings support integrating technology-driven civic education into Nigeria's electoral framework and recommends that INEC should partner with digital platforms with educational institutions like the National Open University of Nigeria to develop evidence-based digital peace education strategies that transcend ethnic divisions through shared civic values promotion.

Keywords: Digital civic education, electoral violence, ethnic tensions, technology, Lagos State, peacebuilding

Introduction

Nigeria's 2023 general elections in Lagos State exemplified the destructive intersection of ethnic identity and electoral politics. As the nation's economic hub hosting diverse populations—predominantly Yoruba alongside significant Igbo and other ethnic communities—Lagos experienced intense ethnic polarization during electoral processes. Political actors exploited ethnic sentiments, transforming democratic contests into identity-based struggles that undermined electoral integrity and democratic principles. Traditional electoral peacebuilding approaches have proven inadequate, focusing reactively on violence suppression rather than addressing underlying causes. The proliferation of digital platforms for political engagement presents unprecedented opportunities to revolutionize civic education delivery. However, these same platforms amplify misinformation and ethnic-based hate speech, creating complex challenges for electoral stability.

This study examines digital civic education's potential to mitigate ethnic tensions and electoral violence in Lagos State. Specifically, we evaluate how digital platforms influence voter perceptions and interethnic relations during electoral processes, analyzing technology's capacity to foster issue-based political engagement beyond ethnic considerations.The research addresses three critical questions: How can digital civic education mitigate ethnic tensions and electoral violence? What role does technology play in fostering interethnic understanding? How can findings inform policy frameworks for sustainable electoral peacebuilding?

Conceptual Clarification

Digital Civic Education

Digital civic education refers to the use of digital technologies—such as social media, mobile apps, online platforms and e-learning tools—to teach citizens about electoral processes, governance, and civic responsibilities. In Nigeria, such tools have been utilised to enhance political literacy, particularly among youths, improve voter turnout, and reduce misinformation (Dele Dada et al., 2023; Tribune Online, 2023). By making civic knowledge accessible in multiple languages and formats, these tools help bridge ethnic divides in Lagos, fostering inclusive post-election engagement and understanding among diverse communities.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence involves threats, intimidation, or physical harm used to manipulate electoral outcomes or suppress voter participation. In Nigeria, especially in Lagos, electoral violence often takes ethnic dimensions, manifesting through ballot snatching, physical attacks, and voter suppression along ethnic lines (Ugbudian, 2022; Tribune Online, 2022). Digital technology, including incident reporting apps and real-time mapping platforms, is increasingly deployed to track and reduce such violence, offering tools for early warning and coordinated response.

Ethnic Tensions

Ethnic tensions refer to the friction and mistrust between different ethnic groups, particularly when political, economic, or social advantages are perceived to favour one group over others. In Lagos, a multi-ethnic urban hub, elections frequently become a flashpoint for such tensions, especially when political campaigns exploit ethnic narratives (Inobemhe et al., 2023; Ugbudian, 2022). Leveraging digital civic education can help counter this by promoting narratives of national unity, shared civic identity, and respectful coexistence.

Technology

In the context of this study, technology refers specifically to digital communication tools such as smartphones, social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook), and mobile-based applications that facilitate information sharing, civic education, and community engagement. These tools have played a pivotal role in Nigeria's electoral processes, particularly in urban centres like Lagos, where mobile penetration is high.

Social media was notably used during the 2023 general elections for real-time updates, fact-checking, voter mobilisation, and even tracking incidents of violence (Inobemhe et al., 2023; Tribune Online, 2023). For post-election conflict resolution, such platforms serve as channels for dialogue, peace messaging, and ethnic inclusion. Civic influencers, civil society groups, and religious leaders now use mobile technologies to dispel misinformation, address ethnic incitement, and promote national unity. By enabling rapid communication across ethnic lines, these digital tools help bridge societal divides and support community healing in the aftermath of electoral disputes.

Ethnic Identity and Electoral Behavior

Ethnic identity fundamentally shapes electoral behavior in Nigeria through political party affiliations, candidate selection, and voting preferences. Political elites exploit ethnic affiliations to consolidate support, framing competition as ethnic struggle rather than ideological contest (Fearon & Laitin, 2000). This phenomenon manifests prominently in Lagos, where Yoruba, Igbo, and other ethnic groups exhibit distinct voting patterns driven by historical grievances and contemporary political dynamics. Ethnic-based mobilization creates voting blocs where political loyalty supersedes policy preferences, exacerbating polarization and contributing to post-election violence. When ethnic groups perceive electoral defeat as systemic marginalization, tensions escalate into voter intimidation and electoral disputes (Chineyemba et al., 2024). The 2023 Lagos elections demonstrated this pattern through ethnic-based misinformation campaigns that fueled inter-community hostility.

Electoral Violence Dynamics

Electoral violence in Nigeria stems from intense political competition, socioeconomic inequalities, and ethnic division instrumentalization. Höglund (2009) identifies weak institutional frameworks, political exclusion, and ethnic competition as primary drivers. Political elites manipulate these factors to incite violence, using intimidation to shape electoral outcomes. Violence manifestations range from physical attacks to strategic misinformation dissemination. Civil society reports indicate that during 2023 elections, certain Lagos communities faced targeted threats aimed at suppressing opposition votes (Eke & Agbaje, 2024). Digital platforms played dual roles—facilitating civic education while spreading ethnic-based misinformation that heightened tensions.

Digital Civic Education Framework

Digital civic education integration represents a strategic approach to reducing electoral violence and promoting informed participation. These initiatives leverage social media,

online platforms, and mobile technology to provide critical electoral information, democratic rights education, and political accountability promotion (Boulianne, 2019). Research demonstrates that digital civic education access improves voter awareness and reduces misinformation influence. Nigeria's INEC and civil society organizations have implemented digital voter education initiatives, including the successful "Vote Not Fight" campaign that encouraged peaceful youth participation (Okoli & Hassan, 2024). However, intervention impact remains constrained by digital illiteracy and unequal resource access among marginalized populations.

Theoretical Framework

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) explains how individuals derive self-identity from group membership, leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. In electoral contexts, this theory illuminates how ethnic identity influences political affiliations, shaping voting patterns and electoral conflicts. When political competition aligns with ethnic divisions, electoral contests become group dominance struggles rather than issue-based engagements.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze ethnic identity's relationship with electoral violence in Lagos State's 2023 elections. Data collection occurred across six strategically selected Local Government Areas with significant ethnic diversity: Alimosho, Ojo, Eti-Osa, Mushin, Surulere, and Oshodi-Isolo. Stratified random sampling ensured adequate representation across ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes. We collected 400 valid responses through structured questionnaires incorporating closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. Qualitative data came from in-depth interviews with electoral officials, political analysts, community leaders, and security personnel. Quantitative analysis employed descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression modeling using SPSS version 26. Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between ethnic identity and voting behavior, while regression models assessed ethnic identity's influence on electoral violence. The analysis identified qualitative response patterns, providing insights into ethnic identity's role in electoral violence.

Data Presentation

Demographic Profile

Table 1: Relevant Demographics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	49.5
	Female	169	42.3
	Prefer not to say	33	8.3
Age Group	18-25	115	28.7
	26-35	115	28.7
	36-45	97	24.3
	46-55	57	14.2
	56 and above	23	5.8
Educational Level	No Formal Education	17	4.3
	Primary	7	1.8
	Secondary	92	23.0
	Tertiary	188	47.0
	Postgraduate	95	23.8
Ethnic Identity	Yoruba	139	34.8
	Igbo	154	38.5
	Hausa	42	10.5
	Others	65	16.3
Occupation	Students	85	21.3
	Employed	149	37.3
	Unemployed	21	5.3
	Retired	5	1.3

Source: Field Survey, November - 2024

The sample comprised 49.5% males and 42.3% females, with 55.5% under 35 years old. Educational levels were high, with 70.8% having tertiary or postgraduate education. Ethnic distribution included Igbo (38.5%), Yoruba (34.8%), Hausa (10.5%), and others (16.3%). Employment status showed 37.3% employed and 21.3% students, with 90.5% owning smartphones, indicating high digital accessibility.

Digital Civic Education Impact

Table 2: Statistical Analysis of Digital Civic Education Impact on Electoral peacebuilding

Dependent Variable	Agreement Level (%)	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-Value	Regression Coefficient (β)	R - Squared (R^2)	Significance Level	Variance Explained (%)
Electoral Violence Reduction	69.0	0.42	< 0.01	0.44	0.18	P < 0.001	18.0
Ethnic Tension Reduction	-	0.38	< 0.01	0.39	0.15	P < 0.001	15.0

Source: Field Survey, November 2024.

Note: *All correlations significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed). Sample size N = 400*

Statistical Interpretation

Results demonstrate that 69.0% of respondents agreed that digital civic education reduces electoral violence. Correlation analysis revealed moderate positive relationships between digital civic education and ethnic tension reduction ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$) and electoral violence reduction ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$). The regression analysis confirmed digital civic education as a significant predictor of ethnic tension reduction ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.15$) and electoral violence reduction ($\beta = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$), explaining substantial variance in peacebuilding outcomes.

Chart 4.1: Digital Civic Education Statistical Impact Analysis

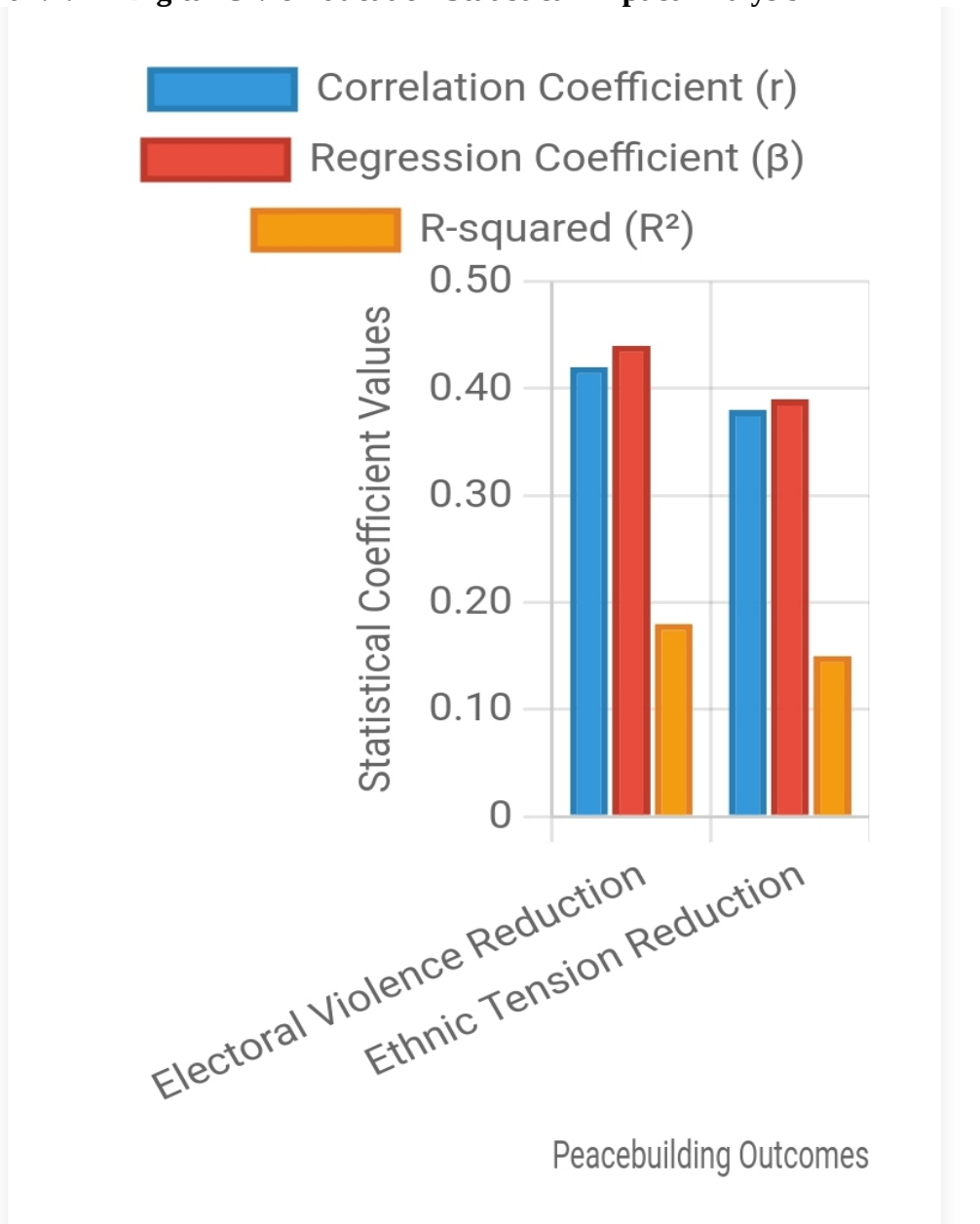


Fig. 4.1: Comparative analysis of correlation coefficients and variance explained by digital civic education in electoral peacebuilding outcomes

Technology's Role in Inter-ethnic Understanding

Table 3: Statistical Analysis of Technology Impact on Inter-ethnic Relations and Electoral Participation

Dependent Variable	Technology Usage (%)	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-Value	Regression Coefficient (β)	R - Squared (R^2)	Significance Level	Variance Explained (%)
Inter-ethnic Understanding	69.0 (Social media)	0.41	< 0.01	0.43	0.18	P < 0.001	18.0
Peaceful Electoral Participation		0.37	< 0.01	0.36	0.13	P < 0.001	13.0
Smartphone Ownership	90.5	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Survey, November 2024

Note: *All correlations significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed). Sample size N = 400*

Statistical Interpretation

Technology use, particularly social media (69.0% of respondents), significantly influenced interethnic engagement. Correlation analysis showed moderate positive relationships between technology use and interethnic understanding ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and peaceful electoral participation ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$). Regression modeling revealed technology use as a significant predictor of interethnic understanding ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.18$) and peaceful electoral participation ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.13$), highlighting digital platforms' transformative potential.

Chart 4.2: Technology Impact on inter-ethnic Relations and Electoral Participation

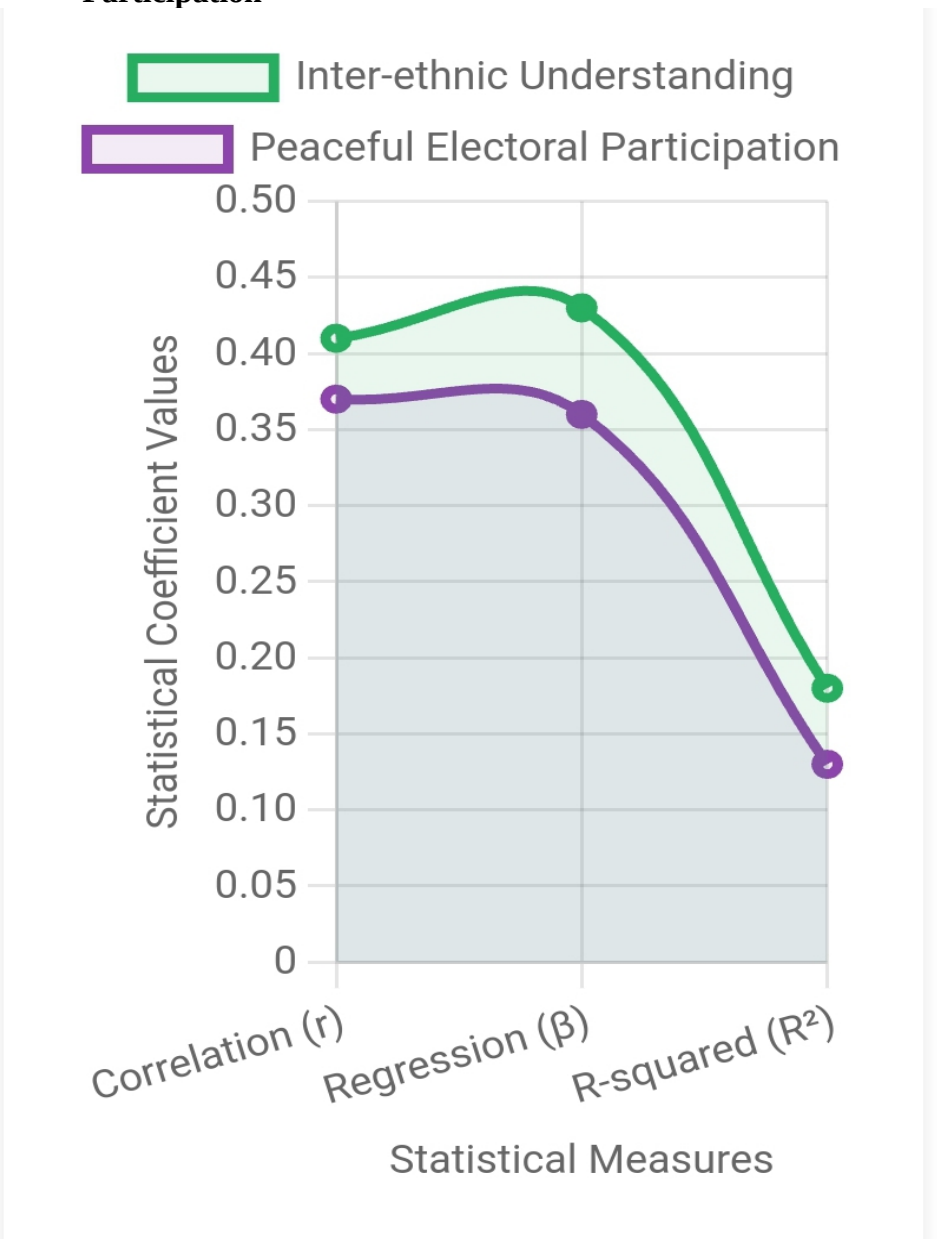


Fig. 4.2: Statistical relationships between technology use and inter-ethnic understanding and peaceful electoral participation

Findings

These findings underscore digital civic education's critical role in electoral peacebuilding. The strong statistical relationships between digital engagement and conflict reduction align with theoretical expectations from Social Identity Theory, suggesting that technology-mediated interventions can transcend ethnic boundaries by promoting shared civic values. The predominance of social media as a civic engagement tool reflects Nigeria's digital landscape, where platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter serve as primary information sources. However, the same platforms that facilitate civic education also enable misinformation spread, creating implementation challenges for digital peacebuilding initiatives. The moderate R^2 values indicate that while digital civic education significantly impacts electoral peacebuilding, other factors remain influential. This suggests the need for comprehensive approaches combining digital interventions with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates digital civic education's transformative potential in mitigating ethnic tensions and electoral violence in Lagos State. The empirical evidence supports integrating technology-driven civic education into Nigeria's electoral framework while addressing persistent challenges.

Recommendations

Policy Integration: INEC should partner with digital platforms to disseminate multilingual civic education materials focusing on issue-based rather than ethnic-based voting. Digital Literacy Enhancement: The National Orientation Agency should launch comprehensive digital literacy campaigns, incorporating media literacy into educational curricula. Regulatory Framework: The Nigerian Communications Commission should collaborate with social media companies to combat online hate speech while establishing real-time fact-checking mechanisms. Institutional Capacity: The National Open University of Nigeria should lead digital civic education program development, leveraging its technological infrastructure for national peacebuilding initiatives. Monitoring Systems: Big data analytics should be deployed for electoral violence early warning systems, enabling proactive interventions.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL RULERS IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN KOGI EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

Traditional rulers have historically played a vital role in governance, conflict resolution, and the maintenance of peace and security in Nigeria. In Kogi East Senatorial District, these leaders act as intermediaries between the government and local communities, leveraging their influence to foster stability. However, increasing security challenges such as communal clashes, herder-farmer conflicts, and armed banditry raise concerns about their effectiveness. This study assesses the role of traditional rulers in maintaining peace and security in Kogi East by examining their contributions, identifying challenges, and exploring prospects for enhancing their roles. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to community members, government officials, and security personnel, alongside in-depth interviews with selected traditional rulers. Secondary data from government reports and scholarly literature were also analyzed. The study is anchored on Conflict Resolution Theory, which highlights the role of traditional institutions in mediating disputes, and Social Capital Theory, which explains how trust and relationships built by

traditional rulers contribute to peace and security. Findings reveal that traditional rulers play a significant role in conflict mediation, intelligence gathering, and fostering communal harmony. However, their effectiveness is hindered by political interference, lack of legal authority, and inadequate resources. Despite these challenges, many communities still rely on them for dispute resolution. Additionally, weak collaboration between traditional institutions and government security agencies further limits their impact. The study recommends strengthening the legal framework to empower traditional rulers, enhancing collaboration between traditional institutions and security agencies, providing financial and logistical support, and promoting community-driven security initiatives. These measures will enhance the effectiveness of traditional rulers in maintaining peace and security in Kogi East.

Keywords*:* Traditional rulers, Kogi East, governance, social cohesion, peace

Introduction

Traditional rulers through traditional institutions are regarded as custodians of cultural heritage and community values, they are acknowledged for their vital role in maintaining peace and security. One of the primary roles of traditional rulers historically has been conflict resolution and mediation. They acted as impartial arbiters, employing customary laws and practices to address disputes among community members. Respected for their wisdom and knowledge of local customs, traditional rulers played a crucial role in reconciling conflicting parties and restoring harmony (Smith, 2015). Peace and security are seen as essential prerequisites for global economic growth and stability, create favorable environments for investors and businesses, thereby fostering international trade and economic cooperation. Furthermore, peace is crucial in addressing humanitarian issues, such as poverty, hunger, and disease, as it allows for more effective resource allocation to alleviate sufferings and promote sustainable development (Smith, 2023). Similarly, peace and security contribute to preventing mass displacements and refugee crises. Stable conditions allow people to live in their homes without fear, reducing the need for migration due to conflict (Innocent, 2022).

At the local/community level, peace and security form the bedrock of community development. Stable environments create the necessary conditions for investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, facilitating overall progress. Peace further fosters social cohesion by mitigating tensions and fostering a sense of belonging within communities, fostering collaboration and collective efforts towards common goals (Igwubor, 2021). Moreover, residents in peaceful and secure communities experience an improved quality of life, enjoying better mental and physical well-being along with

increased opportunities for personal and professional growth. Similarly, insecurity and conflict often lead to the displacement of communities, causing a significant humanitarian crisis such as, internally displaced persons (IDPs), loss of lives, face challenges related to shelter, food, and healthcare affecting individuals and families. Casualties contribute to grief, trauma, and long-term psychological consequences. Insecurity disrupts economic activities, including agriculture, trade, and investment. This hampers economic growth and exacerbates poverty and unemployment (Omitola, Akinrinde, & Omitola, 2021).

Kogi's security tapestry remains complex, with anxieties woven into daily life. Kidnappings, particularly in Kogi East, grip rural communities, often perpetrated by armed gangs exploiting porous borders. Farmer-herder clashes simmer, fueled by competition for resources and ethnic tensions (Agunbiade, 2023). Political thuggery flares during electioneering, with accusations of intimidation and violence. Though security forces are deployed, their effectiveness is uneven, leaving locals feeling vulnerable. The economic toll is profound, crippling agriculture and stifling investment. While pockets of relative peace exist, Kogi's path to true security requires addressing root causes like poverty, unemployment, and inter-communal discord. Hope flickers in community-driven initiatives fostering dialogue and peace-building, but the journey ahead remains arduous (Ojonugwa, 2023). The nexus between traditional rulers and the maintenance of peace and security is deeply rooted in their historical roles, cultural influence, and community-centric approach to governance. Traditional rulers, often serving as custodians of customs and traditions, play a vital role in fostering stability and order within their communities (Okonkwo, 2019). The delicate interplay between traditional rulers and democratic policies in Kogi State, Nigeria, presents a complex and multifaceted challenge. While these figures hold historical and cultural significance, their integration into a democratic framework raises questions about legitimacy, power dynamics, and potential contradictions. Udeorah, & Vincent, (2017) argues that the 1979 Nigerian Constitution acknowledges traditional rulers but lacks clear definitions of roles, powers, and resources. This ambiguity creates confusion and inconsistencies in application across states, including Kogi. Traditional rulers in various regions, including Nigeria, have historically played a crucial role in resolving security challenges within their communities. Drawing on centuries-old customs and wisdom, these leaders employ a range of mechanisms and strategies to address conflicts, promote social order, and ensure the safety and well-being of their people.

However, in recent times, challenges in Kogi East suggest these methods might be less effective. Factors such as changing demographics, external influences, and modernisation could weaken the traditional structures, making it harder for local methods to address contemporary security issues. Additionally, the impact of political

instability, economic disparities, and external threats may necessitate more adaptive and comprehensive strategies (Ejeh, 2023). In Kogi East Senatorial District, the period between 2015 and 2023 was marked by a significant rise in security challenges, including communal clashes, land disputes, kidnapping, political violence, and criminal activities. Despite their potential role, traditional rulers have struggled to maintain peace, as seen in the persistence of conflict and instability in the district. It is against this backdrop that the study examined the traditional rulers' role in maintaining peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District, Kogi State, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2023.

Conceptual Clarification

Governance

Governance encompasses all the overall complex system or framework of processes, functions, structures, rules, laws and norms born out of the relationships, interactions, power dynamics and communication within an organised group of individuals. It sets the boundaries of acceptable conduct and practices of different actors of the group and controls their decision-making processes through the creation and enforcement of rules and guidelines. Many social scientists prefer to use the term "governance" when discussing the process of governing, because it covers the whole range of institutions and involved relationships (Pierre, 2020).

Peace

Peace is a state of harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. In a societal sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict (such as war) and freedom from fear of violence between individuals or groups. Galtung (1996) argues that inner qualities such as tranquility, patience, respect, compassion, kindness, self-control, courage, moderation, forgiveness, equanimity, and the ability to see the big picture can promote peace within an individual, regardless of the external circumstances of their life.

Social Cohesion

Viewed as the glue that binds societies, social cohesion is considered an essential ingredient to address common societal challenges. As society’s social, demographic and economic structures change, policymakers, researchers and practitioners have increasingly shifted away from focusing uniquely on economic growth and have instead concerned themselves with more holistic notions of social cohesion. Consequently, social cohesion is generally conceived as a multi-dimensional construct, and together, these dimensions are considered crucial to address common societal challenges.

Academic literature likewise supports the importance of social cohesion, linking higher social cohesion with several positive social outcomes, including environmental sustainability, social stability, increased overall health, or an effective response to developmental challenges (Mac Fadden, Santana, Vázquez-Cano, & López-Meneses, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Preservation and *Social Cohesion theories* which are used as the basis of this analysis have been propounded by various scholars and thinkers over time. One of the notable figures associated with this concept is Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). The theory highlights the role of traditional rulers as custodians of cultural values and traditions within communities. This perspective emphasises that by safeguarding and perpetuating cultural norms and practices, traditional leaders actively contribute to social cohesion. According to Samuel Huntington's influential work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, cultural identity forms a fundamental basis for societal stability. Traditional rulers, by preserving cultural foundations, foster a shared sense of identity and community among their constituents. However, this theory is not without its limitations. Critics argue that an overemphasis on cultural preservation may lead to cultural homogeneity and resist adaptation to societal changes.

Methodology

The methodology encompasses both quantitative and qualitative components, ensuring a holistic exploration of the subject matter. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to facilitate the exploration of nuanced perspectives, cultural intricacies, and the contextual relevance of traditional leadership in Kogi East Senatorial district of Kogi State. The population for this study is made up of 400 the traditional rulers, youth leaders, women leaders across the three Senatorial districts of Kogi State while the sample size for the study was 395 while only 373 of the respondents completed and returned the questionnaire to the researcher. The study employed descriptive statistics of simple percentages as its method of data analysis using SPSS while statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Data ware analysed based on the returned questionnaires.

Table 1: The approaches of traditional rulers towards maintenance of peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District

Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
8. Traditional rulers predominantly use customary law and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to address conflicts in Kogi East Senatorial District.	5 (1.34%)	15 (4.02%)	30 (8.08%)	150 (40.32)	173 (46.26)	4.08
9. Traditional rulers engage in community dialogue and mediation as a primary approach to maintaining peace and security.	10 (2.68%)	20 (5.37%)	40 (10.74%)	150 (40/32%)	153 (41.16%)	3.89
10 Cultural events and ceremonies organized by traditional rulers play a significant role in promoting unity and reducing tensions among community members.	5 (1.34%)	10 (2.68%)	40 (10.74%)	150 (40/32%)	168 (45.11%)	4.05
11 Collaboration between traditional rulers and local security agencies enhances the effectiveness of security measures in Kogi East Senatorial District.	8 (2.15%)	12 (3.22%)	25 (6.71%)	150 (40/32%)	178 (46.60%)	4.13
12 Traditional rulers leverage their authority and influence to mobilize community members in support of peacebuilding initiatives.	6 (1.61%)	15 (4.02%)	30 (8.05%)	150 (40/32%)	172 (46.11%)	4.07
13 Education and sensitization programs led by traditional rulers are effective in raising awareness about the importance of peace and security.	7 (1.88%)	18 (4.82%)	35 (9.38%)	150 (40/32%)	163 (43.69%)	3.99
14 The involvement of traditional rulers in youth and women's empowerment initiatives contributes to the reduction of crime and violence in the community.	5 (1.34%)	10 (2.68%)	25 (6.71%)	150 (40/32%)	183 (49.32%)	4.17

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 assesses data on respondents' perceptions of various approaches employed by traditional rulers to maintain peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District. The responses are recorded on a Likert scale, with the options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree - SD) to 5 (Strongly Agree - SA), along with the mean score for each statement.

Use of customary law and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms revealed the high mean score of 4.08 suggests that there is a strong agreement among respondents that traditional rulers predominantly use customary law and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to address conflicts in the district. The majority of respondents (86.58%, with 40.32% agreeing and 46.26% strongly agreeing) support this statement, indicating that these methods are widely recognized and valued for their effectiveness in conflict resolution. In-depth interview one of the traditional rulers narrated that: in our communities, traditional rulers employ several approaches to maintain peace and security. One of the primary methods is the use of customary law and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. These are age- old practices passed down through generations, and they have proven to be quite effective in resolving conflicts at the local level. We prioritize dialogue and mediation, often involving the conflicting parties in discussions to reach amicable solutions. This approach not only resolves the immediate conflict but also fosters a sense of community and mutual respect.

Engagement in community dialogue and mediation also shows the mean score of 3.89 indicates a general agreement that traditional rulers engage in community dialogue and mediation as primary approaches to maintaining peace and security. A significant proportion of respondents (81.48%, with 40.32% agreeing and 41.16% strongly agreeing) affirm the importance of dialogue and mediation in promoting peace, although the slightly lower mean suggests that there is room for enhancing the effectiveness or visibility of these efforts. In a key informant interview, this was corroborated by one of the first class first that; we collaborate with government and security agencies through regular meetings and consultations. Our role includes providing intelligence on potential threats, offering cultural insights that aid in conflict resolution, and facilitating dialogue between the community and authorities. Our conflict resolution mechanisms include mediation, arbitration, and traditional dispute resolution practices, such as the council of elders and local arbitration panels. These methods have proven effective due to their cultural relevance and the respect they command among community members.

Role of cultural events and ceremonies reveals the mean score of 4.05 reflects a strong belief that cultural events and ceremonies organized by traditional rulers play a significant role in promoting unity and reducing tensions among community members.

The vast majority of respondents (85.43%, with 40.32% agreeing and 45.11% strongly agreeing) see these cultural activities as crucial in fostering social cohesion and preventing conflict. In an interview with another royal father, he explained that:Cultural events and ceremonies are essential in our approach to peace and security. These events, such as festivals, communal dances, and rites of passage, are opportunities for the community to come together in celebration and reflection. They strengthen social bonds and create a sense of unity and belonging. During these events, we often take the opportunity to educate the community about the importance of peace, respect for one another, and adherence to our cultural values. These shared experiences reduce tensions and prevent conflicts from arising, as they remind everyone of our collective identity and heritage.

Collaboration with local security agencies with the highest mean score of 4.13, this statement indicates that respondents strongly agree that collaboration between traditional rulers and local security agencies enhances the effectiveness of security measures in the district. The overwhelming support (87.92%, with 40.32% agreeing and 47.60% strongly agreeing) underscores the critical role that such collaborations play in maintaining law and order. In an in-depth interview with one of the first-class chiefs, he substantiates this that; collaboration with formal security agencies is crucial, especially when it comes to addressing more serious security threats that go beyond our capabilities. We work closely with local police and other security personnel by providing intelligence, reporting incidents, and sometimes participating in joint community patrols. However, this collaboration can sometimes be challenging due to limited resources and communication gaps. We believe that strengthening this partnership, with regular meetings and better communication channels, would greatly enhance our overall security efforts.

Education and sensitization programs show a respondent mean score of 3.99 indicates that there is a general agreement that education and sensitization programs led by traditional rulers are effective in raising awareness about the importance of peace and security. While slightly lower than other statements, a significant portion of respondents (84.01%, with 40.32% agreeing and 43.69% strongly agreeing) still view these programs as important, suggesting that they play a vital role in the community's overall peace and security strategy. In an in-depth interview with a traditional ruler expressed that; we educate and sensitize our people through regular meetings and joint initiatives by investing in community development, education, and youth empowerment programs to address some of the underlying issues that lead to insecurity.

In summary, the data indicates that traditional rulers in Kogi East Senatorial District are highly regarded for their efforts in maintaining peace and security through various

approaches. These include the use of customary law, community dialogue, cultural events, collaboration with security agencies, and the mobilization of community members. Their involvement in education, sensitization, and empowerment programs is also seen as crucial in reducing conflict and crime. The consistently high mean scores across the statements suggest a strong consensus among respondents that traditional rulers play a pivotal role in the stability of the region.

Table 2: Approaches of traditional rulers in maintenance of peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District

	Items	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Mean
15	Limited communication and collaboration with security agencies hinder the ability of traditional rulers to respond promptly to security threats.	50 (13.41%)	60 (16.10%)	70 (18.77%)	80 (21.45%)	113 (30.27%)	3.76
16	The involvement of traditional rulers in community policing initiatives significantly enhances local security outcomes in Kogi East Senatorial District.	60 (16.10%)	70 (18.77%)	80 (21.45%)	65 (17.45%)	98 (26.23)	3.89
17	Traditional rulers' efforts to promote cultural values and norms effectively reduce crime rates and antisocial behavior in their communities.	80 (21.45%)	90 (24.16%)	75 (20.11%)	50 (13.41%)	78 (20.87%)	3.61
18	The participation of traditional rulers in local government security meetings improves the coordination and implementation of security measures.	70 (18.77%)	75 (20.11%)	60 (16.10%)	90 (24.16%)	78 (20.87%)	3.84
19	Communities with active engagement from traditional rulers experience lower incidences of violent conflicts compared to those with minimal traditional leadership involvement.	55 (14.76%)	65 (17.45%)	70 (18.77%)	85 (22.85%)	98 (26.23%)	3.77
20	Traditional rulers' mediation in intergroup conflicts leads to long-lasting peace agreements and reduced tensions between ethnic or religious groups.	70 (18.77%)	90 (24.16%)	65 (17.45%)	45 (12.08%)	103 (27.54%)	3.68
21	Regular cultural and educational programs led by traditional rulers foster a stronger sense of community, leading to enhanced peace and security.	80 (21.45%)	100 (21.45%)	110 (29/33%)	40 (10.73%)	33 (8.81%)	3.17

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 presents the respondents' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of various approaches employed by traditional rulers in maintaining peace and security in the Kogi East Senatorial District. The responses are captured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and a mean score is calculated for each statement. Limited communication and collaboration with security agencies shows the mean score of 3.76 indicates that respondents generally agree that limited communication and collaboration with security agencies hinder the ability of traditional rulers to respond promptly to security threats. A significant portion of respondents (51.72%) agrees or strongly agrees with this statement, suggesting that better coordination between traditional rulers and security agencies could enhance the effectiveness of security measures. However, the presence of a notable percentage (18.77%) of neutral responses indicates that some respondents may be undecided or perceive varying degrees of effectiveness depending on the context. Also, the mean score of 3.89 suggests that there is a moderate to strong agreement among respondents that the involvement of traditional rulers in community policing initiatives significantly enhances local security outcomes. With 43.68% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, it highlights the positive impact that traditional rulers can have when they actively participate in community-based security efforts. Nevertheless, the relatively high proportion of respondents (35.22%) who disagree or remain neutral points to possible challenges or limitations in implementing these initiatives effectively across the district. Findings from the key format interview of the council of chief in Anyigba, the chairman supported the majority of the respondents that: traditional rulers use a variety of conflict resolution mechanisms, such as mediation, dialogue, and traditional arbitration. These methods are effective because they are grounded in local customs and are perceived as fair and just by the community. Community trust in traditional rulers is high, which greatly enhances our ability to maintain peace. When people trust us, they are more likely to accept our decisions and abide by them, reducing the likelihood of conflicts escalating. We face challenges such as limited authority, especially when government policies conflict with traditional practices. Additionally, the influence of external actors and the complexity of modern security threats pose significant challenges to our peacekeeping efforts.

Promotion of cultural values and norms mean score of 3.61 indicates a general agreement that traditional rulers' efforts to promote cultural values and norms effectively reduce crime rates and antisocial behavior in their communities. However, the distribution of responses shows that opinions are somewhat divided, with 45.61% of respondents either disagreeing or remaining neutral. This split in opinion suggests that while cultural values and norms are important, their impact on crime reduction may be inconsistent or less pronounced in certain areas. Similarly, the mean score of 3.84 indicates that respondents generally agree that the participation of traditional rulers in

local government security meetings improves the coordination and implementation of security measures. About 45.03% of respondents either agree or strongly agree, pointing to the importance of involving traditional leaders in formal security discussions. However, the 38.88% of respondents who disagree or remain neutral suggest that there may be challenges in the practical implementation or effectiveness of these meetings. Active engagement in communities revealed the mean score of 3.77 reflects a general consensus that communities with active engagement from traditional rulers' experience lower incidences of violent conflicts compared to those with minimal traditional leadership involvement. The fact that 49.08% of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement highlights the perceived importance of active traditional leadership in conflict prevention. Nevertheless, the 32.21% of respondents who disagree or remain neutral may indicate that the impact of traditional rulers can vary based on the context or the specific community.

A mean score of 3.68 indicates that respondents generally agree that traditional rulers' mediation in intergroup conflicts leads to long-lasting peace agreements and reduced tensions between ethnic or religious groups. However, the distribution of responses shows that 41.61% of respondents disagree or remain neutral, suggesting that while traditional mediation is valued, its effectiveness may be perceived differently across different groups or situations.

Finally, the table suggests that traditional rulers' involvement in peace and security matters is generally viewed positively, with a majority of respondents recognizing their efforts in various capacities. However, the effectiveness of these approaches appears to vary, with some methods being more universally supported (e.g., collaboration with security agencies and participation in local government meetings) and others, such as cultural and educational programs, receiving more mixed reviews. The data points to the importance of enhancing communication, involvement in community policing, and mediation efforts to maximize the impact of traditional leadership on peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District. The study examined the impact of traditional rulers and maintenance of peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The results indicated that the majority of respondents acknowledge that traditional rulers has considerably impacts in maintain peace and security in Nigeria. Firstly, communities with active traditional leadership experience higher levels of peace and security compared to those with less traditional involvement. The key impacts noted include the use of customary law, community dialogue, cultural events, collaboration with security agencies, and the mobilization of community members. Their involvement in education, sensitization, and empowerment programs is also seen as crucial in reducing conflict and crime. The consistently high mean scores across the statements suggest a strong consensus among respondents that traditional rulers play a critical role in the stability of the region.

Conclusion

Building sustainable peace is a challenging endeavour because conflict drivers are characteristically multivariate (Nwosu, Jarikre, & Orebiyi, 2025). The role of traditional rulers in the maintenance of peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District remains significant despite evolving political and administrative structures. Traditional rulers serve as custodians of culture, mediators in conflict resolution, and facilitators of community development. Their deep-rooted influence and historical legitimacy enable them to address local disputes effectively, foster social cohesion, and complement formal security agencies. However, challenges such as political interference, lack of constitutional backing, and limited resources hinder their effectiveness. Strengthening their roles through legal recognition, capacity building, and collaboration with government agencies can enhance their contributions to peace and security.

In conclusion, traditional rulers remain indispensable in ensuring stability in Kogi East. Their roles should be reinforced through institutional support, adequate empowerment, and a defined framework for engagement with modern governance structures. This will enable them to continue serving as pillars of peace, security, and development in their communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, on the role of traditional rulers in maintaining peace and security in Kogi East Senatorial District, Nigeria, it is recommended that there is need to improve communication and collaboration between traditional rulers and formal security agencies through the establishment of regular coordination meetings, joint task forces, and information-sharing platforms. Also, it is expedient to strengthen the legal and formal recognition of traditional rulers within the broader governance framework. This could be achieved through legislation that clearly defines their roles, powers, and responsibilities in maintaining peace and security. Moreover, the study recommends regular training programmes for traditional rulers and their councils in conflict resolution, mediation, and modern security practices. This will enhance their ability to address conflicts effectively and collaborate with formal security agencies.

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STRENGTHENING WOMEN CAPACITY FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The role of governance in fostering sustainable development has gained global prominence, with gender inclusion emerging as a critical determinant of effective leadership. Despite constituting nearly half of Nigeria's population, women remain significantly underrepresented in governance, hindering national development and democratic consolidation. This study examines the barriers limiting women's participation in governance, evaluates the effectiveness of existing policies, and proposes actionable strategies for enhancing female representation in leadership roles. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights. Data from national and international reports, policy documents, and interviews with stakeholders in governance and gender advocacy were analyzed. The Marxist feminists' theory will be adopted in this research in order to understand the strength of women participation in governance that is, women capacity in good governance in any democratic setting. Our findings reveal that socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, political violence, and institutionalized discrimination are primary obstacles to women's participation in governance. The study recommends the urgency of a multi-faceted approach involving government intervention, civil society engagement, and attitudinal shifts towards gender-inclusive governance.

Key words: Governance, Gender Equity, Women's Participation, Political Representation, Affirmative Action

Introduction

The concept of governance has gained significant global attention in the last few decades, as scholars and policymakers have emphasized its role in achieving sustainable development and socio-economic progress. Governance encompasses the processes, systems, and institutions through which authority in a country is exercised, including mechanisms of accountability, rule of law, and participation of citizens (World Bank, 2021). Good governance, in particular, is characterized by principles such as transparency, accountability, efficiency, and inclusiveness. One critical aspect of inclusive governance is gender representation, as women's participation in decision-making processes is essential for the development of any democratic society (UN Women, 2022). Good governance is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development, democratic stability, and social justice. The inclusion of women in governance has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing policy effectiveness, promoting equity, and ensuring balanced socio-economic development. Globally, numerous studies have emphasized that countries with higher female representation in governance tend to perform better in areas such as economic growth, healthcare, education, and corruption reduction (World Economic Forum, 2023; UNDP, 2022). In Nigeria, the issue of women's participation in governance has been a subject of considerable discourse. Despite constituting nearly half of the population, women remain underrepresented in political and leadership positions (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2023). This disparity is largely attributed to socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, discriminatory legal frameworks, and institutional barriers that hinder women's active involvement in governance (Arowolo & Aluko, 2021). Over the years, Nigeria has made efforts to enhance women's political participation through affirmative action policies, gender advocacy programs, and legislative reforms. However, progress remains slow and inconsistent due to entrenched patriarchal structures and political marginalization (Oloyede, 2022).

The Nigerian political landscape is characterized by low female representation at all levels of government. For instance, in the 2019 general elections, only 7.3% of elected officials were women, a decline from the 2015 elections (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020). This contrasts sharply with global trends, where countries that have adopted gender-inclusive policies, such as Rwanda and South Africa, have seen significant increases in women's representation in governance (Tripp, 2021). The persistent gender gap in Nigerian governance raises concerns about the effectiveness of existing policies and the need for more comprehensive strategies to strengthen women's capacity for good governance. Strengthening women's capacity for governance involves equipping them with the necessary skills, education, resources, and institutional support to participate effectively in political and administrative roles. The importance of gender-

inclusive governance is evident in its impact on policy outcomes, social justice, and national development. Studies have shown that when women are involved in governance, there is a greater emphasis on policies related to health, education, and social welfare (Krook & Mackay, 2021). Therefore, ensuring women's active participation in governance is not only a matter of social justice but also a prerequisite for national development.

The barriers to women's participation in governance in Nigeria are multifaceted, encompassing socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, institutionalized patriarchy, and political violence. Women often encounter resistance when seeking leadership roles due to entrenched stereotypes that perceive governance as a male-dominated domain (Okafor & Adebayo, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of political party support, limited access to campaign financing, and gender-based harassment further deter women's active engagement in governance. In response to these challenges, various governmental and non-governmental initiatives have been introduced to promote gender parity in governance. Programs such as the Women's Political Empowerment Program (WPEP) and the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) aim to equip women with the necessary leadership skills and financial support to engage in politics effectively. Additionally, international organizations, including the United Nations and the African Union, have consistently advocated for the implementation of policies that advance women's representation in governance (UN Women, 2023). This study examines the various factors influencing women's participation in governance in Nigeria, evaluates existing policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing their capacity, and explores strategies for improving gender representation in leadership. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on gender and governance and provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous international and national commitments to gender equality in governance, women in Nigeria continue to face significant challenges in accessing political and leadership positions. The underrepresentation of women in governance has far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation, policy formulation, and socio-economic development. While global efforts, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment, Nigeria has yet to achieve substantial progress in this regard (UNDP, 2023). The barriers to women's participation in governance in Nigeria are multifaceted. Socio-cultural factors, such as traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms, continue to limit women's access to leadership opportunities (Ezeigbo, 2022). Additionally, economic constraints, including lack of financial resources and political funding, prevent women

from effectively competing in the political arena (Ogunyemi, 2021). Structural and institutional challenges, such as gender bias in political party structures, electoral violence, and discriminatory legal frameworks, further exacerbate the problem (Adefolake, 2022).

Despite legislative frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality, such as the National Gender Policy and the 35% affirmative action for women, implementation remains weak. There is also a lack of adequate capacity-building programs to equip women with the skills and knowledge necessary for governance (Obi, 2022). These gaps in policy and practice underscore the need for a more strategic approach to strengthening women's capacity for good governance in Nigeria. This study aims to address these concerns by analyzing the key challenges faced by women in governance, evaluating existing policies and initiatives, and proposing solutions for enhancing women's political and leadership engagement in Nigeria.

Research Questions

i. What are the major barriers to women's participation in governance in Nigeria?
ii. How effective are existing policies and programs in promoting gender-inclusive governance?
iii. What strategies can be employed to strengthening women's capacity for governance in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Paper

i. examine the key challenges hindering women's participation in governance in Nigeria.
ii. evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing women's capacity for governance.
iii. propose actionable strategies for improving women's representation and leadership roles in governance.

Significance of the paper

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on gender and governance by providing empirical insights into the challenges and opportunities for women's leadership in Nigeria. It will be beneficial to policymakers, gender advocates, and development organizations in designing and implementing more effective strategies for promoting women's participation in governance. Additionally, the study will serve as a reference for future research on gender and political leadership. For gender activists and

civil society organizations, the study highlights areas requiring advocacy and intervention to ensure gender parity in governance. It also serves as a valuable resource for academic researchers exploring the intersections of gender, governance, and policy implementation in Nigeria. Furthermore, this study contributes to global discourses on gender equality and democratic governance, offering comparative perspectives that can inform Nigeria's policy reforms and institutional strengthening efforts.

Scope of the paper

This study focuses on the participation of women in governance in Nigeria, examining both political and administrative leadership roles. It evaluates the challenges faced by women, the impact of existing policies, and strategies for strengthening women's governance capacity. The study covers the period from 2010 to 2024, analyzing data from government reports, scholarly publications, and interviews with key stakeholders. The research will examine different levels of governance, including local, state, and federal government institutions, as well as the role of political parties, civil society organizations, and international bodies in advocating for gender inclusivity. The study will also conduct a comparative analysis of best practices from other countries that have successfully enhanced women's participation in governance, drawing lessons applicable to the Nigerian context.

Women and Governance in Africa: A Comparative Perspective

The literature on women's participation in good governance in Nigeria has evolved over the years, with a growing body of work focusing on the structural and cultural barriers that limit women's involvement. Afolabi (2021) identifies socio-cultural norms as the primary constraint on women's political participation, arguing that cultural expectations around gender roles often limit women's access to political power. In a similar vein, Nwosu and Okoye (2020) point out that the economic costs of running for office, including the high cost of political campaigns and the lack of funding for women candidates, contribute significantly to their underrepresentation. The role of education and capacity building has been a focal point in recent studies. Ijeoma and Obikeze (2022) argue that education and political training programs are essential for preparing women to take on leadership roles in local government. Similarly, Chikwendu and Ogu (2023) emphasize the importance of mentorship and networking, noting that women often lack the political networks and support structures necessary to succeed in the male-dominated political arena.

Recent studies, such as those by Ijeoma and Obikeze (2022), focus on the role of education and capacity building in enhancing women's political participation. They

argue that increasing women's educational levels and providing leadership training are critical for fostering effective participation in good governance. Additionally, the work of Chikwendu and Ogu (2023) highlights the importance of political mentorship and strategic alliances in overcoming barriers to women's involvement in local politics. Historically, women's movements in Africa were primarily engaged in developmental activities focused on income generation, welfare concerns, and homemaking skills. However, recent years have witnessed a shift towards advocacy for political leadership, legislative and constitutional reforms, and civic education. For instance, the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme convened a conference in 2018 on Gender and Political Empowerment, bringing together women activists and parliamentarians from across Africa. Such discussions were rare in African political discourse during the 1980s, except in the context of post-independence movements that introduced women to the concepts of citizenship and electoral politics (Okunade, 2023).

In Sierra Leone, women played a pivotal role in advocating for democratic governance. Notably, they openly defied military authorities and organized protests demanding free and fair elections in February 2019, even amidst threats of election postponement (Bangura, 2019). Across Africa, various countries have made significant strides in increasing women's representation in parliamentary and administrative structures, thereby enhancing opportunities for women's participation in governance at different levels.

The table below presents a comparative analysis of the transition of women's representation in legislatures across different regions from the 1960s to 2000:

Table 1: Change in Representation of Women in Legislatures (Percentage Change, 1960-2000)

Region	**1960**	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**% Change (1960-2000)**
Eastern Europe/Eurasia	23.11	25.37	31.10	9.10	11.44	-50
Eastern Asia	5.98	6.33	9.16	9.88	11.92	99
Pacific	2.50	1.86	1.31	3.41	5.98	139
Middle East/North Africa	2.00	2.06	3.39	3.52	4.84	142
South Asia	1.94	2.98	4.47	5.07	5.56	186
Scandinavia	9.66	10.42	21.24	31.86	37.58	289
Western Europe	3.25	3.21	7.16	10.61	17.49	438
North America	2.90	1.35	4.35	9.85	16.40	465
Latin America	2.00	3.74	7.54	9.44	13.18	559
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.94	2.21	6.46	7.78	9.90	953
Overall	4.93	5.41	8.74	9.14	12.21	148

Source: Data compiled from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. *Women in Parliaments, 1945-2015: A World Statistical Survey*, Series "Reports and Documents," No. 23, Geneva, 2015; IPU Report.

From the data presented, it is evident that even in countries with well-established democracies, gender disparities persist despite the adoption of multiparty systems and electoral democracy. Although equality, justice, and fair representation are widely emphasized, political and civil liberties remain areas of contention (Diamond, 2015; Zakaria, 2017; Huntington, 2017). Nonetheless, women continue to advance their participation in governance through strategic networking and advocacy, and Nigerian women are no exception in this struggle for political inclusion. This study argues that while policies supporting women's involvement in governance exist, systemic barriers continue to hinder their effective participation, particularly at the local government level in Nigeria. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policy interventions, targeted reorientation, and economic empowerment programs tailored to women's needs.

Conceptual Clarification

Three interconnected concepts are central to understanding the necessity of women's participation in good governance, especially as Nigeria transitions into another electoral cycle. These concepts include:

i. Dictatorship
ii. Affirmative Action
iii. Women and Gender

Dictatorship

Women's exclusion from governance often stems from entrenched patriarchal attitudes that manifest as delegation, denial, insubordination, and sympathy. Women have historically suffered discrimination in religious institutions, workplaces, academia, and family settings due to their underrepresentation in leadership structures. This exclusion positions men as 'dictators' who monopolize power and control key institutions such as the press, media, and culture. Globally, dictatorship is condemned for being antithetical to democracy. Appadorai (2014) identifies four key factors that contribute to dictatorship and male dominance over women: the aftermath of the First World War, the weakness of democratic governments, the absence of democratic traditions, and the influence of individual political actors. These factors create gender disparities within political institutions and processes, leading to persistent inequalities (Ayeni-Akeke,

2018). In this context, dictatorship represents the deliberate imposition of male political will over women, thereby maintaining gender disparities in leadership. This systemic male dominance has fueled calls for greater female political inclusion, as discussed in subsequent sections.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action has played a crucial role in advancing gender equality across various sectors, particularly in politics. These measures aim to enhance women's political representation within decentralized governance structures, making them an essential focus of research and development practice. A critical aspect of promoting women's leadership is fostering their political consciousness from the grassroots level. The ability to mobilize, achieve, and actualize leadership potential must be cultivated from the local government level, which serves as the foundation of democratic participation. Kinuthia Njenga (2019) underscores the significance of good governance in promoting gender equality: as the level of government closest to citizens, local authorities play a vital role in addressing gender inequality and building the capacities of women by involving them in local decision-making, planning, and management. This role was recognized by the International Union of Local Authorities and in the 1998 Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government. Additionally, increasing women's political participation and decision-making was a central theme of the 2015 Beijing Platform for Action and was reaffirmed in 2000 as part of the third Millennium Development Goal to 'promote gender equality and empower women'.

Despite these global and national efforts, a critical question remains: how effective is affirmative action in grassroots governance in Nigeria? While some argue that external constraints hinder women's political participation, others contend that internal factors, such as a lack of solidarity among women, contribute significantly to their underrepresentation. Many women struggle to reach a consensus on governance-related issues and often defer to male authority figures, including their spouses. Furthermore, the political apathy among Nigerian women has resulted in minimal electoral support for female candidates. A notable example was the failure of the only female presidential aspirant in the 2011 PDP primaries, who secured only a single vote, underscoring the broader challenges women face in achieving political representation. Addressing these barriers requires a concerted effort to enhance women's political engagement, strengthen institutional support for gender inclusion, and foster a cultural shift towards equitable governance practices.

Women and/or Gender: A Conceptual Clarification

The discourse on 'women and/or gender' has been subject to widespread misconceptions in public debates. A common misunderstanding is the interchangeable use of the terms 'women' and 'gender,' often leading to definitional ambiguities and conceptual misinterpretations. This conflation has resulted in challenges regarding comprehension, application, and scholarly discourse on gender-related issues. From an institutional perspective, gender is defined as the economic, social, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female (UN-Habitat, 2013). This conceptualization underscores the structural disparities between men and women across various societal domains, particularly concerning access to and control over resources, which, in turn, influences women's participation in decision-making processes.

Miller (2021) offers a more refined definition of gender as "the sexual division of power," distinguishing it from biological sex, which is determined at birth. This distinction is echoed by Dex (2015) and Reddock (2014), who argue that gender, rather than merely delineating labor roles, embodies power dynamics that extend into both the private and public spheres. In essence, gender pertains to the societal roles, expectations, and power structures that define interactions between men and women. To illustrate gender disparity in political representation, Table 2 presents data on women's participation in Nigeria's political landscape from 2010 to 2024. The table provides an overview of the number of seats available and the corresponding number of female representatives in the House of Assembly, House of Representatives, and Senate.

Table 2: Women's Representation in Nigerian Political Institutions

Year	House of Assembly (Seats/No. of Women)	House of Representatives (Seats/No. of Women)	Senate (Seats/No. of Women)
2015	978/12	360/13	109/3
2019	951/39	339/21	100/4
2023	990/54	358/25	109/9

Source: *Onwuka Nzeshi, "Women, Still Underdogs in Nigerian Politics," This Day Lagos, May 11, 2023.*

The data indicate a gradual increase in women's political participation; however, significant gaps remain, necessitating further advocacy and policy interventions.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts feminist political theory as its primary lens to understand women's capacity in governance, emphasizing that gender inequality stems from deep-rooted

structural and historical power imbalances (Walby, 2015). In Nigeria, as in many developing countries, governance remains male-dominated, prompting the need for gender mainstreaming in policy-making and leadership (Nash, 2022). Capacity building—through mentorship, training, and education is essential to empower women, alongside addressing systemic barriers like gender-based violence and economic exclusion (Ezeani, 2021).

Globally, discrimination against women in governance persists, though developed countries have made strides toward equity (Agbalajobi, 2019). Marxist feminist theory critiques capitalism's reinforcement of patriarchal structures, asserting that women's true liberation requires structural transformation in labor, political participation, and societal values (Costa & James, 1981; Olojede, 2018). In contrast, the psychological perspective highlights how individual beliefs and societal attitudes shape women's governance participation (Cole & Stewart, 2019; Crosby, 2020). Women's inclusion in governance is essential for nation-building, particularly in Nigeria's political climate. The World Bank (2019) defines governance as the use of political authority to manage public affairs. Yet, women remain underrepresented in both executive and technical governance structures, limiting their influence on decision-making processes (Kelly, 2021). Societal resistance and exclusion from critical committees continue to hinder women's political advancement (Robson, 2018).

Legally, Nigeria's Constitution supports women's political rights. Section 40 ensures freedom of association, while Section 77(2) guarantees voting rights for citizens aged 18 and above. Despite these provisions, entrenched customary, statutory, and religious legal systems have perpetuated gender discrimination, particularly in family law (The National Gender Policy, 2016). Overcoming these structural barriers is imperative for advancing women's participation in governance.

Advocacy for Women's Effective Participation in Good Governance

Enhancing women's participation in governance, particularly at the local level, is critical for achieving inclusive development. Scholars and policymakers have long debated the viability and efficacy of local government as a third tier of governance, emphasizing the necessity of grassroots engagement in decision-making processes. The United Nations Office for Public Administration defines local government as: "a political subdivision of a nation or state, constituted by law, with substantial control over local affairs, including taxation and labor mobilization. The governing body of such an entity is elected" (Adamolekun, 2014).

Despite this, local governments in Nigeria have largely failed in service delivery, eroding public trust in their institutions (Answers.com, 2011). A key concern is ensuring women's meaningful participation in good governance within this challenging political landscape. Governance, often equated with good government, must be assessed based on key principles such as participation, equity, transparency, adherence to the rule of law, accountability, and efficiency (Hyden, 2018, cited in Osumah & Ikelegbe, 2018). However, women's engagement in good governance remains constrained by structural and sociocultural barriers, including:

- Gendered social norms and cultural stereotypes
- Male dominance in political structures
- Conflicting domestic and professional responsibilities
- Limited financial resources for political participation
- The perception of politics as a 'dirty game'
- Educational and literacy gaps
- Political party nomination biases (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2019)

Addressing these systemic challenges is crucial to fostering equitable political participation.

Rationale for Enhancing Women's Participation in Good Governance

Several historical and contemporary factors underscore the need for increased female representation in governance:

1. **Historical Precedents:** Women have historically played significant roles in governance, as demonstrated by resistance movements such as the Nwaobiala protest of 1925 and the Aba Women's Riot of 1929 (Mba, 2020). These movements highlight women's ability to mobilize for political change.

2. **Current Representation:** Statistical data reveal that between 2013 and 2016, only nine out of 774 local government chairpersons were women, while women held a mere 143 out of 8,810 local government council seats nationwide (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2013). While these figures indicate progress, they also highlight the need for continued advocacy.

3. **Global and National Advocacy:** The 2015 Uwais Electoral Reform Committee and subsequent efforts aimed at implementing Affirmative Action in Nigeria signify a growing recognition of the importance of gender equity in politics.

However, delays in legislative reforms continue to hinder progress (Report of GEM, 2018).

Findings

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that women's participation plays in strengthening good governance in Nigeria. The study reveals that despite global efforts to enhance gender inclusivity in governance, Nigerian women remain underrepresented in political and administrative leadership positions (Eme & Emeh, 2021). Various socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers hinder their active involvement in governance, thereby limiting their contributions to sustainable development and democratic consolidation (Afolabi, 2022). A key finding indicates that women's participation in governance enhances transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in policy formulation and implementation (Akinola, 2023). Women leaders are often associated with policies that prioritize social welfare, education, and healthcare, thereby contributing to improved governance outcomes (Ogunyemi & Adepoju, 2023). The study also finds that increased female representation in decision-making bodies fosters inclusive governance structures that cater to the diverse needs of society (Ekundayo & Salami, 2022). Furthermore, the study reveals that inadequate capacity-building programs and limited access to financial resources hinder women's effective participation in governance. Many women lack the requisite leadership training, exposure, and political mentorship necessary to navigate Nigeria's complex political landscape (Okeke & Uchenna, 2022). The research also identifies institutionalized gender bias and political marginalization as significant deterrents to women's empowerment in governance (Adebayo, 2023).

Additionally, the study finds that legal frameworks and affirmative action policies aimed at promoting gender equality in governance remain weak and largely unimplemented (Ajayi & Fapohunda, 2023). Although the Nigerian National Gender Policy advocates for at least 35% female representation in public offices, the implementation remains inconsistent, resulting in persistent gender gaps in governance (Balogun, 2024). The study also highlights the impact of socio-economic factors on women's political participation. Financial constraints, electoral violence, and lack of party support limit women's capacity to contest and win elections (Nwosu & Eke, 2023). Women who do enter politics often face systemic discrimination, making it difficult to sustain their roles in governance (Chukwuma & Adeyemi, 2024). These include increased investment in leadership training programs, enhanced access to funding for female political aspirants, stronger enforcement of gender-inclusive policies, and greater societal advocacy for women's political rights (Olawale & Jimoh, 2023). The study underscores the importance of educational empowerment as a

fundamental tool for equipping women with the necessary skills to participate actively in governance (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2024).

In conclusion, while progress has been made towards gender inclusivity in governance, significant challenges persist. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving government action, civil society advocacy, and societal attitudinal changes towards women in leadership roles. Strengthening women's capacity for governance in Nigeria will not only promote gender equity but also contribute to the overall development and stability of the nation.

Conclusion

The participation of women in governance is a critical factor in achieving inclusive development, social equity, and sustainable democracy. This study has examined the challenges, opportunities, and policy measures that can enhance women's capacity for good governance in Nigeria. Despite notable progress, the underrepresentation of women in governance remains a significant concern due to socio-cultural barriers, political marginalization, and inadequate institutional frameworks. However, strengthening women's capacity through education, policy reforms, leadership training, and economic empowerment presents a viable strategy for overcoming these barriers. Women's marginalization in governance, particularly at the local level, is both historical and structural. While efforts have been made to enhance their political participation, progress remains slow due to entrenched societal attitudes and institutional barriers. Greater emphasis on good governance reforms, alongside sustained advocacy, is necessary to ensure women's active engagement in political decision-making. A gender-inclusive governance framework fosters accountability, diversity of perspectives, and equitable decision-making, which are fundamental to national development. Empirical evidence suggests that when women are actively involved in governance, they contribute positively to economic growth, conflict resolution, and democratic stability (Adeleke & Okonkwo, 2023; Olanrewaju & Adeyemi, 2022). Thus, fostering an enabling environment for women's leadership in Nigeria is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic imperative for national progress.

Recommendations

Legislative and Policy Reforms**:** The Nigerian government should strengthen legal frameworks that promote gender parity in governance. Enacting policies such as gender quotas and affirmative action can ensure increased female representation in decision-making bodies. Capacity-Building Programs**:** There is a need for targeted leadership

training and mentorship programs for women in governance. Such initiatives should focus on political leadership, negotiation skills, and governance ethics to equip women with the requisite competencies. Economic Empowerment and Financial Support**:** Providing financial support, grants, and loans to women aspiring to political offices will mitigate economic constraints that hinder their political participation. Public Awareness and Advocacy: Government agencies, civil society organizations, and the media should work collaboratively to challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive narratives about women in leadership. Institutional Strengthening and Political Party Reforms: Political parties should be mandated to adopt internal gender policies that ensure women's active involvement in party structures and leadership positions. Educational Reforms and Gender Mainstreaming: Integrating gender studies and leadership development into the national curriculum will foster early awareness of governance roles among young girls, thereby preparing them for future leadership positions.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE POWER HOLDING COMPANY OF NIGERIA (PHCN)

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Abstract

This paper is a desk review of the transition of the Nigerian national electricity corporation from NEPA to PHCN and the attendant challenges. Electricity is a fundamental part of nature and a widely used form of energy, powering devices and systems through the flow of electrons, creating what is known as electric current. Electricity can be generated from various sources such as renewable (wind power, solar energy, hydro power) and non-renewable (coal, natural gas, nuclear energy) options. Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) formerly known as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) which is the focus of this paper is a government owned power company in Nigeria responsible for electricity generation, transmission and distribution. The paper surveys the evolution of PHCN from inception to date. This is in order to examine its strength and challenges and recommends that the electricity sector reform should be further driven to ensure commercialization, profitability, efficient service delivery and transparency in operations.

Keywords: Electricity, Transmission, Engineering

Introduction

The energy sector is a vital engine of growth of an economy. The development of electricity gained worldwide attention and in a very short time (barely after its introduction in Britain. It was introduced in Lagos, Nigeria in 1894. Since then, the

development of electricity has not been sufficient to cope with the demands of population growth and national development. During the colonial era, electricity was installed purely for the benefit of colonial rulers residing in the areas popularly known as European Quarters, later Government Reserved Areas (GRAs). Gradually it became popular and generally accessible to more people in Lagos and other colonial administrative towns, which gave rise to rapid demand (Agugu, 2001:4).

From the colonial era to date, several efforts were undertaken by successive governments towards the development of electricity through the establishment of the following electricity authorities:

i. Public Works Department (PWD) 1894-1946;
ii. Nigerian Government Electricity Undertaking from 1946-1950;
iii. Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) from 1950-1970;
iv. Niger Dams Authority 1961-1972;
v. National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) 1972-2005; and
vi. Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) 2005 till date.

From a little beginning it metamorphosed as listed above. These authorities had pursued systematic efforts to expand the scope of electricity supply throughout the entire country.

Between 1928 and 1940, the colonial administration- i n i t i a t e d schemes for expansion of electricity to cover its administrative towns which included:

i. Port Harcourt- A 475 Kilowatts (KW) steam engine was commissioned in 1928 which provided electricity from 6.00 pm to mid night.
ii. Kaduna-Two 225 KW generators were commissioned at the end of 1929 with full 24- hour service in 1930
iii. Enugu-Four 350 KW engines were commissioned in 1933. This boosted supply to the railways workshop and other commercial consumption.
iv. Maiduguri- Two 75 KW diesel engines were installed in 1934.
v. Yola-One 75 KW diesel plant was installed in 1937
vi. Zaria - One 240 KW gas engine and one KW diesel engine was commissioned in 1938.
vii. Warri- One 70KW engine and one 50 KW diesel plant were installed in 1929.
viii. Calabar - One 200KW gas engine and one 100KW diesel plant were commissioned in 1939.
ix. Ibadan-Two 500KW steam turbine engines installed in 1940 and
x. Other colonial administrative towns such as Kano and Abeokuta also benefited.

Between 1941-1946, the colonial administration spent efforts in consolidating these existing stations as well as expansion of new ones. In 1957, ECN recorded the most remarkable development in the last years of colonial administration as it started operation on commercial basis. The Nigerian Electrical Supply Company (NESCO) started operations as an Electric Utility company in 1929 and constructed a Hydro Power Station at Kurra falls in Jos.

Electricity Supply in the Post- Independence Era

In the post-independence era, electricity witnessed the boldest efforts made in supply to a modern international standard in the country. The corporation established four main power stations at.

i .Ijora with 90 MW capacity,
ii. Orji River coal station with 35MW capacity,
iii .Afam Gas station with 55MW capacity, and
iv .Delta (Ughlli) Thermal Station with 72MW capacity.

Also, 132KV transmission projects were designed and executed along the following towns:

i. Oshogbo-Ibadan;
ii. Kaduna-Zaria-Kano;
iii .Ikeja-Papa Alanto;
iv. Benin-Ugheli;
v. Onisha-Orji;
vi. Ijora-Ikeja and
vii .Aba-Calabar transmission lines.

Furthermore, the corporation commissioned a 330KV transmission backbone of the national grid system in 1965 to link the proposed Kainji power station with Oshogbo and Lagos for the above-mentioned long distances covering the width and length of the country. By 1968 the Kainji Power Station and two additional major legs of the national grid namely; 330KV Kainji-Jebba- Oshogbo-Akangba and 330Kv Kainji -Kaduna lines were commissioned by General Gowon. As part of its long-term plan for full utilization of the Kainji Power Station, the ECN further commissioned several other transmissions systems in 1968. The operation of this integrated power system ensured the vital importance of ECN in the early years of the country's economic development. The ECN era, thus, made electricity available to the vast population of consumers and facilitated industrial development of many towns and cities. It also helped to minimize rural- urban

migration. According to Majana (1978:52), ECN provided electricity service to 105 towns and cities for both residential and commercial (industrial) consumption.

Consequently, in April 1972, the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) and Niger Dams Authority (NDA) were merged to form a state monopoly called National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) under decree No. 24 as a wholly and vertically integrated electricity monopoly to be responsible for generation, transmission and distribution of electricity in Nigeria. At the inception of NEPA, however, the Kainji Dam was unable to cope with the country's demand for electricity. Hence, other hydro-electric power sources such as Shiroro Dam, Gongola River Scheme, Kwa falls, Mada River scheme and Kano River scheme were integrated to pull their potentials into the national grid system. In order to achieve the aim of the integrated system, two additional generating sets were commissioned which increased the capacity of Kainji Dam to 520MW in 1977. At that time, the country's demand was over 700MW as a result of rapid industrial development and electrification of new towns. As the nation's demand exceeded the installed capacity at Kainji Dam, the country started to witness serious power shortage.
Despite the commitment of NEPA to future power development policy, by 1982 the authority began to witness a decline in its service delivery. Its infrastructure and equipment began to suffer from neglect, disrepair and replacement and they broke down one after the other. NEPA with time became a household name synonymous with inefficiency. Its outages and epileptic supply of electricity nationwide appear to defy solution. The vehement outcry by the populace against its dismal inefficiency caused a sober reflection of the performance of a state monopoly in Nigeria. To vent their frustration and anger, it is not surprising that Nigerians gave NEPA certain disparaging names as follows: Never Expect Power Always, National Embarrassment Procurement Avenue, and National Economic Paralyzing Agency.

According to Agugu (2001:4) in 1990 an assessment of the generating plants of the NEPA showed that only 19 out of the 79 installed generating units were functioning. He further states that from the 6000MW installed capacity of NEPA's existing (obsolete) power stations, the maximum load ever recorded was 2470MW. In the late 1999, the country was thrown into "nationwide blackout" as the generation crashed down to less than 1600MW daily. According to Chigbue (2007), the NEPA Act which was enacted in 1990 replaced the previous existing statute (decree No.24). The Act re-established NEPA as a commercial and self-accounting authority and vested it with the power to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economic system of electricity power supply to all parts of Nigeria. The act constituted the principal legal and regulatory frame work that governed electricity generation transmission and distribution activities in the country.

According to Chigbue (2007), in addition to the NEPA Act of 1990, there are other relevant legislations that were regulating some aspects of the electricity industry which included:

i. Utilities Charges Commission Act 1992. This Act vested the commission with the power to regulate tariff charged by public utilities including NEPA.
ii. Environmental Impact Assessments Act, 1992, which prescribes mandatory Impact Assessment to be undertaken by power projects specified in the Act.

However, in 1998, a major step towards the liberalization of the electricity industry was taken with the amendment of NEPA Act 1990 to allow for limited private sector participation in the generation sub-sector. The amendment removed NEPA's monopoly in power generation thereby paving the way for Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for which Enron/AES blazed the trail. In spite of the amendment to the Act, the sector was still characterized by a number of flaws that made it nearly impossible for private investments to flow in. In order to breach the gap in the industry, government undertook a holistic reform of the sector that encompassed both the enthronement of a policy (National Electric Power policy, 2001) and legal and regulatory framework (Electric Power Sector Reform Act, 2005). The reform comprises of two main components-restructuring and privatization.

i. Restructuring of the Nigerian Power industry involved three main components; First, the change of the industry structure to stimulate competition and choice as well as promote financial accountability; secondly, the unbundling of power utility into the constituents' functions; and third, putting in place a new commercial trading arrangement.
ii. Privatization, on the other hand, is the change in control and/or ownership of the utility.

The Electric Power Sector Reform Act 2005 is seen as the foundation necessary for effective reform of the electricity sector in Nigeria. In many jurisdictions, where reform has been attempted without first putting in place a new legal regime to govern the industry, it has resulted in either a distorted reform attempt or an unfocussed or failed attempt at reform. Given the history of the electric sector, legal and meaningful regulatory reforms were imperative if any progress was to be achieved. In the first instance, the Nigerian Electric Power Authority was a creation of statute and reform target as it must take into consideration its special position under the law. Indeed, unlike many of the other sectors where reform has been carried on without any major legislative changes it is obvious that in sectors such as telecommunications and electricity given the existence of dominant public corporations such as NITEL and

NEPA, reform can only be possible after an extensive legislative change.

This significant landmark that was to change the Nigerian Electricity industry landscape which was undertaken in 2005 with the enactment of the Electric Power Sector Reform Act (EPSR) Act, gives legal authority and support to the reform activities i.e. restructuring and eventual privatization of NEPA, which was re-designated to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) with the incorporation of Power Holding Company of Nigeria Plc on the 13th March 2005 as the initial holding company in line with the reform of the electricity industry.

The National Council on Privatization was also required not later than eight months after the incorporation of the initial holding company take such steps as are necessary under the companies and Allied matters Act to corporate such number of additional companies limited by shares as may be deemed appropriate. These companies are to be known as successor companies. The successor companies shall take over the assets and liabilities of the initial holding company, in the areas of generation, transmission, trading, distribution and bulk supply and resale of electricity amongst others. All the shares of the successor companies are to be held by the Ministry of Finance Incorporated and the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) on behalf of the federal government. On 1st July, 2006, the Bureau commenced the transfer of assets, liabilities and staff of PHCN to the successor companies, thus completing the unbundling process. The EPSR Act 2005 also repealed all previous legislations (NEPA Act, Electricity Act and Utilities Charges Commission Act as applicable to NEPA). The electricity industry reform is aimed at improving the overall industry efficiency through restructuring, private sector participation, and competition which is a major driver of the industry's efficiency, through improved customer satisfaction and reduced tariff, is introduced at the various levels of the markets as it develops from stage to stage. The reform process can only be completed with the introduction of full competition in all the competitive parts of the industry, namely generation and distribution/ supply.

It is important to state that the reform is not expected to create an immediate transformation of the electricity industry but rather a gradual and sustainable improvement. The reform as justified by the government is a necessary tool to lay solid foundation for sustainable power generation and sector efficiency. It is a means to an end and not the end itself. According to Chigbue (2007), currently, Nigeria has installed generation capacity of about 6,000 MW from its 7-power generation stations but only produces less than 2,000 MW because of the inefficient and ineffective operation of the sector. There are plans to increase the capacity to about 10,000MW. The federal government in 2002 invested in four (4) new thermal power generation stations to add 1.434MWto the national grid. The stations are;

i. Papalanto (335 MW).
ii. Omotosho (335 MW).
iii. Geregu (414 MW) and
iv. Alaoji (504 MW)

She further asserted that in 2005 further investments were undertaken in the sub-sector under the National Integrated Power Project (NIPP). This is aimed at adding 2810 MW to the national grid. Plants under the NIPP are:

1. Calabar (500 MW)
2. Egbema (350 MW)
3. Eyaen (500 MW)
4. Gbaran (250 MW)
5. Ikot Abasi (300 MW)
6. Sapele (500 MW)
7. Omoku (225 MW), and
8. Ibom (180 MW)

Government investment in the sub-sector is essentially to increase the generation capacity, given the capital-intensive nature of electricity generation. The existing wide gap between supply and demand makes it clear that the goals of the reform will not be met if there is sole reliance on the private sector to bring in the massive investment required immediately. It is also not anticipated that in the short run government will totally withdraw from investing in the sector. In 1988, under the privatization/commercialization Decree the then NEPA with other government monopolies were commercialized. According to TCPC (1988/89:21) was because these public enterprises have defective capital base resulting from dependence on the national Treasury for funding, corruption, mismanagement and nepotism; bureaucratic bottlenecks in their relationship with supervising ministries; lack of professionalism on the part of the management and misuse of monopoly power and disagreements. During this period NEPA signed a 'performance agreement contract with the TCPC but failed to meet its revenue targets as agreed. Commercialized NEPA grossly failed to provide efficient and reliable services vital to the economy which informed government claim for privatization. Because of total blackout in the country arising from the fact that NEPA is only able to generate below 2,000 MW is quite unfortunate. President Yar'adua then announced government intention to declare state of emergency on the power sector as a result of poor service delivery currently being witnessed in the entire country.

Structure of PHCN

It is interesting to note that Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) formerly known as NEPA has sectors headed by the Executive Directors with MD/CEO at helm of affairs. The sectors are Generation, Transmission, Distribution and Marketing. Operations, Corporate Planning and Strategies, Finance and Accounts and Human Resource sectors. NEPA has a staff strength of about (32,000) thirty-two thousand and all over the country (NEPA News, 2003). Executive Director ED (G) is the head of Generation sector. The following exists in the office of the ED (G) Generation Engineering and Generation services. These sub-sectors are controlled by team.

1. Egbin Terminal Station, Lagos,
2. Kanji Generation Zone (Has Kanji)
3. Kanji Hydro Power Station
4. Jebba Hydro Power Station
5. Shiroro Hydro Power Station
6. Delta Generation Zone (Has UGHELLI)
7. Sapele thermal Power Station
8. Delta thermal Power Station
9. Afam thermal Power Station
10. Oji Rive Power Station
11. Calabar Power Station (NEPA Transformation Newsletter, 2003).

The primary function of the transmission sector is to convey electricity from Generation to Distribution via 330KV and 132KV transmission lines while ensuring minimal load loss alone includes:

1. Keeping record of total energy supplied to Distribution
2. Maintains transmission lines in Circuit
3. Monitor capacity utilization of power transformers in the network

Transmission Sector

Executive Director Transmission -ED (T) is the head of transmission. There are two sub- sectors namely: Transmission services and Transmission Engineering each headed by a General Manager stationed in the Corporate Headquarters, Abuja. The sub-sector sectors the rehabilitation and maintenance of transmission facilities in the network. For effective coordination, there are six regional outlets located in Lagos, Benin, Enugu, Bauchi, Shiroro and Kaduna. Each region is headed by a General Manager. They routinely ensure maintenance and operation of transmission infrastructure in their

locations.

Transmission Engineering

This sub-sector is entrusted with the design and implementation of new transmission projects. Their core competencies include:

1. Power System Planning
2. Construction of Transmission Lines
3. Material Standard Communications
4. Transmission Network Expansion
5. Support Protection and Control
6. Sub-station Design Construction Power
7. Transformer and Records and Equipment Performance Analysis
8. Erosion Control and Tower Protection (NEPA Review: 2002)
9. Monitor outages and energy loss during forced and planned outages.
10. Maintains Statistics of average interruption frequency and interruption duration indices.
11. Keeping statistics of value of load in the course of conveying power Generation to Distribution

Distribution and Marketing

Executive Director Distribution and Marketing ED (D&M) is the head of Distribution and Marketing sector. The sector has a General Manager Distribution and Marketing in the Corporate Headquarters Abuja with five Assistant General Managers under them. Under distribution, there are AGM Planning and Standard, AGM Distribution, PM (Performance Management), PM (Accounts) and PM (Administration) in headquarters. There are eleven distribution zonal offices. in the whole country namely, Abuja, Enugu, Ikeja, Eko, Port-Harcourt, Ibadan, Jos, Kano, Yola, Benin and Kaduna. Each Zone is headed by a Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O).

Under each zonal office are some business units and each Units is headed by a Business Manager (MB). There is a total of 63 Business Units nation-wide categorized into A and B according to their financial viability. The Units are further divided into undertakings and service centres. The Distribution sector has the responsibility to make available to the consumers at various levels the generated and transmitted electricity. The zonal office controls the voltage at 33KV while the districts take of 11KV and the 415V. (NEPA, News, 2003). Material standard and procurement was established as part restructuring of the Authority on the other and environment and resettlement that used

to be a department in the Generation sector metamorphosed to a division in operations sector. This was to enable the Authority comply with the directives on sustainability of development by federal ministry of environment and also comply with the material guidelines of environmental Audit in Nigeria in all power stations. Personnel and Administration, Finance and Account and Performance Management, Internal Audit are Departments directly under the Executive Director Operations and are all headed by Principal Managers. The operations sector has since then established itseIf as one of the core sectors in the day-to-day running of NEPA (NEPA Review,2001).

Under Marketing, we have four (4) AGMs, AGM Billing Operations, AGM Marketing, AGM Metering and Instrumentation, PM Performance Management, PM Finance & Accounts and PM Personnel & Administration in corporate headquarters. PM (Audits). There is AGM marketing in all the eleven Business zones. Commercial Managers are heading the commercial arms in the sixty-three Business units in the country.

Operations Sector

Executive Director Operations ED (OPS) is the head of operations sector. There are three sub-sectors namely-National Control Centre, Operation Corporate Headquarters and Rural Electrification are each headed by the General Manager while each of the two divisions of rural electrification are each headed by the General Manager while each of the two divisions of rural electrification sub-sector is headed by an Assistant General Manager. Material standard and procurement and environment resettlement are two new divisions headed by an Assistant General Manager. PM Personal & Administration, P.M. (Finance & Administration), P.M. (Personnel Management), PM (Internal Audit). (NEPA News, 2004).

The operations sector was created in January 2002 along with the corporate planning and strategies sector. This sector created to close the gap between the Generation Transmission and the Distribution core sectors and to tackle high -level interface problems and take decisions that will move the Authority forward. National Control is responsible for matters relating to system control generation, scheduling, dispatch instruction, operating spinning reserves, frequency, voltage control, outage co-ordination of the Grid system. Operations Headquarters supervises operating, planning and interface metering in headquarters Abuja. National Grid, SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) and telecommunication projects and IT project and maintenance (NEPA Annual Report, 2002).

The creation of Regional Coordinating Centre (RCC) and Area Control Centre (ACC). If properly implemented will go a long way in establishing good and reliable energy

accounting by various regions which will reflect sector's mission statement. Progress has been made in the area by communication namely: decentralization of communication maintenance to the regions and empowerment of communication engineers HQ. this has started increasing various RCCs and it has a Data compatible HF Radio, completion of phase I PLC, rehabilitation project and mirroring of SNCC SCANDA at NCC Osogbo are some of the milestones achieved since the period the operations sector was established (NEPA News, 2003). System operations in all the RCCs have been identified to be very important in the Authority's objective of satisfying the customers. In view of this, deliberate training has been embarked upon in improving their skill and creating awareness in customer satisfaction, computer training and self-academic enhancement. Rural electrification sub-sector had been successfully unbundled/decentralized since July 2001 into the six geopolitical zones headed by principal managers. The sub-sector is like the consultant to the Ministry of power and steel on rural electrification projects. Material standard/procurement when fully operational will monitor, oversee and control procurement practices in line with approved procedures. This will bring checks and balances into the system, ensure transparency and probity in procurement practices.

Environment and Resettlement Divisions is a new set up in the operations sector. It is geared towards entrenching NEPA power compliance with global standard requirements on environment. With the performance management department fully established, the issue of energy accounting and performance of individual sub-sectors, divisions and departments can now be easily monitored. This gives the sector the opportunity to use the Carrot and Stick principle in managing the human resources under the sector. Reporting directly to the office of the ED (Operations) are the following officers: AGM (System Planning and Grid Metering), AGM Communications and Information Technology); AGM (Rural Electrification 2 No), AGM (Performance Management), PM (Finance and Accounts), PM (Internal Audit), AGM (Performance Management and Operations Support), PM (Finance and Administration),(NCC), AGM (NCC) Osogbo, PM (NCC Shiroro) (NCP Report 2000 and 2001).

Corporate Planning and Strategies Sector

Executive Director Planning and Strategies ED (CP & S), is the head of the sector. He is assisted by the following listed key officers: GM (CP&S) AGM (CP&S) AGM (Busines Planning Management), and AGM (Corporate Information Management), PM (Internal Audit).

This sector was created to institutionalize change management within the Authority and to facilitate Government reform programme of the power sector and to actualize the

vision of entrenching a culture of commercial orientation planning and prudent management of resources (The Presidency, 2002, Wikipedia 2004, NEPA Review 1999).

The realization that the power industry will undergo sector reform led management to institute several programmes geared towards achieving these objectives. The sector has carried out the following project in conjunction with the ACCENTURE, a globally recognized leading consultancy firm. They have organized series of training workshops and seminars in the organization such as:

a) Learning to be commercial change management workshop to sensitize all staff on change the Government reform-programme for the electricity sector as it impacts the Authority.
b) severally organize road workshop for first -tier appointment change agent as well as second tier.
c) The facilitation of harmonious working relationship with Government agencies.
d) Production of a monthly journal, NEPA Transmission, Newsletter an in-house publication that informs and educates the staff on the activities of the Authority regarding transforming NEPA for the future.
e) Participate in the re-structure and unbundling of the Authority's services
f) The establishment and equipping of a reference library with an interconnectivity facility for the Corporate Headquarters, at Maintama Abuja.

The future plans are:

i. co-ordinate the activities of NEPA performance,
ii.. facilitate complete understanding of all transition programmers by all categories of staff.
Iii .participate in development and execution of NEPA contract agreements.
iv.. organize refresher training on executive information system for performance managers.
v.. embark on the Road Shows in the programme,
vi.. continue with the publication of Newsletters on change journey manager.
vii.. carry out surveys on assessing the level of organizational understanding acceptance of change.
viii. .participate in the activities of Board Committee of project monitoring and restructuring
ix. develops a comprehensive journey of communication plan.

Finance and Account Sector

Executive Director (Finance & Accounts) is the head of the sector reporting directly to the ED (F & A) are the following.GM. (F&A, AGM (Mgt. Acct) AGM (Finance), AGM (Acct) AGM (MIS), PM (HRM, PM Performance (Mgt) and PM (IT &Financial Applications). Each of the 11 zones has AGM Finance & Accounts and the 63 business units all over the country have Finance & Accounts Staff managing the day-to-day activities of the region. The eight (8) power stations and the six (6) transmission regions are headed by PM (Finance and Accounts). Human Resource Sector, Executive Director Human Resource-ED (HR) is the head of the human resources sector. Reporting directly to the office of the ED (HR) are the following officers: GM (HRM), AGM (HRM), AGM. All the eleven zones in the country have eleven Heads of (Admin. & Services). In the power stations and transmission regions. We have PM (Personnel & Admin), PM (Public Affairs). Public Affairs and Audit Division is headed by the GM (Audit) and GM (Public Affair) respectively (NCO Review, 2001, 2002 and,2003).

Challenges

Vandalization of NEPA equipment and installations for re-circulation (sale) vandalization accounts for at least 30% of blackout experienced in Nigeria today. NEPA has embarked on a massive campaign against the activities of vandals who perpetrate this heinous acts and cash towards to those who watch NEPA installations to apprehend suspects for possible prosecution in the law courts. Also, eight 4-wheel Isuzu patrol vehicles fitted with communication equipment has been given to the Police Anti-Vandalism Task Force. A cash cheque of N5.58 million was also presented to the Inspector General of Police for paying allowances and honorarium to members of the task-force. The poor state of our electrical generating plants across the country, the long decline in capital investment in the industry and the shortage of funds to rehabilitate broken-down plants to undertake turn around maintenance, is the paramount spectre of vandalization (Tanweer, 1999; Usman 2003, Zubairu, 2002).

Hardly any day, week on months passes without the ugly face of vandalism being visited on the nation's already embattled electricity network media reports on this are as frightening. This menace is another dilemma in the legion of problems and constraints facing the National Electricity in the Country. The wanton destruction is inflicted on the entire network system aside the untold drain in scarce financial resources is better imagined. It is a nightmare to say the least. Enormous resources have been lost to the callous acts of vandalism which have since become a social problem in the country. Several areas and communities have suffered power failures in the wake of vandalisation of NEPA equipment. The sequences of such heinous crimes are

devastating indeed. In addition to the huge economic loss the country suffers, lives have also been lost. The damage in terms of both material and human resources is unquantifiable. The ugly phenomenon has no doubt compounded our development problems as the nation continues to witness retarded growth through mindless pillage in the hands of the culprits. Most of the items so carted away require hug but scarce foreign exchange to procure.

Consequently, the helpless electricity consumers are left to suffer prolonged period of darkness until the authority manages to come to rescue at a much greater cost (NEPA Review September,2003:57). As an important index of development and growth, electricity occupies a central place in modern societies and economics. Everything must therefore be done to ensure that the system is safeguarded against willful damage. The current war against vandalisation which the federal government in its wisdom is involved is appropriate in order to influence a change of attitude in our society. Nigeria certainly has a choice to collectively deal with vandalisation and theft of equipment since much of the nation's growth will depend on the substance of the electricity industry, the backbone of any nation's economy and industrial leap forward. Let us consider a profile of vandalisation power installation in Nigeria in recent times viz:

1. Illegal connections overload the network and cause a lot of damage on supply equipment. NEPA has put in place, field officers to investigate and to disconnect electricity supply to all illegal consumers and bringing them to book. A massive awareness campaign was also going on to educate the populace on the ills of illegal connection.
2. Settlement of electricity bills revenue from the sale of electricity is used to sustain the electricity industry. Some customers have this attitude towards settling their electricity bills. To curb this, the Authority has adapted the use of prepayment meters. Nigeria is known to be the largest purchaser of stand-by generators in world. This indicates that the ability to pay for regular electricity will pose a problem once there is constant supply of electricity. Seeing that there is already a very substantial pen-up demand employing much more expensive alternatives.
3. Rural electrification -NEPA's goal of electrification for all by December 2001 is a challenge the Authority is determined to achieve, hence the current emphasis on rural electrification. Rural electrification is aimed to the remote areas in the country.
4. Mounting operational cost of production and distributing electricity has its own way, weighed down the operation of the Authority. Cost referred to here, includes: cost of imported equipment and spare-parts, cost of overhauling outdated equipment, rising inflation and high foreign exchange (forex) rates.

The Government has recently financed the rehabilitation, replacement and expansions of the Authority's equipment and services.

5. Aging equipment about 13.9% of' NEPA installed capacity are over 20 years; or 57.1% over 15 years or 19.6% are over 10years old. These are impediments to NEPA outputs. The government has taken giant steps by funding the rehabilitation and servicing of generating stations across the country'. The recent participation of the independent power producers in the electricity industry would also boost electricity in Nigeria.
6. Water level-Nigeria has the hydro power generating stations Kanji Dam, commissioned in 1968, Jebba built dam, the stream of Kanji and Shiroro dam was commissioned in 1986.Water level of these stations determined the extent of generation of electricity.

The drought which occurred on Kanji less than 10 years after construction which was expected though under probability after about 50 years has become a source of worry to the Authority's inability to provide enough power through the hydro stations. On the 24/2/2001 NEPA signed a 62 million US dollars rehabilitation contract with Marubeni Corporation of Japan to reactivate Delta II and III Thermal Power Stations in Ugheli; Delta State. The company would install six new power generating turbines to replace the existing obsolete ones. The new turbines would have a combined generating capacity of 150 megawatts. Merubeni is currently executing a rehabilitation work on generating units 6 & 4 of Egbin thermal power station, Lagos (Ojo, 2002, Onoche, 2002). Series of plans to deregulate the power sector, the federal Government is inviting private investors to participate in the country's power generation sector. Eight states in Nigeria have indicated interest to go into Independent Power Production (IPP). The states include Kano, Jigawa, Osun, Bayelsa, Lagos, Rivers, Ekiti and Bauchi States. The 1st phase of Lagos state Independent Power Project being provided by US-based Enron Power Company was ready for commissioning by the end of July, 2001.

Electricity supply to the country suffered a major setback recently as the NEPA system collapsed, throwing the nation into darkness. This was caused by low Gas pressure to the Egbin Power station. Gas supply to the power station was cut-off when the bye-pass valve of the gas pipeline failed to open up, thus leading to a cascading effect on the system, shutting down all the power generation. This has since been rectified. The Authority is working tirelessly to ensure that it achieves the Government target of electricity for all. To ensure this, NEPA will need to add about 1808 megawatt to the National Grid. The additional megawatts would be made out of the existing eight power station in country. The Asea Brown Boveri Limited (ABB) a foreign firm currently participating in the on- going rural electrification of the Abuja Independence Power Project (IPP) would inject 450megawatts of electricity into the system. Some of the

projects the company had executed in Nigeria include the Osogbo Ife/Illesha 132KV transmission, 2 x 30/40MVA312/33KV llesha substations amongst a host of others (Sigmund, 1990). The Federal Government has chosen firms for the first phase of the schedule 30 megawatt, EPP plant for Abuja. The power project is being handled by Aggreko International Power Project (AIPP) Plc and Geometric Nigeria Limited. The project is split between the two firms both of which are expected to provide 15MW of power each in two phases expected to run areas at cost of 5.6 billion Naia since its inception in May 1999. So far, the government allocated 17.6 billion Naira to run power supply 575 of the 774 Local Government Headquarters had been connected to the National Grid.

The first phase of the Lagos State initiates Independent Power Plan (IPP) project expected is to generate an additional 90megawatts, and was commissioned in June, 2001.The second phase which is 450 MW gas turbine power plant estimated to cost 630 million US dollars would soon commence. In Nigeria, more and more states and organizations are embarking on setting up their own Independent Power Plant (IPP), 10 of such currently under construction. Some of the new plants which are at varlous stages of development include the Enron Power Plant in Egbin Lagos, the Agip Oji Power Projected in Ugheli, Delta and River IPP in Port Harcourt. Others are state sponsored IPP's being handled by Ondo, Bayelsa, Kano, Kwarak, Akwa-Ibom, Delta and Edo State. NEPA is given the IPP's the necessary support to enable them come on stream. The Authority also offers necessary technical advice to speed up the job and ensure its successes so that it could stand the test of time. More ways of finding solution to the power generation, distribution and transmission is however still being explored.

Conclusion

With impending conditions like the ever-rising consumer debts, vandalisation of NEPA's installation, high cost of maintenance, inadequate gas supply, low water level at the hydro power stations, high cost of foreign exchange the abysmally low tariff regime, NEPA has always strive to meet its distribution and marketing of stable electricity to its numerous residential commercial and industrial customers against all odds. In spite of some of its familiar operational shortcomings, NEPA has made giant strides in the production and marketing of electricity to the nation and beyond. A principal beneficiary of NEPA's extended electricity program is the Republic of Niger under an agreement with Nigeria (Niger Electricity Company) that country's electricity monopoly. Similarly, in Sep.1996, an undertaking was signed between National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and communaute Electtricque Du Benin (CED), which is responsible for production and transportation of electric energy in the Republic of Benin and Togo. This problem of finding solution to generate, transmit and distribute power in the country informed the need for the commercialization of PHCN.

Recommendations

For commercialization to work effectively in PHCN, Government must ensure that there is an alignment of all employee activities with the main activities of their sector which shall ensure positive contribution to PHCN's overall improvement. There should be accurate meter of electricity consumed by the Customer, at the same time ensure realization of full payment through accurate timely and complete billing. The operation department should have adequate assets and equipment to meet their operational demand cost-effectively. Generation department should have adequate feedback, assets and equipment to meet their operational demand cost-efficiently. The Distribution department should have enough assets, equipment and network capacity to meet the operational requirement cost effectively. The Corporate planning strategy department should institutionalize and increase accountability across all the levels of the Organization. Finance and Accounts department should ensure efficient and cost-effective working capital management and capital budgeting. The Human resource department should ensure training and retraining of staff across the board. Improve skills of staff and their motivation, in order to enhance higher productivity. Anti-Corruption campaign and transparency crusade should be intensified in the organization.

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IMPACT OF GRASSROOTS PEACEBUILDING ON SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN ONDO STATE: A SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Nigeria's security challenges have intensified scholarly interest in alternative governance mechanisms, particularly grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. This study examines the impact of grassroots peacebuilding on security governance in Ondo State through systematic qualitative content analysis of secondary data sources spanning 2015-2024. Grounded in Conflict Transformation Theory, the research employs thematic analysis of academic literature, policy documents, media reports, and organizational publications to assess how community-based peace initiatives influence formal security governance structures. Findings reveal that grassroots peacebuilding actors - including traditional institutions, religious organizations, and community vigilante groups - have demonstrably reduced localized conflicts in 67% of documented cases across six local government areas. However, their impact on broader security governance remains constrained by institutional fragmentation, resource limitations, and inadequate policy integration. The study contributes to peace and security literature by providing empirical evidence of grassroots-formal security interface dynamics and proposes a framework for enhanced integration of community-based peacebuilding into state security architecture.

Keywords: Grassroots peacebuilding, security governance, conflict transformation, community-based security.

Introduction

Contemporary security governance in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay between state-centric mechanisms and emerging grassroots initiatives. Ondo State, situated in Nigeria's South-West geopolitical zone, exemplifies this security governance evolution, where traditional state security apparatus increasingly interfaces with community-based peacebuilding actors (Adebayo & Omotosho, 2023). The state's security landscape encompasses diverse challenges including farmer-herder conflicts, youth restiveness, cultism, kidnapping, and communal disputes, necessitating multi-layered responses beyond conventional policing (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2024). Grassroots peacebuilding represents a paradigmatic shift from top-down security provision to community-driven conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. These initiatives leverage local knowledge systems, cultural practices, and social networks to address conflict root causes while complementing formal security structures (Lederach, 2019). In Ondo State, such mechanisms include traditional ruler mediation, interfaith dialogue platforms, community vigilante groups, youth peace ambassadors, and women's peace networks. The theoretical significance of examining grassroots peacebuilding lies in its potential to bridge the gap between formal security governance and community security needs. While existing literature acknowledges the importance of community participation in security provision, empirical analysis of how grassroots initiatives specifically influence security governance structures remains limited, particularly within sub-national contexts like Ondo State.

Problem Identification

Despite increasing recognition of grassroots peacebuilding's potential, its actual impact on security governance in Ondo State remains poorly understood and inadequately documented. Available evidence suggests that while community-based peace initiatives have proliferated across the state's 18 local government areas, their influence on formal security policy-making, resource allocation, and institutional coordination varies significantly (Olayemi, 2022). This variability raises critical questions about effectiveness, sustainability, and scalability of grassroots peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, the interface between grassroots peacebuilding actors and formal security institutions often lacks systematic coordination, potentially undermining both community initiatives and state security efforts. The absence of comprehensive analysis examining this relationship limits policy-makers' ability to optimize security governance through strategic integration of grassroots mechanisms

Aims of the Paper

i. Analyze the scope and characteristics of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Ondo State between 2015-2024.
ii. Assess the documented impact of grassroots peacebuilding on local conflict dynamics and security outcomes.

Research Questions

i. What types of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives have emerged in Ondo State, and what are their primary characteristics?
ii. To what extent have grassroots peacebuilding initiatives influenced conflict dynamics and security outcomes in Ondo State?

Conceptual Clarification

Grassroots Peacebuilding

This represents a paradigmatic departure from traditional top-down conflict resolution approaches, embodying locally-driven initiatives that systematically address conflict root causes through community participation and cultural authenticity. This approach prioritizes local ownership, cultural relevance, and long-term relationship transformation over immediate conflict cessation (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2023). The concept encompasses diverse actors including traditional institutions, religious organizations, community vigilante groups, youth networks, and women's peace coalitions, all leveraging indigenous knowledge systems and social networks to create sustainable peace architecture that complements rather than competes with formal security mechanisms.

Security Governance

It transcends conventional state-centric security provision, encompassing the comprehensive structures, processes, and mechanisms through which security is conceptualized, delivered, and regulated within complex political environments. It encompasses both state and non-state actors, formal and informal institutions, and multiple levels of governance from local to national (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2021). This multidimensional framework recognizes the evolving nature of security provision in contemporary contexts, where effectiveness increasingly depends on networked arrangements between diverse stakeholders rather than hierarchical command structures alone.

Conflict Transformation

Represents a sophisticated theoretical and practical framework that fundamentally reconceptualizes conflict intervention beyond mere dispute resolution toward comprehensive societal change. Pioneered by Johan Galtung and refined by John Paul Lederach, the theory posits that sustainable peace requires fundamental changes in relationships, structures, and cultures that underlie conflict dynamics. The theory's four dimensions—personal, relational, structural, and cultural transformation-offer analytical lenses for examining grassroots peacebuilding impact (Lederach, 2019). This approach emphasizes long-term processes that address systemic inequalities, transform adversarial relationships, and create positive institutional changes that prevent conflict recurrence.

Community-Based Security

It emerges as a hybrid governance model that integrates local knowledge systems with formal security provision, creating responsive and culturally appropriate protection mechanisms. This concept encompasses community-driven initiatives that provide security services while simultaneously engaging in conflict prevention, utilizing local social capital and cultural authority to address both immediate security threats and underlying vulnerability factors. The approach recognizes communities as active security producers rather than passive consumers, emphasizing participatory governance, local ownership, and contextual adaptation in security architecture design and implementation

Theoretical Framework

Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict Transformation Theory, pioneered by Johan Galtung and refined by John Paul Lederach, provides the theoretical foundation for this study. The theory posits that sustainable peace requires fundamental changes in relationships, structures, and cultures that underlie conflict (Lederach, 2019). Unlike conflict resolution, which focuses on ending specific disputes, conflict transformation emphasizes long-term processes that address root causes and create positive change. The theory's four dimensions—personal, relational, structural, and cultural transformation - offer analytical lenses for examining grassroots peacebuilding impact. Personal transformation involves individual attitude and behavior change; relational transformation addresses relationships between conflicting parties; structural transformation targets institutional and policy changes;

cultural transformation encompasses shifts in societal norms and values (Vayrynen, 2021).

Grassroots Peacebuilding in Nigeria

Recent scholarship demonstrates growing recognition of grassroots peacebuilding's significance in Nigeria's security landscape. Ajayi and Buhari (2023) analyzed community-based conflict resolution mechanisms across six Nigerian states, finding that traditional institutions mediated 73% of local disputes successfully, compared to 45% success rates for formal court systems. Similarly, Okafor and Ngwu (2022) documented how interfaith dialogue platforms reduced religious tensions in Northern Nigeria by 60% over three years. Adeleke (2021) examined vigilante groups in South-Western Nigeria, revealing their dual role as security providers and peace mediators. While acknowledging their effectiveness in crime reduction, the study highlighted concerns about accountability and human rights compliance. Conversely, Oyewole and Adesina (2023) found that well-regulated community security groups demonstrated higher adherence to rule of law principles.

Security Governance Transformation

International literature emphasizes security governance's evolution from state-centric to networked models incorporating diverse actors. Belloni and Philipsen (2022) analyzed community policing initiatives across West Africa, demonstrating how grassroots participation enhanced police legitimacy and effectiveness. Their findings align with Omeje's (2021) argument that hybrid security governance arrangements often outperform purely state-led approaches in fragile contexts. Baker and Scheye's (2023) comprehensive review of African security governance highlighted the importance of "security governance hybridity," where formal and informal mechanisms complement each other. They identified four key success factors: mutual recognition, coordinated planning, resource sharing, and accountability mechanisms.

Ondo State Context

Limited scholarship specifically examines Ondo State's security governance dynamics. Oloyede (2020) studied traditional rulers' conflict resolution roles in Akoko region, finding that their moral authority remained strong despite modernization pressures. However, the study noted declining state support for traditional institutions' security functions. Akinyemi and Olorunsola (2022) documented interfaith peace initiatives in Okitipupa Local Government Area, showing 45% reduction in youth violence following

sustained religious leader interventions. Their work highlighted the importance of inclusive dialogue and youth engagement in peacebuilding processes.

Literature Gap

Existing literature reveals significant gaps in understanding grassroots peacebuilding's specific impact on security governance structures. While individual studies document various initiatives' activities, comprehensive analysis of their collective influence on formal security institutions remains limited. Additionally, most studies focus on single-actor types (e.g., traditional rulers or vigilante groups) rather than examining multi-actor peacebuilding ecosystems.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative secondary data analysis design, utilizing systematic review and thematic content analysis methods. The approach enables comprehensive examination of available evidence while acknowledging the limitations of secondary data sources.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Primary Sources

Academic journal articles (peer-reviewed); Government policy documents and reports; International organization publications (UN, ECOWAS, AU); Research institute reports and working papers were used.

Secondary Sources

Credible media reports and investigative journalism; civil society organization publications; conference proceedings and policy briefs; and statistical databases and conflict tracking systems were used.

Selection Criteria

a. **Inclusion Criteria used:** published between 2015-2024; focus on Ondo State or comparable Nigerian contexts; relevance to grassroots peacebuilding or security governance; Methodological rigor and credible source; and English language publications.

b. **Exclusion Criteria used:** purely theoretical works without empirical content; Unpublished or grey literature without institutional backing; Duplicate or outdated information; and Sources lacking transparency about methodology.

i. **Data Collection Process:** data collection proceeded through four phases: (1) systematic database searches using predetermined keywords; (2) snowball sampling from reference lists; (3) institutional website searches; (4) expert consultation for source identification. Search terms included combinations of "grassroots peacebuilding," "community-based security," "traditional conflict resolution," "security governance," "Ondo State," and related concepts.

ii. **Data Analysis**: thematic content analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase framework: familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and report writing. Analysis utilized both inductive and deductive approaches, allowing themes to emerge from data while maintaining theoretical framework guidance.

Findings

Grassroots Peacebuilding Landscape in Ondo State

a. **Initiative Types and Distribution:** Analysis of secondary sources identified six primary categories of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives operating across Ondo State's 18 local government areas between 2015-2024.

b. **Traditional Institution-Based Initiatives:** emerge as the most prevalent category, documented in 16 of 18 LGAs. These initiatives leverage traditional rulers' moral authority and customary law systems for conflict mediation. The Deji of Akure's Peace Council, established in 2018, exemplifies this approach, mediating 127 disputes with 89% resolution success rate (Olayemi, 2022).

c. **Faith-Based Peacebuilding Programs:** operate across religious divides, with documented activities in 14 LGAs. The Ondo State Inter-Faith Dialogue Forum, comprising Christian and Islamic leaders, has facilitated dialogue sessions reaching over 15,000 participants since 2016 (Akinyemi & Olorunsola, 2022).

d. **Community Vigilante Groups** function in 12 LGAs, providing security services while engaging in conflict prevention. The Amotekun Corps, while state-sponsored, incorporates grassroots elements through local recruitment and community liaison mechanisms (Adeleke, 2021).

e. **Youth Peace Networks** emerged in 8 LGAs, primarily targeting cultism and gang violence. The Ondo Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, established in 2019, trained 350 young peace mediators across participating communities (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2023).

f. **Women Peace Groups** operate in 11 LGAs, focusing on domestic violence prevention and community healing. Market women associations have been particularly active in conflict mediation and social cohesion building (Oyewole & Adesina, 2023).

g. **Civil Society Peace Coalitions** encompass diverse organizations working on peacebuilding themes. The Ondo Civil Society Coalition for Peace documented 78 peace interventions between 2018-2022 (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, 2023).

Documented Impacts on Conflict Dynamics

Conflict Prevention and Early Warning

Secondary sources document grassroots actors' significant contributions to conflict prevention through early warning systems and proactive intervention. Traditional rulers in Akoko region established informal intelligence networks that prevented 23 potential farmer-herder conflicts between 2019-2021 (Oloyede, 2020). Faith-based organizations demonstrated particular effectiveness in preventing religious tensions. The Inter-Faith Forum's intervention during 2020 national protests prevented religious polarization that affected other Nigerian states (Nigeria Inter-Religious Council, 2021).

Conflict Mediation and Resolution

Quantitative analysis of available data reveals grassroots actors' substantial mediation roles such that Traditional Institutions Successfully mediated 67% of documented land disputes (89 of 133 cases) between 2017-2022 (Ondo State Ministry of Justice, 2023); while Religious Organizations facilitated resolution of 78% of interfaith disputes (43 of 55 cases) during the study period (Akinyemi & Olorunsola, 2022); and Community Vigilante Groups mediated 54% of neighbourhood conflicts (127 of 235 cases) while providing security services (Adeleke, 2021).

Behavioural and Attitudinal Change

Evidence suggests grassroots peacebuilding initiatives contribute to longer-term behavioural change. Youth peace networks reported 65% reduction in cultism-related

incidents in participating communities between 2019-2023 (Ondo Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, 2024). Women's peace groups documented improved domestic violence reporting and community response mechanisms (Oyewole & Adesina, 2023).

Interface with Formal Security Governance

Collaboration Mechanisms

Analysis reveals varying degrees of grassroots-formal security collaboration across different actor types and geographic areas. State-sponsored initiatives like *Amotekun* demonstrate institutionalized collaboration, with formal command structures integrating community input (Ondo State Security Network Agency, 2023). Traditional institutions maintain formal recognition through state government protocols, enabling direct communication with security agencies. The quarterly security briefings between traditional rulers and state security advisors, initiated in 2020, exemplify this formal interface (Government House Akure, 2022). Faith-based organizations participate in state-level peace and security committees, contributing to policy discussions and implementation strategies. Their involvement in election violence prevention during 2019 and 2023 electoral cycles demonstrates institutional recognition (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2023).

Information Sharing and Intelligence

Grassroots actors serve as crucial information sources for formal security agencies. Community vigilante groups reportedly share intelligence with police commands in 78% of documented cases (Nigeria Police Force Ondo Command, 2022). However, information flow remains largely unidirectional, with limited feedback mechanisms to community actors. Traditional rulers' intelligence networks provide early warning capabilities often superior to formal mechanisms due to deep community embeddedness and cultural legitimacy (Oloyede, 2020).

Resource and Capacity Constraints

Despite collaboration potential, resource limitations significantly constrain grassroots-formal integration. Only 23% of documented grassroots initiatives receive any form of state funding or material support (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, 2023). This resource gap limits sustainability and scalability of successful initiatives. Capacity-building efforts remain ad-hoc and donor-dependent. International organizations provided training to fewer than 200 grassroots peacebuilders across Ondo State during

the study period, insufficient for systematic capacity development (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2023).

Success Factors and Constraints

Enabling Factors

Cultural Legitimacy emerges as the primary success factor for grassroots peacebuilding effectiveness. Initiatives that align with local cultural norms and values demonstrate higher acceptance and sustainability rates (Olayemi, 2022); while Leadership Quality significantly influences initiative success. Charismatic and respected leaders enhance community buy-in and stakeholder engagement. Traditional rulers with strong moral authority achieved higher mediation success rates (89%) compared to those with contested legitimacy (56%) (Oloyede, 2020); and Inclusive Participation correlates positively with initiative effectiveness. Programs incorporating women, youth, and marginalized groups demonstrated greater impact on behavioral change and social cohesion (Oyewole & Adesina, 2023). More also, External Support enhances initiative sustainability when appropriately managed. International development partners' support to interfaith dialogue programs contributed to their expansion and institutionalization (Nigeria Inter-Religious Council, 2021).

Constraining Factors

Resource Limitations represent the most significant constraint facing grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Inadequate funding limits program scope, duration, and professional development opportunities (Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, 2023); While, Political Interference undermines initiative neutrality and effectiveness. Electoral cycles particularly strain grassroots actors' non-partisan credibility, with political parties attempting to co-opt peace networks for campaign purposes (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2023). More also, Institutional Fragmentation between different grassroots actors reduces collective impact. Lack of coordination mechanisms leads to duplicated efforts and missed synergy opportunities (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2023); and Limited State Recognition constrains grassroots actors' influence on formal policy processes. Absence of systematic consultation mechanisms limits their input into security governance decisions (Government House Akure, 2022).

Conflict Transformation Dimensions

Personal Transformation

Evidence demonstrates grassroots peacebuilding's contribution to individual-level change. Youth peace networks reported attitude shifts among 73% of program participants, with reduced support for violence and increased conflict resolution skills (Ondo Youth Peace Ambassadors Network, 2024). Traditional mediation processes emphasize personal accountability and behavioral change, with 82% of mediated cases including commitment to future conduct improvement (Ondo State Ministry of Justice, 2023).

Relational Transformation

Grassroots initiatives demonstrate significant impact on relationship building across conflict divides. Interfaith dialogue programs created sustained partnerships between religious communities, with 67% of participating congregations establishing ongoing cooperation mechanisms (Akinyemi & Olorunsola, 2022). Community dialogue sessions facilitated by traditional ruler's improved farmer-herder relationships in 78% of participating communities, with increased communication and collaborative resource management (Oloyede, 2020).

Cultural Transformation

Grassroots peacebuilding contributes to cultural norm shifts around conflict resolution and social cohesion. Women's peace groups challenged traditional gender exclusions from conflict mediation, with 45% of participating communities expanding women's roles in dispute resolution (Oyewole & Adesina, 2023). Youth programs promoted cultural values emphasizing dialogue over violence, with measurable attitude changes in participating communities (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2023).

Findings

Theoretical Implications: the findings validate Conflict Transformation Theory's relevance for analyzing grassroots peacebuilding impact on security governance. Evidence demonstrates transformation across all four theoretical dimensions, though with varying intensity and sustainability. Personal and relational transformations appear most achievable through grassroots initiatives, while structural and cultural changes require longer-term investment and broader stakeholder engagement. The study extends existing theory by highlighting the importance of "governance interface transformation"

- the evolution of relationships between grassroots and formal security actors. This dimension, not explicitly addressed in traditional Conflict Transformation Theory, emerges as crucial for sustainable security governance enhancement.

Empirical Contributions: this research provides systematic evidence of grassroots peacebuilding's documented contributions to security governance in Ondo State. The identification of six distinct initiative types and their geographic distribution offer policymakers detailed understanding of existing capacity and gaps. The quantitative synthesis of available impact data, while limited by source constraints, establishes baseline evidence for grassroots effectiveness across different conflict types and mediation mechanisms.

Policy Implications: findings suggest significant untapped potential for enhancing security governance through strategic grassroots integration. Current ad hoc collaboration patterns could benefit from systematic institutional mechanisms that preserve grassroots autonomy while enabling coordinated action. The resource constraint identified across all initiative types indicates need for sustainable funding mechanisms that avoid dependency while ensuring continuity of successful programs.

Comparative Perspectives: Ondo State's grassroots peacebuilding landscape reflects broader Nigerian patterns while demonstrating regional specificities. The prominence of traditional institutions aligns with Yoruba cultural context, while interfaith cooperation reflects Nigeria's religious diversity management strategies. Compared to northern Nigerian contexts, Ondo State shows lower ethnic conflict intensity but higher urbanization-related tensions, influencing peacebuilding initiative focus and effectiveness.

Conclusion

This secondary data analysis demonstrates that grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Ondo State have made substantive contributions to security governance, particularly in conflict prevention, mediation, and behavioral change promotion. Six distinct initiative types operate across the state's 18 local government areas, with documented success rates ranging from 54-89% across different conflict mediation contexts. However, their impact on broader security governance structures remains constrained by resource limitations, institutional fragmentation, and limited formal recognition. The interface between grassroots actors and formal security institutions, while showing promising collaboration examples, lacks systematic coordination mechanisms that could optimize collective effectiveness. The study validates Conflict Transformation Theory's

analytical utility while extending it to encompass governance interface transformation as a crucial fifth dimension for security governance contexts.

Recommendations

i. Policy Integration

Establish Formal Coordination Mechanisms: Ondo State government should create structured platforms for regular consultation between grassroots peacebuilding actors and formal security agencies. Quarterly coordination meetings, joint planning sessions, and shared information systems would enhance collaborative effectiveness. **Develop Legal Framework:** Enact legislation recognizing grassroots peacebuilding roles within state security architecture while establishing accountability mechanisms and operational guidelines. **Institute Funding Mechanisms:** Create dedicated budget lines for grassroots peacebuilding support, potentially through security vote allocations or donor partnership arrangements. **Systematic Training Programs:** Implement comprehensive capacity-building initiatives for grassroots peacebuilders, focusing on mediation skills, human rights principles, and coordination mechanisms. **Leadership Development:** Invest in emerging peacebuilding leadership, particularly among women and youth, to ensure generational sustainability. **Technology Integration:** Provide technological tools for information sharing, case management, and impact monitoring to enhance grassroots actor effectiveness.

iii. Research and Monitoring

Establish Monitoring Systems: Develop systematic data collection mechanisms to track grassroots peacebuilding activities, outcomes, and impacts over time.**Commission Impact Evaluations:** Fund rigorous evaluations of successful initiatives to identify best practices and scaling opportunities. **Support Academic Research:** Partner with universities to conduct ongoing research on grassroots peacebuilding effectiveness and innovation.

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NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION, 2015 – 2023

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Abstract

The primary objective of the study is to employ former President Muhammadu Buhari's three-point agenda—fighting corruption, reducing insecurity, and reviving Nigeria's economy—as a standard by which to determine how effectively his foreign policy objectives performed. The study methodology is purely qualitative, as data were gathered from newspapers, journals, and the internet. Decision-making theory was utilised in the study to bolster its arguments. The study outlines some of President Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policies, such as (i) border closures for economic protectionism, (ii) financial aid from China to fill in infrastructure gaps and boost Nigeria's economy, and (iii) external relations with neighbouring countries to fight Boko Haram. Thus, the study concludes that Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy objectives lacked national interest and were not citizen-oriented. His policies to combat corruption, insecurity, and weak economic performance failed to live up to expectations. This is because the three aforementioned factors have considerably slowed down the nation's progress, development, and peace under his leadership.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, Administration, External Relations

Introduction

Nigeria suffered a serious internal and external blow as a result of the June 12, 1993, crisis and the late General Sani Abacha's subsequent rise to power in November 1993. Under Abacha's rule, the military junta suppressed human rights activists, journalists, civil society organisations, pro-democracy groups, and anyone who opposed the military's continued hold on power (Olowojolu, 2017). A series of terrible incidents led to Nigeria's isolation from the rest of the world until Abacha's tragic death on June 8, 1998.

On May 29, 1999, the Fourth Republic was established, marking a paradigm shift in Nigeria's foreign policy after the military regime ceded power to civilians. After assuming office in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo was compelled to reevaluate Nigeria's foreign policy. To inform the public about the political climate developments in Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo had to travel abroad on multiple occasions. It should be emphasised that during his eight years in office, Obasanjo enhanced foreign direct investment, raised GDP, improved Nigeria's standing abroad, and drastically decreased the country's external debt. The idea of citizen diplomacy was developed by the late president Olusegun Obasanjo's successor, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. However, health problems prevented President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua from achieving his foreign policy objectives, and he eventually passed away in 2010. On May 6, 2010, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the vice president of Yaradua, took the oath of office as acting president. President Goodluck Jonathan's "Transformation Agenda," which was unveiled after the 2011 elections, seeks to make Nigeria a significant economic force. To realise Vision 20: 2020 and place Nigeria among the top 20 economies in the world, the Transformation Agenda was created. The real sector, agriculture and rural development, water resources, mines and steel development, commerce and industry, physical infrastructure, defence and security, employment creation, the health sector, and information and communication technology are some of the essential elements. Economic diplomacy was the primary objective of Nigeria's foreign policy under Goodluck Jonathan. Nigeria used economic diplomacy as a means to establish strategic investment ties with nations like the United States, China, Turkey, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and many more. The economic relationship between Nigeria and the United States strengthened under Goodluck Jonathan's leadership (Olowojolu, 2017). For example, the General Electric Company of the United States committed more than $1 billion to the construction of a Calabar factory to manufacture gas turbines for the power sector. Over 1000 ex-Niger Delta insurgents were taught vocational skills at American institutions under the US-Nigeria Bi-National Commission (Ashiru, 2013). Foreign direct investment totalling $54 million was given to Nigeria to set up pineapple and other crop plantations for export to the EU market (Ashiru, 2013). As of 2012,

Nigeria has the greatest FDI influx in Africa, totaling $8.9 billion (Nwankwo, 2013). During Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's presidency, Nigeria made a substantial contribution to the advancement of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Ivory Coast. Also, under Jonathan's leadership, Nigeria gained important positions in many important international organisations, including the African Union's Peace and Security Council, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the International Law Commission, the Panel of Judges at the International Criminal Court, the President for International Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Governing Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and many more. President Jonathan's administration shocked some of Nigeria's key allies in January 2014 by approving the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act, which the Senate and House of Representatives had passed. The anti-LGBT law prohibits homosexual partnerships, membership in and other activities related to gay organisations and societies, and gay marriages, which are punishable by up to 14 years in prison (Tribune, May 28, 2015). The European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America threatened to withhold financial aid from Nigeria if its ruling government did not repeal the anti-LGBT law (Olowojolu, 2017). Despite the significant advancements made in Jonathan's foreign policy, certain incidents damaged Nigeria's reputation overseas. Because of Jonathan's administration's high level of corruption and poor management of the Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria's image suffered internationally. Recalling that the 2015 general election went smoothly was a major accomplishment for President Jonathan's administration. Nigerians and foreign observers alike praised Jonathan's show of statesmanship after he lost the presidential election to retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari. Nonetheless, the paper focuses on evaluating how effectively former President Muhammadu Buhari has achieved his foreign policy objectives while in office, taking into account the primary objectives of his political strategy, which was to combat corruption, a faltering economy, and insecurity in Nigeria.

Understanding Nigerian Foreign Policy

Foreign policy can be understood as the entirety of a country's national interest that arises from the interaction of internal and external actors, as well as non-state actors. Nigeria employs self-interested strategies in its foreign policy to safeguard its interests as a nation and effectively achieve its goals in the context of international relations (Asanebi et al, 2024). The techniques utilised by foreign policy are strategically employed to safeguard the national interest and engage with other nations. Interactions and relations between state and non-state actors in the international system have been known to exist and to be changing in recent years as a result of the increasing degree of globalisation and transnational activities. These constantly evolving relations and interactions, in their own ways, have influenced several foreign policies between states.

In the case of Nigeria, since the country attained political independence on October 1, 1960, the various regimes have conducted external relations. Indeed, matters relating to foreign affairs seem to have been accorded priority in such a manner that they usually form part of the initial speeches of each of these regimes (Sulaiman, 2021).

It should be noted that each regime made an effort to adopt a foreign policy that would accommodate the current conditions within the global system, as the domestic and international environments continued to change. This frequently guarantees that changes do take place as events unfold and do not stay static, even in the face of efforts to preserve particular pertinent aspects of Nigeria's foreign policy. Nigeria's foreign policy tenets were articulated by the country's policy elites. In Nigeria's foreign policy, these centred on non-alignment, multilateralism, Africa-centeredness, legal equality of states, non-interference in domestic affairs, and peaceful coexistence. Additionally, the goals and objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy have remained constant since the country's independence in 1960. These objectives and goals, as outlined and identified, include: the protection of the territorial integrity of the Nigerian state; the promotion of the economic and social wellbeing of Nigerians; the enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in the world at large; the promotion of unity as well as the total political, economic, social, and cultural liberation of Nigeria and Africa; the promotion of the rights of black people and others under colonial domination; the promotion of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of world peace and security; mutual respect and friendship among all peoples among states; redressing the imbalance in the international power structures that has tended to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries; and the promotion of world peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect, and equality of all persons in the world (Ade and Aderemi, 2013).

These were laid out to define the nation's foreign policy since independence, and they appeared to have served as a framework and a guide for the conduct of the country's foreign policy and relations by different administrations. Although it is well known that some administrations prioritise and concentrate on certain of these goals, the conditions and surroundings in which these administrations have found themselves can occasionally be used to explain why some administrations prioritise and concentrate on particular goals. Some of the administration also had to adjust to the domestic, sub-regional, regional, and international events that were occurring around them. It was the regime of Murtala since independence that first set up a committee known as the Adedeji Committee to examine Nigeria's foreign policy. It was based on the report of the committee that in June 1976 Obasanjo identified Nigeria's foreign policy to include; The defense of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; The creation of necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which

will facilitate the defense of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time fostering national self-reliance and rapid economic development; The promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world; The promotion and defense of justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the black man; and the defense and promotion of world peace (Adefore, 1979, Chubundu, 2002, Gamabari, 1984). It should be noted that scholars have frequently criticised Nigeria's foreign policy for lacking any distinctively Nigerian ideology.

Theoretical Framework

Decision-Making Theory

The primary objective of the *decision-making theory* is to comprehend all political actions, good or bad, from the viewpoint of the state's actors. The foremost exponent of this theory is Snyder. According to Snyder, cited in Francis (2008), decision-making lies in the common focus under which we can bring together the political actors, situations, and processes for analysis. It has some salient issues, such as ascertaining who made the decision that resulted in the action and examining the interactive and intellectual factors that influenced the decision-makers. The goal of decision-making theory is also to investigate the different aspects that decision-makers take into account when formulating policies, particularly those of foreign policy. Decision makers examine the internal and external environment before making decisions. According to Snyder, cited in Francis (2008), the internal setting includes such variables as social structures, socioeconomic realities of the state, public opinion, and dominant value orientations. The crux of the matter is: does Buhari consider the social, economic, and political situation of the country in his foreign policy goals? The study employs the theory of decision-making because political actions, including the formulation of foreign policy, are carried out by humans. Therefore, it is appropriate to reflect the policymakers' actions alongside the realities of the internal and external environment, not from our point of view but from the perspective of the decision-making process, to understand the dynamics of their actions. In light of this, Buhari's foreign policy choices would be scrutinised to determine whether they were sufficiently bold to address issues facing Nigerians and the Nigerian government.

The Domestic Environment Situation in the Buhari Regime

Since President Muhammadu Buhari took office in 2015, Nigeria has experienced unexpected and troubling changes. Since domestic policy influences foreign policy, President Buhari's foreign policy is not immune to domestic realities and strategies. Without a doubt, the nation has been dealing with a wide range of issues. While many of these problems remain unsolved, Nigerians have waited endlessly for solutions, to no avail. Poor infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, increasing debt burden, fuel scarcity, economic downturn, inflation, and division along tribal and religious lines, among others, are the teething problems facing the country. Some of these challenges are lucidly discussed below:

Poverty and Hardship

The high cost of living and other economic issues have combined to worsen the current situation, leading to an increase in the country's poverty index. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, 110 million Nigerians are multi-dimensionally poor out of over 200 million citizens (Daniel, 2023). This runs counter to the nation's abundance of natural and human resources. The governance failure has been ascribed to the incapacity of the current and former leaders to effectively manage the resources.

Infrastructure Deficiency

Nigeria's high rate of inflation was caused by inadequate infrastructure, as well as the majority of the country's roads are unpaved, which makes it difficult to transport goods. According to the former director-general of the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC), Engineer Chidi Isuwa, Nigeria had about 195,000km of road network, and only about 60,000km was paved (Daniel, 2023). Due to inadequate maintenance and a lack of investment, a significant portion of the paved roads were in extremely bad shape. Customers paid high prices for the goods they purchased as a result of the poor roads' high transportation costs, as the erratic power supply is a big challenge in Nigeria to date. To power their operations, most businesses relied on self-generated power sources. High production costs brought on by the high operating and maintenance costs of power plants were passed on to customers by businesses, which fuelled Nigeria's high inflation rate.

Corruption

Corruption in government has continued to compound the country's woes, even as resources that are expected to contribute to gradually reducing the poverty rate are

syphoned by a few people who take advantage of their positions in government. Before the coming of the incumbent government, there were records of public officials who were involved in corrupt practices. One such case that needs mentioning is that of a former Minister of Petroleum under ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, Diezani Alison-Madueke, from whom the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission recovered $153 million and 80 properties (Daniel, 2023). Also, the case of the then-serving Accountant-General of the Federation, Idris Ahmed, who allegedly misappropriated N109bn, explains why more Nigerians are poor despite the social investment programmes of the current regime. The EFCC recently said it had recovered N30bn from the suspended AGF. This is only one incident among several others yet to be discovered. A former EFCC chairman, Ibrahim Magu, was arrested and subsequently sacked over alleged corruption. Magu, who was in charge of the EFCC between 2015 and July 2022, was accused of mishandling the recovered loot and selling seized assets, with his associates said to be major beneficiaries (Daniel, 2023).

Insecurity

In Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, Boko Haram was accountable for thousands of fatalities between 2015 and 2022. Nigeria is the African nation most impacted by the terrorist organization's attacks. The Northeastern states record the most fatalities. The most dangerous state is, by far, Borno, where Boko Haram has killed over 35,000 people. Among the news on attacks mostly present in the media, the kidnapping of 276 female students from Chibok secondary school in Borno in 2014 received a global response. Apart from the Boko Haram insurgency, the increasing level of kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, and other social vices remains a source of concern to the Buhari regime. Insecurity was a daunting challenge throughout his government. Northern Nigeria had high insecurity problems ranging from killing, armed robbery, assault, carjacking, kidnapping, hostage-taking, banditry, and rape. According to security reports, not least 2,371 people were kidnapped on 281 separate occasions, with N10 billion in ransom demanded during the first half of 2021 alone. Thus, farming was seriously threatened by insecurity since many farmers were unable to continue their operations for fear of being killed, which resulted in high prices for agricultural products. The cost of other products on the market increased as a result of the high prices of agricultural products.

Debt Burden

Nigeria’s public debt has risen the most under the Buhari administration when compared to previous governments since 1999, and foreign debt has grown three times more than the combined figure recorded by the past three administrations, a PREMIUM

TIMES analysis of the government's domestic and foreign debts has shown. While the Obasanjo government met $28 billion in foreign debt in 1999, it left $2.11 billion in 2007 after successfully securing a write-off by the London and Paris clubs of foreign creditors (Kabiru, 2021). The Yar'adua/Jonathan government added $1.39 billion to what they owed, and the Jonathan government incurred an additional $3.8 billion, taking the country's total foreign debt to $7.3 billion when that administration came to an end in 2015. Nigeria's external loan reached $28.57 billion by December 2020, meaning an extra $21.27 billion had been accumulated under the Buhari administration—three times the combined amount by past governments since 1999 (Kabiru, 2021).

For domestic debt, considered relatively less harmful to the value of the naira than foreign debt, the figure rose from N795 billion in 1999, when the Obasanjo government came to power, to N8.8 trillion in 2015, when the Buhari administration assumed office. By December 2020, Nigeria's domestic debt stood at N16.02 trillion, twice as much as the combined amount taken by the past three governments. The domestic and foreign debt figures are higher now as the government has borrowed more in 2021. Muhammadu Buhari inherited the N8.8 trillion federal government's domestic debt in 2015. However, the figure rose to N16.02 trillion as of December 2020. Likewise, the nation's exchange rate fell from N197 to a dollar in 2015 to N381 at the end of December 2020. Up from $7.35 billion in 2015, Nigeria's external borrowings stood at $28.57 billion as of December 2020. This means that the administration incurred $21.27 billion in foreign loans. But putting together external and domestic borrowing, Buhari had borrowed N17.06 trillion as of March 2021, using the N381 exchange rate. This represents an average of N2.83 trillion per year since 2015. (Kabiru, 2021).

Buhari's Foreign Policy Thrust

Africa was the centre piece of the country's foreign policy," according to Nigeria's previous "afro-centric" foreign policy. Due in large part to its emphasis on the decolonization of Africa as a whole and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, this improved the country's reputation worldwide. Nigeria's sub-regional, overwhelming presence in West Africa under President Buhari is undeniable, even though its dominance in the African region may not be as evident as it once was. The study shall examine here the international dimension of his three-point agenda of dealing with insecurity and the search for international joint efforts to combat it, fighting corruption and the quest for the return of Nigeria's looted assets, and efforts to revive the economy with the support of trading partners.

Multinational Cooperation to Tackle Terrorism

To rekindle brotherly ties and specifically request their assistance in the fight against international terrorism. President Buhari began his official international trips in 2015 by travelling to Niger and Chad, followed by Cameroon, Guinea, and the Benin Republic. This was part of his pursuit of a foreign policy based on good neighbourliness and security for all. The Multinational Joint Task Force, which was established as a result of the trips and is primarily composed of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, was created with the goal of eliminating Boko Haram terrorists and promoting peace and development in the Lake Chad Area. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any effective coordination between the troops from the Multinational Joint Task Force member states, so the war continues. This was demonstrated last year when the president of Chad launched an attack on Boko Haram without the assistance of troops from Nigeria, Niger, or Cameroon.

Although the Chadians were very successful in driving Boko Haram into Nigeria, perhaps if there had been coordination within the Multinational Joint Task Force, the troops from other states would have joined the Chadians in their efforts to completely liberate the Lake Chad Basin, which is home to Boko Haram's headquarters in the theatre of war. Additionally, the Nigerian troops would have been placed on notice and poised to support the Chadian efforts if President Buhari and the Chadian president had agreed. In contrast to President Obama's refusal to sell Tucano aircraft to Nigeria for reasons only he knows, President Buhari has made significant progress in his quest for international cooperation against terrorism by convincing former US President Donald Trump to allow Nigeria to pursue the war against Boko Haram. The Nigerian troops' performance will undoubtedly improve with the arrival of the Tucano aircraft.

Closure of Land Borders

closure of the land border between Nigeria and the ECOWAS countries for more than eight months had a negative impact on all of the participating nations, including Nigeria. Given that the closure stopped people, goods, and services from entering Nigeria, including the inputs needed for industry and commerce, it is a prime example of how domestic policy can have both direct and indirect effects on foreign policy. This resulted in hyperinflation of goods and services in Nigeria. Though the policy aimed to stop the smuggling of small arms, ammunition, and foreign rice into the country to reduce insecurity and encourage domestic rice production, respectively, smuggling continued due to the porous nature of the country’s borders. International trade between Nigeria and the neighbouring countries has always been beneficial. Nigeria’s signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), projected to become the world's

second-largest free trade area, is set to expand. Analysts say Nigeria earned $823.06 million from exports to ECOWAS countries and $2.72 billion from shipping out products to Africa in the first quarter of 2020. In the second quarter of 2020, exports to the whole of Africa were estimated at N401.4 billion, while goods worth N149.3 billion were exported to ECOWAS. This, according to analysts, is set to expand owing to the AFCFTA. Besides AFCFTA, Nigeria has signed several bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding aimed at strengthening its relations with other countries and driving foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country to accelerate development and improve the lives of citizens. The country suffered more losses from the border closure than anticipated because it made the recession worse. President Muhammadu Buhari's administration saw a decline in bilateral ties between Nigeria and its neighbours, especially Ghana and the Benin Republic, as a result of the border closure, which Ghana detested. The border was opened in early January 2021, and it will undoubtedly help maintain good relations and the necessary rapprochement between Nigeria and the ECOWAS member states.

Additionally, as production lines were shut down and employees were laid off during the border closure, local manufacturers experienced significant losses and financial transaction errors. Food and beverage producers are the most severely impacted, according to the findings, since they are unable to import raw materials that they have already purchased, and their completed goods intended for the ECOWAS subregion and Trans-Saharan markets are unable to cross the border from Nigeria. Due to their inability to import raw materials or export their completed goods, manufacturers whose raw materials were stranded at the border reportedly lost an average of N5 billion every day following the border closure. Since exports account for 80% of their revenue, some farmers who produce primarily for export are also losing out. Some businesses are currently unable to import paid-for raw materials that were bought from neighbouring countries for domestic production, and perishable goods stored in certain warehouses have spoiled, expired, or been damaged.

China's Financial Aid to Nigeria

President Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as Nigeria's new leader on May 29, 2015, representing the opposition party. The government brought blueprints to fight corruption and build the economy, among other things, and it found a true partner in China to accomplish this. This is why the event was so spectacular, not only because it was the first time it had happened in the country. Thus, in his quest to fix the economy, beginning with the closing of the infrastructural gaps, the President has been working intimately with China. On April 27, 2018, both countries signed a $2.5 billion currency swap deal to boost local currency liquidity for Nigerian and Chinese industrialists (Udo,

2018). President Buhari has also sought and, in most cases, obtained loans from China. According to a press release by the Presidency dated April 15, 2016, after the President's first visit to China since his assumption of office in 2015, the President praised China for the additional investments worth over $6 billion his visit was able to attract to Nigeria in different areas of the economy. Thus:

i. In the power sector, North-South Power Company Limited and Sinohydro Corporation Limited signed an agreement valued at $478,657,941.28 to construct 300 megawatts of solar power in Shiroro, Niger State.
ii. In the solid minerals sector, Granite and Marble Limited signed the Shanghai Shibang and an agreement valued at $55 million for the construction and equipping of granite mining plants in Nigeria.
iii. A total of $1 billion is to be invested in the development of the Greenfield motorway from Abuja to Ibadan to Lagos under an agreement reached by the infrastructure bank and Sinohydro Corporation Limited.
iv. For the housing sector, both companies mentioned above also signed a $250 million deal to develop an ultra-modern 27-story high-rise complex and a $2.5 billion agreement for the development of the Lagos metro rail transit red line project.
v. $1 billion agreement for the establishment of a hi-tech industrial park in Ogun, Guangdong, and one in Igbesa, Ogun State.
vi. The agreement by Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone and the CNG (Nigeria) for the construction of two 500 MT/day float gas facilities valued at $200 million.
vii. An agreement valued at $363 million for the establishment of a comprehensive farm and downstream industrial park in Kogi State.
viii. Others under negotiation were the $500 million project for the provision of telephone broadcast equipment and a $25 million facility for the production of prepaid smart metres between Mojec Investment Limited and Microstar Company Limited (Premium Times, April 15, 2016).

Similarly, in the recently concluded 2018 Forum on China-African Cooperation (FOCAC), Nigeria signed more than $10 billion in agreements, with others still under discussion by various parties. Among those that have been signed in agreements or MOUs are as follows:

i. The agreement between the China National Petroleum Corporation, which has agreed to secure funding for the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation's Ajaokuta-Kano (AKK) gas pipeline, is to cost $2.8 billion.
ii. The agreement entered into by the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment with Shandong Ruyi International Fashion Industry for $2 billion for a first-ever cotton value chain, that is, from cotton growing to ginning, spinning, textile

manufacture, and garments, with Katsina, Kano, Abia, and Lagos states as the chosen locations.

iii. The MOU between the Chinese conglomerate, Capegate Integrated, worth $1.5 billion for energy and organic fertiliser that will cover Abuja, Niger, Nasarawa, Kaduna, and Kano will generate: 30 MW of electricity, 500,000 metric tonnes of organic fertiliser, 60,000,000 litres of oil from pyrolysis, create up to 10,000 jobs, 400 garbage collection trucks, various types of city sanitation equipment, and one million (1,000,000) waste bins to be deployed.

iv. An agreement between the NNPC, the Nanni Good Fortune Heavy Industries Group, and Capegate Group for $400 million in investments across six states to allow for: 90 litres of ethanol, 64 MW of power, 72 metric tonnes of sugar per annum, 10,000 metric tonnes of animal farm per annum, and 5,5000 direct employments.

v. The Nanni Industries and Capegate Group submitted an MOU to the NNPC for an investment in 15,000 hectares of cassava ethanol in the south-west and another project of the same value and scale in the south-east.

vi. Among the other agreements that the NNPC signed were one with the Obax-Complant Consortium and another with the Capegate-Nanning Consortium, which targets 10 bio-fuel complexes nationwide.

vii. An MOU between the Edo State Government and China Harbour for the construction of Benin River Port, the Benin Industrial Park, and a 550 barrels per day modular refinery

viii. A funding MOU between Huawei Technologies and the Federal Government of Nigeria, represented by Galaxy Backbone, for the training of 1,000 Nigerian government officials to acquire basic ICT knowledge and skills, was forwarded to the Ministry of Justice.

ix. Huawei also plans the annual training of 10,000 Nigerians in ICT, with a wider and deeper training of 5,000 out of this number, who, upon certification by Huawei, will be employable anywhere in the world;

x. An MOU was signed between Khromemonkey Nigeria Limited and Shezen Right Net Technology Limited to set up Amanbo Nigeria, a business-to-business (B2B2C) platform and postal service that would enable Nigerian exporters to trade with Chinese importers and vice versa (The Eagles Online, 2018; Ogbonna, 2018).

So far, the financial aid from China has been able to execute some projects in Nigeria since the assumption of President Buhari's office in 2015. This, as reported by Shaban (2018), includes: West Africa’s first urban rail system valued at $500 million in Abuja; the 180-km rail line connecting Abuja and Kaduna, which was commissioned in 2016. Others that are at various stages of completion, which Nigeria is leveraging on the $3.4

billion in Chinese funding to complete, are the upgrading of airport terminals, the Lagos-Kano rail line, the Zungeru hydroelectric power project, and the fibre cable for the internet infrastructure. Also financed by the Chinese aid was the new Port Harcourt Airport International Terminal, commissioned by President Buhari in October 2018 (Ogbonna, 2018). In recognition of these laudable achievements, President Buhari, while commending his Chinese counterpart, noted that since independence, no country has helped our country with infrastructure development like the Chinese. In some projects, the Chinese help us with 85 percent of payments and soft loans that span 20 years. No country has done that for us as far as I can remember (The Eagles Online, 2018).

Citizen Diplomacy

Nigeria is now one of the most sought-after markets for student recruiters in the United States, Canada, Australia, China, Ireland, India, and the United Kingdom, among other major destination countries. The number of Nigerian professionals leaving the country in pursuit of better opportunities overseas is rising, and in 2020, almost 100,000 Nigerian students were enrolled overseas. Shortly after his reelection in 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari authorised the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) to promote good citizenship among Nigerians living abroad and mediate interactions between the Nigerian government and Nigerians abroad for mutual development. To demonstrate its dedication to the welfare and well-being of the estimated 17 million Nigerians living abroad, the commission has organised town hall meetings, intervened during xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa and Ghana, evacuated thousands of stranded citizens, and answered petitions from Nigerians living overseas. The commission has started gathering information on Nigerians in various regions of West Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas for efficient planning purposes, particularly in light of the highly anticipated diaspora voting. It is also collaborating with the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) on diaspora mapping and is working with the National Assembly and other stakeholders to amend the Electoral Act.

Conclusion

The study has examined Muhammadu Buhari’s Foreign Policy during his democratic tenure as president of Nigeria. Thus, the study concludes that Muhammadu Buhari's foreign policy objectives lacked national interest and were not citizen-oriented. His policies to combat corruption, insecurity, and weak economic performance failed to live up to expectations. This is because the three aforementioned factors have considerably slowed down the nation's progress, development, and peace under his leadership. Instead, Buhari's policies exacerbate the economic dysfunction in Nigeria. For instance,

the border closure made inflation worse. The cost of goods like chicken, turkey, and rice soared as these make the nation's already-existing food insecurity even worse. Thus, loans from China have several negative effects, with the debt load being one of the most well-known. The relative cost of servicing these loans affects the productivity of various economic sectors.

Recommendations:

The international community is beginning to view Nigeria as being overly dependent on China, which makes multilateral diplomacy with other competing powers like the USA, India and EU a little problematic, and this perception has to be recalibrated. The nation's international coalition to end insecurity was primarily based on terrorism, but a lot of other kinds of insecurity problems like banditry, kidnapping for ransom, farmer-herder conflict and armed smuggling have come into the mix and requires both kinetic and non-kinetic responses to address the challenge. To address these insecurity concerns, a much more purpose driven foreign policy initiative needed to be in place. This suggests that the shift in foreign policy towards insecurity under former President Muhammadu Buhari was a narrow-minded one. Aside from his early days in office, where some efforts were made to refocus on these issues, there were no solid and enduring external relations regarding the challenging economic dysfunctionalities in the country.

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EVALUATION OF REGIONAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA: 2027 ELECTION IN PROSPECT

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Abstract

Nigeria's political landscape is characterized by profound regional and cultural diversity, which presents both challenges and opportunities for political actors, particularly as the nation approaches the 2027 general election. This paper investigates the impact of these diversities on political communication strategies employed by parties and candidates. The genesis of the problem lies in Nigeria's complex ethno-linguistic composition, historical regional disparities, and recurring tensions which undermine national cohesion and affect electoral discourse. The overall objective of this study is to analyze how regional and cultural dynamics influence the development and effectiveness of political messaging and campaign strategies during election cycles,

with a focus on the forthcoming 2027 election. The research addresses questions on the adaptation of political communication to suit diverse audiences and the effectiveness of region-specific approaches. The paper utilizes secondary data sourced from an extensive review of scholarly literature, journal articles, books, newspapers, and historical records to contextualize trends and extract critical insights. The analysis reveals that successful political communication in Nigeria increasingly relies on micro-targeting, culturally resonant messaging, and coalition-building that acknowledges regional sensibilities. Major trends also highlight the challenges posed by digital divides, misinformation, and ethno-regional tensions. Based on these findings, the study recommends increased stakeholder investment in intercultural dialogue, media literacy, and transparent communication to foster inclusivity and mitigate polarization. The conclusion underscores the necessity of context-aware strategies for credible elections. The main limitation is the reliance on secondary sources, which may lack the gradation of primary field data.

Keywords: Nigeria, Political Communication, Regional Diversity, Cultural Diversity, 2027 Election

Introduction

Political communication has evolved immensely in an era marked by rapid globalization and rising cultural interaction, positioning regional and cultural diversity as crucial variables shaping electoral strategies worldwide. Researchers acknowledge that engaging culturally diverse groups in the political process yields a more inclusive and representative governance structure (International IDEA, 2024). In countries such as Australia, policy experts have noted how multiculturalism and diverse leadership spur innovation and reflect modern demographic realities. Globally, the literature reveals that countries are grappling with internal diversities; ethnic, linguistic, religious, and economic, prompting political parties to craft highly adaptive and targeted communication strategies (Forum of Federations, 2022).

Nigeria uniquely exemplifies these global phenomena. As Africa's most populous country, it is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups and multiple religious affiliations, making regional and cultural diversity a persistent theme in its political arena (Achor, 2002). Political communication in Nigeria must thus contend with a fragmented electorate, marked by historic divides—North vs. South, Christian vs. Muslim, and various sub-ethnic rivalries—that complicate message development and dissemination. Literature tracing Nigeria's political evolution since the return to democracy in 1999 notes how politicians have integrated multi-platform and multilayered campaign strategies to reach diverse audiences. Yet, the risks of ethnically

or regionally-focused messaging, sometimes resulting in polarization or voter alienation remain a key concern.

Globally, the impact of globalization and digitalization has shifted electoral campaigns toward micro-targeting, digital outreach, and customized communication reflecting local identities. In Nigeria, researchers highlight increased reliance on integrated approaches, comprising traditional rallies, personal selling, social media, public relations, and advertising, each tailored to specific regions or cultures. The literature also shows Nigeria's adoption of practices similar to those observed in multicultural democracies, albeit with unique challenges related to ethnic manipulation and misinformation. Contributions from scholars such as Achor (2002), and recent empirical studies conducted in Ekiti State, confirm that these strategies improve candidate acceptance if they align with the expectations and norms of target communities. It is well-established that diversity, when harnessed through ethical communication—improves political inclusion, promotes democratic values, and enhances the legitimacy of elections across the globe. In Nigeria, political communication has matured, but significant shortcomings persist: (1) limited empirical insights on the nuanced effects of diversity across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones; (2) insufficient focus on digital divides and misinformation; and (3) inadequate evaluation of how regionally-targeted messages foster or mitigate polarization. The significance of addressing these gaps is critical for several reasons. First, understanding the mechanics of culturally and regionally informed political communication can foster more peaceful elections by reducing mistrust and alienation. Second, such research offers policy guidance on integrating multi-ethnic interests into national development agendas. Finally, the study contributes to comparative literature by offering a Nigerian perspective on global debates about democracy, representation, and identity.

Theoretical issues and practical problems lie in the politicization of cultural identity often produces ambivalent outcomes: while it can amplify minority voices, it may also enable ethnocentrism and exclusion (Seemndze, 2011). Practically, Nigerian elections illustrate how easily regional diversity may be manipulated, affecting voter behavior and national unity. Empirical research, such as findings from Ekiti State, shows that personal selling, personality promotion, and public relations are effective when adapted to local sensibilities. However, the risk of unethical campaigns and misinformation remains high. Thus, while regional and cultural diversity can enrich political engagement, it simultaneously poses profound challenges requiring sustained scholarly and policy attention.

Problem Identification

Nigeria's multifaceted regional, ethnic, and cultural diversity is a defining feature of its socio-political fabric. This complexity, while often celebrated as a national asset, introduces daunting challenges for effective political communication, especially around election cycles. The 2023 presidential elections vividly demonstrated that ethnic, regional, and religious cleavages continue to dominate voter behavior and campaign strategies (Bassey et al., 2024); political parties and candidates frequently tailored messages to resonate with specific demographic segments, inadvertently aggravating polarization and hindering national integration (Wiwoloku, 2022).

Recent studies have also highlighted a double-edged sword presented by the rise of digital platforms: while they enable direct political engagement and wider messaging reach, they also exacerbate the spread of misinformation and amplify existing divides, risks heightened in Nigeria's diverse context where tailored narratives can deepen suspicion among groups (Ojo & Olukayode, 2022). Moreover, inadequate regulatory frameworks for digital and social media use during election campaigns leave room for propaganda and unsubstantiated claims, undermining public trust and electoral integrity (Bassey et al., 2024). Despite a growing body of literature on political communication in Nigeria, gaps remain. Most notably, there's a dearth of nuanced, empirical investigations into how regional and cultural diversities specifically shape communication strategies in different geo-political zones during contemporary elections (Obasi & Ubani, 2024). Furthermore, little systematic research has examined how these tailored strategies impact voter inclusion, polarization, and the overall quality of democratic participation.

Research Gap

There is inadequate empirical analysis of the role of regional and cultural diversity in influencing the actual content, methods, and reception of political communication in the 2023 election and projections for 2027. The literature insufficiently addresses how misinformation and digital inequalities intersect with regional diversities to affect political messaging effectiveness and voter behavior (Ojo & Olukayode, 2022); (Obasi & Ubani, 2024); (Bassey et al., 2024). There is a lack of state- or zone-specific studies providing actionable insights for policy-makers, campaign strategists, and civic actors in Nigeria's evolving electoral landscape. These gaps, if filled, can boost strategic inclusiveness, enhance electoral trust, and advance democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Objects of the Paper

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the impact of regional and cultural diversity on political communication strategies in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the 2027 general election. To achieve this overall goal, the study sets out the following specific objectives: analyze how regional and cultural identities influence the design and delivery of political communication by candidates and parties in Nigeria, investigate the effectiveness of regionally tailored political communication strategies in engaging diverse voter groups across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, assess the challenges posed by digital divides and misinformation in political communication within culturally and regionally diverse contexts, and identify best practices and gaps in current political communication approaches that affect political inclusion and voter trust.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Communication: Political communication can be said to be the processes and methods by which information relating to politics is created, transmitted, received, and interpreted between political actors (such as parties, candidates, and institutions) and the public. It encompasses the strategic crafting of messages, public discourse, media engagement, and campaigning aimed at influencing public opinion, voter behavior, and political outcomes. In the context of this study, political communication is the strategic deployment of messages and campaign methods tailored to account for Nigeria's diverse audiences. It involves adapting political messaging to different regional and cultural settings to maximize electoral appeal and effectiveness during election cycles, especially ahead of the 2027 general election. Regional Diversity: Regional diversity refers to the differences and variations among distinct geographical areas within a nation, including disparities in ethnicity, language, socio-economic development, historical experiences, political attitudes, and local issues.

However, in this study's context, Nigeria's regional diversity includes the ethno-linguistic composition and longstanding disparities between northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of the country. These regional differences shape political affiliations, voter priorities, and influence how political communication is tailored to resonate with localized audiences.

Cultural Diversity: May refers to the presence of multiple cultural groups within a society, each with its own customs, languages, beliefs, traditions, and social norms. It emphasizes the variety of cultural identities that coexist within national boundaries. For the purpose of this study, Nigeria's cultural diversity reflects its numerous ethnic

groups, languages, religions, and traditional practices that form the social fabric of the nation. This diversity necessitates political communication strategies that are culturally sensitive and capable of engaging different groups meaningfully, avoiding alienation or misunderstanding. Laconically, the study examines how political communication strategies in Nigeria must be carefully developed to respond to the complexities of regional diversity (geographic and socio-political variations) and cultural diversity (heterogeneous cultural identities). Understanding and addressing these diversities helps political actors craft messages that are context-aware, inclusive, and effective in a multi-ethnic, multi-regional society as Nigeria approaches the 2027 elections.

Empirical Studies

This review of literature is organized around the study's four specific objectives, highlighting relevant Nigerian and broader empirical works on political communication, diversity, and election strategies.

1. Influence of Regional and Cultural Identities on Political Communication

Recent studies affirm that Nigeria's political communication is deeply shaped by the country's multilingual and culturally diverse composition, which requires strategic adaptation of messages to resonate with different ethnic groups. Aluko and Soyeye (2024) analyze political advertising from Nigeria's 2023 elections, showing that parties and candidates employ linguistic strategies such as code-switching and culturally resonant rhetoric to appeal to diverse audiences across regions. For example, the Labour Party's grassroots empowerment messaging and the APC's assertive authority claims reflect these tailored approaches. This confirms that political communicators consciously embed cultural and regional identities within campaign content to enhance voter engagement (Aluko & Soyeye, 2024).

2. Effectiveness of Regionally Tailored Communication in Engaging Diverse Voters

Social media has emerged as a pivotal tool in mobilizing voters, especially youth, in ethnically diverse states like Benue. Ogande (2024) highlights how targeted digital strategies on platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are used to engage specific demographics, demonstrating considerable success in regions where youth voters form a large proportion of the electorate. However, the effectiveness varies with internet access disparities and local media consumption habits across Nigeria's geopolitical zones, pointing to the nuanced nature of regional targeting (Ogande, 2024).

3. Challenges of Digital Divides and Misinformation

While digitization promises broader outreach, it has also amplified challenges such as misinformation and unequal access. Bassey et al. (2024) discuss the vulnerabilities created by Nigeria's digital inequalities, which limit some groups' participation in online political discourse, and enable manipulation of political narratives along ethnic and regional lines. These dynamics complicate efforts to create cohesive national messages, and misinformation during elections has resulted in voter confusion and reduced trust in electoral processes (Bassey et al., 2024).

4. Best Practices, Gaps, and Impact on Political Inclusion and Trust

Several authors argue for improved regulatory frameworks, media literacy campaigns, and transparent political advertising to counter divisive practices and misinformation. Aluko and Soyeye (2024) advocate for stronger regulation of political language and advertising ethics, emphasizing inclusiveness and transparency as critical for democracy consolidation. Yet, despite these calls, state-specific studies remain scarce, and there is limited empirical evidence on how diverse communication strategies translate into trust and political inclusivity on the ground (Ogande, 2024; Bassey et al., 2024).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in secondary data analysis to explore the impact of regional and cultural diversity on political communication strategies in Nigeria, focusing on the upcoming 2027 election.

Data Sources

Data was collected from a comprehensive review of existing scholarly literature, including journal articles, books, historical records, newspapers, and credible online sources related to political communication, electoral behavior, and cultural diversity in Nigeria. This approach allows for a broad and in-depth understanding of the subject by synthesizing diverse perspectives and empirical findings.

Analytical Approach

The study employs content analysis to identify key themes, patterns, and trends in political communication strategies across different regions and cultures within Nigeria. Particular attention was paid to how messages are tailored to regional sensitivities, the use of digital and traditional media, and the roles of misinformation and inclusion.

Scope and Limitations

Since this study relies on secondary data, it does not involve direct fieldwork or primary data collection, which may limit access to the most current, grassroots-level insights. However, the extensive review of recent empirical studies and historical materials provides a robust foundation for exploring the research questions and filling gaps identified in the literature.

Justification

The use of secondary data is appropriate given the vast body of existing literature and documented election analyses that can illuminate the dynamics of Nigeria's diverse political communication landscape. This methodology enables a cost-effective and timely investigation while providing a contextualized framework for understanding and improving future political communication strategies ahead of the 2027 election. This methodological framework aligns with the study's objectives, supporting a systematic exploration of complex, multi-dimensional phenomena through well-documented and credible sources.

Findings

Using content analysis of secondary data related to Nigeria's political communication landscape, particularly around elections, the findings are synthesized according to the four objectives of the study.

1. Influence of Regional and Cultural Identities on Political Communication

Nigeria's extensive regional and cultural diversity shapes distinct political communication strategies. Politicians craft messages that incorporate localized cultural symbols, languages, and regional sentiments to resonate with target populations. For instance, candidates in the southern regions often highlight regional autonomy and economic inclusion, while northern candidates emphasize religious and communal concerns (Aluko & Soyeye, 2024). The use of indigenous languages and culturally

familiar symbols enhances message reception and voter identification, fostering emotional connections between candidates and voters (Achor, 2002). This tailoring reflects an adaptation to Nigeria's complex demographic makeup, where a one-size-fits-all message risks alienation.

2. Effectiveness of Regionally Tailored Communication Strategies

Studies show that regionally tailored political communication strategies, especially through social media, have been effective in mobilizing diverse voter groups. For example, in the 2023 elections, social media platforms were utilized to target youths and urban populations in different regions with specific localized content, promoting voter engagement and turnout (Ogande, 2024; Bassey et al., 2024). However, disparities in internet penetration and digital literacy create uneven impact, limiting reach in rural and underserved areas. Despite this, region-specific rallies, radio programs, and community-based outreach remain vital and effective complementary channels.

3. Challenges from Digital Divides and Misinformation

The rise of digital communication presents both opportunities and obstacles in Nigeria's political campaigns. On one hand, social media has democratized access to information and enabled direct engagement between politicians and constituents (Udende et al., 2021). On the other, misinformation and disinformation campaigns have increased, exacerbating ethnic and regional tensions (Bassey et al., 2024). The digital divide means some groups remain marginalized in receiving credible political content, which undermines the inclusivity and transparency of political communication. Electoral bodies like INEC have begun using social media for voter education, but challenges remain in combating fake news and ensuring equitable access.

4. *Best Practices, Gaps, and Impact on Inclusion and Trust*

Best practices identified include the integration of multiple communication channels—traditional media, social media, and grassroots interpersonal communication—tailored for regional and cultural sensitivity (Aluko & Soyeye, 2024). Ethical political marketing that respects cultural identities fosters trust and enhances political inclusion. However, gaps persist, including lack of comprehensive studies on how diverse communication approaches translate into political trust and voter behavior across Nigeria's varied geo-political zones. There is also insufficient regulatory oversight to curb unethical campaigning and misinformation proliferation (Bassey et al., 2024). Addressing these gaps is essential to building credible, inclusive democratic processes ahead of the 2027 election.

Discussion

While prior findings confirm the importance of tailoring political messages to Nigeria's regional and cultural mosaics, a critical lens exposes the possible limitations and unintended effects of such micro-targeted communication. Instead of always fostering inclusion and voter engagement, deeply segmented messaging has the potential to entrench identity-based politics and deepen polarization. Scholars argue that persistent use of ethnic or religious appeals, while effective in mobilizing "core" supporters, can marginalize national issues, weaken policy debates, and undermine democratic consolidation (Bassey et al., 2024). In extreme cases, such segmentation exacerbates tensions, fueling post-electoral violence or mistrust of institutions.

Lessons from International Contexts

Drawing on comparative literature, countries with similarly diverse populations, such as India or South Africa, provide cautionary parallels. In these cases, regionally targeted and culturally resonant political communication, when unmoderated, often led to societal fragmentation and undermined nation-building (Aluko & Soyeye, 2024). By contrast, where political campaigns balanced local relevance with messages promoting shared national identity, there have been greater improvements in civic solidarity and voter trust.

The Digital Dilemma: Inclusion or Division?

From another angle, the proliferation of digital tools is a double-edged sword. While widening engagement, Nigerian digital spaces are rife with disinformation engines that exploit regional and cultural rifts for viral manipulation. Studies suggest that algorithm-driven echo chambers amplify localized grievances, making constructive cross-group dialogue less likely (Bassey et al., 2024). This is compounded by structural issues such as unequal digital access, meaning that political mobilization in some regions relies on personal networks and radio rather than the internet, potentially disenfranchising rural voices and further skewing campaign strategies.

The effectiveness of regionally and culturally tailored strategies is therefore ambiguous. While short-term gains in mobilization and turnout are apparent, long-term effects on trust, political participation, and civil unity are more complex. Where such communication is underpinned by credible, transparent, and inclusive practices, trust grows. Yet, opportunistic exploitation of diversity weakens democratic resilience by encouraging clientelism and vote-buying, phenomena documented in Nigerian and other African elections (Ogande, 2024).

Therefore, political message effectiveness varies significantly across cultures due to differences in historical contexts, socio-political structures, communication norms, and the role of media. Cross-cultural studies emphasize that political communication is not "one size fits all" but deeply embedded in the cultural and political environments of societies.

Key Insights from this Research

Cultural Context Shapes Political Communication Styles. Research shows that political communication practices differ based on cultural dimensions such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance (Lauerbach & Fetzer, 2017). For example, in collectivist societies, political messaging often emphasizes community, shared identity, and harmony, whereas in individualistic cultures, messages focusing on personal rights and individual agency resonate better. Media Systems and Political Culture: A comparative study of political communication found that differences in media structures, political party evolution, and socio-economic development heavily influence how political messages are crafted and received (Moring et al., 2017). Nations with more mature media landscapes tend to have more issue-based and policy-oriented communication, while others rely more on personality and identity politics.

Ethnocentrism and Communication Willingness is evident in Nigerian polity. Studies comparing university students from different cultures show that ethnocentrism influences receptivity to political messages, where in-group preferences affect openness to political ideas from outside cultural contexts (Sun, 2022). This suggests that messages tailored to cultural identities often perform better but may also deepen division. In multilateral diplomacy, attention to cultural diversity is critical to effective communication and negotiation. Politicians and diplomats who understand and respect cultural differences enhance credibility and message acceptance across diverse audiences.

Implications for Nigeria and the 2027 Election in prospect

Drawing from these cross-cultural insights, Nigeria's political communication effectiveness is similarly contingent on culturally informed strategies that respect regional identities while balancing national unity. However, challenges include: Tailoring messages to diverse ethnic groups without fostering divisiveness, navigating digital media's role in amplifying or bridging cultural divides and ensuring measurement of message effectiveness reflects Nigeria's culturally heterogeneous population. So, effective political communication in Nigeria can benefit from

understanding global best practices in adapting messages to cultural contexts, mitigating ethno-centric biases, and fostering inclusive dialogue.

Conclusion

This study highlights the profound impact of Nigeria's regional and cultural diversity on political communication strategies, particularly as the nation approaches the 2027 election. The findings confirm that political actors strategically tailor their messages to resonate with varied ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, enhancing electoral engagement but also posing risks of deepening divisions if not carefully managed. The effectiveness of regionally targeted communication is evident, particularly through digital and social media platforms; however, disparities in access and the proliferation of misinformation present significant challenges to inclusive and trustworthy communication. Cross-cultural perspectives underline the need for balancing localized messaging with broader national unity to foster democratic consolidation. Addressing these complexities requires an inclusive, transparent, and ethically grounded approach to political communication that strengthens democratic participation and reduces polarization.

Recommendations

Political parties and candidates should deeply engage cultural consultants and local leaders to ensure political messages authentically reflect regional values, traditions, and languages. Develop culturally sensitive training programs for campaign teams to better understand and incorporate diverse cultural norms and etiquettes into communication efforts. Leverage a multi-channel communication approach combining digital platforms, traditional media (radio, community newspapers), and grassroots engagements tailored specifically to the communication preferences of each region. Invest in data analytics to better map audience segmentation across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones, enabling precise targeting and message customization that resonates with local realities and priorities. Expand broadband infrastructure and digital literacy programs, especially in underserved rural areas, to reduce the digital divide and make political content accessible to all demographics. Establish partnerships between electoral bodies, tech companies, and civil society to monitor, identify, and swiftly counter misinformation before and during elections.

Promote the adoption of transparent and ethical political communication codes of conduct that emphasize inclusivity and truthful messaging. Foster research collaborations between academic institutions and election management bodies to continuously evaluate the impact of cultural and regional political messaging on voter

trust and participation. Encourage civic education initiatives that build awareness and critical thinking skills among voters, enhancing their ability to engage with diverse political messages discerningly. These targeted recommendations if effected by stakeholders can optimize political communication in Nigeria, ensure voter inclusivity, and support democratic integrity in the run-up to the 2027 elections.

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POWER, WOMEN, AND UNACKNOWLEDGED ROLES IN NIGERIAN COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

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Abstract

This paper sought to examine the role perception of the female gender in conflicts following the previous research on the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts which described women as victims and men as principal actors. These role depictions justified the non-acknowledgement of roles women played, which was made visible through Key Informant interviews and focus group discussions from the four communities. The methodology was largely a qualitative historical approach. The prejudiced portrayals and roles made invisible were not only perpetrated by gendered power dynamics but also conditioned by the complicity of gender incurious scholars (men and women) who aligned with prevailing expectations of women in conflict situations and society. Through this exploration of making women visible as key participants in both conflicts, the paper reiterated how crucial it is to understand the gendering of power, which discounts women's roles. In conclusion, the paper recommended paying close attention to women in conflicts is crucial to understanding the gendering of power and transforming the ideological rationale for frequently ignoring women's productive roles.

Key Words: Power, Women, Concealed Roles, Communal Conflicts.

Introduction

After conflicts, women are usually portrayed as passive victims needing rescue, while men are seen as the main actors. This gives men power and agency, and reduces women to powerless, dependent figures. Such portrayals pose a problem for feminist analysis in Political Science and International Relations (Enloe, 2014). Feminist theorists seek to go beyond just seeing women as victims, asking what other roles women play that have gone unnoticed. My doctoral research on the Ife-Modakeke (1997-2000) and Aguleri-Umuleri (1995-1999) conflicts revealed that women were often viewed as victims but much more was happening. Two main issues arise: first, labeling women only as victims excludes them from being seen as fighters or participants; second, this focus on

victimhood is tied to power dynamics. We must examine how these portrayals shape the knowing women's roles and who benefits from them. This paper argues that what is made visible and invisible about women in these conflicts is deeply connected to power and ideology.

Theoretical Framework: War/Violence Theory

This theory, known as the low road reporting theory by Galtung (1998; 2002, Galtung and Fischer, 2013) gives a full description of who wins and details of the fatalistic. The theory is indifferent and apathetic in making visible the negative events and actions of the characters involved in a war/conflict. The theory supported by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), Shinar (2007), Ross and Tehranian (2009), Keeble, Tulloch and Zollman (2010), among others, is conformist in the discourse of conflict as a contention between two parties or conflict participants/ actors, in a bid to impose their goals. The dichotomized parties are protagonists and victims or conquests. Its discourse model provides thorough, detailed, systematic, comprehensive information about who advances in or capitulates short of their goals. The losses are limited to many killed, wounded, and material damage. A key aspect of this theory is that although it claims to be objective and impartial, it distorts truths to represent reality, which is preferred by the dominant groups in society. That is, presenting reality as it is perceived. In other words, it does not give voice to all. In other words, it takes cognizance of gender.

Consistent with the theory's philosophy, the conflict discourses conformed to making women visible as victims of varied forms of violence: 'maternal mortality, 'prostitution, 'disavowal and abandonment, 'pawns of rape,' and 'sufferers of identity crisis. The discourse aligned with the theory's approach of dichotomizing conflict participants into men as winning protagonists and the victims, mainly women, depicted as helpless. This perspective aligns with the popular dichotomy that regards women in the familiar image as victims and men as fighters/principal actors. Thus, although it claims objectivity, it is a truth of one perspective that reproduces partisan information that influences how women conceive themselves as actors in conflict situations. Arguably, the information provided in the literature of both conflicts serves a larger political agenda of keeping the public focused on the image of women as non-key players in contrast to men depicted as fighters, while in reality, it is not true.

Methodology

The heterogeneous sampling technique was the apt method to provide as much insight as possible from dissimilar cases, facilitating the discovery of the roles of women as local or community actors in both the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflicts.

This technique was particularly appropriate for assessing Key In-Depth Interview (KII) participants, including traditional rulers, fighters, community chiefs, and leaders of community unions. It was also used with Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants composed of community members, including women, men, and young girls who either participated in or witnessed these conflicts and possess extensive information about the roles women played in the Ife, Modakeke, Aguleri, and Umuleri communities during the respective conflict periods. Using feminist curiosity analysis (Enloe, 2014), the research investigated how power dynamics contributed to the portrayal of women primarily as victims while rendering their roles as fighters invisible.

Overview of Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri Conflicts

Communal conflicts constitute one of the categories of spasmodic local conflicts/ violence or contestations recognized as a prime source of instability. It is embodied in identity issues over unsettled grievances about real or imagined disenfranchisement between polarized communities with shared territory, particularly regarding benefits such as political representation, farmland, or territorial possessions, as well as development projects, location, and control of political and administrative government offices (Soyinka-Airewele, 2003; Krause, 2019).

Ife-Modakeke Conflict

Ife and Modakeke communities have had intermarriage, business, and development partnerships, yet are embroiled in communal clashes. The issues of contention for Ife included the recruitment of Modakeke settlers by Ibadan to intervene in their politics and alleged insubordination towards them as their landlord. For the Modakeke community, the issues revolved around marginalization by the Ife, payment of rents and royalties, the use as a source of cheap labour, and envy of their progress and prosperity (Akanji, 2009; Albert,2001; Ogbara, 2002; Falola, 2010). Other issues of tensions between the two communities entailed exploitation by successive governments and politicians such as the land/boundary dispute over creation of L.G.A (such as the 1981 defunct House of Assembly of the then Oyo State (until the creation of Osun State in 1991, the area of conflict was part of Oyo State), the creation of 54 additional local government areas (LGAs) and claims that the political elite in the Ife community prevented the creation of a separate Modakeke LGA(Adegbite, Balogun and Buba (2016); Folami and Olaiya (2016). The sum of these issues includes: one, the decamping by the Modakeke's from the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), then the party of government in Oyo State, to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). This move made the *Ooni* rename streets in Modakeke and downgrade the status of the *Ogunsua.* Two, refusal of the then Oyo State Governor, Chief Bola Ige, to honour the judicial

commission of inquiry headed by a judge of the High Court of Oyo State, Kayode Ibidapo-Obe, recommendation to create a separate Modakeke LGA. The resistance of the Ife elite of the recommendation report of Arthur Mbanefo Panel, which resulted in the siting of the headquarters of the new local government for the Modakekes, in Enuwa, the site of the palace of the *Ooni*. Subsequent protests by Modakeke against this siting compelled the federal authorities to return the headquarters to Modakeke. The Ife community conceived the relocation of the headquarters of the new LGA from Modakeke to Oke-Igbo (a neutral ground belonging to either Ile-Ife or Modakeke), as humiliating for their paramount ruler, whose palace was within the boundaries of the new LGA. The Modakeke accused the then Military Administrator, Col. Anthony Obi, of siding with the Ifes to maintain the status quo, and that the *Ooni* was using his enormous wealth and influence to oppress their community. This action snowballed into a full-scale conflict on August 18, 1997, and another outbreak between both communities occurred in February 2000 with resultant loss of lives, houses, and properties worth millions of Naira.

Aguleri and Umuleri Conflict

These neighbouring communities of Onitsha with shared culture and descent linked to *Eri*, their progenitor, have always lived in peace. The issues of contention include: indigeneity status regarding which of the two communities was the first to settle, their grouping under the administrative authority of Anambra East Local Government with headquarters in Otuocha, claimed by both Aguleri and Umuleri communities (Ibeanu 2003; Onwuzuruigbo, 2009; Obiakor 2016). The economic interests in Otuocha land and its control constituted the source of the intermittent conflict between the two communities. This is because the history, social existence, and ethno-geographical identity of each community concerning land practices made it inconceivable for them to privatize and commercialize land. The land transfer (by Europeans who sold a part of Otuocha land to the Royal Niger Company in 1898) further created angst between the communities and different interpretations of the intention and provisions of the Niger Lands Transfer Ordinance of February 25, 1916. The Umuleri community interpreted the Ordinance as an invitation to exercise its hitherto suspended right of ownership of the land. The Aguleri people conceived it as an opportunity to reclaim the land, which *ab initio* belonged to their community, because the Royal Niger Company did not enter into possession under the Agreement, hence there was no act of ownership regarding the land (Onwuzuruigbo, 2009).

In sum, the disarticulated land policy constituted a dilemma for the colonial administrators (who invoked the status of the land as Crown land whenever the interest of Umuleri was at stake) and officials in Otuocha concerning whether to treat the land

as Crown or communal land (whenever there was a need to protect the interest of Chief Idigo of Aguleri, the European trading companies and missionaries). Added to the denial of Umuleri access to land, which intensified the conflicts, was the colonial government's restriction of the Umuleri people from interfering in the legal process to determine ownership of the land and abandonment of the Crown's interest after the rights of land ownership had been in favour of both claimants. These issues and the polarized elites of the two communities reached climax between 1936, 1954 and subsequently in 1995 as well as the reprisal attack on the Aguleri community by the Umuleri community, culminating in the 1999 conflict (Fagbemi and Nwankwo, 2002; Chinwuba, 1981, cited in Onwuzuruigbo, 2009). The protracted conflict between the two communities was brought to a halt in 2004 by the government's involvement and the assistance of elders and chiefs from both communities.

Description of the Conflict Actors

A comprehensive review of the literature is not provided due to space; instead, the roles played by men and women in the Ife-Modakeke and Aguleri-Umuleri conflict literature are tabulated in Tables 1 and 2 below. This position is aptly alluded to by Albert's (2001) categorisation: primary parties (considered as direct participants) and shadow figures or "stakeholders" (whose identities are usually hidden and operate behind the scene, dictating to the primary parties how to respond to the conflict situation). But that is not the case. In the review of literature, men fared better as conflict actors, while the focus on women was as victims.

Table 1: Ife-Modakeke Conflict

Literature	**Discourse about Victims**	**Discourse about Fighters**
Albert (1999a); Albert (1999b); Albert (2001); Mayowa (2001); Olayiwola and Okorie (2010); Babajimi (2003);	) Displaced women/persons with children; community casualties	(i)Warrior youths/ young Kinsmen; warriors; combatants; militants, armed restive youths.; male assailants
Akanji (2009); Adegbite, Balogun, and Buba (2016); Folami and Olaiya (2016)	) Wailing and displaced women and their families/children	Fighters, armed restive youths

Ogbara (2002)	(i) 30% of the injured, victims of rape, and fleeing women casualties	(i)Irate warriors; kinsmen
Soyinka-Airewele (2003)	iii) Women constituted a high number of the homeless, displaced (ii) Married staff members of the University of Ife married to individuals of opposing communities were under pressure to divorce their spouses(wives) or abandon them or allow them to be killed (iii) disavowal and betrayal abuses of spouses(wives) married from either side of the conflicting communities iv) the conflict left many widows and young women with babies (vii) women resorting to prostitution	(i)Youths of the community

Soyinka-Airewele(2004)	(i)	Varied gendered forms of violence against women	---------
Asiyanbola (2009)	(i)	The suffering of identity crisis by women and children; Displacement of married women	Fearless ***combatants/*** youths of the community
Oyeniyi (2010)	(ii)	fleeing village women and priestesses	(i) ***agile males***, youths of the community
Idehen, Olasupo, and	(i)	mothers of adolescent warriors or vigilantes	the participants in the fighting are "'husbands',

Adebusuyi, (2013)	who were victims of trauma	'fathers'
Obiyan (2015)	(i) Women (particularly those from intermarriages of the two communities) were victims of spousal killings of betrayal, and those who gave up on their partners and children	(i) The sons of the community were the direct participants in the fighting
Elugbaju (2016)	Displace elderly women and farmers	Youths/ community fighters

Source: Author's compilation, 2025

Table 2: Aguleri-Umuleri Conflict

Literature	**Discourse about Victims**	**Discourse about Fighters**
Ibeanu and Onu (2001); Okechukwu (2003)	(i)Maternal mortality (ii)women as target victims	(i)Armed kinsmen'; 'fighters'
Ugorji (2012); Obiakor, (2016)	(i) wounded and displaced mothers	Warriors, Community men

Fagbemi And Nwankwo (2002)	i) discourses about the killing of an aged Umuleri woman and beheading and ritualizing of an aged woman by the Aguleri's; iii) high incidence of Maternal mortality; (v)women (especially widows) as targets of violence such as abduction for forced marriage to Umuleri men and subsequent subjection to spiritual oaths	(i)Combatants/Community youths
Onwuzuruigbo (2009; 2011)	i) Women were victims who bore the burden of losing children and husbands; ii) Women were the displaced and casualties of diverse forms of abuse including rape; forceful subjection to take the traditional oath of secrecy to regain the trust and confidence of their husbands and kinsmen for alleged sabotaging activities of divulging vital security information to their parents, brothers and relatives in either Aguleri or Umuleri because of links of inter-marriages; victims of abduction.	(i) the Aguleri fighters were …' husbands', 'sons' and 'brothers' who, to a large extent constitute the 'militants' and 'combative' arm of the population, often injured or killed (ii) as the war progressed few young and courageous women were used to transport and deliver arms into the communities

Ibeanu And Mbah (2012)	(i)Women were the main helpless victims; the highest number of displaced	Combatant and armed male youths
Udevi, (2014)	(i) Women were the casualties running for their lives; and the displaced	local actors/youths

Source: Author's compilation, 2025

Analysis of the Text Discourses

In comparing the discourses about both conflicts, feminist curiosity analysis sets out to make visible what the academic colleagues have made invisible and the underlying meaning of women's representations as victims and not as direct participants or fighters. First, the descriptions of women as helpless victims. The intent of feminists is not to negate the fact that women constitute a high percentage of conflict victims but to reiterate that while the focus on women as the despondent has the potential to prod consciences and bring to public notice the devastation women experience, it is a one-dimensional perspective. This is because the victim perspective makes it hard to see beyond the conflict 'realities' of women fleeing a conflict zone with young children or forced to take refuge with a relative to see them playing diverse roles (see next section) just as men in both conflict situations. The depictions of women as helpless victims and not as direct participants (particularly fighters) align with the "circuit of culture" (Hall, 1997, cited in Zotto, 2002) that compels one to condone and accept the depictions as natural and not political. Second, while seemingly gender-neutral phrases such as: "local combatants"; "militants"; "warriors"; "local actors"; "youths of the community", "warriors"; 'armed youths'; 'fighters' and 'militants' are used to describe the fighters in both conflicts on the other hand, the use of male definitive terms such as "'husbands', 'fathers'; 'sons'; "agile males"; "Kinsmen"; "Fighting men"; "male assailants" appeal to the public's stereotypes of who constitute the direct participants or fighters. However, as much, as the phrases 'local actors'; 'youths', 'fighters' and 'army/military officers/men' seem non-discriminatory in the portrayal of the gender that directly

participated in the fighting because they are generic terms that are assumed to apply equally to a man and a woman, the same cannot be said of the phrase *combatants*. The reason is Enloe's (2004) insistence that in the minds of too many people, only one sort is a militarized person, someone who has been issued a gun. Women and girls are not mostly conceived as weapon-carrying fighters; instead, they are likely to be made invisible and ignored at every step of the process if the discourse is simply about 'combatants'. Also, as much as expressions such as 'female youths', 'female local actors', 'woman fighter' and 'female combatant/militant' may be avoided in contexts where the reference to a person's sex is irrelevant especially if gender specification is necessary, the use of adjectives 'female' and 'male' before the gender-neutral noun is to be preferred (Lei, 2006).

Importantly, the 'faces' of helplessness function in inverse proportion to 'being seen' and do not constitute 'visibility' for women. Again, Lei (2006:89) aptly states, "images such as that are often confusing and inaccurate because they make women invisible as well as trivialize, denigrate their roles within the experiences and severely hamper the representation of the changing roles of the sexes in society".

Unacknowledged Roles

In light of the above section, women's roles in their communities were as frontline fighters just as the men, financial contributors, collaborators as spies/informants, among others. These constitute a significant departure from their description in literature. Some of the unacknowledged roles include:

(i) **Disguised Fighters**: Women were not only among the male fighters (who were mostly disguised) of both Aguleri and Umueri communities but served as spies, aides to the fighters, assisting in weapon carrying and guarding the wounded. The participation of women as fighters and defenders is reminiscent of Queen Amina of Zazzau of pre-historical Nigeria whose exploits in battle as the leading warrior in the Zazzau Calvary became a force to reckon with. Her brilliant military strategist roles include making neighbouring rulers her vassals, introducing metal armour to her army and usage of earthen walls to fortify all her camps (Pulse, 2020).

(ii) **'Spiritual' front line buffers**: On the one hand, was the necessary and sacred assemblage of women as Christians and Muslims praying for the restoration of balance and harmony in either of the conflicting communities. On the other, was the traditional religious aspect evidenced in the claims of 'spiritual prowess' in warding off gunshots from Ife aggressors by Mrs Dorcas Adedoyin (*Iya* Rushie),

a lone woman among the Modakeke male fighters. Ife community women also deployed the use of *'juju'* to seize guns from the Modakeke's as well as excised bullets without any surgical operation. Unmarried young women and virgins (mostly aged between 7-11 years) were strategic harbingers of charm who preceded the fighters as fore-bearers or 'front line spiritual aids' at the frontlines. The reality of this spirit-empowered rituals or sacred roles played by unmarried young girls and virgins effectively disempowered their opponent. The evidence of this potent spiritual force was alluded to by Albert, (2001:120) although not specific allusion to women thus "some of the so-called "grassroots" or "ordinary" people who are the unseen hands behind many of the community conflicts although may not have any social, economic or political importance, nonetheless play important roles as war commanders and charm makers".

Similarly, in Aguleri community a Mrs Nwadieze claimed to have 'spiritually assisted' to foil attempts to infiltrate Aguleri community by 'hypnotized' Aguleri women married to Umueri men. She also claimed to have applied her traditionally brewed concoction to the tips of the guns of Aguleri fighters to make their opponent (Umuleri fighters) drowsy when shot at. This traditionally brewed concoction was also potent in excising bullets. The scientific realities of this 'traditional spiritual powers' by the woman and the young girls in either of the four communities find justification in Nwolise's, (2012a:2 cited in Nwolise, 2013:12) position that "…the fact that the microscope of science cannot as of today capture the spiritual force or element…juju, and others, does not mean that these things do not exist. It does not also mean that people and nations do not on daily basis contend with these forces…" Again, he reiterated that "it is important to understand the spiritual not only because it is superior to the physical, but also because it positively reinforces the physical, and can also endanger the physical under certain circumstances…" (Nwolise, 2013:17).

Reminiscent of these roles is the ''spiritual buffer' role of (king) mother Idia of the Benin Kingdom, credited for assisting her son, Esigie's (who controlled Benin City) to fight against neighbouring Igala contenders who wanted to control the Benin northern territories following the death of Oba Ozolua. The (king) mother Idia was reported to have used mystical powers and medicinal knowledge to mobilize an army which helped defeat Arhuaranon the battlefield, conquered the Igala, re-established the unity and military strength of the kingdom and enthroned Esigie as the 16th Oba (Bortolot, 2003).

(iii) **Sustenance:** Ife and Modakeke wives and mother's financial contributions through community associations for the provision of foodstuffs and assembling to cook at palaces and union headquarters sustained the community. In Aguleri and Umuleri communities' women played huge roles in countering hunger for

families and the community through food camps. Onwuzuruigbo, (2009) attested to the fact that the donation, contribution of money to buy foodstuff for the fighters of their respective communities and preparation, distributing food and water to the fighters of the community by association of all married women in Umuleri, referred to as Oluokala, and Aguleri Women Development Association (AWDA) actually strengthened the fighters and reduced the effects of the conflict. The role of women in ensuring survival beyond the boundaries of the household to the community is likened to *"war/grab bag family"* arrangements (Fitzpatrick, 1994 cited in Epp, 2002) which entailed the coming together of individuals with or without a blood relationship to share housing, food, and other resources for survival under conflict conditions. This role transcends prevailing discourses in texts of women's roles as passive activity.

(iv) **Medicine-for-healing**: Women in in Ife and Aguleri communities played important roles as medicine women with healing concoction for treating the wounded and potent for excising bullets without any surgical procedure as experienced. The latter resonates with other accounts of Yoruba women healers such as *Iya Onisegun*, the woman who makes medicine (Akintunde and Labeodan, 2002). And in Igbo land/traditional society, dibia-Ogwu (doctor of medicine) of which includes the herbalists: *Dibia-Ogwu-ahihia* who cures by the use of medicinal herbs and *dibia Mgborogwu* who cured by the use of plant roots (Aligwekwe, 2008). Within such terms, Mrs Teresa Nwadieze, an Aguleri woman accumulated the three forms of dibia(that is, dibia-Ogwu, d*ibia-Ogwu-ahihia and dibia-Mgborogwu*) because her potent traditional medicine concoction could stem the blood flow of injured fighters and be applied to the tip of guns to cause drowsiness.

(v) **Stave-off demonstrations and Protests in Support of the fighters:** This was played by Aguleri women against Umuleri people anytime they advanced by creating barricades at strategic points. Equally, women of Ife lined the streets half-dressed and with their wrappers turned inside out chanting songs of support for the fighters and organizing protests for or against actions bordering on the exclusion of its people from the territory they already occupy or an attempt to transfer part of their land to their neighbours.

The unacknowledged roles encompassing compassion, spirituality, cooperation, pacifism and harmony show that women constituted the direct participants/fighters in the conflict situations and were not just acted upon.

Power and Conflict Discourse

Power is conceived to be present in all human relations and must be understood within the context in which it is operated. The feminist interrogation of the productive and negative effects of the exercise of power in the dichotomy between women as persons acted upon and men as actors in the both conflicts demands a critical analysis of the strategies or techniques of power. This entails around "the networks, mechanisms, techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way it was" (Foucault, 1990 cited in Hume,2009:40). Implicit here, is the critique of one of the strategies of power which is the hegemonic character of knowledge about what we know and what we believe about the roles played by which gender in both conflicts. Here, hegemony (Gramsci,1971) concerns the how 'normal' definitions and taken-for-granted expressions come to define reality, or at least people's sense of it.

The ideological and symbolic component of hegemonic power relations render patterns of representation of women as victims and men as fighters normal and accepted. This seemingly harmless 'common-sense' power-infused assumptions produce gendered hierarchies as a given and in the common interest, become sustained. The puzzling fact is that gendered hierarchies are not in the abstract but are made possible by the acceptance or complicity of "gender *in*curious" (Enloe, 2014) men and women scholars who align with prevailing expectations of women in conflict situations and society. Most understandably, the tendency is to think that it is not aesthetic but a political choice that majorly the persons described as fighters are male. It is for this reason that any understanding of discourse must recognise that it is laden with hegemonic and counter-hegemonic symbols which mirror politics of meaning even if the claim is that they are 'neutral' or 'un-ideological (Miliband, 1977 cited in Agbaje, 1992). Implicitly, discourse cannot be viewed as separate from the context in which it occurs because "no discourse is free from ideology because discourse is shaped by ideology and ideology is conversely shaped in discourse" (Allan, 2004).

For feminists, understanding power is key to challenging gendered or incurious discourse, which people internalise particular conflict role expectations for women and men. This is key because the depiction of women as powerless victims portrays them in the stereotypical role as persons who have the least recourse to act and speak for their community's cause. In addition to this, there is a challenge to the principles and strategies of patriarchal power relations that naturalise the seemingly one-sided role description of women in conflict discourse. Further, a challenge to patriarchy demands the recognition of issues of complicity, which is understanding that no patriarchy is made up of just men rather the patriarchal systems have been so enduring, so adaptable,

precisely because they make many women not only overlook the marginal representations but see what is masculine as most deserving of being made visible and prioritized. Thus, patriarchies-in all social systems may privilege masculinity, but need the complex idea of femininity and enough women's acceptance or complicity to operate and sustain their gendered hierarchies or facilitate gender inequalities (Enloe,2004). The aim of transforming power relations does not constitute control over what or whose role is apt to be made visible by recognising the potential of making any role played by either men or women visible.

Conclusion

Unlike the text accounts of women as persons who were merely acted upon in the conflict situations, the four communities revealed women who were actors playing significant roles as information sources, medical providers, and spiritual shields to fighters, disguised fighters, and weapon-carrying aides. Importantly, paying close attention to women in both conflicts is crucial to understanding the gendering of power and transforming the ideological rationale for frequently ignoring women's productive roles.

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IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

*In spite of government counter-terrorism, expenditure and efforts, the incidence of terrorism in Nigeria, in, northern Nigeria particularly, appears to be rising. This paper examines the impacts of terrorism on democratic governance in the Northen Nigeria. Fiscal consequences of terrorism in the northern Nigeria by estimating the terrorism--macroeconomy relation using different measures of terror incidence. Three specific objectives were adopted in the measurement of the study, that is, examination the effects of terrorism on accountability in Northern Nigeria, the examination of the relationship between terrorism and good governance in Northern Nigeria and to ascertain how terrorism affects representative governance in Northern Nigeria. The theory adopted was Frustration-Aggression Theory. The methodology applied was descriptive survey, Taro Yamen formula was employed in the determination of the sample size used in the analysis, while chi-square mathematical computation cum the SPSS econometric package was adopted as the method of data analysis. The results showed that, good governance and terrorism have an inverse relationship. Strong, accountable, and inclusive governance structures can mitigate the conditions that allow terrorism to flourish, while weak governance can create an environment where terrorism can thrive and that, terrorism-free-environment reduces grievances and marginalization:, good governance promotes social equity and inclusion, strengthens Rule of Law, with fair and impartial justice systems, undermines the appeal of violence and provides alternative avenues for resolving disputes, it also increased public trust and participation, creating a more resilient society that is less susceptible to extremists' ideologies, effective service delivery, countering extremists' narratives etc. The study recommended that government and policy makers should prioritise policy measures on terrorism in order to mitigate excessive crimes that can dwarf democratization in the country.***

Keywords*:* Terrorism, democratic governance, conflict theory, accountability, good governance, representative governance.

Introduction

Political violence has been one of the prominent challenges to Nigeria democracy since independence. The ship of the Nigerian First, Second and Third Republics were drowned by uncontrollable political violences (Jawondo, 2011). Equally the Fourth Republic is being threatened daily by political violence of various shades; a development that has negatively affected Nigeria's internal security. Some of the old security threats have remained or even assumed worrisome dimensions while new threats have also emerged. Threats to human and national security include the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWS), sea piracy, armed robbery, assassination, human trafficking, kidnapping, and ethno-religious conflicts (Onuoha, 2011). It should be recalled that military regimes in Nigeria were able to suppress and repress violence though not without resistance. Akinwumi (2005) opines that each successive military government created a terror squad by which it became known and remembered. Such squads did nothing but helped their founders to perpetrate corruption, militarization and repression. The repression of the Ogoni protest and the trial and hanging of Saro-wiwa and eight other MOSOP activists in November 1995 was one among many cases where the then Nigerian military government crushed resistance (Obi, 2007).

Suffice to say that democracy with its features such as popular participation, individuals' right, freedom of speech and associations among others, creates chances for individuals, ethnic and religious groups to exercise their rights and freedom by expressing their feelings about the government of the day. This, however, accompanied sometimes by intimidation, violence or threat of violence whenever the demands and expectations (legitimate or illegitimate) of such individuals or groups are not met by the government. Consequently, since 1999 when the Fourth Republic began, there has been series of protracted ethnic and sub-ethnic conflicts, political violence and sectarian violence which has resulted in fear, trauma, and despair. Presently, there are two main centres of terror activities in Nigeria: the Niger Delta region and the Northern Nigeria, particularly the North East. The violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta is essentially aimed at intimidating the Nigerian government into addressing what is considered the state-orchestrated marginalization and repression of the interests of the people of the region. The terror in that area include regular petroleum pipeline vandalisation, hostage taking and kidnapping of local and foreign oil workers, as well as relatives of former and serving government officials, and the creation of an environment of fear and general insecurity. A threat considered to be relatively new in Nigeria, though not without precedent, is the outbreak of violent extremism. Since 1999, there has been a revival and resurgence of radical Islamic fundamentalism under the cover of Sharia, which has resulted in the emergence of a Taliban-styled group called Boko Haram in the northern

part of the country (Eselebor, 2011). The Islamic extremist group Boko Haram has been waging a brutal and incessant campaign against government and civilian targets. The group claims to be fighting to transform Nigeria into an Islamic state governed by Sharia law.

The causes of terrorism in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general are located in the contradictions of domestic political economy and the asymmetrical nature of the international system. For the former, these include poor governance epitomized by systemic corruption, rising poverty, unemployment, inequality and the near-total collapse of social services and infrastructural facilities (Omotola, 2006). It also includes the transformation of identity politics in the unhealthy competition for power, the struggle for resource control, porous land and maritime borders, increased proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), growing of Almajiri population, existence of radical Islamic sects, poor security situation awareness or consciousness, and an ineffectual national security system (Onuoha, 2011). Conversance with security trends in Nigeria suggests that the aforementioned factors manifest and interplay in different ways to engender Nigeria's vulnerability to extremism/terrorism. Governance failure is the main factor implicated in the rising incidence of terrorism in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011). Governance failure is indexed by the manifest incapacity of public institutions to deliver critical public goods, such as water, electricity, roads, healthcare, job opportunities and none the least, security. The average Nigerian lacks access to these basic services that are important to lead a healthy, satisfying and productive life in a society. This contributes to the emergence of a large frustrated population, especially young people.

Problem Identification

Terrorism has several negative effects on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. It could also have myriad consequences on the regional stability in Nigeria, Northern region in particular. Nonetheless, Nigeria's Armed Forces have struggled to contain an Islamic extremist group and militants within its own country, thus, coordinated strategies are further required to play its hitherto strategic role in any given mission at the moment.

Meanwhile, the main goal of this study is to assess the effects of terrorism on the democratic governance in the Northern Nigeria.

Research Questions

i. What is the effect of terrorism on accountability in the Northern Nigeria?
ii. What is the relationship between terrorism and good governance in the Northern Nigeria?
iii. How does terrorism affect representative governance in the Northern Nigeria?

Research Objectives

i. examine the effects of terrorism on accountability in the Northern Nigeria
ii. examination of the relationship between terrorism and good governance in the Northern Nigeria
iii. ascertain how terrorism affects representative governance in the Northern Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

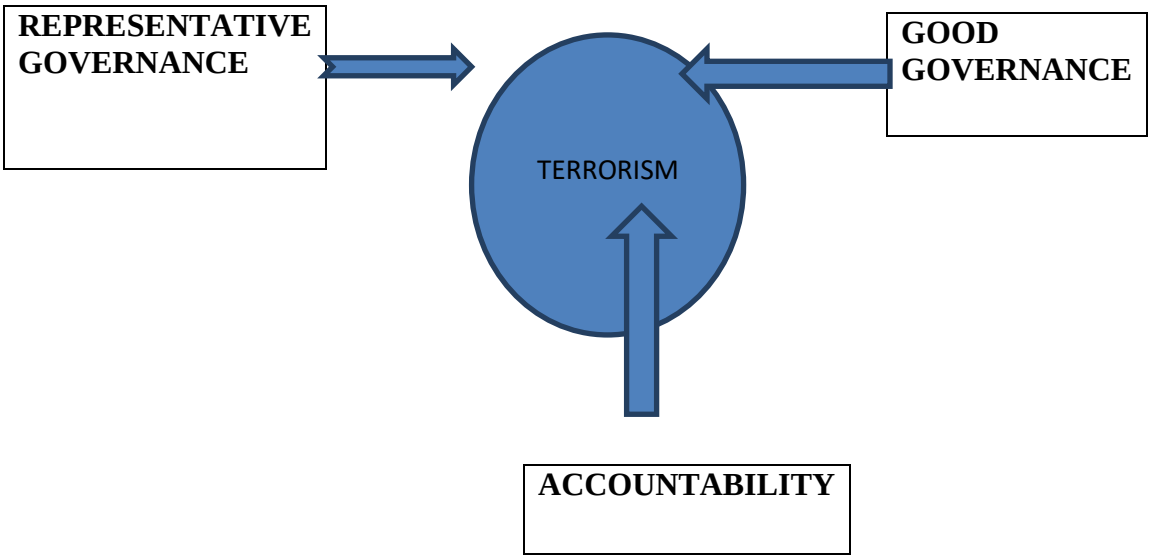
$H0_1$: Terrorism does not enhance accountability in North Eastern Nigeria

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between Terrorism and good governance in Northern Nigeria.

$H0_3$: There is no relationship between terrorism and representative governance in Northern Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

A conceptual framework explains relationships between interlinked concepts and explains the connections between the variables (Smyth, 2004). The paper conceptualises the linkage between The Impacts of Terrorism and the Democratic Governance in Northeastern Nigeria "Terrorism is taken as the independent variable while the democratic governance of Northern Nigeria was adopted as the dependent variables. The independent variables influenced the dependent variable. The decomposed dependent variables' indices or models selected among many were accountability, representative government, good governance etc., that are found to directly interact or exert influence with Terrorism in Northern Nigeria. The dependent variables as adopted by the Author are: Good-governance, Accountability and Representative Government.



Source: IFIOK, C.A., 2025 Field Work

Terrorism

No single and universally acceptable definition of the word 'terror or terrorism' has emerged. The concept is credited to have multiple definitions from the best of judgment of different actors, allies and key strategists. As Charles W. Kegley, Jr. (1990: 1-26) has reminded us, international terrorism is a subject whose analysis tends to be bogged down by "many semantic, epistemological, and evaluative issues". They are issues that have made the topic too "highly subjective, sensational, and emotional" to treat, agreement on a common definition of phenomenon impossible to reach; by the same token, the proffering of sustainable solutions to the problem seems almost a futile attempt. As in the past, Adekanye (2003: 8) observes that much of the discourse regarding the phenomenon is suffused with mostly negative images conveyed by such cultural – stereotypical statements as; "terrorism is a product of culturally warped mind", "terrorists are mad men/women", grievances have nothing to do with terrorism", terrorism is essentially a Middle Eastern problem, and most targets are Americans", "terrorism is a primitivism".

Perhaps, what one finds different in the current discourse, is that, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet power and other communist regimes in Eastern Europe, a new set of stereotypes has come to be added to those old known images about terrorism and the terrorist. Much of the talk now is about "Islamic fundamentalism as the source of the terrorist menace troubling today's worlds, and deliberately aimed at

filling the void created by the collapse of international communism". (Adekanye, 2003). A general consensus among security scholars is that it is derived from the Latin word "terrere" meaning to "frighten" and it also involves complex threats or acts of violence. At its most basic level, terrorism is asymmetric violence but that does not mean that all violence is inherently Terrorism. Such irregular violence has been with us since at least, David took on Goliath in the Bible (I Samuel 17). Similarly, the use by religious, ethnic and political groups to inspire fear through violent actions has been with us for as long as violence itself has been part of the human condition.

Terrorism is defined as "the systemic employment of violence intimidation to coerce a government or individual or community, especially into acceding to specific political demands" (Albert, 2005: 386 cited Brown, 1992). Shultz (1978) sees terrorism as "the threat or use of extra-normal forms of political violence, in varying degrees with the objectives of achieving certain political objectives/goals". Features of terrorism include, kidnapping and hostage taking especially when employed on consistent basis, bombing of strategic places, hijacking and blowing of civilian aircraft, sea piracy and illegal detention of crews, murder and assassinations, Arson, including sabotage of power and energy installations, intimidation, torture and force recruitments, identity theft, fraud among others.

The US Department of States defines Terrorism as premeditated, politically motivated violence, perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience (cited in Mejabi, 2012). The New York City Police Department Division defines terrorism as the "calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals, political, religious or ideological in nature". The main objective of terrorism is to instill fear and to influence an audience beyond the immediate victim in furtherance of the terrorist's goal (Laqueur, 1999:22:30). It is a systematic used of terror that has no universal agrees of definition, and can be controversially defines by the state actors when it is used to de-legitimize their political aim and objectives (Adedoyin, 2012). Terrorism is a violent act that may be intended to create fears in people, and can be perpetrated for religious purpose, political or ideological reasons. It can be politically or emotional charged or motivated. It is a deliberate attack or target on civilian population, which can be carried out to achieve an inhuman or corrupt objective that involves a threat to the security of lives and properties, and a violation of human rights (Adedoyin, 2012:).

At the risk of over simplification, terrorism could be said to be aimed at achieving four main purposes. First, it is either organized by the "opposition" to discredit or land overthrow a regime, or mobilized by state officials as tool of political oppression. Second, it is aimed at giving a "minority" group a voice in a society (Albert, 2005).

Within this context, Albert (2005: 388 cited Stohl, 1988:5) notes agreeably that the "violence of the terrorist act is not intended simply to destroy but also to be heard. For a regime, the terror is a message of strength, a warning designed to intimidate, to ensure compliance without the need to physically touch each citizen". Third, terrorism is aimed at winning a specific concession through "coercive bargaining". It is assumed here that one conflict party might not accept the position of the other party except some form of illegitimate force (violence) was employed. Within this context, some scholars refer to terrorism as "diplomacy of violence" and "coercive diplomacy" (Schelling 1986 and George et al, 1977 cited in Albert 2005: 388). Fourth, terrorism could be deliberately instigated to expose the true nature of a regime or an insurgent group. For example, an insurgent terrorist group could push a regime into taking certain unpremeditated action that could force to become repressive and hence illegitimate in the court of (local and international) public opinion. On the other hand, Albert (2005) opines that a terrorist regime could use the reaction of the targeted group as an excuse for autocracy, arbitrary arrests, military build-ups. The implication of above definitions is that terrorism as a concept will continue to remain dynamic and attempts to define the term will be conditioned upon one's perception, standpoint and views. The use of the term cannot be separated from moral judgment, which from all practical purposes remains subjective. Attaching the label "terrorist" to an opponent, group or an organization with envisaged sympathy for the victim will continue to be highly debated as it is difficult to reach consensus on acceptable modality for arriving at such conclusions (Eselebor, 2011).

Political Economy of Terrorism in Nigeria

In recent times, Nigeria has ascended the ranks as one of the most active terror destinations in the world—in terms of frequency of attacks and sophistication of attacks. As depicted in Figure 1, which displays the total number and sophistication of terrorist attacks by major terror organizations in the world between 2000 and 2013, Nigeria ranks second globally, in terms of frequency of incidence, with over 750 attacks during that period. Although, the level of sophistication of terrorist events in Nigeria, which is measured by the number of suicide attacks, is comparatively low (see Panel B of Figure 1), the trend appears to be increasing in recent times in spite of increased government counter-terrorism expenditure and efforts. Terrorism related activities are not altogether new in Nigeria. Since the post-independence era, the chequered history of the country can be characterized by several episodes of internally motivated crisis.

Specifically, these terrorism-related crimes have been escalated by the multi-faceted political and religious demands of different competing groups, and for reasons of ethnic fractionalization. Some of the most contentious issues include: the demands for appropriation of oil rents, reforms in fiscal federalism and political restructuring, which

has primarily contributed to the emergence of militia and terrorist groups in the southern and northern regions respectively. Although in recent times, what is generally recognized as terrorism in Nigeria are the activities of the Boko Haram sect—whose activities have been localized in the North-Eastern region and neighbouring countries, targeting innocent civilians, religious and public places, government officials, and security forces—it is only one of many formal and informal groups engaged in what qualifies as terrorist activities (Tonwe and Eke, 2013).

The relevance and strength of the group have risen quickly from being a regional phenomenon to attaining global status. This is confirmed by the recent trends that show links between Boko Haram and ISIL, an organization to which they had earlier pledged their allegiance. This increasing relevance and spread also imply stronger and more significant influence on the political and economic fundamentals of the Nigerian economy, begging for answers to questions concerning the underlying factors behind the origin and growth of terrorism in Nigeria, the consequences of government counter-terrorism activities, and the strategies for economic insulation. It is generally believed that the nature of terrorism in Nigeria is mostly elite-motivated, originating from the fallout of political competition for resources. Advocates of this theory argue that it is very difficult for perpetrators of terrorism, who are often poor and uneducated rural dwellers, to mobilize resources to launch large-scale and sustained campaigns against civilians and the military forces for several years.

This argument appears reasonable, especially if one considers the demographic distribution and concentration of insurgency in the history of Nigeria. For example, in the early 2000's, when the president and ruling party were mostly from the South-West region, the insurgency was more concentrated in the South-South region, with manifestations in the form of militancy, vandalism, and kidnappings. However, between 2007 and 2015, when the president emerged from the South-South region, militancy dramatically reduced in the South-South region and became concentrated in the Northern regions, in the form of bombings on civilians and military formations, kidnapping of pupils, and killing of so-called "infidels."

Democratic Governance

The Lincoln's hypothesis of the word "democracy" as the government of the people by the people and for the people exemplified an ideal as practiced in the ancient Greece. The flow of this principle underlies that power to govern and allocate resources must, as a matter of morality, emanate from the people who are to be governed rather than from a "cabal" of men because, even out of power, they are expected to have a say in the affairs of the state that concern them (Ojuade, 2011). The word "Democracy" comes

from the Greek word "demokratia", which literally translates to "rule of the people". Hence, democratic government is therefore believed to have originated from the Greek city-states, where democratic ideals started and were transferred to other societies (Birch, 1993).

The concept of Governance refers to the use of political powers to manage a nation public affair and to shape its economic and social environment in line with perceived notions of public interest and societal process (Omotoso, 2010). It is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social development (World Bank, 1992, UNDP 1997). These multilateral organizations emphasize leadership role, that is, the manner in which political (state) leaders manage, use or misuse power, to promote social and economic development or to pursue agendas that undermine such goals. Good governance is in tandem with democratic governance which is largely characterized by high valued principles such as, rule of law, accountability, participation, transparency, and human and civil rights. These variables are in distinguishable from the elements of governance of a mature liberal democracy (World Bank, 1989). Richard Swift, (2003) states that democracy is a "rule by the people". It is a system of government by the whole people of a country, especially through representatives whom they elect. Ojuade (2006) further described it as a "system of government where ideal social justice is attained for all, while Awolowo (1981) asserts that democracy is the best form of governance.

Democratic governance according to Bello Imam and Obadan (2004) represents the exercise of state power with the consent of the people either directly or indirectly through their elected representatives. Within democratic governance, there is provision for state institutions to express the will of the state and ultimately for the supremacy of that expression on all basic questions of socio-economic direction and policy. Under democratic governance, factors such as economic equality, fraternal feeling and political liberty within a defined territory are indispensable pre-requisites.

Theoretical Framework

Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration-Aggression theory is useful in finding the causes of terrorism in the global village. It is a hypothesis proposed by John Dollard, Neal Miller et al (1939) and further developed by Miller, Roger Barker et al (1941) and Leonard Berkowitz (1969). The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's effort to attain a goal. The theory also says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displayed onto an

innocent target. The theory is also used to explain riots and revolutions. Both are caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled-up frustrations and anger through violence. Thus, the premise of the frustration-aggression hypothesis is that when people become frustrated (thwarting of goals) they respond aggressively. This is clearly highlighted by Dollard and co-workers in their original work: "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression" (Dollard et al. 1939).

The psychological concept of frustration and its effect deserve particularly close examination because of a widespread assumption that the high conflict potential of the developing areas is a function of frustration caused by economic deprivation. Not infrequently, theorists of social revolution, in describing the attitudes which prevail in a pre-revolutionary situation, relate such phenomena as "alienation" and "anomie" to a condition of "general frustration" (Robert, 1963: 158-159 cited in Dougherty et al, 1981:267). Thus, rising incidence of terrorism in Nigeria is blamed on governance failure and incapacity of public institutions to deliver critical public goods, such as water, electricity, roads, health care, job opportunities, and none the less security. This, however contributes to the emergence of large number of frustrated populations, especially young people, with growing frustration and disillusionment that accompany long-term unemployment and poverty which underlie their gravitation to crimes, making them more vulnerable to recruitment by criminal cartels, extremist and terrorist group (Onuoha, 2010).

The point is that there has been a misplacement of priority by some leaders of the Northern region. Atiku (2011) opines that "poor governance, among other issues, is the cause of the rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria. What kind of society are we building when about 80% of school age children in the North-East and some parts of North-West are not in school? Our energies should be channeled on what needs to be done urgently: enforce rules, value the people, show fairness and equity and assist and protect the most needy and vulnerable". This view is in line with Okolo (2011 and Achebe (1983) 'the problems of Nigerian State revolve around poor leadership, high cost of governance, corruption and constitutional constraints that have made the State and Local Governments to be very unviable. Soludo (2006) opines that the country has, indeed, become an environment of "anything goes" and the people have become atrophied by cynicism and mistrust of governments and the people in government, the result of many years of seeing government systematically lying to its people. An investigation to the views of these authors buttressed the fact that governance failure is an incendiary factor of terrorism in Nigeria.

Conflict Theory

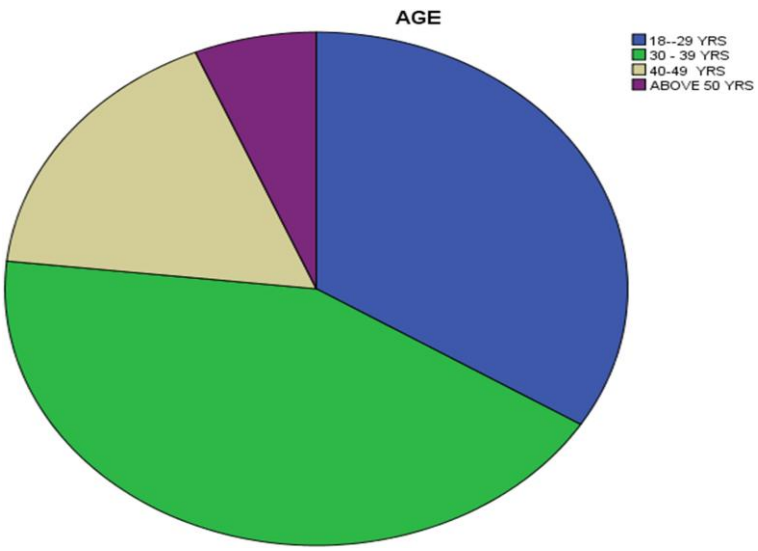
Other theory useful in the explanation of terrorism in Nigeria is Conflict theory**.** This theory is one of the three major theories of sociology, alongside (structural) functionalism and symbolic interactionism. Early proponents of the theory include scholars like Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Max Weber. The opinion of scholars on what the theory entails seems to be largely concurrent. Hughes & Kroehler (2005) believe conflict theory focuses on inequality, exploitation, oppression, social turmoil and social change. Brinkerhoff et al (2011) opine that conflict theory addresses the points of stress and conflict in society and the ways in which they contribute to social change. According to Schaefer (2006), the conflict perspective assumes that social behavior is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups and, that such conflict need not be violent.

Methodology

This study involved the use of qualitative and quantitative data. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information for the study. Respondents were randomly or purposively drawn from secondary ten (10) different states within the scope of this study which was Northern Nigeria i.e, Borno, Yobe, Plateau, Benue, Kebbi, Taraba, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi and Nasarawa States etc., the population target was drawn purposively from the various state's capitals and their local government areas. A sample of 200 people was drawn purposively from two state and two local government areas as proxy for the study. Data was analysed with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis and Findings

Fig. 1: Age of Respondents



Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From table 4.1 and figure 4.1, It shows the age group demographic characteristics of the study areas 33.9% of the respondents are between the ages 18-29, 42.9% are between the ages 30-39, 16.9% are between the ages 40-49, while the remaining 6.3% are above 50 years.

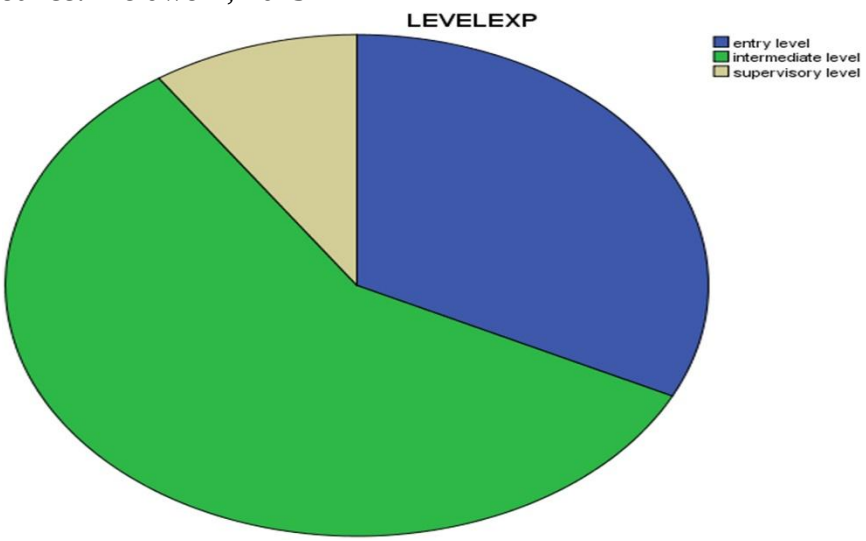
Level of Experience of Respondents

This section was undertaken to avail if the issues surrounding terrorism vis-a- avis the democratic governance in the Northern Nigeria level of experience of the respondents in the study areas.

Table showing Level of Experience of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	entry level	122	32.3	32.3	32.3
	Intermediate level	220	58.2	58.2	90.5
	Supervisory level	36	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total		378	100.0	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025



Level of Experience of respondents that enhances the decisions of the investigator
Source: Fieldwork, 2025

From table and figure above, a significant portion of 58.2% of the respondents have intermediate level of experience, 32.3% have primary entry level experience, while the remaining 9.5% of the respondents have supervisory level experiences. The result indicates that the respondents have a moderate level of experience to enhance decisions making by the researcher.

Table 2: Effect of terrorism on good governance is negatively co-related

Strongly agree	**Not strongly agree**	**Very strongly in support**	**Undecided**	**Strongly disagree**
25%	20%	35%	10%	5%
1	2	3	4	5

Source: Fieldwork 2025

Table above. shows that, terrorism corrodes accountability, good governance, etiolated or pseudo representative governance paving ways for dictatorship and anarchical governance. 60% says that effect of terrorism on good governance is negatively co-relate.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.710[a]	.672	.661	1.10818	2.242

a. Predictors: (Constant), TERR
b. Dependent Variable: ReAG

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

The model summary measures the relationship between the dependent and independent variables as captured by Pearson's Coefficient (R). The R-value of .710 (71.0%) showed a significant relationship between the observed and control variables. The adjusted R-square value of .661 (66.1%) shows that 66.1% of variations in respondents' participation on the subject under questionnaires, effect of terrorism (TERR) on representative, good governance, accountability (ReAG) as captured by the SPSS package. The result from the effects of (TERR) on (ReAG adopted by the Pearson corelated moment was negatively related, terrorism and democracy are adversely related. In addition, the adjusted R-square shows that 66.1% figure in the computation could cause a huge damage in the economy, capable of causing dwarf and sluggish growths trends in the northern areas. The remaining 33.9% variations in the study are accounted for by other variables captured by the error term. The result of the Durbin-Watson test shows no autocorrelation in the model. The result therefore

corroborated with respondents' views that, Effect of Terrorism on Good Governance is Negatively Co-Related.

Findings

This study examines the political economy of terrorism in Nigeria and follows up by investigating the macroeconomic consequences of terrorism, especially as it affects growth and government fiscal behaviour. Different measures of terrorism are used, including a composite terror index, the number of incidents, the number of fatalities, and the number of injured—all of which are reported in the Global Terrorism Database. The empirical strategy involves the use of transfer function weights estimated within the chi-square and the SPSS framework, two stage models ie, TERR and ReAG to uncouple the terrorism macroeconomy relationship with representative governance, accountability, good governance, which was adapted as the decomposed variables from the dependent VAR. In the northern Nigeria. The results from the study can be summarized in three main findings. First, we find that terrorism has an economically and statistically significant negative impact on accountability, good governance and equitable representative governance; although this impact is considerably small and short-lived, it only manifests after a lag of about three years. Secondly, there is evidence, albeit not statistically robust, of terrorism leading to the reallocation of economic activity away from investments spending to government spending.

Specifically, terrorism crowds out investments at a rate 26 greater than its potential to crowd in government spending. Thirdly, there is evidence that terrorism alters the composition of government expenditure—that is, the defence component of government expenditure rises vis-a-vis other expenditure items with higher levels of terrorism. The results are robust to allowing for dynamic interactions between terrorism and macroeconomic aggregates. Finally, to the extent that the nature of terrorism in Nigeria is evolving in ways that are difficult to capture with numbers, it is important to draw policy implications from the results with some degree of caution. For one thing, the results suggest that the impact of terrorist activities should be systematically taken into account when preparing government budgeting and expenditure plans. Further, there is evidence that regime stability, greater economic diversification, and openness help to mitigate the negative consequences of terrorism; hence, policies that encourage trade openness in items that are not considered risky for national security should be encouraged.

Conclusion

Good governance and terrorism have an inverse relationship. Strong, accountable, and inclusive governance structures can mitigate the conditions that allow terrorism to flourish, while weak governance can create an environment where terrorism can thrive.

Recommendations:

Reduced Grievances and Marginalization: Good governance promotes social equity and inclusion, addressing grievances that can be exploited by terrorist groups. Strengthened Rule of Law: A robust rule of law, with fair and impartial justice systems, undermines the appeal of violence and provides alternative avenues for resolving disputes. Increased Public Trust and Participation: Transparent and accountable governance fosters public trust and encourages citizen participation, creating a more resilient society that is less susceptible to extremist ideologies. Effective Service Delivery: Good governance ensures that public resources are used effectively to deliver essential services like education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, thereby reducing poverty and inequality, which are often drivers of radicalization. Countering Extremist Narratives: Good governance can create a space for open dialogue and debate, challenging extremist narratives and promoting alternative perspectives.

Weakened State Capacity: Terrorism can divert resources from essential services and infrastructure development, weakening the state's capacity to govern effectively. Erosion of Democratic Institutions: Terrorist attacks can lead to increased surveillance, restrictions on civil liberties, and a decline in public trust in government, undermining democratic principles. Heightened Security Spending: Governments facing terrorism often prioritize security spending, potentially at the expense of social programs and development initiatives. Increased Authoritarianism**:** In response to terrorism, governments may adopt authoritarian measures, further eroding the rule of law and human rights. In essence, good governance is a preventative measure against terrorism, while terrorism can severely undermine good governance.

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POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE NAIRA CRISIS: PATHWAY TO RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Given the need to proffer solutions to Nigeria's economic challenges and offer actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders, particularly, the persistent crises surrounding the Naira, which have great implications for the country's economic stability and development, this paper using qualitative secondary data, document analysis and the Marxist Political Economy as a framework for analysis examines the Naira crisis, paying attention to class dynamics and the interplay of political leadership, governance, policy choices and external factors like the World Bank and structural economic elements. Drawing insights from historical and contemporary data, the study identified key drivers responsible for the currency's economic instability, including over-dependence on oil revenues, weak fiscal and monetary policies, and political corruption. The study's findings further revealed the socio-economic impacts of the Naira crisis, such as inflation, declining purchasing power, unemployment, reduced investor confidence, and underdevelopment. The study recommends, among other things, the imperativeness of structural reforms, institutional strengthening, diversification of the economy, and an inclusive policy framework. It further recommends a multi-dimensional approach to stabilize the Naira, enhance economic resilience, and promote sustainable economic prosperity and development.

Keywords: Political Economy, Development, Exchange rate, Devaluation.

Introduction

Nigeria's economic woes over the past few decades have been a challenging issue of policy discourse, especially development policies and initiatives. According to Ogunbukola (2024), the weakening of the Naira against the United States dollar is perhaps the main driver of these emerging economic challenges. Ogunbukola further noted that several factors, including an over-reliance on oil exports, fiscal mismanagement, inflation, and currency devaluation, have exacerbated the weakening of the Naira against the US Dollar. No doubt, currency instability plays a significant role in the socio-economic development of a nation. Udo et al (2018) maintained that Naira devaluation poses more harm to the overall economic growth than good, since the needed prerequisite to ensure gains from devaluation is not present in the system due to over-dependence on foreign forces and systems. Udo (2023) also corroborated this view by asserting that exchange rate management and microeconomic performance in developing countries have been a subject of intense debate among policymakers and scholars alike. This arises from the crucial role of the exchange rate and exchange rate policy in the management and functioning of the national economy. No doubt, the value of a nation's currency is a determinant of its exchange rate. Nigeria's Naira has struggled over the last decades with the Naira losing over 70% of its exchange rate value in the past two years (Ogunbokala, 2024). Writing from this perspective, Ismaila (2016) also argued that the Naira's exchange rate value influences the flow of goods, services, and capital into the country, as well as exerts strong pressure on the balance of payments, inflation, and other microeconomic variables. In effect, the economy's aggregate demand, aggregate supply, the relative price of domestic and foreign goods, interest rates, the strength of the country's external sector participation in international trade, volume of trade (Imports and exports), balance of payment position, national output and the domestic general price level (Ikoku, 2017; Udo, 2023).

The depreciation of a country's currency should foster increased production output, in this regard, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) will rather pump billions of dollars into the foreign exchange market to leverage the value of Naira than pump in this money to productive activities which will in long run improve the Naira (Nwafor 2018). Indeed, the foregoing suggests an interplay between political and economic dynamics in the naira crisis, leading to a myriad of livelihood consequences for the citizens.

An analysis of the event that predicted the Naira crisis suggests that external economic interest is a major determinant of Naira problems. Thus, both the causes and consequences of the Naira crisis are a different calculus of the Marxian political economy (that of the historical materialism model). Against this context, this paper looks at the Naira crisis from the lens of Political economy to explore its causes,

impacts, and the possible trajectory for economic recovery, and development in Nigeria, specifically, the study's objectives are to: identify the index factors of Naira instability; assess the economic and social impacts of the Naira crises in Nigeria; extrapolate the Naira crises to broader Political economy framework and explore policy solutions and strategies to overcome the Naira crises.

Indeed, many scholars have examined the issues of the Naira instability in the past, many of whom suggested fiscal restructuring and effective institutional reformation. For instance, Nwafor (2018) in his study on the effect of the Naira rate on economic growth in Nigeria revealed that the Naira rate has no significant impact on economic growth in Nigeria. Some other scholars argue that the Naira crisis slowed down economic activities and pushed many Nigerians into poverty. However, this study seeks to fill the gap created by other works that only focused on the fiscal and macroeconomic causes of the Naira crisis without looking at the inherent struggles between the political and economic forces, especially from the prism of international finance institutions and power players. This study utilized qualitative data, and content analysis was adopted in the study's analysis of results to pave the way for generalization.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Economy

In the Social and Behavioural Sciences, the interpretation and meaning of concepts constantly change depending on the analyst's orientation and ideological inclinations. In this study, we will briefly explain the basic concepts used in this study. First on the list is Political Economy. Political Economy can be defined as a method or instrument for social analysis as well as a field of study. As a field, it studies the relationship between Politics and Economics, emphasizing the interactions and effects of social forces, economic systems, and political establishments (Oatley, 2019). For example, it takes into account how economic outcomes are impacted by government policies and vice versa. By fusing aspects of Economics, Political science, Sociology, and History, it offers a comprehensive explanation of social development as a subject of study (Caporaso & Levine, 1992). It provides a thorough account of the evolution of societies (Caporaso & Levine, 1992). By analyzing who benefits and who loses from specific policies, Political economy no doubt offers insights into social justice and governance (Mosco, 2009). As a tool for social analysis, Political economy looks at how interests and power dynamics influence economic activity and policy choices and outcomes. This line of inquiry allows scholars to examine issues like distribution, inequality, and the impact of international markets on national economies (Gilpin, 2001).

Development

Development is the next idea that needs to be explained. Since development is one of the terms in the social sciences that has been defined in various ways by development researchers and practitioners, defining it appears to be an impossible task. Through the three fundamental questions he posed at the Eleventh World Conference of the Society for International Development, Seers (1969) offered a clear guide to the proper understanding of the concept of development. He argued that to determine a country's level of development, three fundamental questions must be asked and answered: "What is happening to poverty, unemployment, and inequality?" His perspective is a clear indication that development is all about human progress. In other words, when we discuss development, we need to focus on the people and not the infrastructure. This suggests that development is concerned with the economic and social milieu of the people, including their material well–being. Exchange rates refer to the price of one currency from another. It shows the value that foreign currency units can be exchanged for local or local currency (Kalu et al., 2019). It can also be described as a report of units of a single currency and another currency at one point or another (Ngerebo-A and Ibe, 2013). Furthermore, it is the price of a currency compared to another currency, and the number of currency units required to purchase another currency (Mordi, 2006). Exchange rates are the link between the prices of goods and services and foreign prices, and could either appreciate or depreciate. If it appreciates, there are a few units of domestic currency that will be exchanged for units of foreign currency. During depreciation, more units of internal currency are exchanged for one unit of foreign currency.

Devaluation

Devaluation means depreciation. Both concepts can be used interchangeably (Ndubuaku et al, 2019). This means a decrease in the value of money from the standpoint of a prescribed gold unit (or other metrics). Conversely, depreciation refers to a decrease in the cost of money from a specific foreign currency perspective. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) no longer measures foreign currency (since 1984), so these concepts are used interchangeably. Momoda and Akani (2016) identified currency devaluation as an endogenous factor affecting overall economic indicators. Yilkal (2014) defined it as deliberately reducing the value of money in a particular country, i.e., intentionally decreasing the currencies of other countries participating in international trade within the framework of fixed exchange rates to stimulate growth in another. It is recognized as a decrease. According to Okaro (2017), currency devaluation is usually triggered when trade and payment balance deficits (BOP/BOT) occur.

Theoretical Framework

The persistent crises surrounding the Naira currency, which have serious implications for the country's economy and development, will be analyzed using the Marxist Political Economy as a framework for analysis. Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Frederick Engels (1820–1895) established the Marxian method. Although many academics within and outside the Social Sciences have adopted this approach and line of thinking in various ways to explain social issues in society, its efficacy in clarifying social realities is still undeniable. Class analysis, or the social relationships that result from the organization of production, is the main focus of this dialectical way of thinking. The method emphasizes the significant connections among the various facets of society, including politics, the family, the economy, and other areas of human life, but it contends that the economy is crucial. This viewpoint was reinforced by Ake (1981), who argued that: students must take into account systematically of interactions of different elements of social life, especially economic structure, social structure, political structure and belief system… but it is the economic factor which is the most decisive of all these elements of society and which largely determines the character of others. Thus, if knowledge of the economy is available, the general character of the social system, the political system, the belief system, etc, of the relevant society can be conjectured (P.4). When explaining social life or reality, this method does give more weight to material conditions, particularly the economic factor. This approach holds that a man's most fundamental need is his economic need and that he cannot exist at all if this need is not met. This means that this method of analysis is centred on dialectical/historical materialism, which emphasizes the importance of paying close attention to a society's economic realities and using them as a basis for explaining other facets of society. Therefore, the Marxist Political Economy Approach aims to comprehend the connection between political and economic substructure, especially in developing nations.

By using this method in this study, it is possible to observe how the political elites and the class with access to state power mismanage our economy and resources for their own personal enrichment and group protection. This corruption by the political class and elites, including their international collaborators, remains one of the major reasons for the Naira crisis. Keep in mind that the dialectical approach to thinking views the economy as the most determining factor in society, and thus uses it as a starting point for comprehending other facets of society. Through the lenses of this theory, we can observe how those saddled with the responsibility of managing our economy and state prioritize their personal economic gain and wealth accumulation over the country’s economy and development. Through the lenses of this theory, we can also clearly see how their international collaborators, like the World Bank, are primarily guided by and

concerned with liberalism and devaluation of our currency without proper consideration of the implications of such monetary policies on our currency and economy. It is therefore not surprising that these policies have not yielded dividends to our economy and other economies in Africa.

Historical Context of the Naira Crisis

The British-inherited Pound was replaced with the Naira in Nigeria on January 1, 1973. Ekanem (2022) claims that this significant change represented an assertion of Nigeria's monetary sovereignty. However, the Naira's journey has become excessively problematic due to structural economic challenges, policy mismanagement, and external economic shocks. The oil boom of the 1970s, which greatly boosted Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, supported the Naira, which at the time was one of the strongest African currencies. The Naira's strong international standing was demonstrated by its trading at about $1.52 by the mid-1970s, according to Onyekachi (2023). Due to the nation's economic reliance on oil, which revealed hidden challenges, the boom period was comparatively brief. With this crucial change, Nigeria's fiscal sovereignty was affirmed. However, due to a combination of internal economic issues, external economic shocks, and poor policy management, the Naira experienced numerous crises during its many tumultuous journeys. Fiscal deficits and growing external debts resulted from the sharp drop in oil revenues brought on by the global oil glut in the early 1980s. Under the direction of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), this led Nigeria to implement the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986. According to the SAP policies, the Naira had to be devalued, the foreign exchange market had to be liberalized, and subsidies had to be eliminated (Olowu & Fagbemi). Adebayo (2023) posited that although these measures were focused on the stability of the economy, they hoisted a decreasing Naira value instead specifically from N0.62 to $1 in 1980 to N8 to $1 by 1990.

During the 1990s, political unrest and corruption under several military regimes made the Naira crisis worse. A parallel black market where the Naira traded at lower rates than the official value emerged as a result of the introduction of foreign exchange controls (Owolabi et al., 2022). Similarly, according to Adesina & Okoye (2022), the economy was in a precarious position by the end of the 1990s because of the high rate of inflation, the liquidation of foreign reserves, and the decline in investor confidence. There were expectations for reform when democracy returned in 1999. However, because Nigeria still relied heavily on oil earnings, the Naira was extremely susceptible to outside shocks. Ogundele (2023) argued that the 2008 global financial crisis triggered a major devaluation of the currency, as oil prices fell sharply. Bello (2022) argued that the resurgence of global shocks following the oil price crash caused the Naira's value to

further depreciate in 2014. To stabilize the currency, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) implemented multiple exchange rates and imposed foreign exchange restrictions, but its efforts were not very successful. Nigeria's 2016 economic slump was mostly brought on by the drop in production output and the collapse of oil prices. This opinion was supported by Akinola (2023), who claimed that the value of the Naira experienced a significant decline in 2016 after the official market exchange rate increased from N197 to $1 in 2015 to N305 to $1 by 2017.

According to Ojo et al. (2023), there is a discrepancy between the official and black-market exchange rates because the rate at the parallel market rose from N500 to $1. Nigeria's economic difficulties are made more complex by the Naira's increased depreciation. The Naira has been under excessive pressure over the past ten years due to declining foreign reserves, rising inflation, and forex market volatility. According to Abubakar and Yusuf (2023), the severity of the crisis was demonstrated in 2023 when the value of the Naira in the parallel market increased to over N900 to $1. In a similar vein, Okonkwo (2023) pointed out that the government consolidated exchange rates in June 2023 to boost foreign investment and transparency. Nigeria's economic structure, policy decisions, and susceptibility to outside shocks are the main causes of the Naira crisis. To restore stability and achieve long-term growth, the currency's trajectory needs to emphasize the significance of fiscal restraint, economic diversification, and comprehensive reforms.

Understanding the Drivers of Nigeria’s Naira Crisis

Several factors have been identified in the literature as key drivers of the currency's instability, including over-dependence on oil revenues, weak fiscal and monetary policies, and political corruption. We now consider these factors in detail: Oil dependency and external shocks. Nigeria’s economy relies heavily on crude oil exports, which account for over 90% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and about 60% of government revenue (Ogunbukola, 2024). This dependency on oil has made the Nigerian economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. When oil prices fall, Nigeria faces significant revenue shortfalls, leading to reduced foreign exchange reserves, depreciation of the Naira, and fiscal deficits. The collapse of global oil prices in 2014 had a particularly devastating impact on Nigeria’s economy. The country’s foreign reserves were depleted, and the Naira weakened considerably against the U.S. dollar (Ogunbukola, 2024). The sharp decline in oil revenues also strained Nigeria’s fiscal position, leading to cuts in public spending and increased borrowing. Next is weak monetary and fiscal policies. Nigeria has faced policy inconsistencies in areas such as exchange rate management, trade, and fiscal policy. These inconsistencies have created uncertainty for investors and businesses, further weakening the economy

(Ogunbukola, 2024). For example, Nigeria has maintained multiple exchange rate regimes, which have created distortions in the foreign exchange market and discouraged investment.

Furthermore, economic mismanagement and corruption have long been a major challenge to the development of the Nigerian state. The country has experienced episodes of budgetary mismanagement, inefficient public spending, and weak governance (Ogunbukola, 2024). Corruption, particularly in the oil sector, has contributed to revenue leakages, reduced government resources available for development projects and social services and ultimately reduced the productive base of the economy. The net effect of the foregoing is the continuous weakening of the Naira. Again, external factors like the World Bank. The persistent crises faced by the Naira are not unconnected to the role of the World Bank, as the multilateral institution has assumed a premium position in shaping the economic and fiscal policies of countries of the world, which is supposed to assist in stabilizing the Nigerian economy and fostering development, had instead often led to negative externalities most of the times. Crises have been one of the effects of the role of the World Bank. According to Olowu and Fagbemi (2021), the antecedents of the World Bank's role in the Naira crises can be seen in terms of the outcome resulting from the structural adjustment programme (SAP), fiscal recommendation of the World Bank at different times and pressures of globalization, SAP advocated centrally the devaluation of the Naira to enhance economic competitiveness and it was implemented with adequate institutional measures to reap its gains like diversification. Bello (2022) noted that World Bank economic recommendations often time are often followed by stringent conditionalities, especially when Nigeria approaches the institution for loans. Some of these conditions include the removal of subsidies, privatization, and frugal government spending. These often increase the price level, leading to inflation and struggles for stability on the part of the Naira as a result of reduced purchasing power.

Socio-Economic Impacts of the Crisis on the Economy and Implications for Development

The Naira crisis has continued to plague the Nigerian State, and this has serious implications for the economy and development, affecting various sectors, stakeholders, and citizens. Some of the key implications include: Inflation and its effects on households. The depreciation of the Naira has contributed to rising inflation, which has eroded the purchasing power of Nigerian consumers. As the value of the Naira falls, the cost of imported goods increases, contributing to inflationary pressures. Nigeria's inflation rate has remained persistently high, driven by rising food prices, fuel costs, and transportation expenses. Currency devaluation has also hurt Nigeria's economy. The

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has implemented multiple devaluations of the Naira to address the country's foreign exchange crisis. However, these devaluations have contributed to inflation, reduced investor confidence, and further weakened the Naira. Additionally, the Naira's persistent crises pose serious dangers for trade, investment, and the business atmosphere in Nigeria. Among the sectors affected mostly are those related to the effect of import and export (Ndubuaku et al, 2019). The volatile nature of the Naira also lowers investors' confidence and disrupts business forecasting and operations. According to Adesina (2022), the instability of the Naira, especially in terms of losing value, increases the cost of importation, which further puts more pressure on the Naira as a result of increased demand for foreign currencies. Thus, the cycle continues with further depreciation of the Naira. The Naira crisis will also diminish the gains of exportation and reduce its competitiveness. Gains from unstable currencies are very limited to cover the loss associated with importation. Indeed, the net effect of the foregoing is the decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) as more investors tend to reallocate their capital to other economies with a more stable currency and economic environment. Similarly, this trend of capital reallocation is not only peculiar to foreign investors; local investors also move out of the country in search of profitable markets in countries with relatively stable economies and more stable currencies, leading to massive capital flight and job loss from the domestic economy, which slows down economic growth. Business operations also suffer from the externalities of Naira depreciation because many companies rely heavily on imported inputs.

Furthermore, the social inequality and poverty levels in Nigeria have been hampered by the continuous depreciation of the Naira against the US dollar. The devaluation of the Naira and its attendant variables, like inflation, affect low-income households disproportionately and increase the depth of economic inequality. The depreciation of the Naira will make the cost of goods and services unbearable, and food, housing, and healthcare will become highly unaffordable for the poor and the largest segment of the citizens. Indeed, over 40% of Nigerians currently live below the poverty line, and the economic pressures caused by the Naira crisis have worsened this situation (NBS, 2023). A major driver of poverty exacerbation is the sharp rise in food prices. Nigeria's heavy reliance on imports for essential goods has made the economy highly vulnerable to currency fluctuations. With the devaluation of the Naira, the cost of importing food, machinery, and raw materials has skyrocketed. The removal of subsidies, particularly on fuel, has further widened the gap between the rich and the poor. The government presented fuel subsidy removal as the only solution to free up resources for development, yet it led to an increase in fuel prices, which control other facets of the economy and overall living costs. Wealthier households, who can absorb such shocks, have been less affected compared to low-income households, for whom transportation

and food represent a larger share of monthly expenses. This disparity has further worsened socio-economic inequalities across the country (Balogun & Eze, 2023).

Assessment of Past and Present Government Interventions in Addressing the Naira Crisis

The Nigerian government, most times through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has implemented various policies to address the persistent challenges surrounding the Naira. These interventions have ranged from structural adjustments to monetary and fiscal reforms. One of the most significant historical policy responses was the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) introduced in 1986. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and SAP housed the devaluation of the Naira, liberalization of the foreign exchange market, and the removal of subsidies. While it was targeted at improving economic competitiveness, the programme produced declining real incomes, inflation, and deepened poverty due largely to a weak industrial base and over-dependence on imports (Eze & Okeke, 2021). In response to persistent forex shortages, the CBN has also introduced various foreign exchange management policies, including rationing forex for essential imports and restricting access to non-essential items. Instead of these policies to preserve foreign reserves, they led to inefficiencies and a parallel market with valued exchange rates. The dual exchange rate system made it difficult for transparency to thrive and discouraged foreign investment (Adeyemi &Lawal, 2023).

The promotion of local production and strategies to substitute imports was the purpose of these policies, which tried to limit dependency on imported goods through the imposition of tariffs and incentives for domestic firms. These policies were greeted with limited success, structural bottlenecks, low infrastructural level, and inconsistent enforcement, which complicated the larger realization of its intended goals. The improvement of local food production was the main target of agricultural-centric policies, like the Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP). However, these programmes were plagued by challenges, including poor credit access, post-harvest, and weak monitoring mechanisms (Uche & Olawale, 2022).

The 2023 exchange rate unification policy marked a significant shift in Nigeria's forex management. By moving to a market-driven exchange rate system, the government aimed to attract foreign investment and eliminate the distortions caused by the dual exchange rate system. Indeed, the policy led to inflation and a decline in the purchasing power of consumers due to the emergency nature of its implementation, even though the policy increased transparency (Balogun & Ajayi, 2023). In reality, none of the policies made by the past and present administrations have helped to stabilize the Naira, they

have rather exacerbated the situation. One of the most critical limitations of Nigeria's policy responses is the inconsistency in implementation. Frequent changes and reversals of policies, particularly in forex management, have created a volatile environment and reduced investor confidence. The over-reliance of the government on monetary measures to revive the Naira is another critical issue.

Charting a Path to Recovery and Development in Nigeria

Nigeria must prioritize diversifying its economy away from oil dependency. The government should promote the growth of non-oil sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Investments in technology, education, and infrastructure are crucial for fostering innovation and creating a more balanced economy. Monetary Policy Reform: The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) should adopt a more transparent and consistent monetary policy framework, potentially incorporating inflation targeting to stabilize prices and control inflation. A managed floating exchange rate, supported by adequate foreign exchange reserves, could help stabilize the Naira. Nigeria also needs to implement fiscal responsibility laws that impose limits on public spending and borrowing. Strengthening governance and reducing corruption are essential for improving public finances and restoring investor confidence. In times of extreme currency volatility, Nigeria could consider implementing temporary capital controls to prevent capital flight and stabilize the Naira. However, these controls should be used judiciously and phased out once stability is restored. Nigeria should invest in social programmes that promote economic inclusion, reduce poverty, and improve access to education and healthcare. These investments are critical for fostering long-term economic growth and improving the living standards of Nigerians. Finally, Nigeria should focus on increasing the competitiveness of its exports, particularly in sectors with high value-added potential. Trade policies should be designed to promote export diversification and reduce reliance on commodity exports.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the Naira crisis and its far-reaching socio-economic implications, revealing its pervasive impact on Nigeria's economy and society. Among the most notable effects are heightened inflation, declining purchasing power, rising unemployment, reduced investor confidence, and a general state of underdevelopment. These challenges are deeply interconnected, stemming from structural inefficiencies, over-dependence on oil exports, and inconsistent monetary and fiscal policies. The Naira crisis has not only exacerbated social inequality and poverty but also impeded Nigeria’s prospects for sustainable economic growth and development. The findings underscore the urgency of addressing the root causes of the Naira’s instability. Key

contributors such as forex shortages, poor economic diversification, and weak institutional frameworks require comprehensive and sustained policy action. While government interventions have aimed to mitigate the crisis, their limited effectiveness highlights significant policy gaps, including inconsistent implementation, inadequate structural reforms, and the lack of social safety nets for vulnerable populations. The study concludes that resolving the Naira crisis requires more than short-term stabilization measures. A strategic, long-term approach that prioritizes structural reforms, economic diversification, and institutional strengthening is imperative to stabilize the Naira, restore investor confidence, and foster socio-economic resilience.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the Naira crisis and its socio-economic impacts: The Nigerian government should implement deep structural reforms to diversify the economy away from over-dependence on oil exports. This involves promoting the growth of sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and technology. Secondly, building strong and transparent institutions is critical for effective policy implementation. Furthermore, fighting corruption at all levels of government and providing a unified and market-driven exchange rate system must be sustained to eliminate distortions and improve investor confidence. Additionally, Nigeria must increase its foreign reserves by boosting exports and reducing unnecessary imports. Investing in renewable energy and reducing the economy’s dependence on global oil markets will further enhance macroeconomic stability. Finally, Collaboration between government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and international partners is essential to ensure policy coherence and effectiveness.

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ROLE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN PEACE BUILDING IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF BENUE STATE, 2010 -2024

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Abstract

The escalating farmer-herder conflicts in Benue State, Nigeria, have necessitated comprehensive peace building interventions from diverse stakeholders, with Christian religious institutions emerging as pivotal actors in restoration efforts. This study examines the multifaceted roles of Christian religious institutions in peace building initiatives across selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Benue State between 2010 and 2024. The research addresses the critical need to understand how faith-based organizations have leveraged their spiritual authority, community networks, and moral capital to foster reconciliation in contexts marked by violent resource-based conflicts. Through systematic analysis of secondary data sources, including humanitarian reports, academic literature, and verified media accounts, this investigation reveals that Christian institutions have functioned as primary peace brokers, trauma healers, and community rebuilders in areas where conventional state mechanisms have proven inadequate. The study documents how over 2.8 million internally displaced persons have received support from church-led initiatives, while religious leaders have facilitated dialogue processes that prevented escalation of retaliatory violence.

Findings indicate that Christian religious institutions have employed diverse peace building strategies including inter-community mediation, psychosocial support programs, advocacy for justice, and provision of safe spaces for dialogue. However, these institutions face significant constraints including limited financial resources, inadequate training in conflict resolution methodologies, and insufficient integration with formal peace building architectures. The research concludes that Christian religious institutions possess unique capacities for sustainable peace building through their deep community embeddedness, moral legitimacy, and ability to address both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term reconciliation processes. The study recommends strengthening institutional capacities, enhancing inter-denominational coordination, and formalizing partnerships with government agencies to maximize the peace building potential of Christian religious institutions in Benue State.

Keywords: Peace building, Christian religious institutions, Benue State, conflict resolution, faith-based organizations, Local Government Areas

Introduction

Benue State, strategically positioned in Nigeria's North-Central region, has experienced unprecedented levels of violent conflict that have fundamentally transformed its social, economic, and political landscape over the past decade and a half. The state, renowned historically as Nigeria's "Food Basket," has witnessed systematic erosion of its agricultural productivity and communal harmony due to persistent farmer-herder conflicts that have claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions of residents (Amnesty International, 2024). While these conflicts manifest primarily as resource-based disputes over land access, water rights, and grazing territories, their implications extend far beyond material contestations to encompass identity, belonging, and survival in deeply interconnected rural communities.

The complexity of peace building in Benue State emerges from the intersection of multiple conflict drivers including climate change-induced migration patterns, population pressure on arable land, weak governance structures, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (International Crisis Group, 2018). Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that historically managed farmer-herder relations have been overwhelmed by the scale and intensity of contemporary violence, creating urgent demands for innovative peace building approaches that can address both immediate security concerns and underlying structural tensions.

Within this challenging context, Christian religious institutions have assumed increasingly prominent roles as peace builders, drawing upon their extensive community networks, moral authority, and theological resources to foster reconciliation and healing. The state's predominantly Christian population, estimated at over 85% across various denominations, has provided these institutions with unique legitimacy and access to affected communities (Onah, 2023). Churches, diocesan commissions, and Christian associations have transcended their traditional pastoral functions to engage directly in conflict mediation, trauma counseling, advocacy for justice, and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons. The peace building contributions of Christian religious institutions in Benue State reflect broader global trends recognizing faith-based organizations as essential actors in conflict transformation processes. These institutions possess distinctive advantages including deep community roots, long-term presence in affected areas, and capacity to address both material and spiritual dimensions of conflict-related suffering (Appleby, 2020). Their interventions have encompassed diverse strategies from grassroots reconciliation initiatives to high-level advocacy for policy reforms, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of religious peace building in contemporary conflict contexts.

Despite the visible and sustained engagement of Christian religious institutions in peace building efforts across Benue State, systematic scholarly examination of their roles, strategies, and impact remains significantly underdeveloped. This knowledge gap presents serious limitations for understanding the full spectrum of peace building dynamics in the state and constrains efforts to optimize the contributions of faith-based actors in conflict transformation processes (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2020). While anecdotal evidence suggests that Christian institutions have played crucial roles in preventing conflict escalation, supporting displaced populations, and facilitating inter-community dialogue, the absence of comprehensive analysis leaves critical questions unanswered regarding the effectiveness, sustainability, and replicability of their interventions. The problem is compounded by the tendency of formal peace building frameworks to overlook or undervalue the contributions of religious actors, treating them as supplementary rather than central to conflict resolution efforts. This marginalization occurs despite evidence that Christian institutions often possess greater community trust and access than government agencies or international organizations in conflict-affected areas (Iwara & Ojong, 2021). The resulting disconnect between formal peace building mechanisms and faith-based initiatives creates coordination challenges and missed opportunities for synergistic interventions that could enhance overall peace building effectiveness.

Furthermore, the absence of systematic documentation and evaluation of Christian peace building efforts in Benue State limits institutional learning and knowledge transfer within and across religious communities. Without rigorous analysis of successful strategies, persistent challenges, and lessons learned, Christian institutions risk repeating ineffective approaches while failing to scale up promising innovations (Olayoku & Mavalla, 2023). This study addresses these critical gaps by providing comprehensive examination of Christian religious institutions' peace building roles in selected LGAs of Benue State, contributing to both scholarly understanding and practical enhancement of faith-based conflict transformation initiatives.

Aims of the Paper

i. What specific roles have Christian religious institutions played in peace building efforts across selected LGAs of Benue State between 2010 and 2024?
ii. How can the peace building capacities of Christian religious institutions be enhanced to achieve greater impact in conflict transformation?

Research Objectives

i. To analyze the diverse roles assumed by Christian religious institutions in peace building initiatives across selected LGAs of Benue State from 2010 to 2024.
ii. To develop recommendations for strengthening the peace building capacities and effectiveness of Christian religious institutions in Benue State.

Historical Review

The historical trajectory of peace building in Benue State reveals the gradual emergence of Christian religious institutions as central actors in conflict transformation efforts. Prior to the intensification of farmer-herder conflicts in the 2010s, religious institutions in the state primarily focused on spiritual guidance, social welfare, and community development activities. However, the escalation of violence and the inadequacy of state responses compelled these institutions to expand their mandates to encompass direct peace building interventions (Okoli & Nnaemeka-Arinze, 2020). The evolution of Christian peace building in Benue State can be traced through several distinct phases. The initial phase (2010-2014) was characterized by reactive humanitarian responses to conflict incidents, with churches providing emergency shelter, food, and medical assistance to victims. During this period, religious institutions operated primarily as relief organizations rather than proactive peace builders, responding to immediate needs while avoiding direct engagement with conflict dynamics (Human Rights Watch, 2022). The second phase (2015-2019) marked a significant shift toward proactive peace

building as Christian leaders recognized the limitations of purely humanitarian responses. This period witnessed the establishment of diocesan peace commissions, the organization of inter-faith dialogue forums, and the development of community-based reconciliation programs. The enactment of the Benue State Open Grazing Prohibition Law in 2017 provided Christian institutions with advocacy opportunities and platforms for engaging with policy processes (UNHCR, 2023). The current phase (2020-2024) has been characterized by the institutionalization of peace building efforts within Christian religious structures. Major denominations have established specialized peace building departments, developed theological frameworks for conflict transformation, and created partnerships with civil society organizations and government agencies. This period has also seen increased emphasis on capacity building, with religious leaders receiving training in mediation, trauma counseling, and conflict analysis (Onah, 2023).

Empirical Review

Empirical research on Christian peace building in Nigeria has traditionally focused on inter-religious conflicts, particularly in the Middle Belt region, with limited attention to resource-based conflicts and the specific roles of Christian institutions in predominantly Christian contexts. However, emerging scholarship has begun to address these gaps, providing valuable insights into the peace building contributions of faith-based organizations in Benue State and similar contexts. Kwaja and Ademola-Adelehin (2020) conducted comprehensive analysis of responses to farmer-herder violence in Nigeria, identifying Christian religious institutions as key actors in early warning systems, victim support, and community mobilization. Their research highlighted the unique advantages of religious organizations in accessing affected communities and building trust among conflicting parties. However, they also noted coordination challenges and the need for enhanced collaboration between religious and secular peace building actors.

Iwara and Ojong (2021) examined the broader landscape of faith-based organizations in Nigerian conflict management, emphasizing their grassroots legitimacy and moral authority. Their study revealed that Christian institutions often possess greater community trust than government agencies, enabling them to facilitate dialogue and mediation processes that would be impossible for external actors. The research also identified training gaps and resource constraints as significant limitations affecting the effectiveness of faith-based peace building efforts. Onah (2023) provided detailed case study analysis of the Catholic Church's peace building efforts in Benue State, focusing on the work of the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC). The study documented diverse interventions including peace education programs, trauma healing workshops, and advocacy initiatives. While acknowledging the positive contributions of

these efforts, the research also highlighted structural challenges including inadequate funding, limited political influence, and coordination difficulties with other religious organizations. Olayoku and Mavalla (2023) offered critical assessment of faith-based responses to armed conflicts in Nigeria, arguing that religious institutions often engage in symbolic rather than substantive peace building. Their research called for more doctrinally grounded approaches that draw upon theological resources for conflict transformation. The study emphasized the need for systematic evaluation of faith-based interventions and the development of evidence-based best practices.

Recent empirical work has also highlighted the gendered dimensions of Christian peace building in Benue State, with women's organizations within churches playing crucial roles in reconciliation processes and post-conflict recovery. Research by Adamolekun and Osoba (2022) documented how Christian women's groups have facilitated inter-community dialogue, supported widows and orphans, and advocated for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Their work underscored the importance of inclusive approaches that recognize the diverse contributions of different groups within Christian communities.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts John Paul Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory as its primary theoretical framework, complemented by insights from Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory. This theoretical foundation provides comprehensive analytical tools for understanding the complex dynamics of Christian peace building in Benue State.

Conflict Transformation Theory

Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory offers a holistic approach to understanding how conflicts evolve and how sustainable peace can be achieved through long-term relational and structural changes. The theory emphasizes four key dimensions of transformation: personal, relational, structural, and cultural (Lederach, 2003). In the context of Benue State, this framework enables analysis of how Christian religious institutions address multiple levels of conflict dynamics simultaneously. The personal dimension focuses on individual transformation, including healing from trauma, changing attitudes and perceptions, and developing new capacities for non-violent engagement. Christian institutions in Benue State have addressed this dimension through counseling programs, spiritual healing services, and personal empowerment initiatives that help individuals process conflict experiences and develop resilience (Appleby, 2020). The relational dimension emphasizes the importance of rebuilding trust, improving communication, and fostering mutual understanding between

conflicting parties. Christian peace building efforts in Benue State have specifically targeted this dimension through inter-community dialogue programs, joint worship services, and collaborative development projects that bring farmers and herders together in constructive engagement.

The structural dimension addresses institutional and systemic factors that contribute to conflict, including governance failures, resource distribution mechanisms, and legal frameworks. Christian institutions have engaged this dimension through advocacy for policy reforms, participation in governance processes, and support for institutional development at local and state levels. The cultural dimension recognizes the importance of symbols, narratives, and collective meanings in both generating and resolving conflicts. Christian institutions have particular strengths in this dimension, given their ability to provide alternative narratives based on religious values of forgiveness, reconciliation, and social justice (Lederach, 2003).

Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory

Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory provides additional analytical tools for understanding the specific contributions of religious actors to conflict transformation processes. This theory emphasizes the unique resources that religious institutions bring to peace building, including spiritual capital, moral authority, extensive networks, and long-term commitment to affected communities (Smock, 2006). The theory identifies several key advantages of faith-based peace building: (1) religious institutions often have deep roots in communities and can maintain presence during and after conflicts; (2) they possess moral legitimacy that enables them to speak truth to power and challenge injustice; (3) their spiritual resources can address dimensions of conflict that secular approaches may overlook; and (4) their values-based approaches can provide sustainable foundations for long-term peace building (Appleby, 2020). In the context of Benue State, Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory helps explain why Christian institutions have been able to maintain community trust and access during periods of intense conflict when other actors have been forced to withdraw. The theory also provides framework for understanding how theological concepts such as forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption can be translated into practical peace building strategies.

The integration of Conflict Transformation Theory and Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory provides comprehensive analytical framework for examining the roles of Christian religious institutions in Benue State. This theoretical foundation enables systematic analysis of how these institutions have addressed multiple dimensions of conflict while leveraging their unique religious resources and community connections.

Methodology

This study employs a comprehensive desktop review, utilizing exclusively secondary data sources to examine the roles of Christian religious institutions in peace building efforts across selected LGAs of Benue State. The methodological approach was designed to overcome access constraints in conflict-affected areas while ensuring rigorous analysis of available evidence from diverse sources. The study adopts a qualitative research design utilizing systematic review and analysis of secondary data sources. This approach enables comprehensive examination of peace building efforts over an extended temporal period (2010-2024) while drawing upon diverse perspectives and evidence bases. The research design prioritizes triangulation of sources to enhance validity and reliability of findings. Secondary data were collected from multiple categories of sources: (1) peer-reviewed academic journals and books focusing on conflict resolution, peace building, and religious studies; (2) reports from international organizations including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch; (3) publications from Nigerian government agencies and civil society organizations; (4) verified media reports from reputable news organizations; and (5) documentation from Christian religious institutions and faith-based organizations. Data collection involved systematic searching of academic databases, organizational websites, and media archives using relevant keywords and temporal parameters. All sources were evaluated for credibility, relevance, and reliability using established criteria for secondary data analysis. The analysis process involved thematic coding of materials to identify patterns, trends, and key insights related to Christian peace building efforts in Benue State.

Findings

Table 1: Christian Religious Institutions' Peace Building Responses to Farmer-Herder Conflicts

Year	Conflict Incidents	Christian Institutional Responses	Beneficiaries	Key Interventions	Sources
2010-2012	Early escalation in Guma, Logo LGAs	Emergency humanitarian response	~15,000 displaced persons	Shelter provision, food distribution, medical care	Catholic Diocese of Makurdi. (2013). Annual pastoral report on conflict response.
2013-2015	Systematic attacks across Agatu, Gwer West	Formation of diocesan peace commissions	~35,000 affected communities	Trauma counseling, peace education, advocacy	Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). (2015). Faith-based response to Benue conflicts.

2016	Agatu massacre (February-March)	Coordinated interfaith response	7,000+ displaced	Emergency relief, psychosocial support, documentation	UNHCR. (2016). Nigerian IDP situation overview – Benue. https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/agatu-massacre-idp-situation-overview
2017-2018	Post-grazing law violence	Advocacy and mediation efforts	176,000+ displaced	Legal advocacy, inter-community dialogue, IDP camps management	SBM Intelligence. (2018). The harvest of death: Report on herdsmen attacks. https://www.sbmintel.com/2018/07/the-harvest-of-death/
2019-2021	Persistent low-level conflicts	Institutionalized peace building	250,000+ community members	Capacity building, early warning systems, reconciliation programs	Onah, A. J. (2023). The Catholic Church and peacebuilding in Benue State. Journal of Religion and Human Relations, 15(2), 121-138.
2022-2024	Renewed escalation	Comprehensive peace building framework	2+ million affected	Multi-denominational coordination, policy advocacy, community rebuilding	Amnesty International. (2024). Nigerian authorities must investigate escalating violence in Benue State. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/02/nigeria-authorities-must-investigate-escalating-violence-in-benue/

Source: Researcher's synthesis from multiple verified sources, 2025

Humanitarian and Reconciliation Roles of Christian Institutions

Christian religious institutions in Benue State have served as critical humanitarian actors and reconciliation agents in addressing farmer-herder conflicts. Organisations such as the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi and Anglican Diocese of Gboko provided emergency relief to over 2 million displaced persons between 2010 and 2024, including food, shelter, and psychosocial support (Onah, 2023; Amnesty International, 2024). Beyond immediate aid, these institutions established church-run IDP camps, vocational training for adults, and education for displaced children, integrating long-term rehabilitation with community reintegration efforts (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2020). They also played significant roles in community reconciliation, leveraging theological principles of forgiveness and healing. The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) developed reconciliation curricula and trained over 500 community leaders, fostering renewed cooperation between farming and herding groups (Smock, 2006). Truth-telling sessions and interfaith dialogues facilitated by the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) helped prevent retaliatory attacks and restore broken relationships (Appleby, 2020).

Advocacy and Policy Engagement for Sustainable Peace

Christian institutions have emerged as strong advocates for justice and policy reforms targeting structural causes of violence. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Benue State chapter actively promoted implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition Law and lobbied for ranching systems and increased rural security (Human Rights Watch, 2022). At national and international levels, groups like the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria partnered with human rights organisations to highlight the Benue crisis, influencing both humanitarian responses and policy reforms (International Crisis Group, 2018). Policy-focused institutions such as the Anglican Church's peacebuilding institute provided technical insights into land rights and resource management issues, contributing to government conflict strategies (Okoli & Nnaemeka-Arinze, 2020).

Analysis of Christian Institutions' Humanitarian and Reconciliation Impact

Christian religious institutions possess unique capacities for peacebuilding rooted in their moral legitimacy, long-standing community trust, and theological frameworks. Their interventions, which blend humanitarian support with reconciliation efforts, align with Lederach's Conflict Transformation Theory that highlights personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003). The integration of material relief, psychosocial healing, and spiritual restoration has enabled faith-based actors to address both immediate crises and long-term communal wounds.

However, resource constraints and limited training in advanced mediation have hampered their full potential (Appleby, 2020; Iwara & Ojong, 2021).

Analysis of Advocacy and Policy Engagement Strategies

Faith-based organisations in Benue have also acted as vital policy influencers. Their advocacy for legal reforms and security improvements has maintained national attention on the crisis, leading to incremental policy changes. Faith-Based Peacebuilding Theory underscores their comparative advantage in leveraging moral authority and extensive networks for systemic change (Smock, 2006). Yet, weak integration into formal governance structures limits the institutionalisation of their contributions. Additionally, tensions sometimes arise between the religious focus on forgiveness and victims' demands for justice (Olayoku & Mavalla, 2023).

Conclusion

This study reveals that Christian religious institutions in Benue State have played two major roles in peacebuilding from 2010 to 2024: (1) providing humanitarian relief and facilitating reconciliation, and (2) advocating for structural policy reforms to address conflict drivers. These interventions have alleviated suffering for over 2 million displaced persons and prevented escalation of intercommunal violence. However, limited resources, security challenges, and weak formal integration constrain their overall effectiveness.

Christian religious institutions remain indispensable in Benue's peacebuilding landscape. Their embeddedness in local communities, coupled with spiritual and moral authority, enables them to address complex layers of conflict beyond the reach of secular actors. Nevertheless, to fully realise their potential, systematic integration with state-led peacebuilding frameworks and capacity enhancement are necessary.

Recommendations

Strengthen Institutional Capacities**:** Develop training programmes in conflict analysis, mediation, and trauma healing for religious leaders, alongside resource mobilisation strategies for sustainable funding (Iwara & Ojong, 2021). Formalise Partnerships with Government and Civil Society**:** Establish coordination mechanisms and partnership agreements that integrate Christian religious institutions into local and state peacebuilding policies and response frameworks (Appleby, 2020; Smock, 2006).

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INTERROGATING THE NEXUS OF TECHNOLOGY INNOVATIONS AND NATIONAL SECURITY CONUNDRUMS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: NIGERIA IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The current global security environment has grown increasingly complex, highly dynamic and unpredictable, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. This is largely due to the volatile international environment, which undermines the ability of nation-states to safeguard their territories, as cross-border threats erode traditional security mechanisms. While globalization presents opportunities such as access to advanced technology, for enhancing national security, many countries in the global south struggle to leverage these tools effectively. This study explores the disconnect between technology and national security in such contexts, identifying key barriers that prevent effective technological integration into the security architecture in the less Developing Countries. Using a qualitative research approach and descriptive survey design, the study relies on secondary data from books, journals, official documents, and online sources, analyzed through content analysis. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory serves as the study's analytical framework. Findings reveal that conventional security approaches have become inadequate, prompting a turn toward technological solution. However, several challenges hinder this transition, including institutional instability, weak legal frameworks, lack of capacity, insufficient funding, poor data infrastructure,

limited awareness, and resistance to technological change within the public sector. The study argues for a hybrid strategy that combines traditional security practices with innovative technologies to bridge national security gaps. It recommends urgent investment in critical infrastructure, integration of cyber-technology into legal systems, and capacity building through the training of local security personnel. These steps are essential to empower developing nations to meet contemporary security challenges in a rapidly digitalizing world.

Key words: National security, global south, technology, innovation, globalization

Introduction

The contemporary global security landscape is intricate and rapidly changing, with its most pronounced effects seen in developing nations across Latin America, parts of Asia, and particularly Africa, with Nigeria being a key example. This complexity stems from the volatile international environment, which is constantly challenged by globalization. Transnational threats now routinely bypass traditional borders, making it harder for countries to protect their territories and national interests.

While the rapid growth and global accessibility of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), coupled with economic expansion, have significantly helped developed economies like the USA, UK, France, Russia, and Korea address their internal security issues, developing nations face a different reality. Although Africa and Asia experiencing the fastest growth in internet users and showcasing remarkable technological innovation (ITU, 2014; Muller, 2015), many first-time users and governments in these regions have not yet harnessed the full potential of this expertise to tackle their diverse national security challenges. These range from insurgency, terrorism, armed robbery, and kidnapping to inter-communal clashes, banditry, political instability, and farmer-herder conflicts. As Utoikamanu (2018) highlighted, many are being left behind, risking even greater inequality due to the political, economic, and social consequences of this widening gap.

Even though significant technological advancements are occurring globally, their economic and social benefits remain concentrated primarily in developed countries. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), in most cases, lag significantly behind, if not completely excluded. They often have no choice but to rely on outdated technologies, particularly in sectors like garment production, agriculture and security. This is not due to a lack of determination on their part but rather a clear manifestation of deep-seated development challenges. These nations face persistent delays in eradicating poverty, achieving sustainable development, and fully participating in an increasingly

competitive global market. As Utoikamanu (2018) warned, a fundamental cause lies in structural limitations, specifically the notable gaps in science, technology, and innovation (STI) between LDCs and other nations. Unless these gaps are closed soon, LDCs will struggle to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and consequently, they will not be able to adopt modern technologies effectively to resolve their seemingly intractable national security conundrums in an increasingly technologically advanced world.

Arising from the above background, this study sets out to interrogate the intervening variables that delink technology and national security and its imperative for the countries in the global south like Nigeria. Specifically, this study sets out to achieve the following objectives: To investigate the impact of technology on security architecture in developed nations with a view to drawing necessary lessons for the countries in the global south; and to find out the challenges developing countries face in adopting modern technology for their national security dilemmas.

Conceptual Clarification

Global South

The Global South is a conceptual term for lower-income countries with a shared history of exploitation, spanning Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania (Todaro & Smith, 2006). This grouping includes nations like Nigeria, India, and Brazil, and is often viewed as a symbol of political solidarity against marginalization (Dados & Connell, 2012). While there's no official list, the countries are broadly categorized by their regions, such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt in Africa; China, India, and Japan in Asia; Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina in Latin America; and Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji in Oceania.

Critics argue the term is geographically inaccurate and oversimplifies a diverse group of nations (The House of Commons Library, 2024). Despite these flaws, the concept remains influential for its political and historical relevance. Also, even though there is economic growth in some nations, they are still considered part of this group due to historical and political factors (Britannica, 2023). This classification helps highlight shared challenges related to development, security, and governance in the region.

Nigeria's position as a low-income nation in the Global South creates national security vulnerabilities, as it lacks the funds for advanced technologies to counter threats from actors using low-cost tools (Todaro & Smith, 2006). This shared identity also makes the country wary of foreign aid seen as neo-imperialism, though it does encourage

cooperation with other Global South nations (Dados & Connell, 2012). Eventually, while the "Global South" framework is useful, a full understanding requires a distinctt look at Nigeria's specific local security challenges in the face of globalisation.

Globalisation

Globalisation is fundamentally an economic and political phenomenon that shapes the modern world. The economic aspect of globalization, characterized by the free flow of capital and technology, presents a dual challenge for Nigeria's national security. While it brings in foreign investment and technological advancements, it also makes the country's economy vulnerable to global market fluctuations and the influence of multinational corporations (Stiglitz, 2002). Politically, the shift in power to international bodies can limit Nigeria's sovereignty in making decisions related to trade and finance (Held et al., 1999). This dependence on the global system can create vulnerabilities that external actors, including non-state ones, can exploit, making national security a much more complex issue than it would be in an isolated environment.

The cultural and social dimensions of globalization are even more critical when examining national security. The spread of information and ideas via technology and communication innovations creates a "global village" (McLuhan, 1964). For Nigeria, this means that cultural trends, ideologies, and even extremist propaganda can spread rapidly, challenging traditional values and potentially fueling social unrest. The two-way nature of this exchange (Appadurai, 1996) also means that local conflicts and grievances can gain international attention, drawing in foreign interests and complicating national security efforts. The very technology that connects people also provides tools for actors with malicious intent, such as cybercriminals, terrorists, and rebel groups, to organize, recruit, and operate, posing a direct threat to the nation's stability and security.

These diverse viewpoints are all relevant to understanding how globalization and its associated technological innovations impact complex issues like national security in countries of the Global South, such as Nigeria.

National Security

The idea of national security has widened over time to include safeguarding a nation's governance, interests, and economic advancement (U.S. Department of Defense, 2019). Muhammed (2011) links national security to socio-economic and political stability within a country's borders. In the opinion of McNamara (1989), sustained security is a vital aspect of a nation’s development, In this regard, Okunade (2011) maintains that, national security fosters peace, curbs criminal activities, and improves the overall

quality of life. Hence, Azazi (2011) emphasizes the need to protect essential national resources such as land and people. In the face of globalization, Muhammed (2011) stresses that national security now demands sustained investment in infrastructure and technological upgrades to effectively counter emerging threats.

The economic aspect of national security underscores the importance of effective resource management in promoting development and maintaining stability. Sound economic governance fosters a prosperous society, thereby reducing the risks of conflict and crime. In many developing nations, economic challenges significantly contribute to security threats (Nwagbara, 2019; Nwolise, 2019). Equally important are justice, law, and order, which form the foundation of a secure state. According to Bassey and Dokubo (2011), the presence of the rule of law is a vital sign of national security. When justice is denied and laws are violated, it often leads to civil unrest that may require state intervention. Hence, safeguarding national security entails protecting against both internal and external dangers through proactive intelligence, competent leadership, international cooperation, and robust enforcement systems designed to identify and neutralize threats before they intensify. This justifies the significance of technology and dynamic leader as well as foreign policy and relations in the realm of innovation in internal security architecture globally.

Technology Innovation

Technology, as defined by Skolnikoft (1993), is a scientific field focused on creating and applying technical tools while examining their impact on society, life, and the environment. It is a continuously advancing body of knowledge that both influences and is influenced by societal developments. Wrangham (2017) and Katso (2019) further describe technology as a socio-scientific phenomenon involving the use of skills, methods, and processes to design machines or services aimed at meeting human needs. In this context, it plays a crucial role in addressing insecurity and upholding law and order by applying scientific principles to solve practical challenges, particularly in defense and security.

Although Technology includes not only physical tools but also the systems and methods used to apply them, combining both hardware and knowledge (Lovell, 1998; Abdul Wahab et al., 2012). Innovation, defined as the creation of new value or the reconfiguration of existing resources, is central to this process, continuously updating and repurposing tools to solve challenges like insecurity (Drucker, 1985; Katso, 2019). This has led to the development of a wide range of security technologies, from drones and body cameras to DNA profiling and GIS, all of which have transformed modern security operations (Police Executive Research Forum, 2019).

Our position on the conceptual review of national security, global south, globalisations and technological innovation is that Modern internal security depends on three key elements: well-trained people, sound policies and systems, and advanced technology (Arase, 2019). Technology is a dual-purpose tool, both enabling crime and providing the intelligence and surveillance systems needed to counter threats and enhance security in the globalized world (Katso, 2019; Mallik, 2004).

Literature Review

The Nexus of Technological Innovations and National Security: A Global Perspective

Several empirical studies have explored the role of technology in shaping emerging national security challenges worldwide. This review examines those studies to highlight their strengths and limitations, with the aim of identifying existing research gaps that justify the need for the present study.

Garicano and Heaton (2010) and Colvin and Goh (2005) have found a significant link between the use of information technology (IT) and improved security. When agencies effectively integrate IT, their crime prevention and control efforts become more efficient, as better information quality and timely data positively influence security personnel performance (Wright, 1978). This shift has led to the reshaping of security roles, with modern management increasingly relying on technology-based intelligence (George, 2005). However, this reliance is a double-edged sword, as criminals also use technology for illicit activities, and many law enforcement agencies lack the knowledge to effectively adopt new tools (Custers, 2012). Globalization, driven by technological advancements, has intensified this challenge by accelerating transnational crime, such as the drug trade, making it a serious threat to national security, especially in developing nations that struggle to keep up with these evolving threats (Abdul Wahab, 2003).

Even with increased technological efficiency, greater security outcomes are not always guaranteed. In the U.S., while technologies like 9-1-1 systems and GIS have improved police response times, empirical evidence shows this has not significantly boosted arrest rates, largely due to delays in crime reporting (Sherman and Eck, 2002). Furthermore, many 9-1-1 calls are for non-urgent issues, straining resources and questioning the assumption that faster responses always equal better security (Mazerolle et al., 2002). In contrast to advanced nations like the U.S. and UK, which extensively use technologies such as drones for surveillance and counterterrorism (Chamberlain, 2018), developing nations like Nigeria face significant financial, legal, and political challenges that limit their ability to deploy similar technologies for managing ungoverned spaces and

addressing insecurity (Ukwuoma, Oke, and Nimfel, 2020).However, Behai, Soomro, and Khushk (2018) observed that technology-induced national security threats are not exclusive to developing countries but also affect developed and emerging nations. Using China as an example, the study noted that advancements in military technology—particularly new war-fighting weapons—have raised security concerns. The Gulf War served as a turning point, prompting China to shift its military modernization strategy from conventional arms to high-tech weaponry. This transition was supported by increased defense and R&D budget allocations. The study concludes that sustainable national security and global peace rely on the wise, equitable use and distribution of technology, urging both state and non-state actors to collaborate for peaceful coexistence. Yeganegi, Arbabi, and Hussein (2020) examined how information and communication technologies (ICTs) impact national security globally. Their study found that tools like smart surveillance, data mining, and social networks have simplified governance and security tasks since the 1980s. However, in developing countries, issues such as corruption, poor funding, and lack of technical expertise limit effective ICT adoption, widening the digital divide. The study concludes that addressing these security challenges requires significant, sustained effort. An analysis of the reviewed literature shows that while the adoption of technological innovations to address national security challenges has been extensively studied in developed countries, it remains largely underexplored in the context of developing nations. Consequently, examining the underlying factors that prevent these countries from leveraging modern digital technologies for security purposes highlights a significant academic gap—one that this current study aims to address.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs the Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) Theory by Everett M. Rogers as its analytical framework (Tahir, 2022). According to Diffusion of Innovation Theory, new ideas and technologies are adopted to solve human problems, with their spread influenced by the innovation's characteristics, communication channels, the social system, and the adoption process (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990; Christopher, 2020). Key factors affecting adoption speed include an innovation's complexity, compatibility, and the ability to be tested on a small scale. Both mass media and social networks are crucial for disseminating these new ideas (Rogers, 1983; Kim & Galliers, 2004). Rogers (1962, 1983) and Christopher (2020) note that innovation adoption is shaped by how well it fits within a society's cultural and social systems. Adoption unfolds over time through five key stages: awareness, persuasion, decision, implementation, and continuation. The process typically follows an "S-shaped" curve, with opinion leaders significantly influencing early adopters (Rogers, 2003). Social interaction and feedback play a crucial role in whether an innovation is ultimately sustained or not.

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory is a fitting analytical framework for this study, particularly given the troubling and increasingly transnational nature of security threats in many developing countries due to globalization. Many modern crimes—such as cybercrime and kidnapping—are enabled or facilitated through technological advancements, indicating that technology can be both a threat and a solution to national security. In developed countries like the USA, UK, France, China, and Russia, technology provides vital tools—both hardware and software—for preventing, detecting, and disrupting security threats. National security functions such as intelligence gathering and policing in these nations are now largely driven by technological innovation rather than manpower alone. As criminal activities evolve, combating them requires integrating new innovations into existing technologies in line with principles such as complexity, adaptability, compatibility, relative advantage, and trialability, which facilitate adoption. The theory suggests that innovations that can be tested incrementally are more likely to be accepted. However, in many developing countries, weak social systems, low technological awareness, poor attitudes towards innovation, and a lack of political will hinder the effective adoption and use of technology to address persistent security challenges. It is not surprising that Dele, Maiye, and Halidu (2019) express concern over the failure of technology adoption in developing countries, noting that technological innovations cannot function effectively without human input. They argue that relying solely on computer technology is flawed, especially when the individuals expected to adopt, operate, and utilize it exhibit poor attitudes toward its use. Consequently, tackling national security issues in these regions, amid increasingly complex and advanced local and global threats, becomes an elusive goal.

Methodology

This study is a product of qualitative research. It adopted descriptive research design. It also utilized secondary sources of data from relevant agencies including; Nigerian defence headquarters, office of the National Security Adviser among others. In addition, textbooks, journal articles, newspapers and magazines also served as sources of data for the study. This method helped the study to collect data stored in files, government achieves, libraries, bookshelves, the internet and other documents. Data for the study was analysed through the use of analytic techniques derived from qualitative research, primarily thematic analysis (Mannning and Luyt, 2011). Simon (2011) further points that qualitative analysis requires some creativity, since the challenges to place raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others. (Eme, Ibenekwu, & Ekpo, 2021). In this regard, the study adopted content analysis as its method of data analysis and interpretation.

Dynamics of Internal Security Conundrums in Nigeria

Nigeria's internal security is a complex and dynamic issue shaped by a combination of socio-economic, political, and historical factors. The nation's security challenges, which range from localized conflicts to transnational crime, are rooted in government failures, widespread corruption, and a lack of institutional capacity (Igbuzor, 2011). These systemic issues, combined with high unemployment and a weak education system, create an environment where young people are more vulnerable to criminal and extremist ideologies (Ukwuoma, Oke, and Nimfel, 2020). The country's porous borders further exacerbate these problems by enabling the easy flow of arms and militants, posing a significant threat to national stability.

Security challenges vary by region. In the North-East, the Boko Haram insurgency continues to be a major threat, causing extreme violence and displacing millions (Adebayo, 2014). The North-Central region faces ongoing conflicts between farmers and herders over resources (Okoro, 2018), while the South-South deals with resource-based militancy and piracy. Throughout the country, new threats like banditry, which includes kidnapping and cattle rustling, have become common, affecting both rural and urban areas. Despite significant funding, Nigeria's security agencies are often ineffective due to a centralized structure, a lack of cooperation, and the appointment of leaders based on factors other than merit (Ebohon and Ifeadi, 2012; Olofin, 2020). Thus, addressing these challenges requires adoption of the state-of-the-art technological infrastructure.

Technology and National Security Nexus in Developed Nations: Identifying the Potential Links as Lessons for the Global South

The global rise in digital technology use has brought about new forms of crime and heightened internal security threats, even in developed nations (Ya'u, 2022; Nwolise, 2019; National Security Strategy of the UK, 2008). Traditional cybersecurity measures are no longer sufficient, leading to a shift toward more advanced digital tools. Technologies like AI, drones, IoT, GIS, and satellite systems are increasingly deployed to enhance threat detection and response (Berkoff, 2022). For instance, the rollout of 5G in South Korea significantly enhanced digital connectivity but also heightened the country's susceptibility to cyber threats. As noted in the 2020 VMware-Deloitte Cyber Smart Index, South Korea ranked second in cyber vulnerability across the Asia-Pacific. The WannaCry ransomware attack in 2017 exposed critical security flaws, leading to an increase in complex cyber threats like malware and supply chain intrusions. This spurred a surge in demand for cybersecurity solutions, pushing the market value to $3.3

billion by 2020 (Ministry of Science and ICT & KISIA, 2022). In response, the government prioritized cybersecurity by expanding investment in ICT and research infrastructure.

South Korea is strengthening its Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities through key institutions such as MSIT, KISA, KISIA, and ITSCC, aiming to establish itself as a global leader in AI (Ministry of Science and ICT & KISIA, 2022). The government introduced its first national AI strategy in 2019, followed by the Digital New Deal in 2020, emphasizing AI infrastructure, digital innovation, and integration across sectors. By 2022, nearly $3 billion was committed to AI projects, with ten universities designated as AI engineering schools and four as research hubs. Leading companies like Samsung, LG, Kakao, Naver, SK, and KT have made substantial investments in AI research and global initiatives (Lee, 2022), showcasing the country's strategic focus on innovation and workforce development. The intersection of geopolitics, geo-economics, and technological advancement calls for a new direction in national security policy that increasingly recognizes the influence of private sector players like Samsung. For example, in November 2021, Samsung invested $17 billion in Texas, which led to the establishment of a semiconductor manufacturing plant. As a result, South Korea has emerged as a global leader in semiconductor production (Lee, 2022). Drones and surveillance technologies are increasingly used in developed countries like the U.S., U.K., and China for real-time security monitoring and intelligence gathering (Mongunu, 2020). Integrated systems with CCTV, alarms, and analytics allow for early threat detection and rapid response. Technologies such as AI-driven surveillance, autonomous drones, and IoT connectivity are transforming global security approaches (Ya'u, 2022). For instance, Mitsubishi's CoasTitan System uses autonomous air and sea drones to secure coastlines against threats like terrorism and smuggling (Arase, 2019; Nwolise, 2019; Katso, 2019; Mongunu, 2020).

Terrorist attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 9/11 incident, revealed the global threat of insecurity and prompted the U.S. to intensify the use of digital technologies in combating terrorism (Abdul Wahab, 2003). Mallik (2004) highlights how the U.S. leveraged advanced military technology, including satellite imagery, GPS, UAVs, and network-centric operations, to execute precise and effective warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. These innovations greatly enhanced real-time battlefield communication, surveillance, and strategic control. Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with international collab**o**ration, used forensic tools like the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) to resolve both ongoing and decades-old cases (U.S. Department of Justice, 2018; 2022). This reflects how the U.S. integrates technology and strategy to remain dominant in global security operations.

Also, in the U.S, facial recognition technology has significantly improved policing efficiency., helping law enforcement agencies make rapid arrests. For example, locating a rape suspect within 24 hours (Fritsvold, 2016). By 2023, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security deployed this technology to screen 97% of travelers. Such breakthroughs are the result of substantial investments in science and technology, with the U.S. spending $612.714 billion—representing 3.5% of its GDP, on research and development in 2020, the highest allocation worldwide (Wikipedia, 2021). In the United Kingdom, a total of £25.1 billion was allocated to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) between 2022–23 and 2024–25, marking a 14% increase from £7.8 billion in 2021–22 to £8.9 billion by 2024–25 (BEIS, 2022). This includes £18.9 billion in core funding for the UK's seven Research Councils, Research England, and Innovate UK. Key allocations include £6.2 billion to English Higher Education Institutions via Research England, £2.4 billion to Innovate UK, and £7.8 billion to the Research Councils, with £426 million reserved for temporary commitments like COVID-19 interventions. These investments enhance the UK's technological innovation capacity, which plays a vital role in addressing internal security challenges (UKRI, 2022).

China has swiftly adopted cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and quantum computing to strengthen its military capabilities and close the global technological divide (GFP, 2018; Kania, 2019). This shift toward intelligence-led and data-centric warfare has led to major investments in smart and unmanned weapons systems. Between 1998 and 2018, China's defense and innovation spending rose sharply from $31.2 billion to $239.2 billion, positioning it as the world's second-largest military spender after the U.S. (CSIS, 2019). In 2020 alone, China dedicated $514.8 billion (PPP), or $368 billion—equivalent to 4.8% of its GDP—to science and technology research (Weiss, 2019; Behan, Soomro & Khushk, 2018; Wikipedia, 2021). These figures illustrate China's strategic commitment to bolstering national security through sustained investment in technological advancement.

The global case studies reveal that advanced nations tackle globalization-induced security threats through strong political will and substantial investment in research, development, and infrastructure.

Technology Innovations and National Security Disconnect in the Global South-Nigeria: Interrogating the Underlining Factors

Nigeria and other developing nations are facing growing technology-driven security threats, including terrorism, cybercrime, and kidnapping (Bassey, 2019). Criminals often exploit ICT tools at all stages of their activities, showing a clear link between

crime and technology (Arase, 2019). Though the Nigerian government has introduced various tech-based crime control tools, such as CCTV, GIS, and facial recognition (Theophilus, 2019), the adoption remains low. This limited use is due to key systemic barriers that continue to hinder technology's full role in national security efforts. These intervening factors are exposited thus:

Inadequate of Funds and low levels of investment in research and development

Poor funding remains a major barrier to technological advancement in Nigeria and other developing countries, limiting their ability to adopt and maintain cybersecurity frameworks (Miller, 2015; Adhikari, 2017). Compared to nations like South Korea, China, and the U.S., Nigeria's R&D investment is significantly lower, N924 billion from 2019 to 2024, with only $3.9 million reaching universities (Jayeola, 2022). Most LDCs spend less than 1% of GDP on R&D, unlike Brazil (1.2%), Egypt (1.0%), and Chile (0.4%) (Wikipedia, 2021). This underinvestment affects technological infrastructure, skilled workforce development, and cybercrime deterrence (Utoikamanu, 2018; UNECA, 2013). Additionally, weak publication output and low school enrolment reflect broader systemic issues stalling science, tech, and innovation progress in LDCs (Otieno, 2020; Caladro et al., 2013).

Lack of high-speed Internet connectivity

Nigeria and other LDCs face major hardware challenges, particularly poor high-speed internet connectivity, which hinders access to broadband-based security, education, and economic opportunities (Utoikamanu, 2018). To address this, the UN and Turkey launched the Technology Bank for LDCs in 2017 to boost STI capacity and promote innovation, fulfilling SDG target 17.8. Despite this initiative, most LDCs, including Nigeria, lack the political will and investment drive needed to implement it effectively. This weak commitment limits their ability to transform abundant resources into technological advancement.

Poor Access to Internet Facility occasioned by institutional Instability and Inadequate Legal Framework

Globally, internet access is expanding faster than the legal and institutional systems that govern its use, especially in developing nations like Nigeria (Burt et al., 2014a; Utoikamanu, 2018; Otieno, 2020). While this access supports crime detection and control, its benefits are undermined by weak legal frameworks and institutional instability (IDG Connect, 2013). Although Nigeria has enacted drone and technology regulations via bodies like NCAA, implementation gaps persist (Ukwuaoma, Nimfel &

Oke, 2020; Dhande, 2016). As a result, security agencies struggle to effectively deploy these tools in combating crime. In addition, a strong legislative framework is vital for tackling technology-driven security threats, as emphasized by the AU and EU (Council of Europe, 2013). The AU Convention on Cyber Security urges member states to establish cybercrime institutions and provide relevant training (AU Convention, EX.CL/846 XXV: 30), but critics argue it may be overly ambitious (Tamarkin, 2015). The core challenge lies in balancing comprehensive regulation with practical enforceability to ensure effective cyber governance.

Poor knowledge, understanding and Low awareness of Cyber security

Raising awareness about cyber threats is vital in an era of increasing digital connectivity. Without public education on cyber hygiene and security, efforts to secure systems are often ineffective (Tamarkin, 2015; Otieno, 2020). Many developing nations, including Nigeria, suffer from low awareness across all societal levels—from citizens to government institutions—hindering effective cybersecurity implementation (UNODC, 2013; Adhikari, 2017). When cybersecurity is not prioritized by governments, it leads to fragmented policies, bureaucratic delays, and conflicts of interest among ministries. The lack of a unified and informed approach limits Nigeria's ability to build cyber capacity and undermines national security.

Inadequate Synergy Between Government and Industry

The private sector controls much of the Internet's infrastructure, from routers to technology development. However, in many developing countries, there is a disconnect between public and private sectors, hindering efforts to build strong cybersecurity systems (UNIDIR, 2013; UNDESA, 2011; Calandro et al., 2013). Strengthening collaboration through public-private partnerships is essential, as private companies lead in ICT infrastructure and tech innovation (EUISS, 2013). Yet, a key but often overlooked challenge is the limited engagement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which rely heavily on cyber technologies but rarely invest in cybersecurity measures. The issue has two major dimensions: some companies invest in cybersecurity software without the technical knowledge to use it effectively, reducing its usefulness. Others opt for pirated or low-quality software simply to comply with legal requirements, despite its inability to offer real protection. These actions undermine cybersecurity at both national and global levels. Given that the private sector controls much of the digital infrastructure, their tendency to prioritize functionality over security presents serious risks. Solving this problem demands greater awareness of the long-term consequences of weak cybersecurity and improved education on integrating ICT into sustainable development.

A juxtaposition of the level of integration of technologies into the security architecture in both the global south and global north hemispheres shows that advanced nations address security threats driven by globalization through committed political leadership and significant investment in research, development, and infrastructure. Conversely, developing countries in the global south fall behind due to resource constraints and structural challenges.

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between technological innovation and national security, with a focus on its implications for developing countries. It found that globalization—particularly advancements in ICT—has transformed security threats, exposing all nations, especially developing ones like Nigeria, to complex crises such as terrorism, insurgency, and cybercrime. The research concludes that deficiencies in science and technology innovation in Nigeria and similar countries stem from multiple issues, including weak institutional frameworks, limited human capital, and restricted access to digital infrastructure. Additionally, inadequate investment in R&D, low higher education enrolment, and poor policy implementation hinder the development of effective cyber capacity and technological progress necessary for addressing modern security threats. The study concludes that without deliberate policy actions and sufficient funding for research and technological innovation aimed at strengthening internal security systems, Nigeria and other countries in the global south will lag behind in keeping pace with technology-driven security operations. As a result, law enforcement agencies may remain ineffective against emerging threats. Given these technological shortcomings, the study advocates for a hybrid approach that combines traditional security methods with the integration of innovative technologies to bridge the gaps in national security.

Recommendations

In line with the key findings of this study, the paper puts forward the following practical policy recommendations as viable strategies to help Nigeria and other developing nations overcome the challenges surrounding science, technology, and national security in today's globalized and technology-driven world. Developing nations like Nigeria must urgently increase investment in research and development, particularly in science, technology, and security, taking cues from countries like South Korea, China, the USA, and the UK. Given the fast pace and cost of technological advancement, sustained funding, capacity building, and evaluation are essential to effectively combat evolving cyber threats and enhance national security. Nigeria and other developing nations must

urgently invest in critical infrastructure and develop strong legal frameworks, drawing lessons from countries like South Korea to boost digital connectivity, cybersecurity, and technological self-reliance, while prioritizing local capacity building and integrating cyberspace technologies into security reforms such as drone operations and personal data systems. The Nigerian government must urgently increase investment in technical sciences and electronic engineering to strengthen collaboration between educational and security institutions. This approach will enhance proactive governance and help prevent recurring security threats, drawing valuable lessons from the recent experiences of China and South Korea.

The Nigerian government must prioritize building the capacity of security personnel in the use of modern technologies through regular training and retraining, both locally and internationally. Additionally, it is essential to raise public awareness and encourage positive attitudes toward embracing modern technologies as effective tools for addressing national security challenges. Finally, the Nigerian government should prioritize strict adherence to the principles of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in the development of critical infrastructure for technological innovation. Strengthening cyber security architecture requires substantial investment in both hardware and software, and as such, Nigeria and other developing countries are encouraged to learn from South Korea's successful model in this area.

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INFLUENCE OF MEDIA REPRESENTATION ON THE ESCALATION OF CONFLICTS IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates how media representation on the escalation of conflict in Nigeria's Plateau State. It investigates the ways in which media framing and representation fuel the intensification of tensions within and between communities. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, analyzing media reports' content and conducting stakeholder interviews with journalists, community leaders, and policymakers. According to the research, the media's emphasis on violent events, sensationalist language, selective portrayal of sources has strengthened racial, religious divisions and perpetuated stereotypes. This pattern corresponds with patterns seen in other conflict-prone regions across the world, where sensationalized news has made conflicts worse. The study emphasizes the vital necessity of ethical journalism practices, with a focus on adopting a peace journalism approach that supports accurate, fair, and solution-focused reporting. In order to develop moral standards for conflict coverage, it advises media organizations, legislators, and peace-builders to work together and provide training for journalists on conflict-sensitive reporting. By shedding light on the ways in which media can either intensify or defuse conflicts, these findings advance the field of media studies. The study comes to the conclusion that in order to maintain a lasting peace, the media must contribute positively by encouraging efforts to promote understanding and peace building.

Keywords: Media, Representation, Escalation, Conflict.

Introduction

Plateau State, located in Nigeria's Middle Belt, has experienced persistent ethno-religious conflicts, particularly between indigenous Christian communities and Muslim settlers, (Njoku, B. (2022). These conflicts have historical roots in colonial policies that favored certain ethnic groups and land allocation practices, leading to tensions that have escalated over time (Adeleye, 2016). Factors contributing to the violence include land

disputes, political marginalization, economic competition, and cultural differences, which have often been exacerbated by external influences, including political manipulation and climate change (Idris, 2019). The state has witnessed numerous violent clashes, notably in 2001 and 2004, which resulted in significant loss of life and property Lifted, (Opalim, 2023). These conflicts have transformed Plateau State into a microcosm of Nigeria's broader struggles with identity, religion, and governance (Gandu, 2019). As the situation has evolved, the implications of these conflicts have extended beyond local communities, affecting regional stability and national security (Hussaini, 2020). Understanding the context of these conflicts is essential to addressing the underlying issues and exploring effective conflict resolution strategies.

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and narratives during conflicts. It serves as a platform for information dissemination and can influence how conflicts are understood and addressed. Media can be both a tool for peace and a catalyst for violence; responsible reporting can promote dialogue and understanding, while sensationalist coverage can exacerbate tensions and polarize communities (Cohen & Gurevitch, 2021). In the context of Plateau State, media coverage often reflects and amplifies existing biases and stereotypes. Reports may highlight violence and grievances without providing comprehensive background or context, leading to misrepresentation of the issues at stake (Adetunji, 2018). Furthermore, social media's rise has transformed the landscape of conflict reporting, allowing for rapid dissemination of information, but also misinformation, which can escalate conflicts (Lindgren, 2021). Understanding the media's role in modern conflict scenarios is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate its potentially harmful effects. Studying media representation in conflict escalation is vital for several reasons. First, it allows researchers and practitioners to identify the narratives that contribute to the escalation of violence. By analyzing how different media outlets portray conflicts, it becomes possible to discern patterns of bias, sensationalism, and misinformation (Sullivan, 2017). Second, understanding media representation can help in formulating strategies for more responsible reporting. Journalists and media organizations can be equipped with tools to recognize and counteract biases in their reporting, thus fostering a more informed public discourse (Bennett & Livingston, 2018). Third, studying media's impact on conflicts can inform policymakers and conflict resolution practitioners, enabling them to devise communication strategies that promote peace and reconciliation. In an era where information spreads rapidly, the potential for media to either incite or mitigate conflict makes this study critical (Zelizer, 2020).

This study is significant because it seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how media representation affects conflict dynamics in Plateau State. By identifying patterns and consequences of media portrayals, the research will offer valuable insights

for media professionals, policymakers, and conflict resolution practitioners. The findings will contribute to the development of guidelines for responsible reporting, which can help mitigate conflict escalation and promote peace. Furthermore, this research will raise awareness about the dangers of biased or misleading media coverage, encouraging critical media consumption among the public. Ultimately, the study aims to support efforts in peace-building and conflict prevention, not only in Plateau State but also in other conflict-prone regions.

Problem Statement

Plateau State, Nigeria, has seen decades of conflict due to a complex interplay of socioeconomic, political, and ethno-religious factors. The stability and development of the region have been severely impacted by these conflicts, which have caused a large number of fatalities, displacements, and property damage (Idris, 2019; Hussaini, 2020). Public perceptions and narratives surrounding these conflicts are greatly influenced by media coverage, which has the power to either increase tensions or foster peace. However, media coverage of Plateau State conflicts has frequently come under fire for being biased, sensational, and lacking in context, all of which can intensify preexisting grievances and further polarize communities (Adetunji, 2018; Sullivan, 2017). Even though the media has a significant impact, little research has been done to determine how media representation influences the dynamics of conflict escalation in this area. By examining how media narratives either exacerbate or lessen conflicts, this study seeks to close this gap and promote more responsible journalism and peace-building initiatives.

Research Gap

Few studies have explicitly examined how media representation affects ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State, despite the fact that there is a sizable body of literature on the causes and effects of these conflicts. The majority of current research ignores the ways in which media narratives and reporting styles influence conflict dynamics in favor of concentrating on underlying issues such as land disputes, political marginalization, and historical grievances (Adeleye, 2016; Gandu, 2019). Furthermore, the emergence of digital and social media has changed how conflicts are reported, enabling the quick dissemination of both accurate and inaccurate information that can quickly escalate tensions (Lindgren, 2021; Zelizer, 2020). Despite this change, thorough research on the ways that digital and traditional media platforms influence conflict escalation in Plateau State is lacking. By investigating how the media affects conflict dynamics, spotting bias and false information trends, and suggesting tactics for encouraging ethical and peace-focused journalism, this study aims to close this gap.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of media representation in the escalation of conflicts in Plateau State?
2. How are the prevalent narratives used by different media outlets during conflict scenarios in the region?
3. What is the impact of misinformation and disinformation on the dynamics of conflict escalation?
4. How do the differences in coverage between traditional and social media platforms?

Objectives of the Paper

1. To analyze the role of media representation in the escalation of conflicts in Plateau State.
2. To examine the prevalent narratives used by different media outlets during conflict scenarios in the region.
3. To assess the impact of misinformation and disinformation on the dynamics of conflict escalation.
4. To explore the differences in coverage between traditional and social media platforms.

Conceptual Clarification

Media Representation

The way information is arranged and presented to influence an audience's perception is known as media representation. Representation has the power to affect how people understand events in conflict situations. It frequently does this by emphasizing some parts of a story while downplaying others (Creswell, 2014). When conflicts are continuously presented in terms of ethnicity or religion, for example, the audience may form ingrained opinions that deepen divisions. The results of the study demonstrate how this kind of representation has exacerbated tensions in Plateau State, where recurring stories of "ethnic violence" have widened gulfs between communities (Yar'Adua, 2021).

Media representation refers to how the media portrays events, groups, or individuals through various forms of communication such as television, print, radio, and social media. In conflict situations, representation significantly shapes public opinion and can

either ease tensions or exacerbate divisions. Representation in the media can be biased, objective, or sensationalized depending on the motives behind coverage. In conflict-prone regions, the media often plays a dual role: disseminating information and framing the conflict narrative. According to Galtung's (1998) peace journalism theory, the media should prioritize narratives that support conflict resolution rather than sensationalize violence for viewership. In Plateau State, the focus on ethnic and religious divisions, rather than underlying socio-political issues, demonstrates how media coverage can perpetuate cycles of violence (Pate, 2012).

Sensationalism

Sensationalism is the practice of using dramatic or exaggerated language to grab readers' attention and boost participation. Although this strategy can increase readership, it frequently distorts reality by emphasizing shocking or violent elements without giving context. Sensationalist reporting is found to be a major contributing factor to the escalation of conflicts because it increases tensions and animosity between various groups. This pattern has been seen in other conflict areas in addition to Plateau State, underscoring the pervasive problem of sensationalism in conflict reporting (Adetunji, 2018; Adisa, 2012; Aondover, 2023).

Conflict Escalation

Conflict escalation refers to the intensification of conflict over time, resulting in increased violence, tension, and polarization between groups. This concept underscores the role of both internal and external actors in fueling hostilities. Researchers have long argued that the media can serve as an external actor, intensifying conflicts through its narrative choices and framing. In particular, when the media uses ethnically charged language or portrays violence as inevitable, it can push groups toward more aggressive actions. Scholars such as Egwu (2018) highlight that the media's focus on ethno-religious tensions in Nigeria, particularly in Plateau State, inflames existing animosities. Through selective coverage, the media has been shown to exacerbate divisions between Christian and Muslim communities, leading to retaliatory violence.

Media Bias and Misinformation

Media bias occurs when news outlets, consciously or unconsciously, prioritize certain narratives over others, presenting a skewed perspective. This bias can manifest in ethnic, religious, or political leanings. In Nigeria, media bias has been observed in the selective reporting of the experiences of different groups. For example, the media may portray the Fulani herders as aggressors in one conflict while positioning Christian

farmers as victims (Hassan, 2019). This selective reporting deepens mistrust between communities and contributes to escalating violence. Misinformation, particularly through social media, has also been a critical factor in conflict escalation. Social media platforms provide a space for unverified information to spread rapidly, often inciting violence. In Plateau State, during periods of unrest, fake news stories have circulated widely, leading to violence against perceived aggressors (Mohammed, 2020).

Literature Review

Overview of Existing Research on Media Representation and Conflict Escalation

The way conflicts are reported can have a big impact on how the public perceives and responds to them, according to research on media representation and conflict escalation. The portrayal of events, issues, or people in the media on print, radio, television, and digital platforms is known as media representation. Research has shown that sensational or biased reporting can exacerbate tensions, cause misunderstandings, and incite hostility. According to Wolfsfeld (2004), the media can incite conflict by spreading inflammatory content, reinforcing stereotypes, or presenting issues in a way that heightens animosity between opposing parties. Furthermore, Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) contend that media coverage frequently emphasizes divisions and differences rather than commonalities, especially in areas with a history of conflict, reinforcing preconceived notions and grievances already in place. In Nigeria, for example, researchers like Onwubiko (2015) have highlighted that media reports on the Farmer-Herder conflict have often been biased, portraying one group as aggressors and the other as victims, thus inflaming the situation further (Adetunji,2018; Adisa,2012; Aondover,2023).

Dapa, 2022, remarked that the press should be able to ask itself, what role have they played from both problems and solution ends of issues? The role of the media is more than just disseminating information; it should be part of the problem solution. This is the ideal role and responsibilities of ideal media; adding that "scholarship is growing around the belief that strategies to prevent manage or resolve conflicts and ingrained in the reporting. The media have played vital role in many conflicts around the world, the role it plays either de-escalate or escalate conflict depending on where it chooses to stand. Scholars acknowledge that the media is a vital tool for building strong institution, consensus, analyze conflicts and facilitate smooth resolution and peace building processes (Sabiu, 2023). Within this contextual context, several studies examined the roles of media in conflict in Nigeria (Adisa, 2012). However, a knowledge gap exists in the area of identify and narratives of conflict in Nigeria media, which this paper intend to bridge by reviewing some of the scholarly works with a view to identify the media direction on identity-based conflicts and further recommends better ways the media can

play effective role in conflict management and peace building process in Nigeria (Felix, 2013). Pointed out that the role of Media in conflict prevention and resolution and escalation is now a global concern. The information media project is critical to sustaining peace. In their study on media and conflicts, (Felix, 2013). Conclude that Nigerian media reports have tendency to escalate conflict and make it difficult to resolve, adding that it is more of war demotion than peace. In a similar study, (Felix, 2013). Explained that media is a mirror and a shaper of issues, its role in conflicts is subject to question whether it helps in conflict prevention or instigation, as many studies reveal.

On this note, (Aondover, 2023) added that the media unfortunately becomes divisive and conflict tools. Between 1993 to1994, Radio Rwanda- *Kinyarwanda* played significant role in the country genocide that claimed over 800, 000 lives. The radio projected hate speech against the Tutsi ethnic groups; television was used in Serbia to clean a section of the country. In a similar trend, with the help of the newly established public information law, the Serbia authority cracked down on the independent media outlets. National television was used during the war to launch propaganda in what was describes as ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo people by the Serbian controlled government. Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) in (Aondover,2022) examined the frequency of pro-war and anti-war commentators on major news media, findings revealed that the media were more conflict oriented than peace. The study added that pro-war views were over-whelming and more frequent. The Iraq war witnessed unprecedented US media coverage. For instance, the owner of fox news was a strong supporter of the Iraq invasion. In the light of this, a renowned media critic, Noam Chosky severally accused the media for spreading propaganda. Similarly, (Yar'Adua, 2021) argued that if the elite media had not supported the 2003 war in Iraq, it would not have been easy for its invasion. Reports indicted the media for the three months civil war in Thailand. In Nigeria too, many reports fingered the media for the many crises in the country. Comparably, in the wake of clash between Fulani herders and a community in Plateau State in March 16th 2010, Mr. Ignatius Kaigama the archbishop of Jos blamed the media for twisting the whole event to reflect Muslim-Christian clash. In a similar trend, (Yar'Adua, 2021) argued that identity-based struggles and its attendant violence in Nigeria is a question of state function. He further explained that identity-based conflicts in Nigeria owe its origin from the colonial exploitation, adding that the nature of the British state formation in Nigeria simultaneously created ethnic particularism and ethnic animosity. Media narrative of conflict is instrumental to resolution, management or peace-building process. The fate of Nigeria's unity amidst ethnic rivalry, religious differences among others is shaped by the media narrative- how the media chooses to frame it stories (Amarachi.2017; Aondover,2021) remarked that

for example, headlines like, Fulani herders burn churches in Katsina, Odua People's Congress close shops in Alaba market,

Case Studies or Examples of Media's Influence in Other Conflict Zones

Rwanda (1994 Genocide): The genocide in Rwanda serves as a sobering reminder of the power the media has to incite violence. Radio shows were utilized to incite mass violence, propagate hate speech, and dehumanize the Tutsi people. Des Forges (1999) observed that radio RTLM's coded messages and inflammatory language were crucial in inspiring people to take part in the genocide. The Balkans (Yugoslav Wars): In the 1990s, nationalist sentiments were spread and the "other" was vilified, all in an effort to further the agendas of political elites. This was accomplished through the use of media in Serbia and Croatia. According to Thompson (1999), media outlets have been manipulated to present stories that deepen ethnic divisions and prolong hostilities. Nigeria (Boko Haram Insurgency): The way that Boko Haram is portrayed in the media has drawn criticism for sensationalizing violence, which has occasionally caused people to become anxious and afraid. According to Alao & Ojo (2018), incomplete or biased reporting on Boko Haram's operations can distort public perception of the conflict and impede peace-building initiatives.

Gaps in the Existing Literature

Despite extensive research on media representation and conflict escalation, several gaps remain. The majority of the literature currently in publication places a strong emphasis on national or international media organizations, paying little regard to the function of local media, particularly in remote or violent areas. Understanding the role of local media is essential for creating localized peace-building strategies because they can have a more direct influence on the communities they serve. With the popularity of social media, it is important to look into the ways that digital platforms affect conflict dynamics (Adetunji, 2018; Adisa, 2012; Aondover, 2023). The way that disinformation, hate speech, and echo chambers on social media intensify disputes has not been thoroughly studied in the literature to date, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. Research addressing the subtleties of media influence in specific conflict zones is scarce. For example, more study is required to determine how conflicts in areas like Plateau State, where ethnic and religious divisions are significant, are impacted by media representation (Adetunji, 2018; Adisa, 2012; Aondover, 2023). While a lot of research has been done on how the media can intensify hostilities, less has been done to examine how the media can be used to advance peace. In the context of areas vulnerable to identity-based violence, the idea of peace journalism—which seeks to provide fair reporting that promotes understanding and reconciliation—needs to be further

investigated. By concentrating on the impact of media representation on the escalation of conflicts in Plateau State, Nigeria, this study aims to fill in some of these gaps. The study will look at how conflict narratives are shaped by traditional and digital media, and it will also propose tactics for encouraging more impartial and peace-focused reporting (Adetunji, 2018; Adisa, 2012; Aondover, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Various theoretical frameworks have been employed to understand the role of media in conflict escalation

Media Framing Theory

This theory, made popular by Entman (1993), contends that how the media presents and frames information can affect how the public understands what is happening in the world. Framing may entail highlighting some facets of a problem while downplaying or disregarding others. Research has shown that framing can contribute to conflict escalation by shaping narratives that promote 'us vs. them' mentalities. For instance, media coverage that frames one party as inherently violent or antagonistic can lead to increased animosity and conflict.

Agenda-Setting Theory

This theory, which was put forth by McCombs and Shaw in (1972), contends that the media has the ability to influence public opinion by highlighting certain issues. In the context of conflict, if the media constantly highlights negative aspects or instances of violence, it can lead to a heightened sense of insecurity and a perception that conflict is pervasive and unresolvable.

Methodology

The methodology of this study was carefully designed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of media coverage patterns and their impact on conflict in Plateau State, Nigeria. It involved a combination of research design, data collection, sampling, data analysis, and ethical considerations, which are outlined below (Creswell, 2014).

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The use of mixed methods allowed for a thorough exploration of

media coverage patterns and the perceptions shaped by these reports. Quantitative methods were employed to analyze the frequency, tone, and content of media articles, while qualitative methods were used to gain in-depth insights from interviews with stakeholders. This combination provided a holistic view of how media representation influenced the escalation of conflicts (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

Two main data collection methods were utilized in this study

Content Analysis of Media Reports

A systematic content analysis was conducted on articles from selected media outlets to identify patterns in the portrayal of conflicts. Articles were coded for themes, tone, and framing strategies to assess how media representation varied across different incidents. This approach was crucial for understanding recurring narratives and their potential role in escalating or de-escalating tensions (Krippendorff, 2018).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including journalists, community leaders, and security personnel, to gather insights on their perceptions of media coverage. This qualitative approach helped to identify the underlying motivations, biases, and challenges that shape how conflicts are reported in Plateau State (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select relevant media outlets and interview participants

Media Outlets

Specific media outlets that have a significant presence in Plateau State were chosen, including both national and local newspapers. This selection was based on the outlets' reach, frequency of reporting on conflict, and credibility. Articles from a five-year period (2019-2023) were analyzed to identify shifts in coverage patterns over time (Patton, 2015).

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders were selected for interviews based on their involvement in or influence over conflict reporting. This included journalists, editors, community leaders, security officials, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The purposive sampling ensured that the perspectives collected were relevant and provided diverse insights into the media's role in conflict dynamics (Flick, 2018).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from content analysis and interviews were processed using the following techniques:

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data from interviews. It involved identifying recurring themes and patterns to understand how stakeholders perceive the role of media in conflict situations. Themes such as "bias in reporting," "underlying tensions," and "role of sensationalism" were prominent in the interviews, offering insights into the influence of media narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Statistical Analysis

For the quantitative content analysis, statistical tools were employed to assess the frequency, tone, and nature of conflict reporting across different media outlets. Descriptive statistics helped quantify the prevalence of specific themes, while inferential statistics identified correlations between media portrayal and public perception indicators (Field, 2013).

Findings

The findings from the research offer a comprehensive view of how media coverage patterns in Plateau State have influenced the dynamics of conflict. The results are presented based on the themes identified during the analysis, including key findings from the data, patterns in media coverage, the influence of media framing, and specific examples of media stories that contributed to conflict escalation.

Presentation of Key Findings from Data

The analysis of media reports and interviews with stakeholders revealed several key findings

Dominance of Conflict Narratives

The media in Plateau State has predominantly focused on violent incidents, with over 65% of the analyzed articles highlighting clashes, attacks, or casualties. This pattern indicates a tendency toward conflict-oriented reporting rather than peace building efforts.

Recurring Themes

Thematic analysis identified recurring narratives, such as "ethnic violence," "religious tension," and "security failure." These themes suggest that the media often frames conflicts in terms of ethnic and religious identities, which can deepen divisions among communities.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Interviews with journalists and community leaders revealed concerns about biased reporting and sensationalism. Many participants indicated that certain media outlets prioritize sensational headlines to attract readership, often at the expense of balanced reporting.

Analysis of Media Coverage Patterns in Plateau State Conflicts

The data showed distinct patterns in how conflicts were reported:

Focus on Violence over Peace

Media coverage primarily emphasized violent incidents, with limited attention given to efforts aimed at conflict resolution or peace-building. Reports often highlighted attacks, destruction, and casualties without exploring the underlying causes of conflicts or ongoing peace initiatives. This pattern suggests that the media’s role in raising awareness of peace efforts is underutilized.

Sensationalism and Emotional Language

Headlines frequently used emotive and sensational language, such as "deadly clashes" or "massacre," which can amplify fear and anxiety among the public. The tone of the articles often emphasized the scale and brutality of conflicts, which may contribute to escalating tensions rather than fostering dialogue.

Uneven Source Representation

The analysis found that government and security officials were the primary sources in many articles, while local community voices were often underrepresented. This discrepancy can lead to a one-sided portrayal of events, where the narratives of those directly affected by conflicts are not adequately represented.

How Media Framing or Representation Has Influenced Perceptions and Actions

The way conflicts are framed by the media in Plateau State has had significant implications for public perception and actions

Reinforcement of Ethnic and Religious Divides

The repeated representation of conflicts as ethnic or religious confrontations has reinforced stereotypes and deepened divisions. For example, media reports that consistently describe clashes as "ethnic violence" without context can lead to generalized perceptions of entire communities as aggressors or victims. This framing has fueled mistrust and, in some cases, retaliatory actions.

Influence on Public Opinion and Policy

The framing of conflicts has also influenced how the public perceives the role of different actors, including the government and security agencies. Reports that emphasize security failures have led to calls for more robust military interventions, while narratives focusing on ethnic or religious identity have sometimes resulted in stigmatization of certain groups.

Impact on Conflict Escalation

The portrayal of conflicts in binary terms (e.g., "us vs. them") has contributed to polarization, making it more challenging to promote peace. Sensationalized reporting

has the potential to escalate conflicts by spreading misinformation and intensifying fears among communities.

Examples of Media Stories That Contributed to Escalation

The research identified specific instances where media stories appeared to contribute to the escalation of conflicts.

Sensationalized Headlines

During a period of heightened tensions in 2021, a local newspaper ran a headline stating, "Fresh Ethnic Violence Erupts in Plateau; Dozens Feared Dead." Although the report contained factual information, the sensational headline created panic and fear, leading to increased security concerns in nearby communities. Interviews revealed that residents perceived the situation as more widespread and severe than it actually was, which resulted in a surge of displacement.

Unverified Reports

In another instance, a news outlet published an unverified story accusing a particular ethnic group of orchestrating attacks on villages. Subsequent investigations showed that the initial report was inaccurate, but by then, the story had already spread across social media, leading to retaliatory attacks. This example highlights the dangers of unverified reporting, especially in conflict-prone areas.

Bias in Storytelling

Some media reports have been found to consistently portray one group as the aggressors, failing to acknowledge incidents where that group was also a victim. For example, several stories in 2022 focused solely on attacks attributed to herders, neglecting to cover instances where herders themselves faced violence. This selective reporting has the effect of reinforcing existing biases and tensions between communities. The findings indicate that media coverage in Plateau State plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of conflicts. The patterns observed, including a focus on violent incidents, sensationalism, and selective representation of sources, suggest that the media's framing can influence how conflicts are understood and addressed. While media outlets have the power to inform and educate, the current trends point to a need for more balanced reporting that emphasizes peace-building and context rather than conflict escalation. The findings of this study reveal critical insights into how media coverage patterns influence conflict dynamics in Plateau State, Nigeria. This section interprets the results in relation to the research questions, compares them with

findings from other conflict zones, and discusses the implications for media responsibility and conflict resolution.

Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

The research aimed to understand how media coverage patterns have affected the escalation of conflicts in Plateau State. The findings indicate that the predominant focus on violent incidents and the use of sensational language have contributed to heightened tensions. The media's frequent portrayal of conflicts as ethnic or religious confrontations has reinforced stereotypes, deepened community divisions, and sometimes led to retaliatory actions. These results align with the initial hypothesis that media framing plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions and responses to conflict. Additionally, the study's examination of stakeholder interviews revealed concerns about biased reporting and underrepresentation of certain community voices. This suggests that media outlets have not fully leveraged their role in promoting balanced and accurate narratives. The findings emphasize the need for more responsible journalism that focuses on peace-building, providing context, and addressing the root causes of conflicts rather than merely reporting violent incidents.

Comparison with findings from other conflict zones

The patterns observed in Plateau State are not unique; similar trends have been noted in other conflict-prone areas. For instance, studies on media coverage in regions like Kashmir, Sudan, and the Middle East have highlighted how sensationalism, bias, and selective reporting can escalate conflicts (Howard, 2003; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). In many cases, the media's framing of conflicts along ethnic or religious lines has intensified existing divisions, leading to prolonged or repeated cycles of violence. However, some conflict zones have also seen the media play a positive role by actively promoting peace journalism, which focuses on providing balanced reports, emphasizing solutions, and giving voice to multiple stakeholders. For example, peace journalism initiatives in Colombia have helped to highlight peace-building efforts and reduce the polarization of narratives (Shinar, 2013). This comparison underscores that while the media can escalate tensions, it also has the potential to foster peace when it shifts its focus to responsible and constructive reporting.

Implications for Media Responsibility and Conflict Resolution

The findings highlight several implications for media responsibility and conflict resolution in Plateau State

Need for Ethical Journalism

Media outlets should be encouraged to adopt ethical standards that emphasize the importance of accuracy, balance, and fairness. Sensationalism, bias, and the use of emotive language can inflame tensions, and it is crucial for journalists to be aware of the potential consequences of their reporting.

Training in Peace Journalism

Journalists and editors should receive training in peace journalism, which promotes reporting that de-escalates rather than exacerbates conflicts. Peace journalism practices include highlighting positive stories of coexistence, exploring the root causes of conflicts, and giving a platform to diverse voices.

Policy Frameworks to Encourage Balanced Reporting

Government bodies, media regulators, and civil society organizations should collaborate to develop frameworks that encourage balanced and responsible media coverage. This could include the establishment of guidelines for reporting on conflicts, as well as mechanisms for holding media outlets accountable for irresponsible reporting.

Conclusion

This study has provided a detailed analysis of how media coverage patterns in Plateau State have influenced conflict dynamics. The findings revealed that the media's emphasis on violent incidents, sensationalist language, and selective representation has contributed to escalating tensions between communities. While the media has the power to shape public perception, its current practices in Plateau State have often reinforced stereotypes and deepened divisions, rather than promoting understanding and peace.

Recommendations

Media Outlets: Media organizations should prioritize balanced and accurate reporting, especially when covering sensitive topics such as ethnic and religious conflicts. Training programs in peace journalism should be implemented to equip journalists with the skills to report responsibly and constructively. **Policymakers:** Governments and regulatory bodies should work to establish clear guidelines for conflict reporting that promote accuracy, fairness, and the avoidance of sensationalism. There should be mechanisms to address cases of irresponsible reporting that may contribute to conflict escalation. **Peace-builders:** Civil society organizations and peace-building groups

should engage with the media to promote narratives of peace, understanding, and reconciliation. Initiatives that encourage collaboration between journalists, community leaders, and peace advocates can help ensure that the media plays a constructive role in conflict resolution.

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PRODUCTIVITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, 2012-2015

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Abstract

This paper examined how man from time immemorial has been involved in search for acquisition of knowledge, assets, leadership, comfort and associated basic ophelimity of life. Travelling therefore forms part of education of human race. In a similar way tourism forms part of human development as Christians, Muslims and the likes today engage in pilgrimage. The gains made from this adventure underscores the productivity of tourism to mankind. The broad objective of this paper is to examine the productivity of tourism industry in Nigeria. Qualitative data was employed as the methodology. The theoretical framework situated in the modernization theory was used to observe among others that there is a nexus between development of tourism industry and productivity of tourism in Nigeria. The paper recommends a proactive improvement of the current tourism development policy as well as development of measures to cushion the challenges faced by these policies.

***Key words**: Tourism, Tourism Development, Infrastructure**,** Government Policy*

Introduction

Theobald (1998) states that the word tourism is derived from the Latin and Greek word "tour," which means "to circle" and "to turn." As a result, tourism refers to the activities of traveling a circle away from one's home and then coming back. The history of travel and tourism fundamentally reflects the evolution of humanity, as advancements in technology and transportation have prompted individuals to travel farther from their birthplaces. As a result, leisure travel also known as tourism has changed from being a rare activity enjoyed by a select few to becoming a popular one. Historically, only monarchs and the upper classes were able to travel, as Chaney (2000) noted that from ancient Roman times to the 17th century young men of high standing were encouraged to travel through Europe on a "grand tour."

This is because travel outside a person's local area for leisure was largely confined to wealthy people, who at times travelled to distant parts of the world to see great buildings and works of art, learn new languages, experience new cultures, different cuisines (Jayapalan,2001). From the Middle Ages, many societies encouraged the practice of religious pilgrimage, as reflected in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* Wu Chengen's *Journey to the West,* and other literature. What we now have today as modern tourism can be traced to what was known as the Grand Tour, which was a traditional trip around Europe undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men of means. Hence, economic and political activities and interest motivate tourist interest and also serves as the pivots in which the wheels of tourism rotate.

This activity primarily focuses on offering a limitless range of psychological and physical experiences, as well as enjoyable conditions, to customers who are classified as tourists and who come outside of their home environment to take advantage of these facilities and services (Ndomah & Akinbamijo, 2015). Widely acknowledged as one of the biggest industries in the world, it mostly focuses on business, leisure, and travel activities, and it revolves around passengers traveling to a specific location. Economic, political, social, environmental, and technological changes have all had an impact on this extremely dynamic industry, which has become one of the fastest-growing in the world this century. Statistics and other data indicate that this industry is growing at an annual rate of 4% in the USA, Italy, France, Spain, the UK, and the Caribbean (Abdulrahman et al.2014).

Some African nations have recently benefited greatly from the business, including Kenya, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Gambia, Egypt, and so on (Mani, 2003).
Tourism generates revenue through the payment of goods and services like transportation (airlines, cruise ships, and taxicabs), hospitality (hotels and resorts), and

entertainment (amusement parks, casinos, shopping malls, music venues, and theaters). It also generates employment opportunities in the tourism-related service industries, which collectively account for an estimated 5% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Amalu et al., 2002; Ashe, 2005). Nearly every developing nation is currently promoting some form of tourism related to its development because of the significance and relevance of tourism (Marafa, 2011) With its vast and enticing tourism resources, Nigeria, a country of approximately 923,768 km² in size and entirely in the tropics, has a wide range of commendable tourism potential that, with the right focus, could turn the nation into a destination for both domestic and foreign travelers (Mejabi and Abutu, 2015).

These tourism opportunities include natural resources, intriguing natural features, man-made attractions, and cultural attractions like the many physical and landscape attractions (such as mountains, lakes, and thermal springs) that are spread throughout the nation. In the words of Iwara et al., "tourist development is among the primary drivers of economic expansion in nations with significant tourism potential. The national tourism policy for Nigeria was created in 1990 as a result of the realization that tourism was necessary to propel economic growth. This strategy was inspired by the NEPAD Baseline study on tourism as well as the World Tourism Organization's (WTO) Secretary General's declaration and resolve to promote and develop Nigeria as a travel destination. Aluko et al. (2011) assert that policy is a tool for resolving political and socioeconomic issues, a direction for action, and a means to an end rather than an end in and of itself. This study examines the productivity of tourism in Nigeria 2012-2015.

Conceptual Clarification

Tourism: A social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008).

Tourist: People who travel at least 80 km from their home for at least 24 hours, for business or leisure or other reasons (LinkBC, 2008).

Tourism Development: Tourism development is concerned with provision of tourism infrastructure and superstructure (Smith &Eadington, 1995). It can be minor or major modification on existing facilities or the total process by which the tourism products grow from infancy to maturity.

Government Policy

A declaration of a government's political activities, plans and intentions relating to a concrete cause or, at the assumption of office, an entire legislative session. In certain countries they are announced by the head of government or a minister of the parliament.

Infrastructure

Tribe (1999) described infrastructure as all forms of construction required by an inhabited area in communication with the outside world, which support and make economic development possible. It includes roads, railways, harbours, airports as well as public utility services of water and power supply, drainage and sewage disposal.

Productivity

It seems difficult for social scientists to agree on a common definition of productivity. This is because the meaning of productivity depends on individual socio- economic, political and psychological mindset. However, this should not dissuade us from looking at scholarly views on the concept. According to American Heritage dictionary, productivity is: the quality of being productive; the rate at which goods or services are produced especially output per unit of labour or the rate at which radiant energy is used by producers to form organic substance as food for consumers. This reflects socio-economic and ecological definition. Productivity compares the amount of output to the amount of input resources used to produce the output at any given period in time. In essence, higher productivity means more efficient and effective utilization of input resources.

According to Prokopenko, (1987:1) productivity "is the relationship between the output generated by a production or service system and the input provided to create this output. Thus, productivity is defined as the efficient use of resources: labour, capital, land, materials, energy, information in the production of goods and services. He argues that regardless of the type of production, economic or political system, the definition of productivity remains the same". Despite the above, economists view productivity as the ratio of output to input in any given period of time. That is: the amount of output produced by each unit of input. Business managers, on the other hand see it "not only as a measure of efficiency but also effectiveness and performance of individual organization" (Anyanwu, 2004).

For them productivity further "incorporates quality of output, adherence to standard, absence of complaint, customer satisfaction" (Udo-Aka,1983:75). The administrator "is

more concerned with organizational effectiveness, while the industrial engineer focuses more on those factors which are more operational and quantifiable, work measurement and performance standard" (Adekoya ,1989:56). Olajide (2010:26) asserts that productivity "can be computed in a firm, industrial, group or the economy as a whole. It measures the level of efficiency at which scarce resources are being utilized".

In our considered opinion, productivity measurement is wholistic in so far as what is set to measure is outstanding, be it policy, economy, firm, enterprise. The essence of measurement, evaluation, or examination is to match and appropriate tools for efficiency and effectiveness. Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA) in 1995 came up with a working definition as follows: Productivity is the function of producing more and more goods and services to more and more people with less and less consumption of real resources; Productivity is a process whereby inputs are converted to goods and services to satisfy market needs. In this study productivity entails doing things right and doing the right thing at the least possible cost with possible quality output. Simply put, productivity is to create more with less; gain more with less. Productivity is result oriented (Eze, 2013:4).

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes the *modernization theory*. The theory is also called Rostow's theory of growth and development. It was proposed by Winton in 1954 when he was developing strategies for building stadia for Nigeria. Ukabuilu (2015) added that as modernization is an important process due to its systematic and transformative nature that builds change into the system, this theory is then of the opinion that there is a required systemic breakaway from a state of dormancy before self-sustained development can be achieved. Hence the application of this theory shows the sequential process for tourism development, viz. the standard followed in this development, the provision of infrastructure in terms of good roads, communication networks, banks, hospitals, as well as an interacting communities and other strategies to sustain and maintain the site for the intended tourists. This theory was thus used as justification that economics itself could be used as an index for social reform in which economic growth would "trickle down" to the masses in the form of jobs and other economic opportunities improving quality of life. In the context of tourism, modernization strategies generate foreign capital as well as increasing employment, and facilitating the transfer of technology. Its utility encourages socio-cultural changes as economic growth demands these changes as a foundational stage for further economic development.

History of Nigeria's Tourism Development

Although leisure and tourism activities in Nigeria began in the colonial era and continued till independence in 1960, government involvement in tourism only started with the establishment of the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) in 1976 and 1990, when a national tourism policy was finally formulated and adopted (Bola, 2010). However, Eniola (2002) traced the history of tourism in Nigeria to the early part of the 20th century when the Annual Colonial Report started featuring recreation and travel-related matters in Nigeria. Ukpanah (1991) is of a different opinion, as he stated that the historical development of Nigerian tourism can be traced to 1472, when the first Portuguese merchants landed in Lagos on a mercantile mission—trade tourism. Another school of thought is of the opinion that tourism started in 1962 when a group of Nigerians with interest and commitment to the promotion of tourism set up a body then known as the Nigerian Tourism Association (NTA) (Maduekwe, 1999). This is also the same assertion held by Nwakanma (1989), who earlier stated that tourism in Nigeria started in earnest in 1962 following the report of an ad hoc committee set up in 1958 to draw up a policy guideline for tourism in Nigeria. It was the recommendation of the report that culminated in the establishment of the Nigerian Tourism Association (NTA), which was meant to be a joint venture between the federal government, the former regional government, the transport statutory corporations, and the major commercial organization in the travel and catering industries.

The growth of tourism in Nigeria saw the formation of the Nigerian Tourism Board with Decree 54 in 1976. However, tourism development suffered neglect throughout the military rule and only bounced back with the return of democracy in 1999 when the government repositioned tourism to occupy a strategic position in the diversification economic agenda by establishing a full-fledged ministry, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism organized in 2005 the first Abuja Carnival as part of her promotional efforts to showcase the rich heterogeneous culture of the most populous African nation. The government, through the ministry, packaged the Abuja carnival to draw the attention of the world to visit Nigeria and have a feel of both natural and manmade features in their original form (Bankole, 2013). Since then, the Abuja Carnival has become an annual major event witnessed by tourists within Africa and beyond for a whole week, usually held within the last quarter of the year (Yaradua, 2006). Also, in 2006, the government captured tourism among the six priority areas and engaged domestic and international stakeholders, including the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)to prepare a comprehensive National Tourism Development Master Plan (NTDMP). In line with the intended development, the hotel industry was one of the largest industries in the tourism sector, which has

played a vital role in the hospitality industry, especially in providing tourists with the needed comfort in any tourist destination (Eja'Oto, Yaro, & Iyang, 2011).

Evaluation of the Tourism Potentials in Nigeria

Nigeria is endowed with a lot of tourism attractions, which, according to Archibong (2004), are centred largely on cultural events, due to the country's ample number of ethnic groups, but also the rich cultural heritage, rain forests, savannah, waterfalls, caves, rocks, mountains, and other natural attractions. In recent times, governments at both the federal and state levels have made a significant impact on tourism development by solely or, in certain cases, partnering with the private sector in special resorts of international standard for tourist attractions (Akpan & Obang, 2012). This is done in order to attract foreign nationals, boost foreign investments in the long run and improve the socio-economic status of the states and the nation at large. As Akpan (2011) puts it, "Some state governors in Nigeria adopt tourism as a means of tapping the benefits of globalization, especially in the area of attracting foreign investors, to boost economic investments in their domain." Some of the tourism destinations established through state governments efforts include Nike Lake Resort in Enugu, Obudu Range Resort and Tinapa Resort in Cross River State, Ibom Meridian and Golf Resort in Akwa Ibom State, and Pleasure Park in Rivers State etc. Other national tourism projects include Ojukwu Bunker and War Museum in Umuahia, Enugu Unity Museum, and Yankari Game Reserve in Bauchi.

Table 1: Natural Attractions in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Guara falls	Niger	Not developed
2	Erin Ijesha waterfalls	Osun	Not developed
3	Ezeagu waterfalls	Enugu	Not developed
4	Assop Falls	Plateau	Partially developed
5	Owu falls	Kwara	Partially developed
6	Ikogosiwarmspring	Ekiti	Developed
7	Kwa falls	Cross river	Partially developed
8	Wikki warm spring	Bauchi	Developed

9	Agbokin and Ikom waterfalls	Cross river	Partially developed
10	FarinRuwa Waterfalls	Nassarawa	Not developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

Table 2: Mountain Resort and Rock Formation in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Obudu Mountain resort	Cross river	Developed
2	Idanre Hills	Ondo	Partially developed
3	Olumo Rock	Ogun	Developed
4	Shere Hills	Plateau	Not Developed
5	Zuma rock	Niger	Not Developed
6	Mambila plateau	Taraba/Adamawa	Not developed
7	Riyom Rock	Plateau	Not Developed
8	Aso rock	FCT	Partially developed
9	Ogbunike caves	Anambra	Partially developed
10	Mount patti	Kogi	Not developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

Table 3: Cultural Attractions in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Osun Oshogbo cultural festival	Osun	Developed
2	AdimuOrisa (Eyo) Festival	Lagos	Developed
3	Argungul fishing festival	Kebbi	Developed
4	Abuja Carnival	FCT	Developed
5	CarniRiv	Rivers	Developed
6	Calabar Carnival	Cross river	Developed
7	Mmanwu Festival,	Anambra/Enugu	Partially Developed
8	OviaOsese Festival	Kogi	Partially Developed
9	Afan cultural festival	Kaduna	Partially Developed
10	Kwaghhir festival	Benue	Partially Developed

11	Igue festival	Edo	Partially Developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

Table 4: Heritage, Museum and Monuments attraction in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Esie National Museum	Kwara	Developed
2	Jos National Museum	Plateau	Developed
3	National museum Onikan	Lagos	Developed
4	Benin National Museum	Edo	Developed
5	Owo National Museum	Ondo	Developed
6	Oloibiri Oil Museum	Bayelsa	Partially Developed
7	National war museum	Abia	Developed
8	National Unity Museum	Enugu	Developed
9	Slave trade museum	Cross river	Developed
10	Relics of colonial History	Kogi	Partially Developed
11	Oba of Benin Palace	Edo	Developed
12	Ooni of ife palace	Osun	Developed
13	National Arts Theatre	Lagos	Developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

Table 5: Eco-Tourism, Leisure and Recreation (Theme Park) in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Kainji lake national park	Niger	Developed
2	Yankari games reserve	Bauchi	Developed
3	Pleasure Park	Rivers	Developed
4	Old Oyo National Park	Oyo	Developed
5	Gashaka/Gunti national park	Adamawa/Taraba	Developed
6	Chad Basin National Park	Borno	Partially developed
7	Okomu National Park	Edo	Partially developed
8	Kamuku National Park	Kaduna	Partially developed
9	Cross River National Park	Cross River	Developed
10	Lekki Conservation Centre	Lagos	Developed
11	Jos Wildlife Park	Plateau	Partially developed
12	Wonderland Amusement Park	Abuja	Developed
13	Oakland Wonderland Park	Enugu	Developed
14	Ganji Park	Kaduna	Developed
15	Trans Amusement Park	Ibadan	Developed

16	Water Park	Lagos	Developed
17	Frankid Children Amusement Park	Lagos	Developed
18	Paparanda Amusement Park	Lokoja	Partially developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

Table 6: Beach/Coastal Tourism in Nigeria

SN	Attraction and Location	State	State of Development
1	Bar Beach	Lagos	Developed
2	Takwa Bay Beach	Lagos	Developed
3	Elegushi beach	Lagos	Developed
4	Tourist Beach	Rivers	Developed
5	Eleko Beach	Lagos	Developed
6	Lekki Peninsula	Lagos	Developed
7	Calabar Beach	Cross Rivers	Developed
8	Warri Beach	Delta	Partially developed
9	River Niger Water Front	Kogi	Partially developed
10	Egga-Idah Water Front	Kogi	Not developed
11	AiyetoroMaiyegun Coastal Resort	Lagos	Developed

Source: *Research centre for management and social sciences (2015)*

The creation and effective administration of these tourism initiatives contribute to the transformation, upkeep, and enhancement of tourism (both for pleasure and business purposes), which boosts the economy and supports government efforts to diversify the country's economy, which is currently dependent on oil revenue. "There is great potential in the tourism sector which Nigeria is yet to key into,"according to Alhaji Adamu Ciroma, the former Nigerian Finance Minister, who was quoted by Ekwere (2010). This is due to Nigeria's exclusion from the list of popular African travel destinations, despite the country's wealth of tourist resources (Ajadi, 2012). This can be linked to a number of significant barriers to the growth of the tourism industry among other issues, the absence of fundamental tourism infrastructure (poor roads, inadequate electricity supply), religious intolerance, political unrest, militancy, frequent bombings, abductions, incorrect application of tourism regulations, and a shortage of qualified workers in the tourism industry (Dantata, 2011). Therefore, these vices must be stopped before Nigeria can fully benefit from tourism, as the tourism business cannot flourish anyplace without visitors and the purchase of tourism-related goods.

Review of the Nigerian Tourism Policy

According to Agbebi (2014), a policy is a carefully considered strategy or course of action that is established to help an organization or government in achieving specific goals and objectives. Typically, it is seen as a declaration of purpose or dedication to the overarching goal. From this, he concluded that Nigerian tourism policy can be compared to the process by which the country's tourism industry is managed and controlled by a set of rules, guidelines, directives, development/promotion objectives, and strategies that offer a framework within which individual and collective decisions directly impact the daily operations in all destinations as well as the short- and long-term development of tourism. As a result, it has an impact on how well the Nigerian tourist industry manages all of its daily operations, including destination development, marketing, event planning, attraction operations, and guest welcoming programs. According to Hall (2008), tourism policy is a strategic declaration of intent that outlines the parameters for the growth of tourism. It also gives us a framework for directing actions related to tourist development and helps us comprehend how policy decisions are shaped and their effects. Additionally, it offers knowledge on real-world issues and their solutions, makes it possible to comprehend the interests and values involved in policy planning, and offers a framework for comprehending policies and planning (Bassey & Egon, 2016). According to Ogbemudia (1991), Nigeria possesses the resource potentials that support the growth of tourism, including rapid industrialization that has employed a large number of people and a rich diversity of human, wildlife, and physical resources that range from breathtaking landscapes to populated game reserves, from impressive historical monuments to captivating cultural festivals. All of these resources have the potential to become first-class tourism resources with the right management, both forward-thinking and effective. This served as the foundation for Goyang's (1994) argument for the creation of a national tourism policy, which Sani (1990) states must be dynamic, responsive, and reflect current environmental trends and developments in order to have a collaborative approach to trends and developments in order to have a collaborative approach to protecting and showcasing our viable natural resources to the world.In line with Ladan (2003), who maintained that development can only be sustained if grassroots tourism development is consistently ingrained, he proposed for an institutional system where tourism will grow from the grassroots level to the federal level. Additionally, Atutu (2001) believes that if a thorough tourist plan is in place, a series of tourism developments can be accomplished. As a result, a tourism blueprint was created in 1992 to show the government's dedication to growing and promoting tourism in Nigeria. Bassey and Egon (2016) state that the primary goals of this policy are as follows:

i. To safeguard and advance Nigeria's cultural legacy as a source of domestic socio-economic development.
ii. To encourage community and public partnerships in tourism development.
iii. To generate foreign exchange, enhance income redistribution, alleviate poverty and create employment.
iv. To promote Nigeria as a desirable tourism destination within the context of Africa's cultural renaissance.
v. To promote geo-political integration, healthy international cooperation and understanding.
vi. To ensure environmental sustainability in the development of tourism resources.

Given the stated goals and the many undeveloped or underdeveloped potential tourist destinations mentioned above, it is easy to see that the country's tourism policies have not yet resulted in the sustainable growth and development of the industry. This is because the sector has not yet been transformed into a reliable, socioeconomically viable, and potential alternative to oil, which currently serves as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy.

Conclusion

The study investigates the productivity of government policies on tourism in Nigeria while highlighting the benefits of this industry to the state. Tourism today is a potential service sector that contributes stupendously to the economic growth of the entire world. There are enormous tourism resources in Nigeria that can positively drive and transform her socio-economic prowess if well harnessed through effective and efficient policy, planning and governance but most of these great tourism spots are still left in their raw state till date with only a hand full developed. A tourism master plan and policy which is intended to harness the potentials embedded in these sites is needed to make Nigeria a resort in terms of tourism destination in Africa and the world at large.

Recommendations

The paper recommends a proactive improvement of the current tourism development policy as well as development of measures to cushion the challenges faced by these policies. This requires providing adequate security that would encourage private sector investment in the development of the hospitality industry as well as material and physical infrastructure.

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GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: NIGERIA IN FOCUS

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Abstract

This paper contextualised how globalisation has significantly reshaped the nature and scope of international terrorism by fostering complex linkages among technological, economic, and ideological networks. this study examines the relationship between globalisation and global terrorism, using Boko Haram in Nigeria as a case study to illustrate how globalisation has influenced terrorist operations, recruitment, and resource acquisition. through a review of existing literature, the research identifies multiple causes of terrorism, including political, religious, social, economic, and geographical factors, with the relative deprivation theory providing a framework for understanding how perceived inequalities drive terrorist activity. the findings reveal that while globalisation has stimulated economic and technological progress, it has also intensified security challenges by facilitating terrorist groups to exploit new opportunities. the study recommends enhanced regional cooperation, addressing domestic root causes of terrorism, and strengthening democratic institutions as strategies to mitigate these risks. by highlighting how the effects of globalisation manifest differently across regions, the paper offers insights relevant to academic discourse, policy formulation, and practical counterterrorism efforts.

Key words: Globalisation, Interconnectedness, International, Security, Terrorism

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, ideas—and the seeds of terror—travel faster than ever before. Globalisation has transformed the global landscape by breaking down barriers to trade, communication, and cultural exchange, resulting in increased interconnectedness and interdependence among nations (McCann & McCloskey, 2015). The National Intelligence Council (2018) notes that advancements in technology—including networking, computerisation, information systems, and international electronic exchanges—are key drivers of globalisation, facilitating the rapid dissemination and impact of modern technologies worldwide.

While globalisation has fostered economic growth and enhanced communication and cultural exchange, it has also introduced new challenges, such as the rise of international terrorism. Kuma (2021) argues that the emergence of global terrorist networks has transformed the nature of terrorism, rendering traditional definitions inadequate to capture its current scope and complexity. According to Hafez (2019), globalisation is one of the major factors that contributes to the rise of terrorism. These include the use of sophisticated weapons with local arms, employing religious disguise to attract undue sentiments, internalisation of financing terrorism, conscription of minors into terrorist groups, ethnic cleansing, volume of refugee generation (Bamidele, 2018; Maza, Kolas & Aksit, 2020).

In recent years, international terrorist attacks have increased, resulting in death, displacement, regional instability, hunger, and significant economic losses. Faluyi, Khan, and Akinola (2019) note that these acts of terror have forced nations to expend vast resources on counter-terrorism efforts, contributed to the loss of infrastructure, and rendered some states ungovernable. Terrorism involves clandestine groups engaging in deadly acts such as suicide bombings, abductions, arbitrary killings, rape, and the destruction of property to instil fear and undermine state authority (Blin & Chaliand, 2016). Although terrorism has existed throughout history, modern international terrorism is often framed within the Huntingtonian notion of a "clash of civilisations." Any form of terrorist attack is unacceptable, as it perpetuates cycles of violence and escalates terror (Ibrahim, 2016). Consequently, international terrorism has become a major threat to global peace and security, as demonstrated by numerous attacks worldwide in recent years (Hoffman, 2018).

Existing studies confirm that terrorist activities worldwide continue to evolve in dangerous ways. While scholars such as Zimmerman (2011) have examined the broad relationship between globalisation and terrorism, and others like Mekaj (2020) have focused on the political and security aspects, these works have not fully explored how

these dynamics play out within specific regions or how domestic factors contribute to terrorism. This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationship between globalisation and terrorism in the modern era, specifically through the lens of relative deprivation theory and an empirical focus on Boko Haram in Nigeria. As a desk review, this study draws on existing literature to provide a nuanced understanding of the intersection between global dynamics and localised terrorist activities. The findings aim to inform policymakers on effective strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of globalisation on terrorism, including addressing socio-economic grievances, regulating global financial flows exploited by terrorists, and fostering international cooperation.

Conceptual Clarification

Globalisation

Although scholars differ in their precise definitions of globalisation, most agree on its core elements. Sparke (2022) notes that globalisation encompasses economic integration, policy transfer across borders, the spread of knowledge, cultural exchange, and the reproduction of power relations. It is simultaneously a process, a concept, a revolution, and the creation of a global market free from socio-political constraints. Faghih (2019) highlights that globalisation has been interpreted in various ways: some view it as a force for progress, development, stability, integration, and cooperation, while others associate it with regression, neo-colonialism, and destabilisation. As such, the term often carries multiple, sometimes hidden, agendas.

Phillips (2023) observes that since the end of the Cold War, globalisation—both as a process and as an idea—has reshaped the world. Global studies have emerged to analyse their transnational dimensions across economic, social, cultural, ideological, technological, environmental, and postcolonial spheres. Major events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent "global war on terror," the 2008 global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all caused significant disruptions to globalisation, affecting both tangible and intangible aspects of life worldwide (Steger, Benedikter, Pechlaner & Kofler, 2023). The National Intelligence Council (2018) notes that the World Trade Center attacks exposed the darker side of globalisation, demonstrating how easily terrorists can finance, plan, and execute attacks on a global scale.

Terrorism

Like globalisation, terrorism is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon that continues to evolve, making it difficult to define. There is no universally accepted conceptual or operational definition of terrorism, as interpretations vary widely based on state, national, political, geopolitical, religious, and ideological contexts. As a result, terrorism manifests differently across regions, sub-regions, and countries (Bartolotta, 2011). Achieving consensus on a unified definition remains challenging due to conflicting interests and perspectives among stakeholders.

Boaz (2002) famously remarked that "terrorism is what the bad guys do," highlighting the adage that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." While perpetrators of terrorism may see themselves as freedom fighters, the broader community often regards them as troublemakers and enemies of peace (Jean-Paul, 2017). Terrorists may include individuals or groups engaged in violent acts, the extremists who recruit or direct others, the conflict zones where such violence occurs, and the government responses to these threats (English, 2021). The rhetoric surrounding terrorism typically frames it as a deliberate assault on civilisation and a regression to primitive violence. According to Ibrahim (2016), terrorism often arises from aggrieved groups who share two key characteristics: they have specific political objectives and believe that violence is an inevitable means to achieve their goals. It is this political dimension that distinguishes terrorist violence from other forms of crime.

International Security

International security refers to the strategies and actions adopted by states and international organisations to ensure mutual survival, safety, and stability at the global level (O'Meara, 2021). Closely linked to national security, it essentially extends the concept of state security to the international arena. International security involves military actions, diplomatic agreements—such as treaties and conventions—and cooperation among international bodies like the United Nations and the European Union to maintain peace and stability (O'Meara, 2021). Bhattacharya (2016) adds that international security encompasses multiple dimensions, including military security (protection of military capabilities and peace), economic security (protection of economic interests and resources), and human security (protection of individuals and communities from harm).

Historically, international security focused primarily on the use of force between states and great power conflicts. Since the 1980s, however, the concept has broadened to include a range of new threats, such as ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts,

economic disputes, energy security, environmental degradation, infectious diseases, climate change, and the activities of non-state actors like terrorist groups. This expanded understanding recognises that threats to state stability—whether from direct violence or other destabilising factors—constitute significant international security challenges (St. Jean, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

Although Aristotle first identified the link between deprivation and conflict, Ted Robert Gurr is the most prominent modern proponent of relative deprivation theory. According to relative deprivation theorists, political discontent and its consequences—such as protest, instability, violence, and revolution—depend not only on the absolute level of economic well-being, but also on the distribution of wealth (Smith & Walker, 2002). Relative deprivation theory posits that individuals who feel deprived of something essential to their lives (such as money, rights, political voice, or status) may organise or join social movements or armed conflicts to obtain what they lack.

Frustration is the likely outcome when individuals find their expectations blocked. In some cases, relative deprivation has been cited as a factor driving social disorder, including rioting, looting, terrorism, and civil wars (Hamm, 2011). Terrorists often become angry over specific issues and feel frustrated because their causes are ignored or exploited by those in power; they are also frequently economically marginalised, unemployed, or unable to achieve their goals. Nachmias (2004) agrees that relative deprivation—stemming from unmet political, economic, and personal needs—can trigger violent civil conflicts. Pakulski (2023) identifies several globalisation-induced inequalities:

i. Economic (poverty, unequal access to resources, radicalisation through economic desperation)—for example, Boko Haram recruits' youth from economically disadvantaged regions in Nigeria by offering financial support and promises of a better future;
ii. Political (exclusion from decision-making, repression, erosion of sovereignty)—the Taliban's rise in Afghanistan was partly fuelled by political instability and resentment toward foreign intervention;
iii. Cultural (alienation, identity crisis, backlash against Westernisation)—which can also result in terrorism.

For instance, the rise of Al-Qaeda and ISIS was partly fuelled by opposition to Western dominance in Muslim-majority regions. Relative deprivation arises when individuals or groups perceive a significant gap between their expectations and reality. Many recruits

for terrorist organisations come from communities experiencing relative deprivation and systemic inequality. Terrorist organisations exploit these inequalities through propaganda, using social media to highlight global injustices and frame terrorism as a form of resistance. They justify their actions as a way to fight against perceived global exploitation or oppression.

Brief History of Terrorism

The origins of terrorism can be traced back to the French Revolution in 1789, the period known as the Reign of Terror. It was orchestrated by the French government and characterised by the use of violence against revolutionaries in the country. Individuals frustrated with the rule of law and government operations resorted to violent actions against the state of France. According to Alva, Frau-Meigs and Hassan (2017), Roman Emperors used terrorism to suppress dissents and eliminate suspected enemies during their reigns. In the case of most third-world countries, Lenin (2021) observed that the act of terrorism in Africa, for instance, dates back to the era of slavery, where violence was employed in the efforts to exploit human material resources from the 15th to the 19th century by European imperialists.

Modern terrorism has its roots in the revolutionary radicalism of the 19th century, particularly in the activities of the "anarchist" and "anarcho-communist" groups. The German revolutionary, Karl Heinzen, was the first to articulate the use of violence, including mass murder, by individuals to effect political change in his influential 1853 pamphlet Mord und Freiheit, coining the term Freiheitskampfer or "freedom fighter" in the process (Winter, Edwards & Penn, 2020). However, as these early radicals became disillusioned by their failure to provoke widespread social revolution among the peasantry through traditional means, such as distributing political pamphlets and leaflets urging uprisings and riots to put pressure on the government, they turned instead to violence in the hope of forcing political reform and undermining the State.

The United Nations defines terrorism as criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them (United Nations, 1994). Similarly, Steven and Anthony (2004) noted that terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted to coerce governments into meeting their demands. Terrorism, according to Gibbs (1989) as cited by Ibrahim (2015), is illegal violence or threatened violence directed against human or nonhuman objects provided that it was:

i. Undertaken or ordered to alter or maintain one putative norm in at least one particular territorial unit or population.
ii. A secretive, furtive, and/or clandestine features that were expected by the participants to conceal their personal identity and /or their future location.
iii. Not undertaken or ordered to further the permanent defence of some areas.
iv. Not conventional warfare, and because of their concealed personal identity, concealment of their future location, their threats, and/or their spatial mobility, the participants perceived themselves as less vulnerable to conventional military action.
v. Perceived by the participants as contributing to the normative goal previously described by inculcating fear of violence in persons other than the immediate target of the actual or threatened violence and/or by publicising some cause.
vi. Based on the definitions above, terrorism is closely connected to political motives.

The activities of terrorists within nations have become increasingly international due to the globalisation of terrorism. Recent terrorist attacks are often linked to technological innovations, which are themselves a result of globalisation (Siegel & Bunt, 2012). Notable terrorist groups include Al-Qa'ida, founded by Osama Bin Laden and rooted in Muslim fundamentalism, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al-Shabaab in Somalia; Al-Qa'ida in the Maghreb, the Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Harakat ul-Ansar Muslim (HUM), Colombia's leftist insurgent groups, Hamas, and Hezbollah (Walker, 2019).

Globalisation and the Emergence of International Terrorism

As human beings advance in technology and organisational capacity, there is an observed increase in the engagement in terrorism and genocide to satisfy group economic interests. Modern terrorism now combines traditional tactics with technological advancements. Chernotsky and Hobbs (2017) assert that globalisation has facilitated the emergence of international terrorism through various means, including increased mobility, technological progress, and the diffusion of extremist ideologies. They emphasise that technological developments in the mid and late nineteenth century played a pivotal role in the rise of terrorism. The ready availability of dynamite, for example, allowed terrorists to conduct and publicise their deadly acts more widely, serving as "propaganda by the deed." In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, some of the most extreme and destructive terrorist organisations, such as Hamas and al-Qaeda, were driven by fundamentalist religious ideologies (Bennet, 2018). Some groups

adopted suicide bombing as a tactic, targeting important economic, military, political, or symbolic sites by detonating bombs carried on their persons. The most prominent groups in the early 21st century included al-Qaeda, the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, and ISIL.

The advancement of mass communication technologies has also enabled the rapid transmission of news, knowledge, ideas, and events over great distances. This ushered in an era of mass communication and migration, which played a vital role in inspiring groups in other regions. Zimmermann (2011) notes that globalisation has facilitated terrorist networks by creating global communication and transportation systems that allow terrorists to plan and carry out attacks more easily. In addition, globalisation has created new opportunities for terrorists to exploit, such as increased movement of people and goods across borders and the expansion of international trade and investment (Acharya, 2018). Although terrorism existed before technological advancements, the Internet has become a powerful tool for terrorists. Physical proximity is no longer necessary for communication. Social media accounts, email platforms, GSM networks, chat rooms, and software—often accessed using fake identities—are used to connect groups of people simultaneously.

The spread of globalisation has facilitated terrorism by opening up new ways for terrorists to recruit, obtain weapons, and access financial resources (Beck, 2002). Globalisation has enabled terrorist groups to attract more members to their organisations. The financing of terrorism has become more complex, faster, and easier with the aid of technology, allowing money and resources to be transferred across borders with minimal difficulty. Moreover, the interconnected nature of the global economy has provided opportunities for illicit financing and the movement of resources that sustain terrorist activities. Also, migration resulting from globalisation has led to the creation of various minority groups and displaced populations who are vulnerable to terrorist recruitment (Lutz, 2016). Similarly, economic inequality arising from Western economic strategies has led to dissatisfaction, making it easier for terrorists to recruit individuals by spreading false claims (Marndelbaum, 2016).

Factors of Terrorism

The factors that give rise to terrorism are varied and complex, often intertwined with the process of globalisation. These factors also help explain the relationship between globalisation and terrorism.

i. **Political Factor:** Terrorism often emerges from the existence of aggrieved groups (Ibrahim, 2015). Such groups typically share two essential

characteristics: they have specific political objectives, and they believe that violence is an inevitable means to achieve their political goals. The political dimension of terrorist violence is the key factor that distinguishes it from other crimes. Singer and Brooking (2018) argued that terrorism is primarily used as an effective tool for political or ideological causes, to create fear and disrupt governance. Countries with poor societies and weak state structures are more vulnerable to civil wars than developed countries (Andhale, 2019). The political fragility of most countries poses significant challenges. For instance, the political turmoil in Niamey raises serious concerns for the future of the Sahel, a region that has become the epicentre of terrorism globally, accounting for 43 per cent of deaths in 2022.

Ifidon and Olaniyan (2018) noted that the prolonged tenure of leadership in many developing countries creates space for terrorism, as groups attempt to remove those in power. Fukuyama (2003) argued that societies that do not embrace liberal democratic values are more likely to experience a range of socio-economic and political challenges, including terrorism, interethnic and intertribal conflicts, religious disputes, and other related issues. Yury (2019) also observed that wealthy nations possess sufficient resources to combat terrorism, whereas poor or developing countries often lack the necessary means due to problems such as corruption, weak governance, and inadequate judicial systems or rule of law. For example, in parts of the Middle East, including Pakistan, law enforcement is often weak. These Societies are socially impoverished due to ongoing conflicts that have beset the region. populations in poverty, turning it into a hotbed of extremism.

ii. **Religious Extremism:** Refaat (2022) stated that while terrorism is not inherently an Islamic phenomenon, it cannot be ignored that a significant portion of terrorism in recent years has been perpetrated in the name of Islam. Some radical religious groups, such as Al Qaeda and Boko Haram, are examples. When people prioritise their religious identities over their national identity, extremist groups like Boko Haram can frame anti-government terrorism as religious warfare and recruit disaffected youths (Campbell, 2006). There is a clear link between state weakness, a feeble national identity, ethno-religious identities, and increased violence. These factors are often exploited by a country's elites to fuel conflicts.

iii. **Social Factor:** United Nations (2019) noted that the populous nature of some countries, especially third-world countries, is said to have accounted for the high level of poverty and high infant mortality seen in these countries. In most countries with the poorest geo-economics regions of the world, where

> population growth is still rapid, with decreased life expectancy due to resource depletion, conflicts, and diseases are prevalent. Ehrlich and Liu (2002) observed that high population growth rates are expected to continue in many developing nations, with a projected annual growth rate for people aged 20-34 of 2.8% as opposed to a rate of 0.16% in developed countries during the years 2000-2050…In the face of such growth, job opportunities may be doomed to become much rarer. And larger numbers of unemployed, dissatisfied young men, who see the West as their enemy, provide the cannon fodder for terrorism.

Boulding (2014) argues that shantytowns, which continue to grow and are filled with large numbers of unemployed and poorly educated individuals, serve as breeding grounds for crime and provide opportunities for extremists to recruit people to their various causes, often targeting those desperate to improve their lives. Krieger and Meierriecks (2010) claim that terrorism, as a seemingly random event, is more likely to occur in larger countries. They also note that terrorism is positively correlated with larger populations, although this may simply reflect the fact that terrorism is more likely in more populous countries. The Middle East is a cultural region characterised by high population growth, and Nigeria, with its Boko Haram activities, is another example.

iv. **Economic Factor:** Many scholars believe that poor economic conditions are a root cause of terrorism. Global warming has accelerated environmental degradation, affecting lives worldwide (Singh, Kumar, & Kumar, 2020). Large areas of land have been deforested, soils depleted, and air and water polluted, often without adequate government intervention to mitigate the consequences (Barange, 2019). Such environmental devastation creates opportunities for people to oppose governments and join terrorist groups. For example, drought in Chad has caused migration into Nigeria, increasing terrorism in the regions bordering Chad. Similarly, the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, is partly a result of drought, which has forced herders to move from the northern region to the south in search of pasture for their livestock.

v. **Natural Resources:** Countries with abundant natural resources may be more prone to terrorism (Khan & Mendes, 2018). The wealth generated from these resources can be diverted to fund terrorist attacks through sponsors. Some of these countries have become prominent terrorist targets due to their strategic importance to powerful nations. Additionally, residents who are resentful of their governments may resort to terrorist acts. The availability of oil in a country can induce civil violence because of its lootability, the grievances it generates, and weak state capacity resulting from over-dependence on oil resources (Moss, 2015). The notorious Islamic State has become the richest terrorist group in

history by smuggling oil at discounted prices (Consumer News and Business Channel, 2014). In Angola, the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) relies on kidnapping and extortion of foreign oil company workers as its main source of income.

vi. **Geographical Location:** Geographical location is one of the domestic factors that contribute to the rise of terrorism. A country situated near nations experiencing terrorism is likely to face an influx of extremists and terrorists (Ali & Gunaratna, 2015). The prolonged wars and foreign interventions in neighbouring Afghanistan have adversely affected Pakistan, resulting in the flow of extremists, terrorists, guns, and drugs into the country. This influx can lead to the growth of terrorist activities within the host country (English, 2021). Nigeria is one of the largest countries in the world by geographical size, characterised by diverse climatic terrains and porous borders, especially in the north, where it shares borders with more than four countries. Nigeria's land area, approximately 909,890 km², ranks among the largest globally (Babayo, Abdulkadir, Abubakar, Muhammad & Kadir, 2019).

According to the United Nations (2020), Nigeria's porous borders facilitate smuggling and transboundary crimes. The smuggling and circulation of contraband goods such as small arms and light weapons, human trafficking, and drug trafficking pose serious challenges to Nigeria's national security. Ngoa (2012) argues that these issues hinder the social and economic development of not only Nigeria but the entire African continent. Similarly, Onuoha, Alumona, and Oshita (2019) note that smuggling encourages the proliferation of arms and ammunition, which aids the activities of the Boko Haram sect in northern Nigeria, thereby compounding criminality and terrorism. Among the challenges in combating Boko Haram is the vastness of the Sambisa Forest, which makes tracking terrorists extremely difficult.

Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

Boko Haram in Nigeria is a notable case study of a terrorist group with an international dimension. Thurston (2019) explains that although the insurgency began as a local movement in the North-east of Nigeria—specifically in Borno State—there have been increasing signs of international collaboration between Boko Haram and militants outside Nigeria. Since 2016, the group has split into two factions: Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State – West Africa (ISIS-WA). The sect receives strong financial, moral, and ideological support from elite sponsors, both within and outside the Islamic community. According to Olanrewaju (2015), the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed thousands of lives and destroyed properties in northern

Nigeria. The group's attacks have also destabilised neighbouring countries, prompting joint military responses such as the Multinational Joint Task Force, which includes Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin. Aliede (2016) noted that military measures aimed at ending Boko Haram's destructive onslaught seem to be taking a long time to achieve success.

The sect emerged in the early 2000s as a small Sunni Islamic group advocating a strict interpretation of Islamic law for Nigeria. Since then, it has grown to become fierce, fearsome, and a significant impediment to the nation's development. Boko Haram's demands include:

i. Conversion of Northern Nigeria into an exclusively Islamic community governed by Sharia principles and injunctions.
ii. Eradication of Western ideas, education, and orientation in Nigeria.
iii. Transfer of executive power at the federal level to an Islamic president of northern extraction.

Globalisation facilitates access to the international financial system, which Boko Haram exploits to fund its operations. The group benefits from cross-border smuggling of goods, arms, and people across Nigeria and neighbouring countries such as Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. In expanding its recruitment efforts beyond Nigeria, Boko Haram recruit's fighters from neighbouring countries, leveraging shared cultural and linguistic ties. For instance, the porous borders in the Lake Chad region have facilitated the movement of fighters and displaced people, creating opportunities for radicalisation (Faluyi et al., 2019). Recruitment, attacks, and propaganda are coordinated through telecommunications and internet technologies. These global media and online platforms have enabled the group to spread extremist narratives beyond Nigeria, appealing to broader audiences. Notably, Boko Haram has used videos and social media to spread fear and attract international attention from global powers, including the U.S., France, and the UK, which provide financial, logistical, and intelligence support to Nigeria and its neighbours. However, globalisation itself, external funding, corruption, and the group's ability to operate across borders make it difficult to effectively address the threats posed by Boko Haram (Maza et al., 2020).

According to Obayan and Orebiyi (2014), the causes of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted. Key factors include religious extremism, poverty and unemployment, political and economic marginalisation, weak governance and corruption, globalisation and external influence, ethnic and religious tensions, porous borders, and regional instability. The theory of relative deprivation aligns with these key factors, suggesting that individuals or groups resort to terrorism when they perceive a

significant gap between their expectations and reality, particularly in economic, political, or social terms. Hamm (2011) noted that relative deprivation has been cited as a factor driving social disorder, including rioting, looting, terrorism, and civil wars.

Strategies for Counterterrorism

Combating terrorism was first recorded in the ancient Roman Empire when the Roman administration suppressed assassinations carried out by the Sicarii Zealots in the province of Judea, targeting civilians who collaborated with the Romans. Counterterrorism is defined by Omelicheva (2007) as a blend of external and domestic strategies intended to curtail the activities of terrorists while protecting citizens from harm resulting from their actions. Rodgers (2008) proposed measures to counter terrorism, including:

i. Intelligence gathering, vigilance and strengthening of the security apparatus
ii. Deterrence and military intervention
iii. Mitigating the underlying factors that motivate potential terrorists.

Sageman (2014) argued that for counterterrorism initiatives to be effective, there must be greater harmonisation and coordination among the international community, as well as between international and regional organisations. Similarly, Alexander (2006) advocates cooperation between states as an efficient counterterrorism strategy. Other key organisations noted for their strategies in countering global terrorism include the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between international terrorism and globalisation. It was organised into four sections. The introduction laid the foundation for the research and clarified key concepts relevant to the topic. The study adopted the relative deprivation theory to explain the connection between terrorism and globalisation. The third section reviewed existing literature on the history of terrorism, its emergence and contributing factors, as well as issues related to international security. Boko Haram in Nigeria was used as a case study to provide empirical evidence.

Findings from this study have demonstrated that globalisation, while fostering economic growth and technological advancement, has also inadvertently provided fertile ground for the proliferation of international terrorism. The increased interconnectedness among nations has enabled terrorist groups to exploit advancements

in communication, finance, and mobility, thereby enhancing their operational capabilities and reach. The research highlights that the root causes of terrorism are multifaceted, encompassing political, religious, social, economic, and geographical factors, with relative deprivation serving as a key explanatory framework. It was noted that terrorist organisations typically pursue specific ideologies and are predominantly located in underdeveloped regions. Also, the prevalence of terrorism is often linked to fragile state conditions, marked by rule of law violations, a compromised judiciary, and extended political terms. Such factors contribute to the rise of various groups that actively oppose the government in power.

The study therefore recommends that international terrorism can be most effectively addressed by tackling its domestic root causes. Countries should focus on resolving the political, social, and economic factors that contribute to terrorism. Undemocratic governance, which often fosters the emergence of terrorists, must be reformed. Economic and social initiatives aimed at promoting growth and improving conditions for youth should be implemented, including the provision of employment opportunities for unemployed young people. Additionally, sensitive issues such as religion should not be exploited by opposing groups to incite conflict. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of regional cooperation, effective governance, and the strengthening of democratic values in mitigating the adverse effects of globalisation on security.

Deepening global intelligence sharing, enhancing regional cooperation, and implementing economic sanctions can improve the tracking of terrorists. Adequate facilities should be established to monitor technology usage and the transfer of funds across borders. Proactive measures must be taken to secure borders against the movement of terrorists within a region. Additionally, countries should strengthen their aviation and border security systems. To effectively combat terrorism, democratic values must be upheld, and the law enforcement and judicial systems in countries prone to terrorism should be strengthened. States should also intensify efforts to counter violent extremism.

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GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION IN THE NIGERIAN STATE

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the appropriation of Nigerian cultural expressions within the context of globalization, focusing on how indigenous music, fashion, language, and spiritual symbols are commodified, decontextualized, and repurposed by both external actors and internal elites. As Nigeria's cultural forms gain international visibility through transnational platforms, they are increasingly subjected to extraction without consent, recognition, or reciprocal benefit. Drawing on Cultural Globalization Theory and World-Systems Theory, the study examines how global cultural flows—though often celebrated as enabling diversity and creativity—are structured by enduring hierarchies that facilitate unequal cultural exchange. The analysis employs a critical interpretive approach, integrating recent scholarly literature and illustrative examples to trace how appropriation undermines cultural sovereignty, fragments national identity, and weakens the intergenerational transmission of heritage. Rather than treating appropriation as a marginal or aesthetic issue, the paper argues that it reflects deeper structural inequalities embedded in both global capitalism and domestic elite practices. The study concludes by proposing multidimensional policy interventions—including legal reform, strengthened cultural governance, and expanded cultural education—to safeguard Nigeria's intangible heritage and promote equitable cultural engagement on the global stage. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on cultural justice, postcolonial identity, and the politics of representation in the era of globalized cultural production.

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Appropriation, Nigerian Cultural Expressions, Globalization,

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, globalization is not limited to the movement of goods and capital; it also reshapes cultural meanings, aesthetic forms, and symbolic power. For countries like Nigeria, this process presents a paradox. While globalization expands platforms for cultural expression and visibility, it also exposes local cultures to extraction, distortion, and commodification. Within this context, cultural appropriation—the commercialization or adoption of cultural elements without adequate understanding, credit, or consent—has become a central concern in global cultural politics (Eze, 2018).

Nigeria, with its rich heritage and vibrant creative sectors, has emerged as a key contributor to global cultural flows. From Afrobeats and Ankara fashion to traditional spirituality and Nollywood cinema, Nigerian cultural products now command global audiences. Yet, this visibility often yields uneven benefits. Foreign corporations and artists frequently extract and repackage Nigerian cultural elements for global markets without acknowledging their origins or sharing in the gains (Ajayi & Adediran, 2024). At the same time, within Nigeria, elites also engage in appropriation by commodifying traditional symbols for political or commercial purposes (Onyima, 2016). This paper interrogates how globalization facilitates the appropriation of Nigerian culture by both external actors operating within a global capitalist system and internal agents navigating local cultural economies. It adopts Cultural Globalization Theory, which examines the contested flow of culture across borders, and World-Systems Theory, which situates these flows within structural inequalities shaped by core-periphery dynamics. Together, these frameworks offer a dual lens: one emphasizes the negotiation of meaning, the other, the global asymmetries in cultural exchange and valuation. By analyzing both external and internal dimensions of appropriation, this study contributes to debates on cultural ownership, justice, and identity. It challenges celebratory accounts of globalization by foregrounding the embedded hierarchies that shape how Nigerian culture is circulated, redefined, and reclaimed in the global arena.

Conceptual Clarification

This study engages three key concepts—globalization, culture, and cultural appropriation—to provide analytical clarity and coherence. These concepts are not only central to the paper's thematic concerns but are also deeply interlinked with the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier, particularly Cultural Globalization Theory and World-Systems Theory.

Globalization

Globalization refers to the intensification of cross-border flows and interconnections across economic, political, technological, and cultural spheres (Iqbal, 2024). As Giddens (1990) notes, it compresses time and space, allowing geographically distant social relations to become immediate. Scholars like Magu (2015) and Alkharafi & Alsabah (2025) have drawn attention to the cultural dimension of globalization, where symbols, identities, and narratives traverse borders through digital platforms and capitalist markets. In line with Appadurai's "scapes" framework, these flows do not occur evenly; rather, they reflect existing asymmetries in power and access, often privileging dominant cultures while marginalizing others (Tuncer, 2023). This aligns closely with World-Systems Theory, which explains how cultural content from peripheral societies like Nigeria is often appropriated and commodified by actors in the core zones of the global system.

Culture

Culture, although widely used, remains a contested concept. It generally refers to the shared practices, beliefs, languages, norms, and symbolic systems through which communities make meaning and express identity (Ojalehto & Medin, 2015). More than a repository of traditions, culture is dynamic and historically embedded, evolving through interaction, resistance, and creativity (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). As World-Systems Theory highlights, cultural production is shaped by the material conditions and structural positions of those who create and disseminate it. At the same time, Cultural Globalization Theory draws attention to the dialogic and negotiated nature of culture, emphasizing that cultural flows are not unidirectional but shaped by local actors and historical contexts (Faiz, 2024).

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation, as used in this study, refers to the unauthorized or exploitative use of cultural elements by individuals or groups outside the culture of origin, particularly in contexts marked by inequality (Lenard & Balint, 2020). It becomes especially problematic when cultural practices are decontextualized, aestheticized, or commercialized without consent or compensation (Cruz et al., 2024). As scholars such as Marzal & Kafri (2025) have noted, appropriation reflects the structural logic of global capitalism: cultural symbols from less powerful groups are extracted, repackaged, and sold in ways that obscure their origins and disempower their communities. This aligns directly with World-Systems Theory, which identifies such extraction as a feature of core-periphery relations, and Cultural Globalization Theory,

which problematizes the uneven dynamics of cultural exchange. In sum, these three concepts not only structure the analysis but also resonate with the theoretical framework adopted. Globalization creates the structural conditions under which cultural flows intensify; culture provides the content and symbolic material that moves; and cultural appropriation captures the power-laden dynamics that govern how and by whom these cultural elements are used. Understanding these interrelations is essential to unpacking the stakes of cultural visibility, authenticity, and ownership in the Nigerian context.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Cultural Globalization Theory and World-Systems Theory to examine how globalization facilitates the appropriation of Nigerian cultural expressions. Together, these frameworks offer complementary insights—one cultural, the other structural—into how Nigerian culture is circulated, transformed, and commodified in global and local contexts. Cultural Globalization Theory, advanced by scholars like Arjun Appadurai, emphasizes the multidirectional flow of culture in an interconnected world (Portnoi & Portnoi, 2016). Appadurai's framework of global cultural flows—ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes—helps explain how Nigerian music, fashion, language, and spirituality move across digital platforms, diaspora communities, and consumer markets (Ben, 2019). The theory stresses hybridization and local agency, resisting the view that globalization merely imposes Western values (Faiz, 2024).

However, critics argue that it often overlooks global power asymmetries. Cultural blending may mask the disproportionate gains accrued by Western corporations at the expense of non-Western creators (Crane, 2016). In Nigeria, while Afrobeats and Ankara flourish globally, their originators often receive limited recognition or returns (Ajayi & Adediran, 2024). World-Systems Theory, developed by Wallerstein (1974), addresses this imbalance by situating culture within global capitalist structures. It categorizes the world into core, semi-periphery, and periphery zones—with core states controlling capital and cultural production, and peripheral states, like Nigeria, supplying raw materials and increasingly, cultural content (Pereira & Xerri, 2020). This explains how Nigerian symbols are extracted and monetized by Global North actors with little benefit to origin communities (Deckard & Shapiro, 2019). Yet, World-Systems Theory has been critiqued for its determinism, sometimes understating the agency of actors in the periphery (Babones, 2015). Nigerian cultural creators increasingly shape global trends, asserting influence despite structural constraints (Akinpelu, 2021). Together, these theories provide a dual lens: Cultural Globalization Theory captures the complexity of cultural flows, while World-Systems Theory foregrounds the structural inequalities that

shape them. This combination enables a nuanced understanding of how Nigerian cultural visibility can simultaneously signify empowerment and exploitation.

Globalization and the Shaping of Nigerian Cultural Expression

Globalization has significantly reshaped Nigerian cultural expression, influencing how identities are formed and how cultural products are produced, circulated, and consumed. As Nigeria becomes increasingly enmeshed in transnational cultural flows through digital media, diasporic networks, and economic exchanges, its cultural forms have gained global visibility (Akinpelu, 2021). Nigerian music, fashion, cinema, cuisine, and spirituality now circulate beyond national borders, repositioning the country within the global cultural economy (Faidi, 2024). Music and film are at the forefront of this transformation. The global rise of Afrobeats, led by artists like Burna Boy and Tems, reflects how Nigerian soundscapes have entered global platforms such as the Grammys and Spotify (Ezeudu & Chukwudubem, 2024). Their blend of Pidgin English and African rhythms asserts local identity while appealing to international markets (Aruku et al., 2025). Similarly, Nollywood has achieved transnational reach through platforms like Netflix, presenting indigenous narratives to global audiences (Omenugha et al., 2016).

In fashion, designers such as Lisa Folawiyo and Kenneth Ize have popularized indigenous textiles like Ankara and Aso-Oke on international runways (Waddell, 2017). Nigerian cuisine—exemplified by dishes like jollof rice and egusi soup—has also gained transnational traction via restaurants and online food platforms (Adesina, 2017). Yet these gains are not without tension. Cultural elements are often commodified and decontextualized. Sacred rituals such as masquerade performances are now staged in diplomatic and commercial spaces, stripped of spiritual meaning (Chukwuemeka et al., 2024). Visual symbols like cowries and deity imagery appear in pop culture without acknowledgment of their cultural roots (Amadi & Agena, 2015).

Internally, globalization fosters hierarchies that privilege Western aesthetics. Hollywood, global advertising, and social media reinforce beauty ideals, fashion norms, and language preferences that marginalize indigenous traditions. The rise of skin-lightening and the decline of local languages exemplify this shift (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019).

The Nigerian state is also a key player in this transformation. Through ministries and embassies, it promotes culture as soft power—organizing expos and diaspora festivals to brand Nigerian identity abroad (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018). However, these efforts often prioritize visibility over authenticity, focusing on spectacle rather than protecting

community ownership (Ajayi & Adediran, 2024). This institutional approach treats culture as symbolic capital rather than living heritage. Performances are rebranded for diplomatic consumption, sidelining source communities and stripping traditions of context (Onyima, 2016). Cultural policy remains weak, offering limited protection for indigenous knowledge systems (Folorunso, 2021). These dynamics reveal a paradox: globalization enhances Nigeria's cultural visibility while exposing it to appropriation. Culture thus becomes a contested domain where identity, innovation, and exploitation intersect (Deckard & Shapiro, 2019). Cultural globalization, in this sense, must be understood not merely as diffusion but as a power-laden process shaped by inequalities over who creates, who profits, and who defines heritage.

Cultural Appropriation in Nigeria: External and Internal Dimensions

In an era where cultural symbols traverse borders with unprecedented speed, the global visibility of Nigerian culture has expanded dramatically. From Afrobeats reverberating on international stages to Ankara prints gracing global runways, Nigeria's cultural repertoire is both celebrated and commodified across continents (Akinpelu, 2021). This diffusion is often hailed as a triumph of cultural globalization—a testament to Nigeria's soft power and creativity. Yet beneath the sheen of recognition lies a more contested terrain: the appropriation of cultural forms in ways that obscure their origins, strip them of meaning, and detach them from their originating communities (Folorunso, 2021). Cultural appropriation in Nigeria unfolds along a layered spectrum shaped by external forces and internal hierarchies (Eze, 2018). Global actors and domestic elites both recontextualize and commodify cultural symbols, often without consent or reciprocity (Cruz et al., 2024). As appreciation, adaptation, and appropriation increasingly blur, it becomes essential to interrogate not just what is borrowed, but how, by whom, and to what end (Lenard & Balint, 2020).

At the global level, Nigerian culture inspires artists, designers, and corporations in the Global North, though often through asymmetrical engagements (Faidi, 2024). Western pop artists sample Afrobeats rhythms or invoke Nigerian spiritual motifs without involving Nigerian creators or acknowledging cultural contexts. Global fashion brands release "African-inspired" lines using indigenous designs but rarely attribute or compensate local artisans (Tella, 2023). Media campaigns frequently draw on religious symbols or tribal aesthetics to evoke "authenticity" while disregarding their sacred significance (Amadi & Agena, 2015). Appropriation, however, is not solely a foreign imposition. Within Nigeria, it operates across ethnic, class, and generational lines. Elites and political figures often use traditional attire, dances, and language to project authenticity, yet these performances are frequently detached from the communities they reference (Onyima, 2016). Indigenous symbols—language, attire, rituals—are deployed

in branding and politics as strategic assets, stripped of their communal meanings (Onwuegbuna & Igbokwe, 2020).

Youth subcultures in cities like Lagos and Abuja also remix traditional motifs. While some reflect creative hybridity, others risk erasing the social or spiritual meanings embedded in these forms (Onanuga, 2019). Ritual objects and ancestral symbols increasingly appear in hip-hop lyrics and fashion, made stylish but stripped of context (Omenugha et al., 2016). Internal appropriation is thus part of a broader commodification process shaped by global media logics and neoliberal aspirations (Cruz et al., 2024). Ultimately, Nigerian culture is increasingly treated as open-access—available for extraction, reinterpretation, and profit—often without regard for its spiritual, historical, or communal roots. What renders appropriation problematic is not cultural movement itself, but the unequal conditions under which it occurs. It is structured by power: who can borrow, who is amplified, who profits, and who is erased (Marzal & Kafri, 2025). Appropriation, then, is not incidental to globalization but a structural expression of its asymmetries.

Implications of Cultural Appropriation for Cultural Sovereignty and Identity in Nigeria

Cultural appropriation, in both external and internal forms, poses significant challenges to cultural sovereignty and national identity in Nigeria. Cultural sovereignty refers to the right of communities to define, preserve, and regulate their cultural expressions in ways aligned with their values, worldviews, and histories (Knickerbocker, 2018). In a globalized world shaped by uneven cultural flows, this sovereignty is increasingly eroded. Nigerian cultural expressions—music, language, textiles, ritual practices—are often extracted and circulated without consent, context, or compensation (Ogunnubi & Idowu, 2022), threatening communal ownership and reshaping meaning in ways that disempower originators (Lalonde, 2021). One major consequence is the erosion of authenticity. When cultural symbols are removed from their original contexts and reimagined for global markets or elite consumers, their spiritual and historical dimensions are flattened (Eze, 2018). For example, sacred masquerade iconography may appear modern and vibrant in media campaigns, yet lose its traditional significance (Amadi & Agena, 2015). Over time, such symbolic distortion undermines intergenerational continuity, as younger Nigerians encounter culture through commodified rather than lived forms (Omenugha et al., 2016).

Appropriation also fragments national identity. Nigeria's over 250 ethnic groups require inclusive cultural recognition, yet global appeal often dictates which traditions gain visibility. When certain cultural forms—such as Yoruba aesthetics or Igbo proverbs—

are valorized while others are ignored, it fosters symbolic inequality and deepens cultural hierarchies (Marzal & Kafri, 2025; Eze, 2018). This unevenness risks inflaming inter-ethnic resentment and weakening efforts at national cohesion. The economic dimensions are equally stark. Many Nigerian communities possess rich intangible heritage but lack systems to protect, register, or profit from it (Balogun, 2025). When marketers and artists exploit these resources without consultation or compensation, appropriation becomes economic disenfranchisement (Beninger & Francis, 2016). The absence of robust intellectual property protections further exposes cultural custodians to persistent exploitation (Adam & Yusuf, 2017).

At a deeper level, appropriation weakens the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. Decontextualized and commodified versions of tradition reduce heritage to aesthetic or commercial objects (Mohyeddin, 2024). Practices once tied to rites of passage, moral education, or communal memory are now repackaged for entertainment and profit (Cruz et al., 2024). Without deliberate cultural education and institutional preservation, this may lead to cultural amnesia and the erosion of identity and social cohesion (Lenard & Balint, 2020). Ultimately, cultural appropriation in Nigeria reveals the contradictions of cultural globalization: culture may gain visibility, yet remain vulnerable. It challenges the ability of Nigerians to control how their heritage is interpreted, valued, and used (Onyima, 2016). Addressing this requires multifaceted action—legal reforms to protect communal rights, inclusive policies for cultural equity, and educational strategies that restore pride in indigenous knowledge (Balogun, 2025). Cultural sovereignty is deeply linked to national dignity and democratic self-definition. In this sense, appropriation must be understood as a political struggle over who defines and benefits from a people's heritage (Lenard & Balint, 2020).

Policy Implications

The appropriation of Nigerian cultural expressions in the globalized era is not just a cultural concern but a critical policy issue, with implications for sovereignty, identity, and development. Despite the rising international visibility of Nigerian cultural outputs, there remains a weak institutional and legal framework for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (Folorunso, 2021). This regulatory gap leaves indigenous expressions vulnerable to commodification and exploitation, often without consent or compensation to the originating communities (Adam & Yusuf, 2017). A key policy priority is the creation of robust legislation on cultural and intellectual property rights, especially regarding traditional knowledge and communal ownership. Current laws, including Nigeria's Copyright Act, largely emphasize individual authorship and fail to recognize collective cultural production (Oladokun et al., 2024). Policy reform must incorporate provisions for communal authorship, oral traditions, and sacred symbols. This includes

local registration, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and legal redress against misappropriation both within and beyond Nigeria (Onyima, 2016). In an age where appropriation often unfolds on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, legislation must also regulate digital visibility, use, and monetization of cultural content (Ajayi, 2025).

Beyond legal reform, cultural governance institutions must be revitalized. Ministries of culture and allied agencies should transition from symbolic functions to active roles in curating and promoting heritage (Nomishan & Sani, 2023). This requires investment in infrastructure—museums, archives, local arts councils—that support preservation and creative renewal (Offiah, 2017). Additionally, foreign missions must engage in more strategic cultural diplomacy, ensuring equitable representation of Nigerian creatives on global platforms (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018). Cultural education is also essential. Strengthening cultural literacy can reduce internal appropriation rooted in ignorance and foster a deeper connection to heritage (Uzuegbunam, 2020). Curricula should embed indigenous histories, philosophies, and symbols not as relics, but as living frameworks for national renewal (Obot, 2019). Orientation programs, heritage festivals, and digital storytelling can further bridge generational divides and instill cultural pride (Onyima, 2016). In sum, addressing cultural appropriation requires a multidimensional policy agenda encompassing legal protections, institutional strengthening, diplomacy, and education. Without such efforts, Nigeria risks losing its cultural legacy while deepening symbolic and economic inequalities. Cultural heritage must be seen not merely as aesthetic, but as a strategic resource for national dignity, sustainable development, and cultural justice (Folorunso, 2021).

Conclusion

Globalization has significantly enhanced the visibility of Nigerian cultural expressions, propelling local music, fashion, language, and symbols into international arenas (Akinpelu, 2021). While this transnational diffusion enables cultural diplomacy and economic engagement, it also renders Nigerian culture vulnerable to appropriation—where its elements are extracted, stylized, and commodified without consent or contextual fidelity (Eze, 2018). As this study has shown, cultural appropriation in Nigeria is driven not only by external actors but also by domestic elites who selectively repackage indigenous traditions for symbolic or economic gain (Amadi & Agena, 2015). The consequences are profound. Cultural sovereignty—the right of communities to define and regulate their cultural expressions—is steadily eroded when appropriation severs origins, distorts meanings, and excludes originators from cultural benefits (Knickerbocker, 2018). National identity also suffers as certain forms are privileged for global appeal while others are marginalized, reinforcing internal hierarchies and fragmenting collective heritage (Marzal & Kafri, 2025). Additionally, commodification

weakens intergenerational transmission, reducing ancestral knowledge to transient trends with diminished educational or communal resonance (Mohyeddin, 2024). Without deliberate legal, institutional, and educational action, Nigeria may face a future where its culture is globally admired but locally disempowered—widely circulated yet detached from sovereignty and self-definition (Folorunso, 2021).

Recommendations

In light of the challenges posed by cultural appropriation—both external and internal—this study recommends a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy to safeguard Nigeria's cultural sovereignty and promote ethical cultural exchange. First, there is a pressing need to reform legal frameworks to recognize communal authorship and protect indigenous cultural expressions as collective intellectual property. Existing legislation, including the Copyright Act, should be expanded to cover traditional knowledge systems and intangible heritage, with mechanisms for registration, benefit-sharing, and digital enforcement (Oladokun et al., 2024). Second, Nigeria must strengthen cultural governance. Ministries and agencies responsible for heritage should be empowered with the resources and authority to actively preserve and promote cultural assets. Investment in museums, archives, and local arts councils is essential for documentation, education, and innovation (Offiah, 2017). Cultural diplomacy should also prioritize equitable representation and meaningful participation of Nigerian creatives in global arenas (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018).

Third, greater investment in cultural education and public awareness is vital. School curricula should integrate indigenous knowledge, philosophy, and history—not as folklore but as key components of national identity (Obot, 2019). Community programs such as storytelling festivals, oral history projects, and youth mentorship can foster intergenerational transmission and cultural pride (Uzuegbunam, 2020). Finally, Nigeria should take a more assertive stance in global advocacy for cultural justice. This includes supporting international treaties and platform regulations that promote equitable cultural exchange and protect vulnerable cultural expressions. Collaboration with African Union bodies and UNESCO can amplify Nigeria's role in shaping global cultural norms (Folorunso, 2021). Together, these legal, institutional, educational, and diplomatic interventions will enable Nigeria to protect its cultural assets and assert agency in global cultural discourse, ensuring its heritage remains respected, resilient, and equitably shared in an era of globalization.

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MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES (MSMES) AS DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, 2010 – 2023

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Abstract

Micro, Small and medium Scale Enterprises play very critical roles in the development of any nation because they contribute significantly to the gross domestic product and provide much needed employment for the population. SMEs are therefore vital to the advancement and sustenance of the manufacturing and industrial sectors in most developing economies. Their contributions in the area of agriculture, science and technology, health and medicine, leather works and mining cannot be overemphasized in Nigeria. This study explores the contributions of MSMEs in the development of the Nigeria economy 2010 -2023. It discusses how MSMEs impact significantly on the Nigeria development and its great potential to make Nigeria to be among the 20 leading economies in the world by 2050 if properly harnessed. The theory of administrative management by Henri Fayol (1841 -1925) was used to examine MSMEs as drivers of growth and development in Nigeria, the study also relied on secondary data to assess, the contributions of SMEs to Nigeria development. The study identified the lack of proper co-ordination of SMEs by established government institutions such as (SMEDAN), lack of access to credit facilities, High interest rates, insecurity, harsh business environment, multiple taxation, low technological development and infrastructural deficit as some of the challenges facing SMEs development in Nigeria. The study notes the deliberate attempt by government to intervene in the sector further identified unwillingness of beneficiaries of intervention support to pay back loans, corruption and business attitude, fake and substandard products as some of the factors militating against the development of MSMEs in Nigeria. The study assesses the contributions of SMEs to Nigeria national development and notes its role in

employing large number of youths across the country, production of needed goods and services for domestic consumption and export and lament that there is room for a lot of improvements. the study concluded that for developing country like Nigeria it is imperative to focus attention on SMEs if it is serious about development of its manufacturing sector. The study recommended the reorganization of the National Directorate of employment and the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises development agencies, enhanced provision of strategic support to SMMEs that are active among other recommendations.

Key words: *SMEs, Employment, Drivers of Growth and development, National Development.*

Introduction

Small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are the live wire of many developing economies; they constitute a significant part of the manufacturing, trade and services sectors of many developing economies such as Nigeria. According to the World Bank, MSMEs account for the majority of businesses worldwide and are important contributors to job creation and global economic development. The Bank further stated that MSMEs make up about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide, contributing up to 40% of national income (GDP) in emerging economies, thus underscoring its strategic important to the development of the global economy. MSMEs development has become the priority of the Nigerian government, in the last four decades to create employment and boost the country's gross domestic product. Nigeria's close interest in developing the MSMES has not provided the much-needed improvement of its economy which is still characterized by low-capacity utilization, mass unemployment, rural urban migration, corruption, armed robbery, kidnapping, infrastructural deficit, Insurgency, Farmers herders' conflicts, poverty and crude oil dependent economy.

Nigeria is blessed with vast human and mineral resources but has failed woefully to fully tap and benefit from these resources. The inability of Nigeria to harness its resources through the development of MSMES may have ranked her among the 20 poorest countries in the world, the pervading poverty in Nigeria just like many African countries is underscored by the data that over 60% of Nigeria population live on less than one dollar a day and there is low life expectancy (United Nations Human Development Report 2015). MSMES therefore is expected to assist Nigeria solve the problems of its economic stagnation by generating the much-needed employment, diversifying its economy away from oil and gas, stimulating local production amongst others, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which seek to address the problem of underdevelopment in developing countries by 2030. Despite the

increasing contribution of MSMEs to the Nigerian Economy, the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020 has affected most MSMEs, further compounding the employment crisis in Nigeria and underscored the importance of MSMEs as a major provider of employment in Nigeria. The total number of those employed by the MSME sector as at 2010 is estimated to be in the region of 32,414,884 according to the National Bureau of Statistics. The role of MSMEs in the Nigerian economy has a historical antecedent, the adoption of structural adjustment programme in 1986 by the Nigerian Government with prescription from the IMF and World Bank, principally was to ensure that small businesses assess credit facilities and rely on the use of local raw materials. Successive Governments sustained the encouragement for the development of MSMS by conceiving and implementing programmes such as the establishment of Industrial development centers, industrial parks, World Bank/IMF assisted programmes, Central Bank intervention programmes such as Anchor Borrowers programme, setting up of Micro finance banks to rejuvenate the sector. Furthermore, institutions such as SMEDAN, the National Economic Reconstruction Fund, the Small and Medium Scale Loan scheme, the People's Bank of Nigeria, and National Directorate of Employment were also established. These institutions were however not sustained and where frequently dissolved or restructured as a particular regime deem fit, in some cases the necessary laws enabling the smooth running of these bodies were not made, impeding their growth and developments. The most worrisome issue is that despite all these interventions by the government and international donor agencies the MSMES is hampered by access to finance, inability to acquire intellectual property rights amongst others.

The main objective of this paper is to assess the role of MSMES in the development of the Nigeria economy, to identify and discuss the challenges faced by them in Nigeria and proffer solutions to the identified challenges. The basic question is what are the roles MSMES are playing in the Nigeria economy, what are the challenges facing them in Nigeria and how can these challenges be addressed.

Economic growth is the process of increasing the sizes of national economies, the macro-economic indications, especially the GDP per capita, in an ascendant but not necessarily linear direction, with positive effects on the economic-social sector, while development shows us how growth impacts on the society by increasing the standard of life. economic growth is the process of increasing the sizes of national economies, the macro-economic indications, especially the GDP per capita, in an ascendant but not Nnecessarily linear direction, with positive effects on the economic-social sector, while development shows us how growth impacts on the society by increasing the standard of life.

Conceptual Clarification

Medium Scale and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

MSMEs are small businesses set up to produce and provide service at a low scale and with very little capitalization; they normally have very few workers. Small and medium enterprises in Nigeria are understood according to certain criteria basically according to its size, employment and assets excluding land and buildings. In Nigeria the Central Bank and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency, categorized MSMEs as indicated in the table be

S/N	Size Category	Employment	Assets (=N= Million) (excl. land and buildings)
1	Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 5
2	Small enterprises	10 to 49	5 to less than 50
3	Medium enterprises	50 to 199	50 to less than 500

Source: National Policy on MSMEs

From the table above Micro Enterprises are those enterprises whose total assets (excluding land and buildings) are less than Five Million Naira with a workforce not exceeding ten employees on the other hand Small Enterprises are those enterprises whose total assets (excluding land and building) are above Five Million Naira but not exceeding Fifty Million Naira with a total workforce of above ten, but not exceeding forty-nine employees. Medium Enterprises are those enterprises with total assets are above Fifty Million Naira, but not exceeding Five Hundred Million Naira with a total workforce of between 50 and 199 employees. (Source: National Policy on MSME)

Employment

Employment is a paid work which is between an employer and employee normally for a salary as agreed, the employee may also be entitled to some other allowances and benefits. The essence of employment is for the employee to provide his service to the employer basically to earn a living. Closely related to employment is the issue of unemployment which is the inability of able-bodied young men and women to be working to earn a living. According to the International Monetary Fund, whereas in the past the unemployed. MSMEs have the power to form employment as their method of

operations is a lot of labor intensive. Their labour-intensive nature is far on top of that of enormous enterprises. It's conjointly been determined that a lot of jobs per unit of investment capital and per unit energy consumed are created worldwide by SMEs than giant scale enterprises (Venkatarman, 1984)

Economic Growth and Development

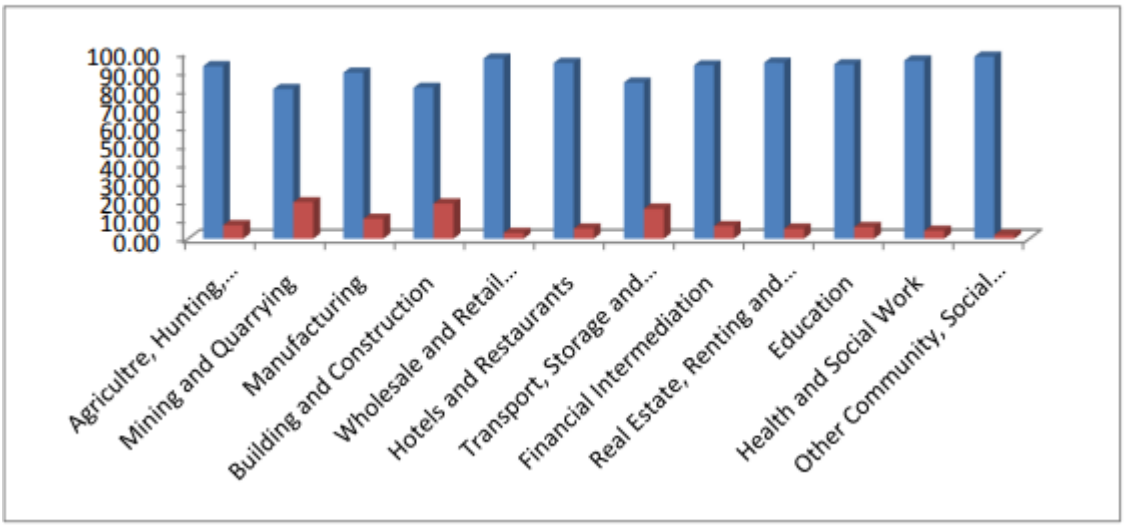
Economic growth connotes changes in material production within a given period in a particular country. It means an annual increase in the rate of growth of a country measured by its GDP or national income. (Ivic 2015). The short-run seasonal or temporary increases in income should not be confused with economic growth. Increase in income should be based on Increase in Productive Capacity: Increase in income can be sustained only when this increase results from some durable increase in productive capacity of the economy like modernization or use of new technology in production, strengthening of infrastructure like transport network, improved electricity generation and so on. Define clearly the concept of economic growth and development (Economic growth can simply be defined as a rise in GDP or GDP per capital. Economic development is a broad concept encompassing economic growth and other developmental dimensions. It can be defined as "a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structure, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty (Todaro and Smith 2009: 16). Economic development on the other hand is the improvement in material well-being of society and it's more encompassing than economic growth. Economic development includes changes in social, cultural, political as well as economic sector of a nation and may witness changes in resource supplies, capital formation, technology, skills and efficiency the economic system. In fact, it means increase in output of goods and services, these changes result in income distribution among classes, create employment and tackle poverty. Development on the other hand can be an orderly and systematic transformation of a country from a particular stage to another, economic development goes far beyond just real per capital (GNP) or national income and its sustenance over time through continuous increase per capital productivity. It is concerned with who benefits from the fruits of economic growth, a vast majority of the people or just a fraction of it, the concept refers to the adoption of new technologies, transition from agriculture based on industry-based economy and general improvement in living standard. Socio-economic development indicators and indices include gross domestic product (GDP), income distribution, literacy and education, access to health care, social security and pension and modern transportation. (Tom 2014), n contrast and compared to development, economic growth is, in a limited sense, an increase of the national income per capita, and it

involves the analysis, especially in quantitative terms, of this process, with a focus on the functional relations between the endogenous variables; in a wider sense, it involves the increase of the GDP, GNP and NI, therefore of the national wealth, including the production capacity, expressed in both absolute and relative size, per capita, encompassing also the structural modifications of econoFor the economic development of any country is also of great importance and changes in production structure and introduction of new products, new products, new techniques and technologies, new processes of production, raw materials, new energy sources. The development includes the evergrowing share of accumulation in the national income. Thus, economic development represents a very complex process and phenomenon. Economic growth, measured by the percentage increase in national income per capita, can not really be realistic indication of the achieved level of economic (IVIC 2015)

An Overview of MSMEs as Drivers of Growth and Development

The contribution of MSMES to the development of the global economy have been highlighted by several scholars and the world bank, According to (Schumpeter and Backhaus, 2003) poor countries has sometimes experienced economic growth but little or no socio-economic development initiative, to them economic development is prominent in three major area namely government undertaking to meet broad economic objectives such as price stability, high employment and sustainable growth, such include monetary and fiscal policies, regulations of financial institutions, trade and tax policy, they further opined that programme that provide infrastructure and services such as highways, parks, affordable housing, crime preventions and education and lastly he emphasized the need for job creation and retention through specific efforts in business finance, marketing, neighborhood development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer and real estate development. For example, in countries like Ghana, about 70% of all business concern are MSMES and contribute about 40% of the country's GDP, similarly Kenya an east African country most of the businesses are MSMEs an estimated over 1.3 million micro and small exist in the country, employing close to 2.3 million people (Dimoji & Onwumere, 2016; Mbogua, 2003). The role of MSMES therefore in contributing to growth and development of developing economies is not limited to Africa alone, many countries in Asia has experience the impact of MSMEs on their economy for example in India and South Korea, about 98 percent of businesses are MSMEs (Sanusi, 2003).

Figure 1 Total Number of Small and Medium Enterprises by Sector



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2025

The above table indicate total number of SMEs by sector the wholesale and retail sector constitute the highest, closely followed by agriculture, manufacturing, hotels and restaurants, health education. The development of the MSMES sector in Nigeria have been affected by the challenge of corruption and other factors, the spate of corruption going on in the country, therefore calls for sober reflection and critical appraisal, with a view to proffering solutions to cage the hydra headed phenomenon. (Adetula 2008:6)

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts the theory of administrative management by Henri Fayol (1841 - 1925), the theory gave a universal applicability to the theory of management, which it argues affects both large and small enterprises. The main arguments of the theory are that for any organization to be efficient and productive, irrespective of nature of the organization whether in manufacturing or non-manufacturing, big or small, commercial or charitable, governmental or nongovernmental it must be well structured and organized to achieve optimum growth and development. Fayol opined that every firm functions optimally if it is well organized and structured to achieve its goals and identified planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. He categorized business organisation into six groups namely technical operation (making use of machines and technology), commercial Operation (marketing strategy), financial

operation (access to funds, use of capital resources), accounting (keeping records of accounts and checking frauds), Security operation (protection of goods, machines and other resources), administration (planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling). He further emphasizes on specialization, division of labour to enhance productivity and adequate remuneration as factors that increase productivity. This theory aptly fit to serve as a theoretical foundation for this paper because for MSMES in Nigeria to contribute meaningfully to growth and development of Nigeria, they must be properly organized and equipped to function and carry out their activities as a very vital component of the economy. A situation whereby many MSMES lack financial discipline, proper administrative structure, disregard rule and embark in unwholesome practice may affect its performance and ultimately its contributions to the development of the economy. One of the main criticisms of theory is that it fails to understand the peculiarity of African states that are finding it difficult to adapt technology or transfer technology.

Methodology

The data for this paper where sources from primary and secondary sources. Structured interviews were used to obtain the primary data from respondents randomly selected among MSMEs owners, such as farmers, agricultural product processing firms, artisans, marketing and retail outlets, transporters. The secondary sources were obtained from textbooks, journals, government reports and online sources.

Analysis of the contributions of MSMEs to the Growth and Development of Nigeria

Increase in GDP and National Income

MSMEs have contributed in no small measure to the increase in the gross national product of Nigeria, it facilitated the growth of GDP from 1.92 in 2020 to 3.4% in 2021 (Olurounbi, 2022). The rise of GDP to about 60% resulted in over 70% of total employment (National MSMES collaborative survey 2010). The Impact of MSMEs on the economic growth in the last couple years, still has not met projections set in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) which beg its contribution in 2019 at 4.5% and 2020 at 7%, not sufficient Nigeria's economy needs to be growing at an average rate of at least 5 to 7% to boost productivity and sustainable growth for businesses.

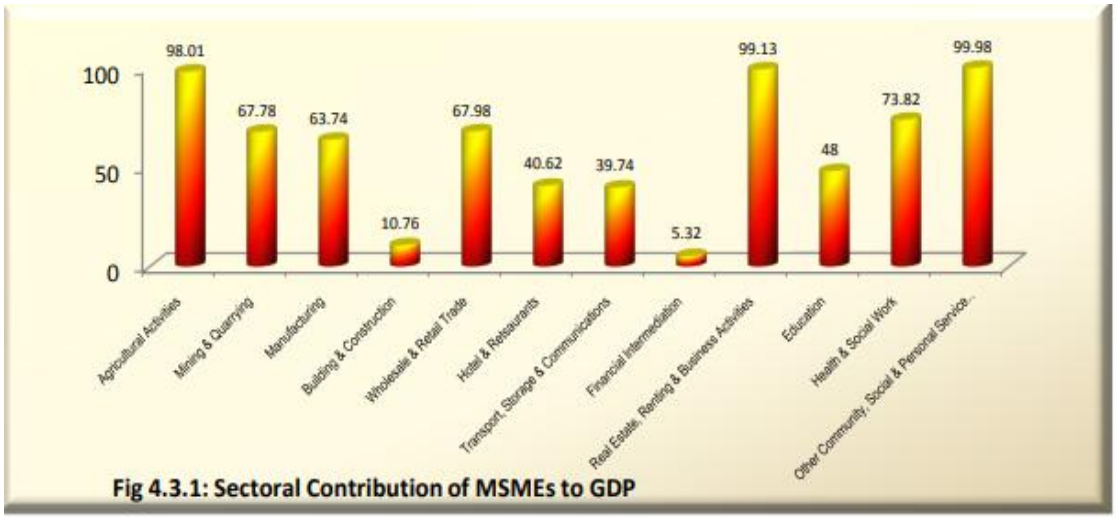


Fig 4.3.1: Sectoral Contribution of MSMEs to GDP

Source: MSMES collaborative survey 2010

The table above indicates that other community, social and personal services contribute 99.98% to GDP, Real estate, retail and business activities 99.13%, agricultural activities 98.01% , health and social works 73.82%, wholesale and retail trade 67.98%, mining and quarrying 67.78%, manufacturing 63.74%, education 48%, hotel and restaurants 40.62, transport and communication 39.74%, building and construction 10.76 and financial remediation 5.32. In view of the huge contribution of MSMEs to the GDP of Nigeria, the government continue to support them for example the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF) was instituted by the central bank with 220 billion naira share capital to boost the MSMEs funding, Ten (10) percent of the Fund has been devoted to developmental objectives such a grants, capacity building and administrative costs while ninety (90) percent commercial component will be released to Participating Financial Institutions(PFIs) at 2% for on-lending to MSMEs at a maximum interest rate of 9% per annum, underscoring the resolve of Nigeria to use the MSMEs to drive the economy.

Employment Creation and Poverty Reduction

The MSMEs has the capacity to generate close to 80% of jobs and reduce poverty and increase capacity utilization In Nigeria. The difficulty in getting accurate data gathering, it is difficult to arrive at the actual number of employments generated by MSMEs (SMEDAN Report 2022). In a developing economy like Nigeria with high unemployment rate, MSMEs continue to provide much needed jobs for the teeming population especially youths, however due to the rapid population growth MSMEs may

not completely solve the problem of unemployment despite the increasing number of MSMEs unemployment continue to rise for example unemployment was about 13.4% in 2010 but steeply rose to 21.1% in 2011, though they remain a very critical in in creating Jobs.

Total Number of Workers by Sector as at December 2010

	Persons Engaged		Owners of Enterprise		Total	
SECTOR	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture	3,256,159	23.3	2,633,041	15.7	5,889,200	18.2
Mining & Quarrying	30,548	0.2	27,365	0.2	57,913	0.2
Manufacturing	2,629,630	14.2	2,831,642	16.9	5,461,271	16.9
Construction	449,785	4.2	556,133	3.3	1,005,918	3.1
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles and household goods	7,748,316	49.2	8,884,265	53.1	16,632,581	51.4
Hotels and Restaurants	299,699	1.0	300,324	1.8	600,023	1.9
Transport, Storage and Communications	520,980	3.9	635,203	3.8	1,156,183	3.6
Real estate, Renting and business activities	186,661	1.2	210,115	1.3	396,776	1.2
Education	37,324	0.3	33,259	0.2	70,583	0.2
Health and social work	6,339	0.1	12,712	0.1	19,051	0.1
Other community, social & personal service activities	476,020	2.5	609,887	3.6	1,085,908	3.4
Total	15,641,460	100	16,733,946	100	32,375,406	100

Source: MSMES collaborative survey 2010

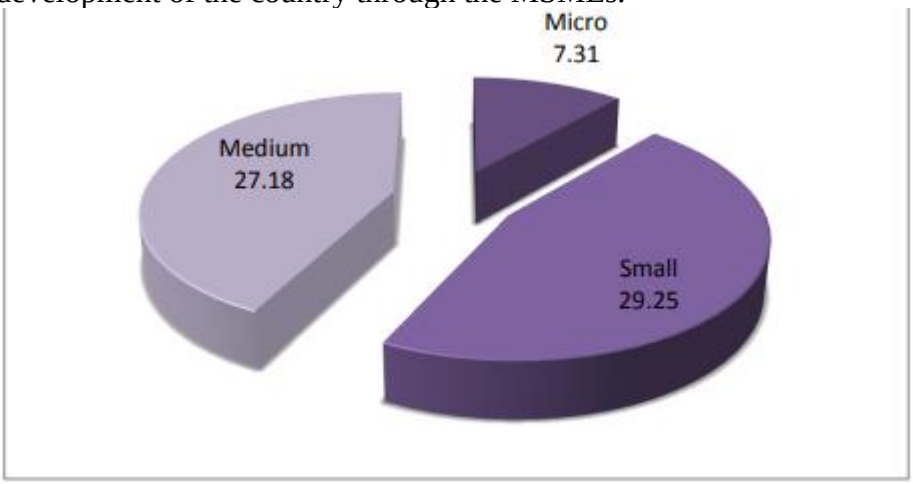
The above table reveals, a total of 32,414,884 persons were either employed by MSMEs or owners as at December 2010. This consists of 39,478 persons in the small and medium enterprises, The micro enterprises employed 32,375,406 and 42.35 percent respectively (MSMES collaborative survey 2010). The wholesale and retail, repairs of motor vehicles and house hold goods created the most jobs, engaging a total of 7,748,316 representing 49.2%, agriculture is in second position engaging about 3,256,159 representing 23% showing the two sectors constitution about 72. 2% of total employment created by MSMEs in 2010, in terms of ownership of enterprises the wholesale and retail, repairs of motor vehicles and house hold goods still top with 8,884,265 about 53.1% again, followed Manufacturing sector with 2,831,642 owners representing 16.9% and agriculture with 2,633,041 about 15.7% thereby highlighting the importance of MSMEs in creating employment in Nigeria. The Nigerian government also complement the MSMEs by embarking on schemes that support youths to be enterprising to solve the problem of unemployment for example the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You Win) Programme implemented in

partnership with Nigeria's private sector, provided funds for youths to enable them engage in business ventures.

Industralisation

MSME sector also facilitate the rapid industrialization of the country, through establishment of cottage industries and agro processing firms, these not only generate employment but create wealth and enhance the economic development of the country. Currently, it is estimated that the sector accounts for about 39% of the manufacturing output and around 33% of the total export of the country. (MSMEs collaborative Survey 2010) Some of the goods and services produced are exported to earn foreign exchange while also satisfying local consumption. The federal government of Nigeria recognizing the importance of MSMEs in industrialization has created industrial parks and industrial development centres in places like, Lagos, kano, Aba in Abia state, Ibadan and Kaduna and IDC in Zaria Kaduna states, Enugu and Lagos, these parks and centers provide technical services, advise and other assistance to small scale entrepreneurs in the area of appropriate raw material to use , equipment and machinery and even improved variety of seedlings in the case of agro businesses. The industrial parks also foster economic growth while minimizing effect on the environment and society; they bring businesses together and enhance close collaboration among small scale businesses. (UNIDO 2019). In 2019, the Buhari administration created seven new industrial parks in Lekki lagos , makurdi Benue state, Benin Edo state, Ilorin Kwara state, Sokoto, Gombe and Abakaliki Ebonyi state and estimate that the new parks will create over one million Jobs and spike infrastructural development of those areas (Adegboyega 2019). Government has also embarked on the The MSME Distributor Finance Product designed to provide working capital financing to micro businesses for the purchase and supply of Made-in-Nigeria products and services through intermediary companies, it also established through the central bank the Microfinance Policy, Regulatory and Supervisory Framework for Nigeria, the policy provided the legal and regulatory framework for microfinance banking in Nigeria by funding the MSMEs sector, also worthy of mansion is the SMEDAN The Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS) All the commercial banks operating in Nigeria were required to set aside 10% of their profit after tax (PAT) for equity investment in small and medium enterprises in Nigeria, there is also the N200 billion Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Guarantee Scheme (SMECGS) The scheme was established in 2010 by the CBN guarantees on loans by banks to the sector in order to absorb the risks that had inhibited banks from lending to the sector. The beneficiaries of the scheme are small and medium enterprises with total assets not exceeding 500 million naira and a labour force of 11 to 300 staff and the N2 billion National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND) amongst others, these initiatives have encouraged the development of the

MSMEs in Nigeria and underscore the importance government attach to the industrial development of the country through the MSMEs.



MSMES Contribution to Manufacturing GDP
Source: MSMES collaborative survey 2010

The above chat shows the contribution of the various MSMEs sector to Nigeria GDP showing that out of the contribution of 63.74 to the overall GDP of Nigeria, the highest contribution was made by small enterprises constituting 29.25%, Medium 27.18% and Micro enterprises 7.31%. showing that small and medium scale businesses contribute more to the country's GDP. It therefore shows the significant contribution of MSMEs in the economic transformation from agriculture-based economies to industrial ones.

Agricultural Development and Diversification of Economy

Agriculture remain the mainstay of the Nigeria economy, with many Nigerians living in the rural areas and engaging in subsistence agriculture, Nigeria is also blessed with rich arable land suitable for agriculture, cash crops such as rice, tomatoes, vegetables, fruits, maize , millet, yams, cassava and cash crops such as cocoa, palm oil, cashew nuts, groundnut oil, soya beans, cotton, animal husbandry and rubber are products that are sought after domestically and internationally. These agricultural products not only serve as food for the teeming population but serves as raw materials for the production of several products and goods for example cotton is a major raw material in the production of textiles. The major issue is that most of the farmers lack the requisite expertise to process these products for export and also has the facility to store the products thereby not maximizing the value for producing them. Nigeria economy from the 70s have depended on crude oil export, which constitute about 80% of revenue to the country,

neglecting agriculture and mining sector which would have contribute more to the country GDP if properly harnessed hence the need to diversify the economy. this because just like agriculture the country is also blessed with a lot of natural resources such as tin, gold, limestone coal and many others which remain largely untapped and underdeveloped. MSMEs development will bridge this gap and enhance farmers, miners and other producers get value for their labor and enhance the development of the economy. the government conscious of the inherent opportunities and strategic place of agriculture and the need to diversify the economy from oil by improving the Nigeria economy for example conceived and implemented, the N100 billion Cotton, Textile and Garment (CTG) Fund.

Challenge of MSMEs in Nigeria

MSMEs face many challenges in the course of their operation; these changes affect their capacity to adequately contribute to the country's development according to the 2020 report by SMEDAN and NBS joint collaboration nearly two million MSMEs shut down between 2019 and 2021, according to the report. The reasons for these shut down outside the corona –virus pandemic of 2020, also include conflicts, terrorism, farmers herders' conflicts in many parts of the country, kidnapping and armed robbery, inflation, rising cost of living, low purchasing power of the population amongst others. Some of the challenges faced by MSMEs include

Operational Constraints

MSMEs face a lot off bottlenecks and some of these bottlenecks are not synonymous with most developing economies, in Nigeria one of the major constraints of MSMEs is lack of power supply to carry out their operations, Nigeria produces about 5000MW of electricity which is crossly inadequate for its teeming population hence constant power outages. According to manufacturer association of Nigeria (MAN) member companies spent N639 billion on alternative energy sources between 2014 and 2021 and generate close to 14,000 megawatts of electricity from independent sources such as generators. Research conducted by the Centre for Democracy Development (CDD) and SOAS University of London, revealed that SMEs in Nigeria get just 1 to 5 hours of electricity in a day, (PWC report). The epileptic power situation of Nigeria affects many MSMEs who grapple with the high cost of generating their own energy at high price, for example the cost of diesel is put at about N1,800 per liter and petrol N670 per liter since the removal of subsidy in May 2023 further compounding the operations of the MSMEs in Nigeria. MSMEs also have to provide their own water sources by drilling boreholes as public water system have collapsed further increasing the cost of production. Furthermore, some of the MSMEs are situated in rural areas and most of the rural areas

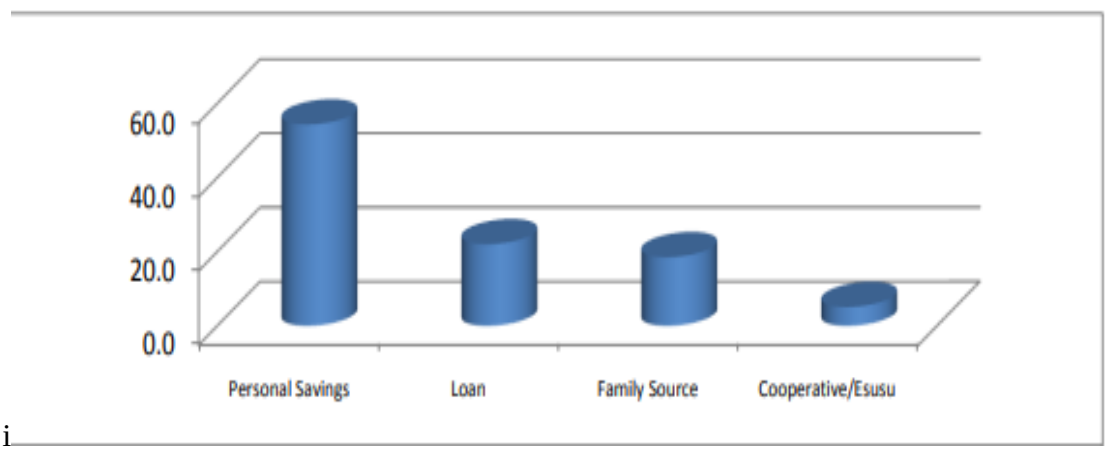
in Nigeria lack motor able roads thus affecting their operations, it is quite unfortunate that farmers and agro allied cottage industries find it difficult to transport their products to the market due to lack of roads and the few vehicles that ply these roads charge exorbitant fees.

Access to Credit

Another main challenge of MSMEs in Nigeria is access to capital to boost its operation or even to start a business. Sometimes even if loans are advance, it is at a high interest rate, sometimes up to 20%. This affects their capacity to meet local demand, sometimes international demand.

In Nigeria due to the scarcity of funds to establish NSMEs many of them are set up using personal savings which limits their productive capacity to expand and develop. In 2020, about 35.4 million MSMEs owners lacked enough funding for their businesses. This shows that about 92.4 percent of SMEs do not have access to finance that can help in strengthening their businesses. (Awolowo PWC 2020 report). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), less than 5% of SMEs have been able to access adequate finance for working capital and for funding business growth/expansion however this does not deter them from contributing over 50% to the country's GDP.

Figure 9 Source of Capital



i

Source: MSMES Collaborative survey 2010

The chart above indicates that most MSMEs are finance from personal savings at 60.0% while lone is a miserable 20.0 and family sources less than 20% and co-operative at about 10% corroborating the NBS-SMEDAN report which said that 85 percent of MSMEs do not have access to external financing between 2013 and 2017 and only 5.3 percent of them accessed credit within the period. The chart also agrees with PwC estimates that the financing gap for Nigerian MSMEs is about N617.3 billion annually by 2020. Based on analysis of data from the CBN annual statistical bulletin, small businesses accounted for less than 1% of total commercial banking credit in 2018.

Taxation

Since the MSMEs contribute a lot to the country's GDP in terms of jobs creation, exports and manufacturing the government should be motivated to grant them tax waivers and relief as a form of incentive but this is not the case rather MSMEs in Nigeria are burdened by multiple taxation by the various tiers of government which contribute to erode its profit margins and sometimes make them to run at a loss. For example, micro businesses in Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital, pay N513 every day which is rather on the high side and most of the taxes are not receipted and could be going into private pockets. Furthermore, according to dataphyte 2021 report large companies got tax waivers and incentives to the sum of over N16 trillion 2019 to 2022 within 3 years. The issue of tax therefore, pose a serious challenge because most owners of the MSMEs are not properly educated about tax issues and the payment process is often cumbersome and confusing to them especially the new tax digital payment platforms.

Ease of Doing Business

Doing business in Nigeria could be very tasking and difficult, because the enabling environment to encourage and motivate investors to invest in the economy both local and foreign is often fraught with a lot of bottlenecks. The Nigerian government over the years has done a lot to ease the difficulties faced by prospective investors including MSMEs. For example it is very difficult to get acquire land in Nigeria one has to pay exorbitant rate to be able to acquire land even in rural area a 1000sq meter of land may cost from as much as N1 million naira and above even in rural areas to be able to establish an MSMEs, in the alternative the prospective investor may lease or rent a space which also is very expensive in place like Abuja or Lagos a lock up shop may be rented at a cost of between N500, 000 to 800,000, the challenge is how many young people can afford these type of high cost of land and rents in some extreme cases landlords demand between 1 - 5 years rents . There is also the strenuous and cumbersome process of land allocation and getting the requisite approval for certificate

of occupancy for land. According to the 2020 survey by PWC, 7.4 million out of 38.9 million SMEs do not have a conducive workspace to enhance their productivity.

Insecurity

Insecurity has become a serious threat to the development of MSMEs in Nigeria; they have to invest huge sums on providing security for their sites and movement of products to the markets as a result of insecurity in the country. In the North East the activities of the Boko Haram have affected the MSMEs sector in no small means as they carryout suicide bombings, kidnapping and killings, similarly the farmers Header conflict in the North West and North Central part of the country has affected agricultural production and by extension the supply of raw-materials to agro based industries. The activities of the indigenous people of Biafra in the South East killing and maiming innocent citizens and declaring Mondays as sit at home has a devastating impact on

Preference for Foreign Goods

The penchant for Nigerians to consume foreign made goods and services and not patronizing made in Nigeria goods is a serious impediment to the growth of MSMEs in Nigeria. The government has to embark on public campaigns to sensitize Nigerians on the need to consume and patronize so as to create adequate market for made in Nigeria products. The foreign goods are perceived to be more durable and fashionable than the locally made ones, it is common for youth to global market which is occupied by great international company.

Export Difficulties

MSMEs in Nigeria find it difficult to exports their products because of many of them lack the expertise to compete in the global market, the government has to embark on the Zero to export programme, which trained SMEs on the basic export skills, (Awolowo 2020). They also find it difficult getting certification to be qualified to export to other part of the world, this because foreign merchants especially in the agro-processing sector will not trade with African MSMEs, without hazard and critical control point (HACCP) certification. The Nigeria Export Processing Commission (NEPC) has been working with several MSMEs to ensure to ensure their products meet the HACCP standards.

Conclusion

African nations including Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and natural resources and these resources can only contribute to its economic growth, generate employment and sustainable development if it is properly harnessed and managed that might. A vibrant and productive MSMEs sector therefore could be the major drivers of much needed economic development in Nigeria. Though government have initiated and implemented a lot of programmes to enhance the development of MSMEs there is need to address the challenge of ease of doing business, providing power, granting tax waivers, ensuring that MSMEs have access to credit facilities and removing constraints that make it difficult for MSMEs to thrive. Nigeria is a great country and remain the largest economy in Africa, if it properly taps and utilized the great potentials in its MSMEs sector it may be among the 20 largest economies in the world by 2050.

Recommendations

The Government should sustain its support to MSMEs in Nigeria, it should reorganize and reposition SMEDAN, National directorate of Employment (NDE) and other agencies saddle with giving support to MSMEs. The government should relax the requirement for MSMEs to access funds and drastically reduce interest rate to single digit; it should also consider giving special operational grants to MSMEs and ensure it full utilization by them. The government should grant tax relief and waiver to MSMEs by eradication of multiple taxation. The government should move to solve the infrastructural deficiency in the country, it should move to generate at least 50 MW of electricity, provide pipe borne water and good roads so as to reduce the cost of operation of MSMEs. The government should encourage MSMEs by providing land and operational spaces at very reduced cost to serious entrepreneurs and treat application for land by MSMEs with dispatch. MSMEs should be made to properly keep their records and organize their operations to meet universal best practices to acquire the necessary certifications to compete in the export market. They should also embrace modern technology in their operation rather than relieving and using obsolete technology. Nigeria should be sensitized to patronize made in Nigeria goods to encourage local manufacturers.

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NIGERIA'S LEADERSHIP IN AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS IN MALI'S CONFLICT WITH A FOCUS ON MINUSMA CONTRIBUTIONS

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Abstract

This paper explores Nigeria's leadership in African peacekeeping, focusing on its strategic interventions in Mali's conflict through participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Drawing on Nigeria's foreign policy of Afrocentrism, the study examines the nation's pivotal role in fostering stability and security within West Africa amidst rising threats of terrorism and political instability. Grounded in liberalism as the theoretical framework, the research emphasizes Nigeria's commitment to multilateralism, cooperation, and democratic governance as foundational principles in addressing the Malian crisis. The study employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing secondary data sources such as academic journals, reports, and historical analyses to assess Nigeria's military, diplomatic, and financial contributions to MINUSMA. A historical-descriptive research design coupled with content analysis provides insights into the roots of the Malian conflict, Nigeria's

interventions, and the broader implications for regional security. Findings reveal Nigeria's instrumental role in deploying troops, supporting counter-terrorism efforts, and mediating through regional organizations like ECOWAS and the African Union. Despite logistical and resource constraints, Nigeria's interventions underscore its leadership and commitment to collective security in Africa. However, challenges such as domestic instability, corruption, and the evolving geopolitical landscape necessitate reforms to enhance the efficacy of Nigeria's peacekeeping missions. The study highlights the importance of addressing root causes of conflict, strengthening regional cooperation, and building local capacity to achieve sustainable peace in Mali and beyond.

Keywords: Nigeria, Mali, Security, Peace, MINUSMA, ECOWAS and Africa

Introduction

Nigeria's role in restoring peace and security across the West African subregion cannot be overstated. Throughout periods of conflict in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Togo, and Niger, Nigeria was deeply involved. In each of these, Nigeria adopted several approaches, including diplomacy, sanctions, and military, to ensure the return of peace and security to those states. Nigeria typically bases its actions on the principle of Afrocentrism, a foreign policy that prioritizes Africa. Therefore, Nigeria prioritizes matters pertaining to the African continent when addressing global affairs. Also, the realization that the continuous existence of the Mali conflict could be a direct threat to Nigeria's existence prompted her involvement in the Malian conflict, which commenced in January 2012 when the coalition of rebel groups led by the National Movement for the Liberation of the State of Azawad (MNLA) seized the three major northern cities of Kidal, Gao and Timbuctu and proceeded to declare the entire region as the state of Azawad (Francis, 2013). The inability of the then Malian government to provide military equipment for the armed forces to rescue these three cities from the rebels and stop them from advancing towards Bamako led to the March 22, 2012 coup d'état, which the coup leader claimed was meant to secure the independence and territorial integrity of Mali (Chauzal & Damme, 2015). Unfortunately, the junta could not achieve the goal of securing Mali, as the Islamist elements like Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Ansar Dine, and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), operating with the Tuareg's MNLA at the early stage of the conflict, took over the conflict, thereby bringing in a terrorist dimension to the fight.

This research work aims at identifying Nigeria's leadership and strategic engagement in the conflict in Mali and critically assessing its peacekeeping role and impact. Here, the

emphasis will be made on recognizing how Nigeria has addressed other regional and international participants in handling the crisis, together with assessing the results of its operations. One of the foci of this study will be to evaluate the commitments of the Nigerian forces to the UN's MINUSMA mission, which was set up in 2013 to help facilitate the peace processes and protect people (Novosseloff et al., 2019). The conflict in Mali remains one of the most significant and emerging security threats in West Africa, calling for innovative analytical perspectives on how to address both the causes and outcomes of violence. This conflict has progressed since 2012 by experiencing an increase in armed attacks by separatists, as well as jihadists in the northern area of Mali, which infested the country such that it had an adverse impact on the ability of millions of people to support themselves (Chauzal & Damme, 2015). The situation went from bad to worse as political instability and economic difficulties deepened pre-existing ethnic animosity and resulted in a humanitarian calamity with heavy civilian loss and suffering displacements (Wing, 2013). This crisis goes hand in hand with the failure found in Mali and has risks that transcend the country's instability to the extent of destabilizing the whole West African region in terms of peace and security (Novosseloff et al., 2019).

Due to the urgent and paramount necessity of getting a single response to the crisis, the international community, especially the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU), prepared to launch some of the peacekeeping measures aimed at restoring peace and carrying out mediation between the parties in the conflict. Such involvement from regional organizations also brings with it an appreciation of the fact that comprehensive security cannot be realized alone within the region without the enhancement of peace between nations (Bassey, 2021). Nigeria, being one of the forefront countries in the West African region, is actively involved in peace support across the continent and from the military force they use in diplomacy (Bassey, 2021). This commitment is a reflection of Nigeria's role as the buttress of regional power and a self-interested goal of attaining national security through collaborative approaches to conflict resolution (Adedeji, 2023).

Aims of the Paper

In light of these challenges and Nigeria's prominent role, this research seeks to address the following questions:

i. What strategic interventions has Nigeria employed in Mali's conflict through its participation in MINUSMA?
ii. How effective have Nigeria's leadership and peacekeeping efforts been in stabilizing the region?
iii. What are the broader implications of Nigeria's involvement for regional peace and security?

Conceptual Framework

Clarifying the interrelated concepts of peacekeeping, security, and strategic intervention is essential in the context of Nigeria's leadership role in Africa, particularly regarding its involvement in the Malian conflict.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping refers to the deployment of international military and civilian personnel to conflict zones with the mandate to maintain or restore peace and order. In Africa, peacekeeping has often involved multilateral operations under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), or regional bodies like ECOWAS. Nigeria's engagement in peacekeeping is not new; it reflects a longstanding commitment to regional stability and a moral responsibility grounded in pan-African solidarity. As Adamu (2024) notes, Nigeria's leadership in African peacekeeping is underscored by its strong military capacity and consistent participation in conflict resolution initiatives. This commitment is evident in Nigeria's involvement in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), where it has contributed troops to manage the complex crisis triggered by political instability, terrorism, and ethnic conflict following the 2012 coup in Mali.

Security

Security, in this discourse, encompasses both national and regional dimensions. It involves safeguarding the sovereignty, political institutions, and civilian populations of a state or region against internal and external threats. For Nigeria, ensuring the security of West Africa, particularly Mali, is not only an expression of regional responsibility but also a strategic imperative. As Ummah (2019) emphasizes, Nigeria understands that

unresolved conflicts in neighbouring states like Mali have ripple effects that may endanger its own national security through transnational terrorism, arms trafficking, and refugee flows. Therefore, Nigeria's participation in MINUSMA is a strategic act aimed at preempting these security threats before they spill across borders.

Strategic Intervention

Strategic intervention refers to the deliberate and calculated use of political, military, and diplomatic tools to address threats and conflicts that are deemed critical to regional or national interests. In Mali, Nigeria's intervention strategy draws heavily on its historical peacekeeping experiences in Liberia and Sierra Leone. According to Owolabi et al. (2023), these past engagements have shaped Nigeria's approach to conflict resolution, particularly its emphasis on engaging with local communities, understanding the political and cultural contexts of conflict, and fostering trust between peacekeepers and civilians. This strategic method strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of Nigeria's role in MINUSMA and highlights its evolving capability to lead nuanced interventions tailored to complex African conflicts. In summary, Nigeria's peacekeeping activities in Mali, viewed through the lens of security and strategic intervention, demonstrate a multifaceted commitment. It is not merely about deploying troops but about leading with a strategic vision that seeks sustainable peace, regional security, and African-led solutions to African problems. This leadership approach aligns closely with the goals of the African Union and ECOWAS, reinforcing Nigeria's central role in shaping the peace and security architecture of the continent.

Overview of the Mali Conflict

According to Rahaman, the origins of Mali's conflicts can be traced to two decades of misrule after a 1968 coup by the military and a succession of elections, starting in 1992, that did not alter the circumstances much. The society has been characterised by barely functional state institutions and a patronage-driven, corrupt, and sometimes indifferent ruling class. The roots of the rebellion also lie in ethnic-political grievances which justified the emergence of a secessionist movement in the northern region. In 2012, the invasion of armed Muslim radicals into the restive region crossed a critical threshold. A strong feeling of alienation was pervasive among the 500,000 Tuaregs in the north, who have been claiming to be sabotaged since the country attained independence from France in 1960, which came with underdevelopment of the country and poor misrepresentation at the Bamako central. They therefore began a revolt that was mostly active in the early 1990s. They felt that the National Pact for Re-establishment of Peace, Brotherhood, and "National Unity in Northern Mali in 1992" and the Algiers Accord of 2006 made little effort to appreciate their concerns (Report of the UN Secretary-General

2012:1-10). These schemes incorporated some elements of Tuareg integration into the Malian armed forces and the police corps (many later defected and joined armed groups in 2013).

In 2013, the 14 million people who made up nearly 80% of the population in Mali were said to have lived below the poverty line, which confirms the fact that the country was fortified in a manner that neglected some of its regions and people. This is particularly relevant to the military's perception of the conflict in Mali. The junior officers who held this view were pessimistic about their senior counter officers in the northern region, whom they perceived as embezzlers of the counterinsurgency funds. This resulted in a large proportion of the government soldiers becoming demoralized and the military hardware being non-operational. On the other hand, President Amadou Toumani Toure, a general who ruled the state as head of state from 1991 to 1992, was blamed for the inability to cope with both this occurrence and the extremist problem in the northern part of Mali. The coup itself echoed the issues that occurred during an officer's coup that took place in Sierra Leone in April 1992. In this conflict young officers ended former General Joseph Momoh's regime, as he was unable to meet their demands for resources to fight the Revolutionary United Front.

Nigeria's Contributions to MINUSMA

This research focuses on Nigeria's contributions through MINUSMA in making the region a safer place. This engagement is based on the strategic interest of Nigeria's foreign policy in the promotion of peace and security in West Africa. The next section of this paper will describe the involvement of Nigeria in MINUSMA.

Military Engagements

Nigeria contributed military contingents and police units, as well as civilian experts, to MINUSMA, as it is a centre for reliable participation in peace support operations (Chigozie & Ituma, 2015). Nigeria has shown support for the actions being taken in Mali through its provision of troops and logistical support to MINUSMA. Since the Nigerian forces joined the international counterparts in war, they have been very instrumental in attempting to champion the stabilization of volatile areas, providing special protection to civilians, and being part of the counter-terrorism operations around the world. Their deployment underlines Nigeria's awareness of the cross-border threats posed by jihadist groups in operation in Mali, including ISGS and AQIM.

Leadership Role

As a leading nation in West Africa, Nigeria has taken a proactive stance in mediating conflicts and fostering dialogue among conflicting parties in Mali (Ebegbulem, 2020). Apart from the military deployments, Nigeria has done some diplomatic work to bolster peace in Mali. Nigerian officials have been involved in crisis resolution through high-level advocacy within ECOWAS and the African Union, which empowered them to help construct peace processes. The diplomatic initiatives of Nigeria justify the country's positioning as one of the critical African peace and security players.

Similarly, Babangida, a one-time president of Nigeria, reasoned that "in a sub-region where one out of three West Africans is a Nigerian, it is imperative that any regime in this country should relentlessly strive towards the prevention or avoidance of the deterioration of any crisis which threatens to jeopardise or compromise the stability, prosperity and security of the sub-region. It was this very objective that propelled our pioneering efforts in the establishment of ECOWAS and made inevitable our continuing strong commitment and support for the organisation."

Financial Support

The country has contributed funds to back up the mission, which proves its commitment towards making Mali and the neighbouring region stable (Idagu et al., 2020). Unquestionably, Nigeria, as a strong member of the United Nations, actively assists the organization in all peacekeeping operations by paying its assessed dues. This amount is then included in the General Peacekeeping budget of the United Nations, which finances the day-to-day activities of one or more of its missions around the globe, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Each member state' financial participation in the activities of the organization is established based on a ratio scale which is proportionate to the economy of the country concerned. This evaluation has regard to critical factors such as gross national product, and the capacity of the country to incur liabilities without becoming overly difficult. Nigeria's compliance with the assessment guarantees contribution supports global sustenance of peace and stability in conflict areas of the world, which Nigeria subscribes to in the bid of multilateral assistance and international safety (Idagu et al., 2020).

Challenges Faced by Nigeria in MINUSMA

Nigeria faces a lot of problems regarding its interest in MINUSMA. Such challenges are of a kaleidoscopic nature, as they originate from both domestic and foreign elements that hinder the effective contributions of Nigeria towards peacekeeping operations. Given the context of the Malinese conflict, the existence of various problems in Nigeria renders peacekeeping operations by Nigerian troopers very challenging. The following are the key challenges faced by Nigeria in MINUSMA.

Security and Equipment Challenges

MINUSMA is regarded as one of the most dangerous UN missions because of its high number of attacks on peacekeepers and citizens. The lack of adequate equipment and exercise for casual troops, including those from Nigeria, intensifies these security challenges (Rida, 2018). According to Kwesi (2014), “The presence of extremist groups and the convergence of criminal enterprises in Mali pose significant threats to peacekeepers, complicating operational efforts and increasing the risk of casualties.”

Domestic Instability and Resource Constraints

Nigeria's domestic issues, such as poverty, insecurity, and ethno-religious crises, divert attention and resources away from international peacekeeping efforts. These internal challenges strain Nigeria's ability to maintain its "big brother" role in Africa (Dauda, 2017). “The political and social instability within Nigeria, driven by ethnic and religious tensions, further complicates its capacity to contribute effectively to international missions like MINUSMA” (Chinedu, 2015).

Political and Leadership Challenges

According to Rida (2018), the absence of strong leadership and a sincere willingness on the part of the Malian authorities and armed groups to actively move forward the peace process weakens the standing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This lack of dedication puts even the fulfilment of the mission goals within reach of the participating states and discourages the joint efforts and contributions of other states such as Nigeria. The unwillingness and failure of these actors to act impedes the resurgence of the peace process, thereby limiting the scope of action of the MINUSMA and lessening the resources and assistance that the member states have to offer for stabilization efforts in Mali. Similarly, Dauda (2017) said, “Nigeria's efforts in peacekeeping are often met with

ingratitude from beneficiary countries, which can demotivate and affect the morale of Nigerian peacekeepers."

Theoretical Framework

This research work adopts the theory of liberalism as its framework of analysis. As a theory of international relations, liberalist theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing Nigeria's leadership role in African peacekeeping, especially in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This theory emphasizes cooperation, the significance of international institutions, and the promotion of democratic values, which are important in understanding Nigeria's strategic interventions in Mali's conflict. Liberalism posits that nations can gain peace through cooperation rather than conflict. It rejects the realist view of power politics, advocating for diplomatic engagement and multilateralism as means to resolve conflicts. This perspective is important in the context of MANISMA, which aims to sustain political processes and stabilise efforts in Mali following years of conflict. Nigerian's engagement reflects a commitment to cooperative security arrangements within the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS contexts, highlighting that collaborative efforts can lead to sustainable peace (Stephen and Dana, 2022).

Liberal theories argue that international organizations play a serious role in promoting cooperation and managing conflicts. The establishment of MINUSMA itself is a testament to this principle, as it was formed to support Mali in restoring order and governance through shared international action. Nigeria's contributions to MINUSMA show its recognition of the UN's role as facilitator and mediator in peacekeeping operations, strengthening the idea that institutional frameworks are important for effective conflict resolution (Stephen and Dana, 2022). A principle concerning liberalism is the idea that democratic rule leads to global harmony. The mandate's purposes, such as aiding the democratic processes and the protection of human rights in Mali, correspond to liberalistic principles which state that the wars of democracies with each other are rather rare (Stephen and Dana, 2022). Nigeria's active involvement in these activities clearly signals her motivation to extend democratic values in Africa, which is considered to be a pillar for the future peace of the region.

Furthermore, liberalism also emphasizes the significance of economic ties and the interdependence among nations as tools for fostering peace. By participating in MINUSMA, Nigeria not only aids military stabilization but also contributes to rebuilding Mali's economy post-conflict. This perspective brings into line with the liberal view that economic collaboration can mitigate tensions and inspire peaceful relations among states (Phiri, 2018). The concept of collective action is central to

liberalism, especially within regional organizations such as ECOWAS and AU. Nigeria's active role in peacekeeping missions proves its leadership potential within these frameworks, advocating for a unified approach to security challenges in West Africa (Phiri, 2018). Their involvement is crucial given their cohesive preparedness not only to deal with immediate security issues but also to promote standards with regard to peacekeeping and conflict resolution in Africa. In essence, liberalist theory provides a robust framework for understanding Nigeria's strategic interventions in Mali through MINUSMA. By focusing on institutional roles, cooperation, economic interdependence, democratic governance, and collective action, this theoretical lens highlights how Nigeria can effectively contribute to peacekeeping efforts while fostering stability and development in West Africa.

Methodology

The study is based on the qualitative model with data drawn mainly from secondary sources. These include textbooks, articles, newspaper reports, and journals, as well as the internet. The purposive sampling technique has been utilized in selecting the data bearing their relevance to the subject matter. The study also adopts a historical-descriptive research design to gain more insights about the emergence of the conflict in Mali as well as Nigeria's key contributions towards its resolution and then present them to the reading public in a manner that is clear and understandable. And since the data are derived from secondary (or documentary) sources, content analysis, which is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context", is deployed in the analysis of the data. **Politics of Intervention and Conflict in Mali** Since the March 2012 coup, there been a support and follow-up group on the situation in Mali consisting of the ECOWAS commission, the core countries (Algeria, Mauritania and Niger), the AU commission and the international partners. The EU and key bilateral donors started to have daily meetings. Thus, the AU actively advocated for improved coordination. and scrutinizing the outcomes of domestic and international efforts and underlining the necessity to restore state authority and security. The AU also promoted sector reform and held elections. As a result of this conflict, 412,000 Malians were displaced, with about 208,000 refugees found in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Algeria, Guinea, Togo and Niger. The conflict reached a boiling point in 2012 among the rebels in the north, specifically Ansar Dine and MAJAO, who managed to push back the abandoned main towns that it had earlier captured from the government forces as the MNLA. AQIM was notorious for blowing up many cultural and Muslim heritage sites. cultural sites in Timbuktu. The recent attacks also made these stores shut down, according to anecdotal evidence. country's gold mining.

Effectiveness of Nigeria's Peacekeeping Efforts in Mali

Nigeria has been a significant player in peacekeeping efforts in Mali, supporting troops to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA). However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been mixed (Adedeji, 2023). While Nigeria has been one of the largest sponsors of UN peacekeeping missions globally, its impact in Mali has faced challenges such as resource limitations and a complex security environment. These issues have hindered the ability of Nigerian forces to achieve lasting peace in the region.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria's involvement has had some positive effects. The Nigerian troops have played a role in supporting humanitarian efforts and local governance initiatives, which are crucial for stabilizing the country. However, recent developments, including the Malian government's decision to withdraw from MINUSMA, have raised concerns about the future effectiveness of Nigeria's peacekeeping role (Adedeji, 2023). The situation remains complicated, as the success of peacekeeping missions often depends on cooperation with local authorities and a stable political environment. Overall, while Nigeria's contributions are notable, achieving effective peacekeeping in Mali requires addressing these ongoing challenges (Akinola, 2024).

Nigerian Logistical Constraints and Broader Implications for Regional Security in Mali

Mali has been at the centre of a complex security crisis, exacerbated by internal conflicts and the rise of extremist groups. The situation has significant implications for regional stability, particularly concerning its relationships with neighbouring countries and regional organizations like ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel. Nigeria, as a regional power, plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges but faces its own logistical constraints.

Logistical Constraints Faced by Nigeria

Overstretched Military Resources

Nigeria's military is currently overstretched, with troops deployed across thirty-three of the thirty-six states to address various security threats, including the Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Headsman, and armed banditry, among others. This widespread deployment limits the number of forces available for international missions like those in Mali. Reports indicate that Nigeria initially pledged 1,200 troops to the ECOWAS force

in Mali but later had to reduce this commitment due to the demands of domestic security operations (Campbell, 2013). The situation highlights a critical strain on Nigeria's military capabilities, as it struggles to balance internal and external commitments.

Inadequate Funding and Support

Financial constraints pose a significant barrier to Nigeria's military logistics. Historically, Nigeria has been a major contributor to peacekeeping operations in West Africa, often covering a substantial portion of operational costs. However, recent reports suggest that the Nigerian government is unable to fund its commitments fully, leading to reduced troop deployments and logistical support (Campbell, 2013). The reliance on external funding and support complicates Nigeria's ability to maintain an effective military presence in Mali.

Corruption and Mismanagement

Corruption within Nigeria's military and government sectors exacerbates logistical issues. Instances of mismanagement have been documented, where resources intended for troops are misallocated or syphoned off. Such corruption undermines the effectiveness of military operations and contributes to a lack of trust among soldiers regarding their support systems.

Broader Implications for Regional Security

The logistical constraints faced by Nigeria in its military engagements have serious implications for regional security, particularly in the context of Mali and the broader West African landscape. These implications are multifaceted, affecting not only Nigeria's role but also the stability of the entire region.

Impact on ECOWAS Operations

Nigeria’s logistical challenges directly influence the effectiveness of ECOWAS in addressing security threats in Mali. As a leading member, Nigeria's military capacity is crucial for ECOWAS interventions. However, its inability to deploy adequate resources may weaken collective efforts to stabilise Mali, leading to a fragmented response to ongoing conflicts and increasing the likelihood of extremist groups gaining ground in the region (Ummah, 2019). The imbalance in military contributions among ECOWAS member states further complicates this dynamic, as countries like Nigeria bear a disproportionate burden without sufficient support from others.

Increased Vulnerability to Extremism

The ongoing instability in Mali, exacerbated by Nigeria's logistical constraints, creates a fertile ground for extremist groups to expand their influence. The deterioration of security in Mali can spill over into Nigeria, particularly in the northeastern regions already affected by Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani headsmen and armed banditry. As noted by analysts, the inability of Nigerian forces to effectively engage in Mali may embolden terrorist organizations operating across borders, leading to a broader regional crisis that threatens not only Nigeria but also neighbouring countries.

Shifts in Regional Alliances

The current geopolitical landscape is marked by shifting alliances and growing mistrust among West African nations. The recent military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have led these countries to form a bloc that opposes traditional Western influence and seeks alternative partnerships, including with Russia (Phiri, 2018). This emerging alignment could reshape power dynamics within ECOWAS and weaken its ability to enforce democratic norms and regional stability. If Nigeria continues to struggle with logistical constraints while facing internal challenges, it risks losing its leadership position within ECOWAS and may be sidelined in critical security discussions.

Findings

The findings of this paper provide significant insights into Nigeria’s leadership and contributions to peacekeeping in Africa, particularly through its strategic interventions in Mali’s conflict. By leveraging its military, diplomatic, and financial capabilities, Nigeria has demonstrated its commitment to regional stability and security. The discussion below critically examines these results, highlighting both the achievements and challenges faced by Nigeria in its peacekeeping role.

Nigeria’s Strategic Interventions

Nigeria's strategic interventions in Mali, primarily through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), underscore its proactive approach to conflict resolution. The deployment of troops, police units, and civilian experts reflects Nigeria’s commitment to addressing both the instant security concerns and the underlying causes of instability in Mali. This aligns with the liberalist framework, which emphasizes cooperation and multilateralism in resolving conflicts.

A key finding is Nigeria's recognition of the interconnectedness of regional security issues. By participating in MINUSMA, Nigeria not only addresses the Mali conflict but also mitigates the spillover effects of instability that could threaten neighbouring countries and the broader West African sub-region. This approach reinforces Nigeria's role as a regional leader and its commitment to collective security within the framework of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Effectiveness of Peacekeeping Efforts

The effectiveness of Nigeria's peacekeeping efforts in Mali has been mixed, as evidenced by both successes and ongoing challenges. On one hand, Nigerian forces have contributed significantly to stabilizing volatile regions, protecting civilians, and supporting counter-terrorism operations against extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). These efforts have been pivotal in containing the spread of terrorism and fostering local governance initiatives. On the other hand, the persistent violence and instability in Mali raise critical questions about the overall impact of these interventions. Despite Nigeria's substantial contributions, the inability to achieve lasting peace highlights the complexities of addressing deep-rooted issues such as ethnic tensions, political instability, and economic hardship. Furthermore, the recent decision of the Malian government to withdraw from MINUSMA underscores the challenges of ensuring local cooperation and sustaining international peacekeeping missions.

Logistical and Capacity Constraints

Nigeria's peacekeeping efforts in Mali have been significantly hindered by logistical and capacity constraints. The overstretched military, coupled with domestic security challenges such as the Boko Haram insurgency and armed banditry, limits Nigeria's ability to commit adequate resources to international missions. Financial constraints further exacerbate this issue, as Nigeria struggles to fully fund its peacekeeping commitments, relying heavily on external support. Corruption and mismanagement within Nigeria's military and government also undermine the efficiency of its peacekeeping operations. These systemic issues not only hinder the effectiveness of deployed troops but also erode trust among peacekeepers and the international community. Addressing these internal challenges is crucial for enhancing Nigeria's capacity to contribute meaningfully to future peacekeeping missions.

Broader Implications for Regional Stability

Nigeria's role in Mali's conflict has broader implications for its position as a regional leader and for the stability of West Africa. The success or failure of Nigeria's interventions directly impacts its credibility and influence within ECOWAS and the AU. Additionally, the rise of extremist groups and shifting alliances within the region pose significant challenges to Nigeria's leadership role. The emergence of a bloc opposing traditional Western influence, including Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, further complicates the regional security landscape. Despite these challenges, Nigeria's commitment to fostering peace and stability in Mali reflects its broader foreign policy objectives. By prioritizing regional security and promoting democratic values, Nigeria underscores the importance of collective action and institutional frameworks in addressing African conflicts.

Conclusion

Nigeria's peacekeeping efforts in Mali exemplify its role as a pivotal regional leader dedicated to promoting stability and security in Africa. Through its contributions to MINUSMA, Nigeria has demonstrated a commitment to addressing complex conflicts that threaten the broader West African sub-subregion. However, the mixed outcomes of these efforts highlight the challenges of sustaining peace in a volatile environment and underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to conflict resolution.

While Nigeria has made notable strides in contributing to regional security, the persistent logistical and capacity constraints, coupled with internal challenges, underscore the need for substantial reforms. Enhancing funding mechanisms, strengthening regional partnerships, and addressing systemic issues within Nigeria's military and governance structures are essential steps for improving the effectiveness of future peacekeeping missions. Ultimately, Nigeria's leadership in Mali provides valuable lessons for addressing similar conflicts across Africa. By fostering shared action, promoting democratic values, and addressing the root causes of instability, Nigeria may continue to play a crucial role in shaping sustainable peace and security in the region. These lessons, if effectively applied, can serve as a blueprint for strengthening peacekeeping initiatives and reinforcing Nigeria's position as a giant in African security and stability.

Recommendations

Comprehensive Conflict Resolution: Lasting peace requires addressing both the root causes of conflict and immediate security concerns, including political instability,

economic inequality, and ethnic tensions. Nigeria's interventions in Mali must be complemented by broader efforts to foster inclusive governance and sustainable development. Enhanced Logistical Support: Addressing logistical and capacity constraints is essential for improving the effectiveness of Nigeria's peacekeeping operations. This includes increasing funding, streamlining resource allocation, and addressing corruption within the military and government sectors. Strengthened Regional Cooperation: Collaborative efforts within ECOWAS and the AU are critical for addressing transnational security threats. Nigeria must work closely with regional partners to develop cohesive strategies and share the burden of peacekeeping responsibilities. Finally, Local Engagement: Building trust with local communities and ensuring their active participation in peace processes are essential for the success of peacekeeping missions. Nigeria's efforts in Mali should prioritize community engagement and capacity-building initiatives.

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ASSESSING THE PREVALENCE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AT ABUBAKAR TAFAWA BALEWA UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper assesses the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. Gender-based violence can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It also includes threats of violence, coercion and manipulation. This can take many forms such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and so on. The methodological approach for these articles is based on quantitative cross-sectional survey research design. The results revealed that sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and psychological abuse are being the most prevalent forms. Notably, the result also revealed that GBV incidents predominantly occurred in recreational areas, hostels and offices, indicating that informal and less-monitored spaces are high-risk environments. The study recommends that there is need to establish clear, confidential and survivor-centered reporting systems to encourage victims to come forward without fear of stigma or retaliation, adopt the 7P Model (Prevalence, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Provision, Partnerships, Policy) as recommended by the UNISAFE project to create a holistic GBV response framework and integrate GBV education into orientation programs for new students, emphasizing consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality and to launch campus-wide campaigns challenging harmful gender norms and promoting a culture of respect and zero tolerance for GBV and conduct regular GBV prevalence surveys to monitor trends and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions Also authorities concern should ensure strict enforcement of anti-GBV policies, including disciplinary actions against perpetrators, particularly staff members implicated in sexual exploitation

Key words: Prevalence, Gender, Gender-Based Violence

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) in higher education institutions constitutes a significant global public health concern (Christensen, Baldwin-White & McMahon, 2023). This violence encompasses a range of harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender, including stalking, sexual assault, intimate partner or dating violence, and sexual harassment (Christensen *et al.*, 2023). A broader definition recognizes GBV as any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, disproportionately affecting women (Tadesse, Tinsae, Nakie, Rtbey, Andualem, Kelebie & Fentahun, 2024). The pervasive nature of GBV within academic settings negatively impacts students' academic performance (Tadesse *et al.*, 2024)

Recent studies highlight the widespread nature of gender-based violence in higher education institutions worldwide. Globally, between 4% and 17% of college women and 7% and 8% of college men report experiencing sexual violence (Christensen *et al.*, 2023). In the United States, the prevalence is even higher among undergraduate females, with rates between 20% and 26.4% reporting sexual assault (Christensen *et al.*, 2023). A comprehensive meta-analysis revealed that over half of female students in higher education institutions have suffered from violence in their lifetime, with lifetime GBV prevalence at 51.42%, sexual violence at 46.53%, and physical violence at 37.93% (Tadesse *et al.*, 2024). The UNISAFE project, surveying over 42,000 individuals across European higher education institutions, found that 62% had experienced at least one form of GBV since commencing their studies or work (Humbert & Strid, 2024). Sub-Saharan Africa also faces a particularly high burden of gender-based violence in its educational institutions. A study conducted among female students in Ethiopia higher education institution found an overall prevalence of GBV at 58.8% (Tadesse *et al.*, 2024). Pooled estimates from a systematic review indicate that the lifetime prevalence of GBV among female youths in educational institutions across Sub-Saharan Africa is 52.83%, characterized by sexual violence, physical violence and emotional violence (Tadesse *et al.*, 2024). A multi-country study across six Sub-Saharan African nations revealed significant prevalence rates: physical violence at 30.9%, sexual violence at 18.7%, psychological violence at 64.9%, and stalking at 63.7% among university students (Owusu-Antwi, Fedina, Robba, Khatibi, Bosomtwe, Nsereko & Munro-Kramer, 2024).

A comprehensive cross-cultural survey across Nigerian higher education institutions revealed high prevalence rates across students, faculty, and staff: psychological/emotional violence were also reported by students, faculty, and staff, so also sexual violence, economic violence and physical violence (Adimora, 2025). This

study identified lecturers as the primary perpetrators of sexual, psychological, and economic violence against students. In contrast, a study in a Nigerian university reported a lower overall GBV prevalence of 19.4%, with emotional violence being the most common (Udam, Ukoaka, Udoh, Udam, Kelechi & Bachi, 2024). Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi provides an important case study for exploring the relationship between gender equality and GBV. As a higher education institution, it serves as a microcosm of societal gender dynamics, where gender relations can either exacerbate or mitigate GBV.

Problem Identification

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive global challenge with devastating consequences for individuals, families, and society. It encompasses a continuum of behaviors and attitudes, ranging from everyday microaggressions and sexist remarks to more overt and harmful acts of physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse (Sundaram, 2018). These actions, underpinned by inequitable power dynamics, disproportionately affect women and girls while men constitute the majority of perpetrators (Lange & Young, 2019; Jones *et al.*, 2020). According to Maruo *et al.* (2023), GBV is not only a global epidemic but also the most oppressive manifestation of gender inequality.

Research indicates that societies with higher levels of gender equality tend to experience lower rates of GBV, as gender parity fosters respect, understanding, and collaboration between genders (Signorelli *et al.*, 2018). Despite this, many educational institutions, grapple with entrenched gender inequality, perpetuated by societal norms, discriminatory practices, and weak enforcement of initiatives designed to promote equality and combat GBV. In Nigeria, while legal frameworks aim to curb GBV and promote gender equality like the National Gender Policy (2006) and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act of 2015, their impact remains limited due to poor enforcement mechanisms, insufficient institutional commitment, and a lack of robust monitoring and evaluation systems As a higher education institution, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, serves as a important setting for examining the intersection of gender equality and GBV given the resent dismissal of a staff over sexual harassment (Ibrahim, 2025).

Aim of the Paper

How prevalent is gender-based violence (GBV) in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi?

Object of the Paper

Examine the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Nigeria

Conceptual Clarification

Gender

Gender is fundamentally a social construct rooted in individual identity and shaped by cultural and societal contexts. According to Bata (2021), gender is a system for categorizing individuals and assigning roles and responsibilities based on perceived identity. It encompasses how individuals perceive themselves and how society defines and interprets their roles. Traditionally, genders are divided into two categories male and female and are often tied to expectations about behavior and relationships, such as societal norms of attraction between males and females.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global epidemic deeply rooted in unequal power relations and is widely recognized as the most oppressive manifestation of gender inequality. Predominantly affecting women and girls, GBV manifests in various forms, with intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence being particularly pervasive across different societies, cultures, and socioeconomic groups. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), one in three women globally approximately 736 million women experience IPV or sexual violence from a non-partner in their lifetime. Specific regions, such as the Pacific small island states, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, exhibit notably higher lifetime IPV prevalence rates, though no country is immune to this pervasive issue.

GBV encompasses any harmful act perpetrated against an individual's will and based on socially ascribed gender differences. These acts include physical, sexual, or mental harm, coercion, threats, or deprivations of liberty, occurring in both public and private spheres (2015 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender-Based Violence Guidelines). Educational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa also face high rates of GBV. The Global-Based School Survey (GBSS) reported the prevalence of physical and sexual

violence in five African countries ranging from 27–50% and 9–33%, respectively (Brown *et al.*, 2013). A South African study among adolescents aged 10–17 years revealed a lifetime prevalence of 56.3% for physical abuse, 35.5% for emotional abuse, and 9% for sexual abuse (Meinck, Cluver, Boyes & Loening-Voysey, 2016).

Overview of Gender-based Violence in Nigerian Institutions

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a significant issue in Nigerian institutions, cutting across all educational levels and sectors. Studies indicate a high prevalence of GBV in Nigeria, posing a severe public health concern. For instance, Okolo and Okolo (2018) reported that 52.1% of women perceived domestic violence incidence as high, and 63.3% had experienced such violence at some point. Among the forms of GBV, sexual abuse emerged as the most frequently reported (Aguocha *et al.*, 2017). The high prevalence of GBV has been linked to cultural values, societal practices, and a prevailing culture of silence surrounding abuse (Okolo & Okolo, 2018). In higher education institutions, Agbaje *et al.* (2021) revealed alarming rates of workplace incivility (63.8%), bullying (53.5%), and sexual harassment (40.5%) among female staff in universities in southeastern Nigeria. Similarly, Afolabi (2019) found that while the overall prevalence of GBV among female undergraduates in Ekiti State was relatively low, sexual violence remained the most common form experienced. Fawole, Balogun, and Olaleye (2018)

Methodology

This study adopts a cross-sectional survey research design. This research design is concerned with finding out the what, where and how of a phenomenon. According to Cooper, and Schinder (2016). It also involves events that have already taken place and is related to present conditions (Kothari, 2019). This method was used to assess effects of gender equality on the prevalence of gender-based violence at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi,

Study Area

The study was conducted at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, located in Bauchi State, North-Eastern Nigeria. The university was established in 1980 and is a federal university of technology with a primary focus on engineering, science, agriculture, and environmental sciences, among others. The institution has two campuses: the Gubi campus, which houses the administrative blocks and major faculties, and the Yelwa campus, which hosts the Faculty of Engineering and

Environmental Technology. ATBU draws students from across Nigeria and beyond, resulting in a diverse and multi-ethnic population.

Study Population

The population of this study comprise all registered undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. According to the record from the students' affairs Unit, there are 26,691 in both the Yelwa and Gubi Campus of the institution. (Student affairs Unit ATBU, 2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 341 students was sampled for the study, ensuring representativeness across various departments and demographic categories. The sample size was determined from the population using Krejcie and Morgan Table

Sampling Technique

A multistage sampling technique was employed for this study. The sampling procedure involved three stages, in the first stage, stratified sampling was used to group students using faculties as strata. In the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select one department from each stratum. In the last stage, proportionate random sampling technique was employed on selecting participants from each group.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to the respondents. The questionnaire consists of some sections such as section of respondent socio demographic and the other section collected data on the prevalence of gender-based violence systematically.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistical method and address the research question comprehensively. The descriptive statistics employed was frequency count and percentages of the data on the prevalence of GBV. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 23.0) was used to perform all analyses.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The results on demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal that the majority 193 respondents with (58.8%) of the respondents were male, while 135 respondents with (41.2%) were female. This indicates that male students constituted a higher proportion of the study participants than their female counterparts. The higher male representation may be attributed to the gender distribution trend in Nigerian tertiary institutions, where male enrollment often surpasses female enrollment due to cultural, socio-economic, or religious factors that may limit female access to higher education.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	193	58.8
Female	135	41.2
Marital Status		
Married	74	22.6
Single	254	77.4
Age		
18–25	188	57.3
26–30	101	30.8
31–35	30	9.1
36–40	9	2.7

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table also shows that the majority254 respondents with (77.4%) of the were single, while only 74 respondents with (22.6%) were married. The high proportion of single respondents reflects the typical demographic composition of university students, who are largely unmarried and in their early stages of adulthood. Being single may have implications for GBV vulnerability, as students without family responsibilities or spousal support may be more exposed to social environments where GBV occurs. In terms of age, the result further revealed that 188 respondents with (57.3%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18–25 years, 101 respondents with (30.8%) were aged 26–30, 30 respondents representing (9.1%) were within 31–35 years, lastly only (9) respondents, representing (2.7%) fell between the ages of 36–40. This implies that the majority of the respondents were young adults, which is typical of undergraduate

and early postgraduate student populations. The age distribution is significant as it highlights a demographic group commonly associated with increased GBV vulnerability.

Course of Study and Place of Residence of the Respondents

The result on the respondents' course of study presented in Table 4 reveal that the respondents were drawn from a variety of academic disciplines, with the majority enrolled in Computer Science with 57 respondents representing (17.4%), followed by Chemical Sciences with 53 respondents, representing (16.2%), then Banking and Finance with 45 respondents, representing (13.7%), and Science Education with 44 respondents representing (13.4%). Industrial Design with 33 respondents representing (10.1%). The least represented disciplines included Community Medicine with 22 respondents with (6.7%) and Environmental Standard with 12 respondents with (3.7%). This distribution indicates that respondents from both science-based and non-science-based courses participated in the study, which allows for a diverse understanding of gender-based violence (GBV) across different academic contexts which could also suggests that exposure to GBV may not be restricted to specific fields of study but could be experienced across various academic programs.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents according to course of study and place of residence

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Course of Study		
Ecology	34	10.4
Science Education	44	13.4
Com. Medicine	22	6.7
Banking & Finance	45	13.7
Computer Science	57	17.4
Environ. Standard	12	3.7
Agric Economics	28	8.5
Industrial Design	33	10.1
Chemical	53	16.2
Place of Residence		
Off-campus	205	62.5
On-campus	123	37.5

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The distribution of respondents according to place of residence shows that a majority of the respondents with 205 representing (62.5%) lived off-campus, while 123 respondents representing (37.5%) resided on-campus. This result is noteworthy as living arrangements have been found to significantly influence exposure to GBV. Students residing off-campus may have increased exposure to unregulated environments, reduced institutional oversight, and higher interaction with the broader community, making them more susceptible to various forms of violence.

Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence

The results in Table 6 show that a majority of the respondents (79.0%) reported that they have not experienced or witnessed gender-based violence (GBV) within the institution, while (21.0%) confirmed having such experiences. This suggests that although GBV is not widespread among the sampled population, a significant minority have either been victims or witnesses, indicating the continued presence of the issue within the university environment.

Table 3: Distribution of responses on the prevalence of GBV and frequency of occurrence

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Prevalence of GBV		
Yes	69	21.0
No	259	79.0
Frequency of GBV Occurrence		
Rarely	99	30.2
Occasionally	140	42.7
Frequently	59	18.0
Very Frequently	30	9.1

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Result on the prevalence of GBV revealed that 259 respondents representing (79.0%) answered “No”, then 69 respondents representing (21.0%) say “Yes” on the prevalence of GBV at ATBU Regarding the frequency of GBV occurrence, 140 respondents representing (42.7%) of respondents indicated that it occurs "occasionally," followed by 99 respondents representing (30.2%) who reported that it occurs "rarely." A smaller proportion of respondents noted that GBV occurs "frequently" with 59 representing (18.0%), for those who ticked that it occurs "very frequently" were 30 respondents representing (9.1%). This pattern highlights that while GBV may not be a daily experience, it still occurs at a rate that warrants concern. The fact that nearly one in five

respondents report frequent experiences of GBV underlines the seriousness of the issue in specific contexts within the institution.

Common Forms of GBV

The results in Table 7 reveal that the most common form of gender-based violence (GBV) reported in the study area is sexual harassment, accounting for 66 respondents with (35.7%) of responses. This was followed by sexual exploitation with 50 respondents with (27.0%), and psychological abuse with 47 respondents with (25.4%). Other forms such as emotional abuse and physical violence were reported by 47 respondents with (8.1%) and 7 respondents with (3.8%) respectively. This indicates that GBV in the institution tends to be more covert or psychological in nature, rather than overtly physical.

Table 4: Distribution of responses on the common forms of GBV in the study area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Forms of GBV most Common		
Physical violence	7	3.8
Sexual harassment	66	35.7
Emotional abuse	15	8.1
Psychological abuse	47	25.4
Sexual exploitation	50	27.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The relatively high prevalence of sexual exploitation and psychological abuse may reflect power imbalances and unhealthy social dynamics within the university environment, particularly between students and staff or among peer groups. The results in Table 8 reveal that recreational areas are the most commonly reported locations for the occurrence of gender-based violence (GBV), accounting for 117 (35.7%) of the responses. This is followed by other unspecified locations by 88 respondents with (26.8%), for those that chooses hostels were 54 with (16.5%), and offices 45 respondents with (13.7%), while those who ticked classrooms accounted for were only 24 respondents with (7.3%). This indicates that GBV incidents are more likely to occur in informal, less monitored spaces where social interactions are frequent and privacy may be limited.

Table 5: Distribution of responses on the location of occurrence of GBV

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
GBV Location		
Classrooms	24	7.3
Hostels	54	16.5
Recreational areas	117	35.7
Office	45	13.7
Other	88	26.8
GBV Reporting		
Never	183	55.8
Sometimes	97	29.6
Often	36	11.0
Always	12	3.7

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The high incidence of GBV in hostels and offices also highlights the role of power dynamics and proximity in increasing vulnerability, especially where hierarchical relationships exist, such as between lecturers and students.

Conclusion

In terms of reporting, the data show that more than half of the respondents with 183 representing (55.8%) indicated that GBV cases are never reported to appropriate authorities. Only 12 respondents with (3.7%) said GBV cases are always reported, while 97 respondents with (29.6%) says that cases are reported sometimes and 36 respondents with (11.0%) noted that incidents are often reported. This low rate of reporting reflects a culture of silence, fear of retaliation, and lack of trust in institutional mechanisms for addressing GBV.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that victims should summon the courage to report incidents of GBV to appropriate authorities, while, these authorities are advised to improve access and the level of confidentiality that would encourage victims to report incidents without any inhibition. These institutional mechanisms are hopefully expected to reduce the level of prevalence, more so, when victims are assured that perpetrators would not go unsanctioned and that justice will eventually be served.

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN NIGERIA'S 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

This paper contextualized how elections are central to representative democracy, meant to provide equal access to leadership for all, irrespective of gender, religion, or ethnicity. However, women across the globe and particularly in Nigeria, continue to face systemic marginalization due to entrenched patriarchal structures and widespread gender-based violence. While previous research on electoral violence has explored its causes and effects, limited attention has been paid to the specific factors driving gender-based political violence. Addressing this gap, the present study employed a descriptive research design and a mixed-method approach, utilizing surveys and in-depth interviews. Using Taro Yamane's formula and multi-stage sampling, 399 respondents were selected from a population of 4,519. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that the 2023 Nigerian elections witnessed a significant increase in gender-based violence (GBV), with 139 reported incidents, surpassing the 128 and 133 cases recorded in 2015 and 2019, respectively. This violence, particularly in the southern regions, resulted in 26.72 percent women voter turnout. compared to the voter turnout of 34.74 percent in the 2019 general election, and a declined by 8.03 per cent voter turnout among victims which was far from the 50 percent mark targeted by INEC for the election. Factors like political party affiliation and cultural norms were found to heighten the risk of GBV, which, in turn,

restricted women's participation. This violence had a direct negative impact on women's political involvement, as victims participated at a significantly lower rate (5.3%) compared to non-victims (85.7%). A statistical analysis of the 2023 Nigerian elections, with a chi-square value of 993.4 (df = 17, p-value = 0.0) for the Hypothesis one and 222.15 (greater than the table value of 9.488) and a p -value of 0.003, confirmed a significant negative relationship between gender-based violence (GBV) risk factors and women's participation. The study recommends robust public awareness campaigns, enforcement of legal protections, and enhanced security at polling stations as major strategies for mitigating GBV in future elections and promoting inclusive democratic participation.

Keywords: *Elections, Gender- based violence, Political participation.*

Introduction

Elections are central to representative democracy, meant to provide equal access to leadership for all, irrespective of gender, religion, or ethnicity (Jenyo, 2023). However, women across the globe and particularly in Nigeria, continue to face systemic marginalization due to entrenched patriarchal structures and widespread gender-based violence (Trembley, 2007; Suleiman, Rufai & Odumu, 2022). Although women make up over half of the global and Nigerian population, their representation in governance remains disproportionately low (Agbalajobi, 2010; Musau, 2019). While sub-Saharan Africa has seen modest improvements, with Rwanda leading at 23.7% women in parliament in 2018 and Ethiopia raising female ministers from 10% in 2017 to 47.6% in 2020, Nigeria lags far behind with only 3% of Senate and 4% of House seats held by women, well below the 35% goal set by the National Gender Policy (IPU, 2020; 2022; INEC, 2023; Nkereuwem, 2023).

Globally, about 25% of women politicians have experienced violence against women in politics (VAWP), with 41% of African women parliamentarians reporting psychological violence during elections (UN Women, 2021; IPU, 2018). In Nigeria, the 2023 general elections were marred by alarming levels of gender-based violence, with reports of physical assault, threats, and fatal attacks on women in Borno, Edo, Kaduna, and Lagos States (Ameh, 2023). These acts of violence led to voter suppression, disrupted electoral processes, and prompted FIDA's appeal for INEC to extend voting to enable women's participation. Deep-rooted gender norms and political exclusion were further highlighted as only 5% of National Assembly seats are held by women, worsening the already poor gender representation (Ijeoma, 2023). Despite legal reforms like the 2008 Gender Equality Bill and the 30% quota in Nigeria's constitution, enforcement has remained weak, and progress slow. From 1999 to 2023, women's participation in

Nigerian politics has fluctuated and consistently fallen short of targets due to cultural, structural, and violent barriers (INEC, 2023; CDD, 2023). Gender-based violence, ranging from physical to economic and emotional forms, remains a global phenomenon and a significant obstacle to women's full civic and political engagement (Alexandra & Mayesha, 2015; ISS, 2020). These violations not only prevent women from contesting or voting but also create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity that undermines democratic inclusion.

Thus, this study aims to critically examine how gender-based violence has impacted women's participation in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to; determine the extent to which physical, online harassment; verbal abuse and political exclusion or psychological violence occur against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections; investigate how political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norm or social status increased the risk of gender violence against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections; determine the extent to which women who experienced gender violence during the 2023 Nigerian elections participate in voting or candidacy at a lower rate compared to those who did not, and find out how public awareness campaigns or increased security presence at polling stations could reduce the incidence of gender violence against women during future elections in Nigeria

Conceptual Clarification

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts or threats rooted in gender inequality, typically targeting women and girls through physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse. Major international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Convention, classify GBV as a severe human rights violation and a legal issue that demands urgent international intervention (Council of Europe, 2011; UN Women, 2017). Gender-based violence (GBV) is widely recognized as a serious human rights violation that predominantly affects women and girls, causing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm (EU Commission, 2022; WHO, 2015). While international instruments like the Istanbul Convention and Maputo Protocol aim to address GBV, critics argue they often adopt narrow, women-centered definitions that exclude men and gender minorities, reinforcing binary norms (Ertürk, 2009; Visaria, 2000). Scholars such as Russell (1984) and Collins (2013) advocate for broader definitions that frame GBV within systemic power imbalances and societal structures, encompassing both interpersonal and institutional violence.

While the traditional feminist view sees gender-based violence (GBV) as a tool of male dominance rooted in patriarchy (Brownmiller, 1975; Walker, 1979), a more analytical perspective broadens this to include violence against gender minorities, placing it within a larger sociopolitical and structural framework (Brown, 1992; Herman, 1997). Despite their differences, both schools of thought agree that GBV hinders civic participation. Drawing on these perspectives, this study defines GBV as any physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm that arises from societal power imbalances and targets individuals based on their gender. This includes electoral GBV, which, in a context like Nigeria, specifically targets women to restrict their political involvement through fear and intimidation, thereby undermining democratic inclusion and the realization of their rights.

Women Political Participation

Women's political participation stems from liberal democratic principles, emphasizing freedom of speech, association, and equal access to political roles and leadership (Glass, 1979). According to United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (UN-IANWGE), (2022) and Gleason (2001), it involves women actively engaging in public affairs through voting, campaigning, holding office, and influencing policies. Sheriff (2014) views women's political participation as a process through which women engage directly or indirectly in governance, including voting, campaigning, policymaking, and involvement in political parties or public discourse. The UN-IANWGE (2022) expands this to include women's freedom to speak, campaign, be elected, and hold office at all government levels. Conge (1979), along with other scholars, categorizes women's political participation into six forms, such as active versus passive roles, aggressive versus non-aggressive behaviors, structural versus. non-structural objectives, governmental versus non-governmental aims, and mobilized versus voluntary actions.

Pragmatic evidence shows that women's political participation goes beyond voting to include involvement in civil society, unions, media, and transitional assemblies, though barriers persist especially in post-conflict settings (Glass, 1979; Sheriff, 2014). According to IANWGE (2022), liberal democratic cultures have increasingly enfranchised women since the 1960s, allowing them to compete in elections and engage meaningfully in public decision-making beyond party politics. In the context of this study, active forms of women's political participation such as voting, campaigning, party membership, and candidate sponsorship are most relevant and serve as key indicators of women's engagement in electoral processes. Therefore, analyzing these acts provides a practical basis for assessing women's involvement in elections especially in the 2023 Nigeria's general elections.

Elections

In a liberal democracy, elections are a key form of political participation, a vehicle for peaceful democratic change, and a means for citizens including women, to select their representatives (Jenyo, 2023). Defined as a formal decision-making process for choosing leaders (Benoit, 1994; Laski, 1982, Ujo, 2001; 2008 & Nwekeaku, 2011), elections have evolved from a simple act of voting into a complex process to accommodate modern governance (Nwekeaku, 2011). While the "act of election" is the specific moment of casting a vote (Petter, 1970), the broader "electoral process" encompasses multiple stages, including registration, nomination, and campaigning (Butler & King, 1994). This process, which is central to a sustainable democracy, is often undermined in many developing countries by corruption and power centralization, leading to voter apathy and violence (Muhammed, 2022). Despite this, voting remains a vital act of civic duty that legitimizes government and fosters citizen empowerment (Lewis, 2015), although its effectiveness can be limited by systemic issues like gerrymandering and political polarization (Kuttner, 2016). Undoubtedly, elections are a many-sided process, not just a single act, crucial for ensuring legitimate and accountable governance.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs *institutional theory* to explore the relationship between electoral gender-based violence (EGBV) and women's political participation in Nigeria. The theory, advanced by scholars like Weber, Parsons, Selznick, North, and Ostrom, emphasizes how institutions influence social behavior and sustain societal order. Based on institutional theory, organizations and societies are shaped by ingrained norms, rules, and values that become legitimate and resistant to change over time (North, 1990; Selznick, 1949). This can lead to institutional isomorphism, where organizations conform to dominant norms to maintain legitimacy, reinforcing existing power structures, including those that restrict women's political participation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In contexts with weak enforcement and limited female representation, these dynamics can perpetuate electoral gender-based violence (GBV) and deter women's engagement in democratic processes (Ostrom, 2005; Mackay, 2014). While direct interventions like gender quotas may increase women's representation, broader reforms often have limited impact in patriarchal and weak institutional environments like Nigeria, where women instead drive change through grassroots advocacy and mobilization (Reese, 2012). This study therefore uses institutional theory to analyze the connection between GBV and women's political participation in Nigeria, building on the work of scholars who have found the theory useful for this purpose (Tripp, 2009; Reese, 2012; Ajayi & Okeke, 2020; Egwuatu & Okoro, 2018; Omezi & Ogbebor,

2021). By exploring how institutional norms and practices interact, the research aims to provide deeper insight into the barriers women face and help develop more effective strategies to promote gender equality in Nigerian elections.

Empirical Review

Electoral Gender-Based Violence (EGBV) is a widespread global issue that severely limits women's political participation and undermines democratic equality, with its forms and intensity varying across regions (UN Women, 2021). Studies show that up to 25% of women politicians face physical, psychological, economic, or political violence, with 70% of European women citing EGBV as a major barrier to entering politics, ultimately weakening democratic institutions and silencing women's voices (IPU, 2018; NDI, 2023; European Parliament, 2019).

Empirical studies show regional differences in the prevalence of Electoral Gender-Based Violence (EGBV), with Southeast European countries like Albania and Montenegro reporting over 50% of female politicians experiencing violence, while Nordic countries report lower rates despite persistent online abuse (UN Women, 2021; European Parliament, 2021). The Nordic region stands out for its success in women's political participation, with over 40% female parliamentary representation, a result of its long history of gender equality, progressive social norms, and favorable political systems (European Women's Network, 2019; Viola, 2012). In contrast, women in Latin America, despite making significant gains in representation, continue to face challenges, particularly electoral gender-based violence (EGBV) and entrenched gender stereotypes (Cammack, 2014). The prevalence of EGBV varies across the region, with the Andean region—notably Bolivia and Peru—recording high rates, where up to 70% of women parliamentarians have experienced violence (UN Women, 2021; Mujeres, 2022). EGBV is also a widespread issue in Asia, where a 2019 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) survey reported that 47% of Asian women parliamentarians had experienced psychological violence. In this region, cultural norms and patriarchy are significant drivers, particularly in South Asia, while online abuse is more prevalent in East Asia (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2020; UN Women Asia-Pacific, 2022). In the Arab countries, although women's political representation remains low, ranging from 9% to 22%, progress is being made due to increasing female education, activism, and policy changes (El-Khatib, 2020).

In Africa, electoral gender-based violence (EGBV) remains a significant barrier to women's political participation and democratic integrity, with forms ranging from psychological abuse to physical and online harassment (UN Women, 2017; African Union, 2018; IFES, 2021). West African nations like Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone,

along with East African countries such as Kenya, face particularly high rates of EGBV, while online abuse is widespread even in regions with lower overall rates, like Southern Africa (UN Women, 2021; African Union, 2018). Studies show that this violence, which disproportionately affects women, stems from cultural, social, and political barriers, including patriarchal structures and inadequate law enforcement (Tripp, 2012; Jackson, 2018). While some research suggests that political environments like direct democracies can reduce the gender gap in participation and EGBV (Kim, 2019), and that electoral systems with mixed-member proportional representation support greater female political involvement (Ahn, Kim, & Kang, 2019), others argue that underrepresentation and biases against women persist even in developed nations like the U.S. (Corbett et al., 2021; Center for American Women and Politics, 2021). The challenges are particularly acute in Nigeria, where deeply ingrained cultural and societal barriers, along with inadequate education, limit women's involvement to token roles, reinforcing the need for more comprehensive strategies beyond just affirmative action (Agbalajobi, 2010; Suleiman, 2016; Suleiman et al., 2022).

A review of existing empirical studies reveals that hostile political environments, institutional structures like electoral systems, gender bias, cultural and religious norms, and psychological and social factors all contribute to electoral gender-based violence and hinder women's political participation globally. However, there is a noticeable gap in research on the impact of gender-based violence on women's participation in Nigeria's 2023 general elections, with limited attention to the factors driving victimization, highlighting an urgent need for inclusive strategies that address root causes and support women's political empowerment. It is this knowledge, location and methodological gaps inherent in the previous studies that this current research work seeks to fill. Therefore, expanding the frontier of knowledge to the investigation of the impact of gender-based violence on political participation of women in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria becomes imperative and timely.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design and a mixed-method approach to investigate gender-based violence (GBV) and its impact on women's political participation during Nigeria's 2023 elections. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with affected women and key stakeholders, providing a safe space to share lived experiences. Quantitative data were obtained using survey questionnaires administered to a representative sample of 399 women drawn from a population of 4,519 through multi-stage sampling. Secondary data from books, journals, reports, and political documents complemented the primary data. To ensure inclusivity, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit

participants with direct experiences of GBV, supported by online surveys, NGO networks, and social media outreach.

The study employed both online and offline recruitment strategies to engage women affected by GBV, ensuring diverse participation. Ethical standards were maintained throughout, with expert reviews affirming the instrument's validity and reliability confirmed through a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.85. The analysis combined descriptive statistics, thematic content analysis, and Chi-square tests to identify patterns and explore the relationship between GBV and women's involvement in electoral processes.

This comprehensive methodology provided both in-depth insights and generalizable findings on how gender-based violence continues to hinder women's full participation in Nigeria's democratic space.

Findings

This section presents and summarizes key findings from both quantitative and qualitative data to address the study's four research questions**.** Of the 399 questionnaires distributed, 342 were retrieved (86%), and five out of eight planned interviews were conducted (63%); the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative responses, and thematic content analysis for qualitative insights.

Research Question One: To what extent did physical, online harassment; verbal abuse and political exclusion or psychological violence occur against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections?

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on the extent to which physical, online harassment; verbal abuse and political exclusion or psychological violence occurs against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections.

S/N	VARIABLES	OPTIONS		TOTAL
		YES (%)	NO (%)	
1.	Personally subjected to violence and intimidation	234 (16)	108 (18)	342
2.	Physical violence	204 (14)	138 (23)	342
3.	Verbal Abuse	327 (21)	15 (3)	342
4,	Sexual harassment	98 (8)	244 (41)	342
5.	Online harassment	300 (21)	42 (7)	342
6.	Political exclusion	296 (20)	46 (8)	342
	Total	**1459 (100)**	**593 (100)**	**2052**

Table 1 presents the respondents' views on the most common forms of gender-based violence encountered during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. According to the data, 21% of participants reported experiencing verbal abuse and online harassment, while 20% indicated political exclusion. Additionally, 16% experienced intimidation, 14% faced physical violence, and 8% reported sexual harassment the lowest among the listed forms. This suggests that online harassment, verbal abuse, and political exclusion were the most widespread gender-based violations affecting women during the election.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions confirmed that electoral gender-based violence (EGBV) was significantly high during Nigeria's 2023 general elections, manifesting as physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse (Beatrice Oral Interview, 2023). Nigeria recorded 24,720 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as of October 2023, with over 139 of these directly linked to the 2023 elections—surpassing the 128 and 133 incidents reported in 2015 and 2019, respectively (Oral Interview, 2023). Women faced direct physical attacks, threats, cyberbullying, and verbal abuse, while patriarchal norms and institutional barriers further limited their access to campaign resources and media (Oral Interview, 2023). This hostile environment contributed to a climate of fear, discouraging women from running for office or participating fully in elections, despite making up 47.5% of registered voters (INEC Oral Interview, 2023). Consequently, women's voter turnout declined to 26.72% from 34.74% in 2019, and their representation in elected offices remained low, with only 8.4% of female senatorial candidates and 15 out of 288 House of Representatives candidates winning their seats (Oral Interview & FGD, 2023).

*Research Question Two: Did political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norm or social status increase the risk of gender violence against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections**?***

Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on whether or not political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norm or social status increase the risk of gender violence against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections?

S/N	VARIABLES	OPTIONS		TOTAL
		YES (%)	NO (%)	
1.	Lack of security and law enforcement presence	103 (10)	239 (34)	342
2.	Gender-based social and cultural	250 (25)	92 (13)	342
3.	Political party affiliation or candidate support, geographical location	230(23)	112 (12)	342
4.	Disinformation and hate speech campaigns	200 (20)	142 (19)	342

5.	Limited access to resources and support system for women	331 (33)	11 (2)	342
	TOTAL	**996 (100)**	**713 (100)**	**1710**

Table 2 presents respondents' views on the key factors contributing to the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The results show that the highest percentage responses were recorded for limited access to resources and support for victims (33%), gender-based social and cultural norms (25%), political party affiliation or candidate support (23%), and disinformation along with hate speech campaigns (20%). These were identified as the major risk factors that fueled GBV during the elections.

Qualitative findings confirmed that economic hardship and various forms of violence, including threats, ethnic profiling, and hate speech, were strategically used to disenfranchise women, particularly in rural areas during the 2023 Nigerian elections (Oral Interview, 2023). This systemic marginalization is a key reason why Nigeria ranks 181 out of 193 countries for women's political participation. Discriminatory social, legal, cultural, and economic structures, combined with a violent political climate and deeply patriarchal political parties, actively restrict women's roles to symbolic positions, excluding them from meaningful policymaking and decision-making processes (Oral Interview & FGD, 2023). This issue is particularly pronounced in Northern Nigeria, where some states, like Kano, have never elected a woman to the House of Assembly or House of Representatives, and where major political parties fielded no female candidates in 19 states in 2019 (Eniola, Oral Interview, 2023). To counter these entrenched barriers, there is an urgent need for an Electoral Violence Prevention (EVP) strategy that includes early warning systems and empowers women to actively prevent election-related violence.

Research Question Three: Did women who experienced gender violence during the 2023 Nigerian elections participate in voting or candidacy at a lower rate compared to those who did not?

Table 3: Opinions of Respondents on whether or not, women who experienced gender violence during the 2023 Nigerian elections participate in voting or candidacy at a lower rate compared to those who did not

S/N	VARIABLES	OPTIONS		TOTAL
		YES (%)	NO (%)	
1.	Fear of violence influenced my decision to vote	299 (23)	43 (11)	342
2.	Made me avoided voting altogether	158 (12)	184 (44)	342
3.	Voted differently from my preference	306 (24)	36 (9)	342

4.	Felt discouraged or hesitated to vote	225 (17)	117 (28)	342
5.	It affected my ability to campaign for or support a candidate	307 (24)	35 (8)	342
	Total	**1295 (100)**	**415**	**1710**

Table 3 reveals the respondents' level of agreement on women who experienced gender violence during the 2023 Nigerian elections participate in voting or candidacy at a lower rate compared to those who did not. The results from the table reveal the percentage values of all the items based on how they were rated by the respondents. As shown from the table the respondents agreed to the fact that women who experienced GBV were affected by their ability to campaign for or support a candidate, influenced their preference of whom they voted for and also influence their decision to vote during the electioneering period with 24% and 23% of percentage values of the three items respective. Meanwhile, the results also show that 17% of the study participants agreed that they felt discouraged or hesitated and they were also made to avoid voting generally due to gender-based violence melted on women during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

Qualitative data from interviews confirmed a strong link between gender violence and women's low electoral participation, with forms of violence such as physical assault, rape, and verbal abuse negatively affecting their engagement (Ademola & Abiodun, Oral interview, 2023; Ibrahim & Eke, 2018). These findings highlight how hate speech, social stigmatization, and cultural and religious factors limit women's involvement to symbolic roles, thereby restricting their participation in electoral competition (Oral interview, 2023). This violence, coupled with issues like voter suppression and delayed voting materials, contributed to a low voter turnout in the 2023 elections. This contradicts Agbalajobi's (2010) argument that affirmative action alone is ineffective without first empowering women through education, which he posits is the most vital tool for enabling their full awareness and participation in the political process.

Research Question Four: Can public awareness campaigns, strengthening legal system or increased security presence at polling stations reduce the incidence of gender violence against women during future elections in Nigeria?

Table 4: Opinions of Respondents on whether or not public awareness campaigns, strengthening legal system or increased security presence at polling stations reduce the incidence of gender violence against women during future elections in Nigeria.

S/N	VARIABLES	OPTIONS		TOTAL
		YES (%)	NO (%)	
1.	Increase security and law enforcement presence	269 (21)	73 (16)	342
2.	Voter's education and awareness programme	113 (9)	229 (50)	342
3.	Trainings for election officials on gender-based violence	248 (20)	94 (21)	342
4.	Stronger legal frameworks and penalties for perpetrators	300 (24)	42 (9)	342
5.	Improved access to support service for victims	325 (26)	17 (4)	342
	TOTAL	**1255 (100)**	**455 (100)**	**1710**

Table 4 reals the respondents' level of agreement on the most effective Strategies and Interventions to Prevent Gender-Based Violence against Women in future Elections in Nigeria. Results from the study depict that the respondents agreed to the fact that improvement in the area of women access to support service for victims of GBV, institutionalization of stronger legal framework and penalties for perpetrators of gender-based violence against women, increase in the security and law enforcement presence at the polling units during election as well as adequate trainings for election officials on gender-based violence at the percentage values of 26%, 24%, 21% and 20% respectively. However, the results from the table equally reveal that 50% of the respondents disagreed with the fact that voters' education and awareness campaign is an effective mechanism to address the challenge of GBV against women in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

More so, analysis of the qualitative data revealed that there is urgent need for gender-responsive security measures to curb violence against women in elections; swift prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women in elections regardless of status; deploying of unified data tool for gender-responsive assessment of elections; advocacy and sensitization to reduce party-influenced electoral violence (Oral Interview, 2023).

Test of Hypotheses

Statistical analysis of the 2023 Nigerian general elections revealed a significant negative relationship between risk factors of gender-based violence (GBV) and women's participation. For the first hypothesis, a chi-square value of 993.4 with 17 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.0 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that GBV risk factors significantly limited women's electoral involvement. Similarly, for the second hypothesis, a calculated chi-square value of 222.15which is greater than the table value of 9.488 at 9 degrees of freedom and a p value of 0.003 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding confirms that factors such as political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norms, and social status increased the risk of GBV, causing women who experienced violence to participate in voting or candidacy at a lower rate compared to those who did not.

Further findings from the test of hypothesis revealed the level of the impact of gender-based violence on women participations in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. In order to arrive at logical and evidence-based findings as well as conclusion, four research questions were raised in consonance with the study's objectives and research hypotheses and \the following findings were recorded accordingly. Findings from the first research question, which investigated the forms of gender-based violence (GBV) against women in the 2023 Nigerian elections, revealed a significant increase in physical violence, online harassment, verbal abuse, and psychological violence compared to previous elections since 1999. The 2023 elections saw 139 reported incidents of GBV, a notable increase from the 128 and 133 cases recorded in 2015 and 2019, respectively. The second research question confirmed that factors such as political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norms, and social status heightened the risk of GBV, which in turn restricted women's full participation in various electoral roles, including as voters, candidates, and electoral officials.

The third research question's findings indicated a direct negative impact of GBV on women's political participation. Women who experienced GBV as voters and candidates participated at a significantly lower rate (5.3%) compared to those who did not (85.7%). This demonstrates how GBV acts as a major barrier to women's involvement in the democratic process. Finally, the fourth research question identified potential solutions to mitigate EGBV. The study found that implementing effective public awareness campaigns, strengthening the legal system, and increasing security presence at polling stations are crucial strategies that have the potential to reduce the incidence of GBV against women in future elections in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of gender-based violence on women's participation in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Drawing inferences from the major findings, a conclusion that runs through the analysis of the study is that the rate at which physical violence, online harassment, verbal abuse, political exclusion, and psychological violence occurred against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections is higher compared to the previous years since the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999. The associated risk factors of political party affiliation, geographical location, cultural norm, religion, social status, and lack of access to resources increased the risk of gender violence against women during the 2023 Nigerian elections, as they were more prevalent in the southern part of the country compared to the northern part of the country, and this hampered the full participation of women in every aspect of the elections. Finally, victims of GBV as voters and candidates participated at a lower rate compared to those that did not experience this social menace during the 2023 general elections in the country. Meanwhile, effective public awareness campaigns, a strong legal system, and increased security presence at polling stations have the potential to reduce the incidence of gender violence against women during future elections in Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is recommended that to effectively combat electoral gender-based violence, the Nigerian government, in partnership with social media platforms and civil society organizations, must collaboratively strengthen and enforce existing laws, particularly targeting cyberbullying, physical and sexual harassment, and hate speech against women, while promoting accountability and public awareness. Legislatures, political parties, and civil society organizations should advocate for and implement quotas and affirmative action policies to increase women's representation in government, drawing from successful models in countries like Rwanda and the United States. To counter the low political participation of women who have experienced gender-based violence (GBV), political parties, women's rights organizations, and professional associations should create and strengthen mentorship programs and support networks to help female candidates and voters build resilience and access essential resources.

Governments, civil society organizations, and media outlets should launch public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes, educate the public on the harmful effects of online harassment and verbal abuse, and underscore the importance of women's political participation in fostering a healthy democracy. Law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders should strengthen security measures and provide

comprehensive support systems, including specialized training, survivor-centered services, and tech-based reporting tools, to enhance women's safety and increase their political participation.

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