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IDEAS

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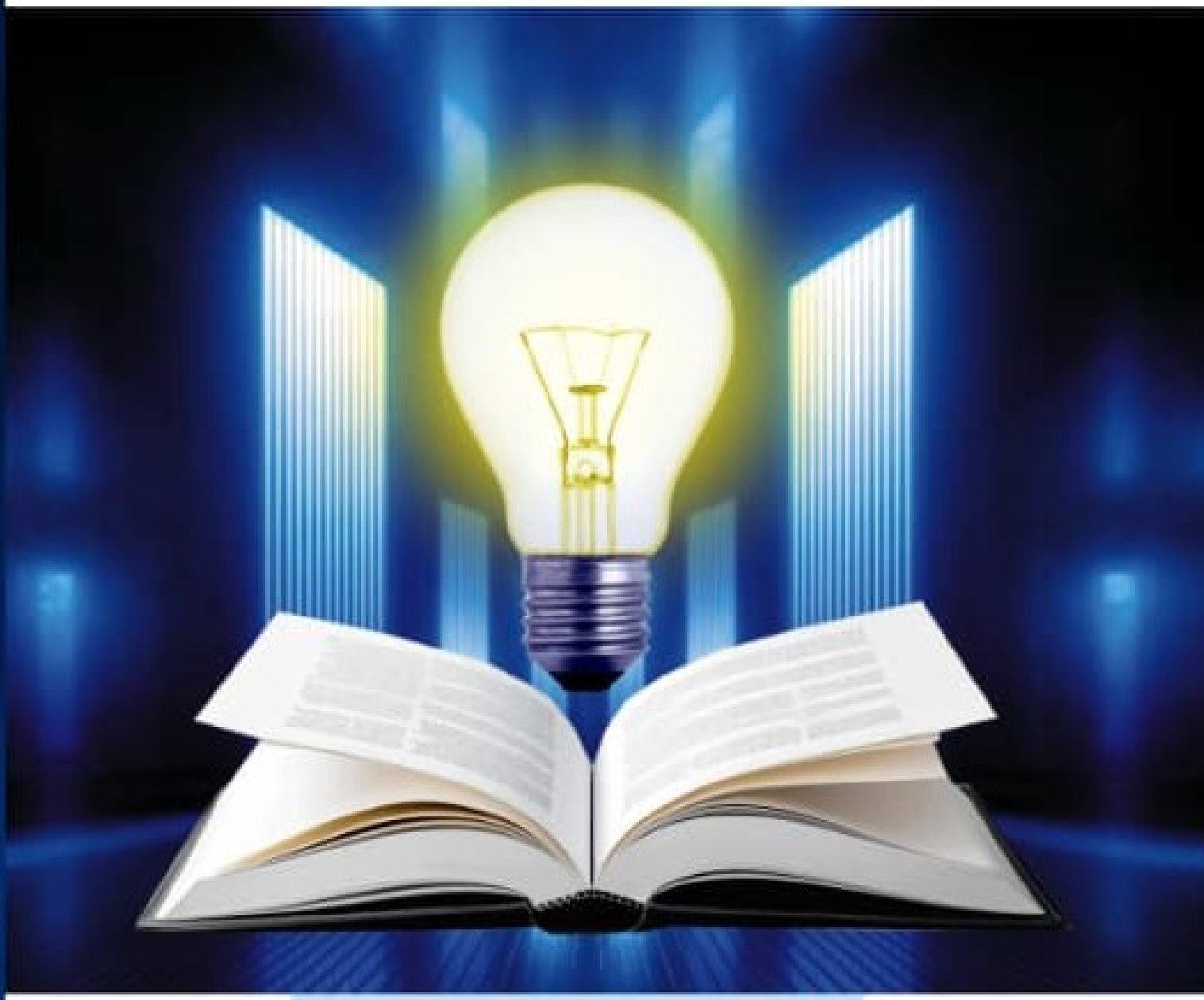

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The Need for Renewal of Work Ethics as the Basis for National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Human beings, acting either individually or collectively, cannot but be faced,one way or another, with issues that are suffused with ethical or moral questions. In fact, there are actions which all of us will acquiesce in or approve as commendable like honesty ,truthfulness, fidelity to promises, hard work ,diligence, reciprocity etc. Conversely, there are behaviours and actions, which every rational mind will adjudge as reprehensible and as such should not be tolerated or allowed to flourish in a human community. Such actions and behaviours include murder, rape, homosexuality, theft, adultery, corruption .graft, sleaze, kleptomania, embezzlement etc. The attitudes and work ethics of Nigerian workers have been a cause for concern at this time in order to encourage a change towards positive development of the work enterprise and the nation at large. The various expositions on the attitudes to work of the Nigerian workforce have painted a rather negative picture of an apathetic, uncommitted men and women who are unresponsive to traditional techniques. It is against this background that two issues become imperative in this paper. These are work ethics of Nigerian workers and the need for renewal of work ethics and attitudinal change of the workers to allow for effective utilization of every individual within a workforce.

Key Words: Ethics, workplace ethics, development, national development, Renewal.

Introduction

The work attitudes, integrity, self-discipline, teamwork, emphasis on quality, commitment and productivity of the Nigerian workers have painted a rather negative picture of an apathetic, uncommitted men and women, who are unresponsive to motivational techniques. Whichever way we look at it, the Nigerian workers are what we have; hence we must encourage them to make meaningful contribution to the development of the nation by becoming more productive. The urge to attain and maintain high level of productivity is a "sine qua non" for the development of every sector in the nation. Ethical consideration in labour management relationship is a concomitant for organizational development. Hence, for high productivity, it is important that all stakeholders observe ethical conducts in their dealings with one another. This must be openly displayed through positive attitudes, committed teamwork, high integrity and self-discipline.

One of the issues that have not received enough attention in Nigeria's quest for development is the need for renewal of work ethics among the workers.It has been observed that most workers havepoor attitude to work because the impression of most of them is 'we don't need to sweat while doing government work. Invariably, most workers see government work as nobody's business.Perhaps this is why Olugbile asserted that "Nigerian worker is lazy, Indolent, unconcerned, indiscipline and unmotivated. He is corrupt and lacking in commitment to the goals of his organization and loyalty to his employer"(Olugbile, p.49)The attitudes of Nigerian workers have been a cause for concern at this time in order to encourage a change towards positive development of the work enterprise and the effective utilization of inherent potentials and capacity. The various expositions on the attitudes to work of the Nigerian workforce have painted a rather negative picture of an apathetic, uncommitted men and women who are unresponsive to traditional techniques. It is against this background that two issues become imperative in this paper. These are work ethics of Nigerian workers and the need for renewal of work ethics in the workplace as a way of contributing to national development.

Conceptualizing Ethics

The best place to begin a discussion on ethics is to attempt a conceptualization of the term. This is because what ethics is and ought to be are problematic but germane to understanding of it. The ground issue of ethics however is what is good and bad or why a piece of action is good and praiseworthy and another bad and blameworthy. Scholars have not agreed on what constitute the nature of ethics because it does not easily lend itself to a univocal definition like physics, history and biology etc. however, saying this should not be construed to mean that ethics is incapable of being defined.

Ethics comes from evolutionary process. It grows with the society and it is the nearest to common law. It provides the ways of judging social behaviour. Ethics is the systematic study of the fundamental principles of morality. It is a critical examination of values with a view of having qualitative way of living and conduct. It examines the rights and wrongs in human conduct and the society. It prescribes, instructs and exhorts human beings on what to do, and what not to do. Since man is averagely a pleasure- seeking and pain –avoiding animal, since man's first instinct is self –satisfaction and perpetuation, the tendency is for man to pursue

those actions, conducts and things that would guarantee his maximum interest. Often times, it is at the expense of fellow human beings and the environment whose interest, satisfactions and self-perpetuation would necessarily collide with one another.

In order not to exist in the Hobbesian state of nature, wherein life will be nasty, brutish, chaotic, and short, in which there would be quarrelling, anger, forcefulness, violence, war of all against all, ethics serves as a conscience regulator, a check on one's insatiable want and appetites, a check on one's habit and character by reminding oneself that same interest which he has is also same interest by another. Ethics therefore is a self –regulator, a refrain on human beings to be conscious and respectful of existence, lives, values, interest and needs of other human and non-human entities in nature and to be aware that every so-called right imposes a responsibility on one to respect the right of another.

For there are many definitions or approaches to as deposed by scholars from antiquity to the contemporary period. There is the theoretical aspect as well as the practical aspect or dimension of ethics. In the former, ethics refers to the study of morality in all its forms, "it is primarily an academic exercise, an intellectual pursuit, a process of inquiry and reflection" (Olugbile, p.15).Ethics is that branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of human beings as they make moral decisions, These decisions lead to actions which are results of judgment, and they involve the use of words known as moral predicate "ought" "should" "Right" "good" and their opposites.(Omoregbe,1990 p.149)·Without unnecessarily sounding repetitive, ethics as it is stated above "investigate the principle governing human actions in terms of their goodness, badness, rightness and wrongness. As such its tasks can be expanded to include a concern with discovering the principles that should govern human conduct and with the investigation of the normative issues involving value judgment" (Omoregbe1990 p.41)

Having considered briefly the theoretical dimension of ethics, let's take up the other aspect of ethics which bother on the practical dimension of ethics which this paper is majorly concerned about. Ethics to some scholars is regarded as a practical discipline like law, medicine, journalism geography, engineering etc. In every day experience human beings, as social animals are always confronted which demand making moral judgments on the right thing to do or the appropriate course of action to take. This is so because human beings interact with other beings of their kind in various places, like market place, at work, worship centers, schools and some other social groups. In the course of these meetings and encounters, certain moral issues are generated. So the application of ethics to public life and the professions in the interest of the discourse in professional ethics, also known as work place ethics. Thus professional ethics is a moral reflection in work life, where work is simply defined as an activity resulting in products or services done for payments.(Moshood,p.115)

The word ethics is a derivative from the Greek "ethos", which means custom or practice and has to do with a manner of doing things. Ethics refer to the scientific and theoretical method that illumines a subject in a "thematic, systematic, coherent and consistent manner"(Irele,p.1) Accordingly, ethics is "the science of behaviour … a series of rules and principles by which we act and which tell us what to do ,it clarifies and classifies words and actions into things which are good and into things which are bad"(Irele, p.1) Ethics therefore prescribes rules that guides moral decisions ,what ought to be done ,the value of action and the judgment of action.

The kernel of this philosophical postulate of ethics is that it is a product of human rational will because man is a rational being; he must necessarily obey moral law. Moral issues are of philosophical interest. This has led to the emergence of ethics as a sub-discipline in philosophy. Ethics is concerned with philosophical inquiry about morality, moral problems and moral judgments.(Omoregbe, ,p.150) When, as individual, we begin to think critically and generally about moral issues, we are in the domain of ethics, when we say an issue is a moral issue, it implies that the options open to the agent will affect the welfare of others, either positively or negatively. That is, moral issues normally arise only when there are possibilities of either harm or benefit to the people. But it may be argued that moral issues are not limited to only questions about the well-being of other people. They may also arise in cases where the agent's well-being is affected.

Any issue that can be morally appraised may be classified as either morally prohibited, morally required or morally permitted. When it is said that an action is morally prohibited it means that it is regarded as morally wrong or bad. That is, something you ought not to do .For something to be morally required implies that it is morally right or good. That is, something you ought to do. If something is said to be morally permitted or acceptable, it means that it is neither morally required nor prohibited. If you do something that is morally permitted, you cannot be said to have done something good or bad.

What is Work Ethics?

Workers, whether or not at the management position often encounter an ethical dilemma when they confront a situation that requires them to make choice between two courses of action, especially if each of them is likely to serve the interests of one particular interest group to the disadvantage of the other. To make right decision, workers must weigh the competing rights or claims of the different interests. Sometimes, taking a decision is easy because some obvious standard norm or value of behaviour applies. More specifically, work ethics are the accepted principles of right or wrong governing the conduct of people in the work place.(Hill and Jones, p.24)

Workplace ethics are the set of values, moral principles, and standards that need to be followed by both employers and employees in the workplace. It is the set of rules and regulations that need to be followed by all staff of the workplace. These ethics are implemented by employers to foster both employee-employee relationship and employee-customer relationships. An organization may decide to put these ethics into writing or not—they are however meant to be followed. There exist some general workplace ethics that do not need to be defined by the employer, but are common ethical behaviours employees need to exhibit. In the same vein, some organization-specific ethics may need to be defined in a company handbook.

Work ethics can also be regarded as a subset of ethics. It focuses mainly on the rules and regulations that guides the conduct of individuals as professionals. Somehow, these workers faces situations that demand making moral decisions bordering on honesty, truthfulness, care safety, trustworthiness, loyalty, solidarity etc. in the course of carrying out their duties like the relationship between a doctor and patient, employer and employee, teacher and students, lawyer and client etc. .In these professions, the objective and goal is usually encapsulated in the operational guidelines, or technically referred to as codes of professional ethics. Different

professional bodies have codes of ethics for their members who are expected to aid the stipulations of the relevant provisions. Every code of ethics must not contradict the constitution of the country, or the fundamental principles of morality, because the former is the supreme law of the lad whereas the latter provides the general framework, which ultimately validates the contents of whatever code of work ethics under any consideration.

Work ethics is a form of applied ethics that examines ethical principles, moral or ethical problems that arises in a work place environment. It is applied to all aspects of work conduct and is relevant to the conduct of individuals in an organization. This ethics originate from individuals, organizational statement and from the legal system. It refers to the contemporary organizational standards, principles, sets of values and norms that govern the actions and behaviours of an individual in a business organization. It is the branch of philosophy that deals the philosophical and the ethical underpinning of work place environment. Without going into too much detail, society expects its members to behave in certain ways and not behave otherwise. This brought about what is understood as moral values and moral vice or positive value and negative values respectively. Positive values which cut across every facet of man's life are manifested in acts of "honesty, discipline, dedication to duty, tolerance, justice, love, hard work, sincerity, impartiality, humility, hospitality, endurance, prudence etc".(Omoregbe,p.25) Conversely, negative value is just the opposite of positive values which are demonstrated in form of indiscipline, idleness, laziness, injustice, intolerance, arrogance, dishonesty etc. It is important to note that while the society encourages its members to adhere to positive values; It discourages them to abstain from the negative values because they debar success, sustenance, maintenance and progress of society.

In the light of the above definitions, work ethics could be defined as moral rules or a principle in relation to work; or it refers to moral rules guiding behavior of workers in relation to the work they do, upon which they can earn salaries or wages. In a broader manner, work ethics deals essentially with moral values associated with the following facet of work, worker, workplace, working condition, work experience, work force, work clothes, working implements or instruments, working practice, working hours, working relationship, working class, working day, working girl, working group, working area, workroom, work permit working order etc.(Grint, p.15) If we relate moral rules to work, it implies that work ethics demands that workers should be punctual at workplace, cooperate with co-operate with co-workers, work hard to justify their salaries, contribute their quotas to the progress of work they employed to do . In addition, workers need to be honest, straight forward and sincere in discharging their duties responsibly, they need to endure hardship when the need arises as often dictated by the nature of the work they do.

Recent incidence of unethical activity in workplace underscore the wide spread need for a better understanding of factors that contribute to ethical and unethical decisions. Individual personal moral philosophies and decision making experience may not be sufficient to guide in the work place, hence work ethics will help to identify ethical issues and recognize the approaches available to resolve them.

Work ethics exposes the major problem that leads to the decree of unethical conduct in a work place which arises from the fact that people at work are willing to do things that are not only unethical but illegal, so as to maximize their position or boost their personal ego(Bastore,

p.86) This type of reasoning has led many to conclude that "anything is possible and applicable at work" however, it is not the case because the application of work ethics comes to play which enable appropriate rule to be formulated and applied. The importance of work ethics is to ensure that, at a minimum, workers abide to all the applicable laws and regulations that guides and keeps the working relationships together making everything else more effective and efficient and also enhancing productivity. Just as morality is essential for regulating the conduct of a society, a code of ethics cannot be dispensed with if members of a given organization want to make progress in their chosen profession. Having stated this, we need to probe into the workability of work ethics in Nigeria. The question is to what extent hasan average Nigerian worker has adhered to work ethics in his or her place of work. This leads to another topical issue, which is essential to the understanding of our paper.

Assessment of Nigerian Workers Adherence to Work Ethics

The phrase Nigerian worker is ambiguous, it needs clarification. It is difficult to assess all Nigerian workers. Hence we choose to limit our assessment to civil servants. This choice is informed by research findings of Olugbile, who discover that civil servants were rated as the poorest in term of their attitude to work.(Olugbile,1997 p.50)He observes that civil servants have cold attitude to work more than other workers. Unfortunately, when it comes to Nigerian civil servants, there is an undeniable poor attitude towards work. You walk into an office and somewhere along the line, you are being treated as an enemy or, the boss is the enemy; with no regard for your physical and mental well-being. A studied view can show that most Nigerian workers and employers alike bring nothing but unprofessionalism to the table. They fall ungracefully to a place of complete lack of civility and the disturbing thing is that they are either unaware or do not mind at all.

The Nigerian workers have been described as indolent, apathetic and unresponsive to motivation and generally, not willing to put forth maximum productive efforts.(Olugbile,1997 p.50.) Most workers are not punctual, they get to work late, and they are often not dedicated to duty. A few of them who occupy important positions take bribe and engage in corruption, and embezzlement of public fund. One can hardly get anything from government secretariat without greasing the palm of those in charge of what one wants. Some of them, especially women, engage in private (business)practice such as selling of wares and domestic needs both within and outside their offices. A few men have their shops or business centers in towns to which they sometimes divert government or company properties to, like stationery and motor parts.

From observation, some Nigerian workers bring to the pellucid surface flotsam and jetsam of brazen and utter disregard for work ethics and professionalism. Pragmatic and religious observance of even common nuances, forms and rules of the work ethic manual seems to be a mountainous task for a motley depressing number of Nigerian workers. In fact, work ethics which are the pivots of workers' behaviour or principles and rules which control and influence workers' attitude are as foreign to Nigerian workers as Martian aliens are to earthlings. You are confronted with the deficiency in the work ethic and professionalism domains of some Nigerian workers when you go to some Nigerian banks. In this gamut, here is a commonplace experiential rendition. You have exhausted your cheque-book and you need a new one. It takes

seven days or more to get a new cheque-book at your bank. You dash to your bank like a bat out of hell because you need to make a substantial payment for something next week. And with the cashless policy you cannot make the payment in cash.

At 8 a.m. you are already at the bank, but you cannot enter to do your niggling business. You are ordered to stay within a certain perimeter on the premises of the bank by an eager-to-please security man. You ask him why you should be waiting since Nigerian banks open at 8 a.m. He tells you en passant that there is an important meeting going on. A meeting at a time when customers should be at the banking hall doing different transactions? You query inaudibly. It is 8:30 a.m. now, you are still waiting, and the number of those waiting to get into the bank has increased. That means an unfanciful struggle as Nigerians always seem to be in a hurry to nowhere.

In all of that, the morning dew moistens you. You say thank God it is not afternoon when the sun is "angry". You cannot stand waiting in the sweltering heat. Finally, at 8:50 a.m., you are let in. The security man thinks he has done you a favour, so you should reciprocate the "kind" gesture when you are on your way out. You make straight for the Customer Service Unit. There you meet a young pretty lady at her desk chewing gum at 9 a.m. Her harum-scarum chewing makes an annoying "tau-tau" sound. You say, "Good morning ma", although you are older than she is, "Please I need to make an application for a new cheque-book". She looks at you and presses forward to stare at her computer and fiddle with its mouse. You say again, this time in a more stupidly ingratiating way, "Please ma I need to make an application". She cuts in before you finish the sentence, "I heard you, I am not deaf". She fumbles her hand into her drawer, brings out a form that is after much drama, and haughtily hands it to you to fill out. She has done you a great favour. You still say, "Thank you" after the humiliating service. And she leaves you with a sour reply, "Don't mention it". What for? For the bad service? You question in your head. A memento it is, because it re-echoes in your ears.

After your business is done and the ego-bruising episode is gone, you want to leave the bank in a hurry. You are deflated. You approach the security door at the exit. You enter, the door opens. You take two steps out. The security man gives you a menacing after-all-the-favour look. You remember, you have not given him "something" for letting you in before a scrum of people who are on pins and needles. You dig out a sum good enough for a security man. You do not want him to add another lashing to your already beaten spirit. He is happy. He patronizes you, "Oga you too much jor!" And he leaves you with a parting expression, "Oga thank you for coming!" A memento it is too because it rings in your head long after you have left the bank. You have just been extorted.

You mull changing to another bank. But your friend Tayo tells you he gets worse treatment at his own bank. He literally grovels to bank officers to get a transaction done. He also informs you, not surprising though, that it is a Nigerian problem. Most Nigerian workers lack work ethics and professionalism. You agree it is true. You have taken enough poppy-cock to know it is true.

You go to a Nigerian federal ministry that has called for an expression of interest in a given project, and needs a competent contractor to execute the project. You know you are qualified. So you have prepared all the necessary documents to meet with the director who has been assigned to handle matters concerning the project. The Director's secretary tells you snobbishly

that you cannot see her boss. And that you have to hand in your documents to her. Without a tussle or a hassle, you give the documents (photocopies of course) to her in a file. She instructs you imperiously to come back after a week to know the progress of your file. You are enthused with that. You look beyond her repulsive attitude. You say, "Thank you", fulsomely. Nigeria is changing, you think. You did not give her "something" as you are leaving.

A week passes; you decide to go back to the Director's office after the passing of another week. It is a Monday, and it has been two weeks since you tendered your documents for scrutiny and consideration. You are there now, confident and cheerful. You believe you will get the contract. Alas! Without any show of penitence, the Secretary announces to you that your file cannot be found. She adds that the contract has been awarded to someone else already so you do not need to bring another set of documents. You are ruffled. How can that happen in just two weeks? You hide your anger. You do not want to look desperate. You know it was because you did not give her "something". You make a controlled gait to leave a last impression of pride and elegance. She mockingly leaves you with a memento, "Oga try next time".

The reality of crass disregard for professionalism, courtesy and work ethics by some Nigerian workers hits you in the face again. Defeated, you persist in eating the dung of Nigerian workers. The anecdotal analyses above are definitive pictures of the plummeting in professionalism and work ethic capital of some Nigerian workers. The individual cases are representative of many other related cases. Again, it is clear that just as professionalism and work ethics are lacking in some Nigerian workers in the private sector, the same thing can be said of some Nigerian workers in the public sector. Both sectors must as a matter of exigency train and retrain their staff in the imperatives of professionalism, work ethics and courtesy. And there should be severe reprehension for flouting the canons of these essential elements of service.

The above attitude of an average Nigerian worker is a manifestation of low adherence to work ethics. This situation produces negative consequences such as nepotism and favouritism, low productivity, lack of meaningful development, frustration and hopelessness, inefficiency, ineffective work, delay in the implementation of government policies, denial of public the right to enjoy certain facilities from the government. It indirectly inspires some to commit crimes of all sorts, the totality of which has often brought bad image to the nation. Whichever way we look at it, the Nigerian workers are what we have; hence we must encourage them to make meaningful contribution to the development of the nation by becoming more productive. The urge to attain and maintain high level of productivity is a "sine qua non" for the establishment of government corporations, commercial and business ventures which invariably transmit to national development. For this reason, there is an urgent need for to stop the situation. But before we can do this, we need to probe in both the remote and immediate causes of low attitude of Nigerian workers to work ethics.

Ethical consideration in workplace relationship is a concomitant for organizational and national development. Hence, for high productivity, it is important that all stakeholders observe ethical conducts in their dealings with one another. This must be openly displayed through positive attitudes, committed teamwork, high integrity and self-discipline .

Reasons For Low Work Ethics

Behaviour is a function of both the persons and the environment. Unethical behavior by employees can affect individuals, work teams, the organization and even the nation at large. Thus, it is expedient for individuals to act ethically. Ethical behaviour is acting in ways that are consistent with one's personal values and the commonly held values of the organization and society(Otakpor, p.67) Unethical behaviour by employees can affect individuals, work teams, the organization and even the nation. Nations and organizations thus depend on individuals to act ethically. A nation or an organization's ability to elicit ethical behaviour that goes above and beyond the call of duty can be a key asset and one that is difficult for competitors to imitate. "It's not enough to just show up at 8 o'clock each morning and say, oh, I have done a wonderful thing". Ethical behaviour in organizations is necessary because business can become unethical, and there are plenty of evidences as in today on unethical organizational practices. "Irrespective of the demands and pressures upon every organization, by virtue of its existence it is bound to be ethical, for at least two reasons: one, because whatever the business does affects its stakeholders and two, because every moment of action has paths of ethical as well as unethical paths wherein the existence of the business is justified by ethical alternatives it responsibly chooses.

Not surprisingly, there is a growing interest among organization scientists and practitioners in the patterns of and in the motivational factors affecting such behaviour, as well as in its consequences for both organizations and their members. At times, we might ask: is it possible to look at peoples‟ attitudes, their state of mind? Can we influence the way they think about work? If we could change their attitudes, make them more positive, would they not behave differently? Work ethics is important in all aspects of life because it is an essential part of the foundation on which a civilized society is established. An organization or society that lacks ethical principles is bound to fail sooner or later.

What then are the reasons responsible for poor or work ethics among Nigerian workers? These could be listed as follows: poor pay, poor housing, poor working condition, transportation problems, prevalence of get rich quick attitude among Nigerians, lack of motivation, poverty, lack of supervision and poor enforcement of work ethics and the group norms cultural values of the society and religious statement. We shall discuss each of this briefly as possible for reason of space. It is evident that Nigerian workers receive poor wages and salaries, which are not sufficient to feed their families and to attend to their domestic and social demands. This view is expressed in the following common parlance among workers "My take home pay cannot take me home." Another one says, "My boss is a comedian. What he pays me is a joke"Because of this development, many workers take to short cut in order to make money at the expense of their employer.

Besides, most Nigerian workers work under poor condition .For example, there is no provision for facilities that enhances good working atmosphere, such as recreation centers, personal or official vehicles to take them to work and from work. Because of non- availability of facilities and good working condition, workers remain indolent. Apart from this, it is observed also that most Nigerians are materialistic as they have been caught in the web of get rich quick syndrome. For most Nigerians believe in 'big money, little work'.it is ironical that an office

messenger wants to ride the latest car in town because of his desire for material things like other workers elsewhere, including his bosses, To achieve this selfish goal they engage in unethical practices like corruption, bribery and embezzlement of public fund.

Associated with materialism is the issue of poverty, which is a reflection of the inability of the individuals to satisfy their own material wants. The high level of poverty occasioned by the depressed economy in Nigeria gave birth to inflation which has forced some of the Nigerian workers to have poor work ethics. In the light of this Olakunle's observation is apposite as he opines that: "You cannot preach ethics to a hungry man who could do anything including robbery and thuggery to keep, body and soul together. The poor has nothing to lose but his poverty"(Olukunle, p.29)While we do advocate immorality, the fact still remains that poverty can make a worker violate moral rules associated with his work as a means of survival.

Another fundamental factor responsible for low poor ethics is the group and cultural values. These norms and values are expressed through such ties of family relationships, denominations, party affiliations, age grades, secret societies etc. All human societies have well defined strategies for social control which includes system of values, beliefs, norms and sanctions. The understanding of value prescribes what is intrinsically and extrinsically worthwhile. it also refer to traits or qualities that we consider useful, beneficial or worthwhile .It has to do with social conception of what is right and wrong and what 'ought' to be. Values are sole determinants of priorities among people's goals and objectives.

'Value' fall under a branch of philosophy called the Normative or Prescriptive philosophy. It is precisely on the account of its prescriptive nature that an ideal statement is subject to varieties of interpretation and application. The word 'value' has multiple and often complex interpretation. This is because values are usually understood within different socio-cultural context. Secondly, values relate to persons, and persons are different and unique. Values are one of the most important features that distinguish humans from brute beasts; they are the things that define who we are and what we believe. In the same way, our values are usually the basis for our personal ethics and beliefs(Ukpokolo,p.49).

In the words of Joseph Agbakoba, "the notion of value readily goes with preference because a thing or idea has more or less worth in relation to other things and ideas"(Agbakoba, p.30) Families, groups or cultures have values that are largely shared by members. The values a group subscribes to identify the objects, conditions or characteristics that members of the group count to be important or worth pursuing. Individuals also have personal values that are unique to them. For example, some workers because they belong to a particular group engage in nepotism and favouritism for their colleague at the expense of the work ethics. For any meaningful development to take place, there is need for renewal of work ethics, this shall form the basis of our discussion in the next section.

Renewal of Work Ethics and its Connection to National Development

Work ethics is dialectically linked to national development. It is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. It becomes imperative that work ethics creates sustainable development; it creates an environment that sustains and promotes the process of development by being responsive to the basic needs of employer's goals and aspirations together with that of the employees. Ethics is concerned with the well-

being of a people without neglecting the rights of the people. It interrogates and investigates the economic and social policies instituted by the owners of business organizations. It examines the extent of accountability, transparency and the sincerity of employers; it also suggests ways to improve corporate governance neither by the reconstruction of the guiding principles and values, or the replacement of some. Since decision making is paramount to any good and effective organization. A search for work ethics or organization-wide ethical standards, calls for an alternate structural approach to the reformation of the people in the organization. This, in the view of the traditional pragmatic framework ,is an attempt to connect behaviour and experience in order to "strengthen the foundations of our knowledge and our actions" Human beings are seen as actors and players who create and give purpose to institutions and organizations through dynamic activity to ensure well-being and progress. Also, humans are creatures of habit. Once an act or attitude is imbibed, it takes a lot of effort and resistance to correct the situation. It is thus sensible to say that the values of cooperation and involvement should be imbibed for every human within the organization to be well utilized.

The knowledge of work ethics makes sure the principles and values guiding the governance of any nation are such that make the process of decision making and implementation to be transparent and open to public criticism. Knowing the governance invariably involves the employers and employees; ethical knowledge and moral values in the work place makes it an imperative that the process of decision-making and implementation is sensitive to the needs of every individual within the public and private organizations.

We must engage the idea of ethics in the workplace from a more theoretical perspective that examines the nature of right and wrong; while at the same time emphasize the axiological and justice dimension of work ethics. The essence of ethics according to Perry is Man's endeavour to harmonise conflicting interests, to play the role of an arbiter, and to secure the greatest possible general good. (Perry, 1974:374) if this is true, work ethics is an injunction against harming others and protecting others in the work place. It is also an attempt to unleash the fullest of values and the potentials of the power of responsible knowledge.

Morality demands that workers should work hard to justify what they earn as salaries and wages without which they are bound to fail in their endeavor if we are to go by an African proverb that says "whatever gain we not labour for does not last and that it is what we earnestly labour for that lasts" this proverbial sayings express African opinion about dignity of labour. The Africans believe in hard work, dedication to duty, honesty and sincerity in places of work. Dedication to work and not idleness produces success in earthly endeavour , Dignity of labour brings honour, nobility, respect, glory, praise and grandeur. It is on this ground that De George established a relation between work and ethics which, according to this could be manifested in worker loyalty, dedication to duty and obedience. He opines that when a worker accepts a position, morality demands that he or she should what the position requires including what those above he or she tell him or her to do and he or she is therefore credited for doing so.

In the same line of thinking, workers should be given adequate security and his appointment should not be terminated for any unjust reason for workers are also human beings who like other members of the society deserve respect, honour and fair play. Workers are not objects to be discarded or replaced at whim. There should be better provision to protect workers from arbitrary and unfair treatment.

It is our belief that development depend on the content of work ethics in a particular organization. Policies that would translate to visible human and material development require practical commitment on the part of the employees and the employers. This singular action raises questions of religiosity and moral values (such as honesty, patriotism, selflessness, duty responsibility, accountability, culpability and liability)which have implications for development. Invocation and proper articulation of work ethics among the workers would go a long way in stemming the tide of financial fraud, bias, injustice and laziness, etc. which are inimical to national development.

The task of work ethics in our contemporary time is to ask epistemic and existential questions in order to arrive at answers that can positively influence the people's choices and actions for the realizations of their well-being and that of their work place. For the enhancement of work ethics, there is a need to check if the implementations of policies and codes of conduct are fair, just and inclusive and task cognizance of the needs of the most vulnerable people in the work place.

Conclusion

It must be emphasized that the challenge of ethical behaviour must be met by organizations if they are truly concerned about survival uprightness, integrity, and competitiveness. What is needed in today's complicated times is for more organization to step forward and operate with strong, positive and ethical cultures. Organizations must ensure that their employees know how to deal with ethical issues in their everyday work lives(De George, p.45) As a result, when the ethical climate is clear and positive, everyone will know what is expected of him or her when the inevitable ethical dilemmas occur. This will definitely give employees the confidence to be on the lookout for unwanted unethical behaviour and act with the understanding that what they are doing is correct and will be supported by top management of the organization. If human beings were morally perfect, there would be no need for the evolution of moral principles, to guide their behaviour because they would have been acting all the time strictly according to the fundamental moral principles known to them by intuition-perhaps. Unfortunately, human beings are far from being morally perfect. The existential situation in which man finds himself is such that he has capacity to act immorally. Man's recurrent failure to live to ethical standards at work or any other sphere of human endeavour necessitates continuous interrogation of the complex issues which arise from the asymmetry between the stipulations of conscience and actual behaviour.

The achievement of the intentions of any organisation regarded as workplace requires the establishment of a structure that ensures proper definition of rules and responsibility to provide the basis for corporate performance through effective utilization of human potentials and capacity. The set objective cannot be achieved unless the employers and employees demonstrate the appropriate ethical behaviour in the execution of assigned duties, ultimately enhancing the corporate image of the organisation's outfit in the environment where it operates. This becomes essential for the strategies developed to operate and stimulate patronage. Employees who demonstrate unethical behaviour do not promote the fortunes and the well-being of the organisation.

Implanting work ethics is a call for dutifulness and hard work that must be the major conditions for reward and promotion to greater heights irrespective of who is affected .The critical condition for success will be based on merit and enterprise, distinction and competence. These criteria ought to be impartial and geared toward the primary goal of optimal performance of the organisation. Only recourse to the highest level of excellence as seen in the pursuit of diligence, entrepreneurial expertise and organisational capacity will count in the pursuit of organisational ethical standards. These advantages will be directed towards spectra gains and corporate responsibility. The result of implanting work ethics on the organisation will drive a robust sense of strong loyalty, commitment, and selflessness on the part of the individual that will altogether enhance his or her capacity utilization.

The point then is that the demand and supply, conception and application of talent, good conduct and excellence are reciprocal between the worker and the organisation. Work ethics ought to be upheld so as to ensure the normative revitalization of our workplaces and the release of human potentials for urgently needed development and stability. Good work ethic is definitely one of the very important factors that improve productivity.. Therefore, for the productivity of Nigerian workers to increase employers must put strategies in place to improve work ethic. The strategies most include information about what medications that would lead to positive outcome on work ethic, identification of action levers that lead to increases in productivity and quality of working life, identifying the context of the organization and the way workers react to work improvements and the general re-orientation of Nigerian workers ethic towards their job.

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African Epistemology as a Critique of Western Epistemology

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Abstract

Many African epistemologists consider themselves as either Universalist or Relativist about theories of knowledge. Despite the instinctive appeal of the former and latter, many of their advocates are at crossroads about the relevance of both positions to African philosophy. This paper focuses on the plausibility of both positions, in order to see if African epistemology can be used to critique western epistemology. First, we argue that it is important to make a distinction between the former and later- one which is more communal and the other which tends to be individualistic. Second, after making the distinction between both, we postulate that the Universalist position attribute knowledge as the same across all cultures. This makes it problematic for theories of knowledge. Third, there is the recommendation that any relativist position must begin by defending the uniqueness of African epistemology, on the grounds that it employs a social epistemology that is situated in African ways of knowing, and this is one of the philosophical benefits which African epistemology offers. This paper concludes that there is no reason to doubt the view that African knowledge systems are rational enough to critique western theories of knowledge, which are deemed to be Eurocentric, Egocentric, Racist, and this critique is a positive appraisal rather than a negative appraisal.

Keywords: African, Western, Epistemology, Rationality, Relativists, Universalists, Knowledge

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to:

(a) define what epistemology from a Western and African perspective is;
(b) examine the differences between Western epistemology and African epistemology;
(c) critically examine the critique which African epistemologists have made against western epistemology;
(d) to argue for the benefits of African epistemology over Western epistemology.

In the first section of this paper, the meaning of epistemology will be examined. In addition, the differences between the Western epistemology and African epistemology will be examined. The rationale for the exploration of the issues in this section is to argue against the view that Western epistemology is the only viable epistemology and that non - Western epistemology does not constitute a rational epistemology. This is because of the failure to understand that Africans have their own ontology through which they view reality and how they know and interact with reality.

The second section of the paper deals with the position that African epistemology can be used as a critique of Western epistemology. The argument that will be employed here is the cultural relativist's argument that there is no universal epistemology that constitutes the standard for all ways of knowing across cultures and that different cultures have their own unique way of knowing. The main argument for the cultural relativist's position is that there could be a unique form of epistemology that is critical and rational enough that can be equated with Western epistemology and which indeed can be used to critique Western epistemology, and it shows that there are some benefits of African epistemology over Western epistemology. The argument here is that African epistemology is not entirely individualistic and that is why it is capable of uniting people across different social strata of the society.

What is Western Epistemology?

In its etymological meaning, the word Epistemology is coined from two Greek words, 'episteme'- to know, and 'logos' -study. Thus, in its full meaning, epistemology means theory of knowledge as a branch of philosophy. Its focus is: how we can know, what can we know and the extent of what we can know. The problem in stating a precise definition is because each individual employs its own theories of knowledge about the world, its meaning can then be absolute or relative based on the cultural background of the knower(s).

Consequently, the nature of Western epistemology deals with the fundamental ground rule that knowledge entails "justification, truth and belief" (Hamlyn, 1970). But this paradigm, results in scepticism, to the effect that the analyses of these terms cannot provide a rational basis for knowledge. Donney Willis explained that such rule is guided by two constraints, the Cartesian constraint and the reasons argument. According to him, the Cartesian constraint relates to Descartes' argument in the *Discourse on Method and Mediations (1, 2, 3, and 4*) which supports the view that we can always be deceived by a malignant demon into believing what is false. On the other hand, the reason argument is about the necessary justifications for knowledge and in certain occasions, this might be very difficult, due to the different individual and cultural background of the knower(s); in connection to this, Western epistemology has been done by focusing on the analyses and discussions about three terms: justification, truth, belief (JTB).

What is Justification? Justification in epistemology denotes evidence; to claim that one has knowledge; you must provide different reasons why you know. This is referred to as evidential justification in traditional epistemology, which is the first condition for knowledge. For example, we as human beings have forms of justification:

(i) religious justification,
(ii) evidential justification,

(iii) non inferential justification, etc. What the epistemologists are really concerned with is that there should be sufficient justification for claims towards knowledge.

What is Truth? Truth in traditional philosophy could not be defined, due to the different types of truth. However, as Russell Bertrand's has pointed out in *The Problems of Philosophy*, there are three points to note in discussing the nature of truth:"

(i) Any theory of truth must be as such as to admit of its opposite, falsehood;
(ii) truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs and statements and,
(iii) the truth or falsehood of a belief always depends upon something that lies outside the belief".

Accordingly, in western epistemology, there are three classical theories of truth. These are the correspondence theory, the coherent theory and the pragmatic theory. The correspondence theory of truth, affirms that truth must correspond to a fact; the coherence theory of truth admits that truth must be coherent or consistent with a set of beliefs and the pragmatic theory of truth, focuses on the usefulness of knowledge and that if it is not applicable for understanding the external world, it is not useful. This is supported by pragmatist such as John Dewey, William James, Charles S. Pierce, and Richard Rorty.

What is a belief? In western epistemology, belief is the third condition for knowledge. For us to know, we must entertain one belief or the other. However, for us to know, our belief must be well grounded. For instance, it could be that the knowledge we have about something or someone could be due to our own subjective conditionings of our environment. For instance, Plato recognized that we should be able to separate such 'knowledge' from 'opinion', because knowledge belongs to the Forms, and opinion belongs to matter or physical reality. One cannot have knowledge without forming belief.

In other words, the concepts of justified, truth and rational belief, along with the notion of knowledge, form the core subject of western epistemology. Moreover, it can also be argued that the theory of (justified true belief), is divorced from everyday assessment of different opinions, which tend to emphasize whether we have been responsible in forming our beliefs rather than the satisfaction of the prerequisites of knowledge (Foley, 2012). According to his view, instead of 'knowledge as justified belief', it should be knowledge 'justified reasonable belief', because it is capable of giving expression to the everyday concerns we have in evaluating our own and each other's beliefs- this will allow one to switch attention from whether we have met all the prerequisites of knowledge, but rather to whether we are reasonably careful, reasonable cautious, and reasonably thorough in our opinions, whereby the standards of reasonability can vary from one belief to another.

However, Chundoff Elijah has noted that the issue with Western epistemology is that it requires us to "articulate conditions that suffice for knowledge, even if those conditions are non-explanatory".For example, he asserts that such problems in Western Epistemology has a solution, if and only if there is no analysis of knowledge. In his view, two methodological issues can be taken up regarding the case. The first methodological issue is about what evidence can be given in favour of a theory of knowledge, or knowledge of some kind, since this method will allow us to give up looking for necessary and sufficient condition in favour of looking for explanatory condition which allows us to check it against intuitions about cases, i.e. intuitions

about the presence or absence of knowledge in real or imagined situations. The second approach, is that there should not be enough reason for us to allow methodical doubt, when we subject our knowledge to criteria's of truth, belief and justification.

More so, in western epistemology, there are three types of knowing- knowing by acquaintance, knowing how, and knowing that- which is called propositional in epistemology. But according to various literatures in epistemology, introducing theories of knowledge itself is only contributing to the problems of knowledge. This is because if knowledge is already identified why put theories, which will only seek to overemphasize, restructure all the conditions, origin and sources of knowledge. Ayer Alfred remarks that:

> Likewise, it is also maintained that these theories of knowledge, themselves, fail their own test because they are too circular, that is, they often go in full circle, which leads to another problem of regress, which all avoid the details which are needed to offer a satisfactory condition of knowledge in the first place. (200)

In summation, two schools of thoughts are predominant in western epistemology. Rationalism argues for knowledge by deductive proofs and rules of logic; in that one does not need to look for external sources in the world, before one can acquire knowledge, you can trust your intuition for claims of knowledge. Empiricism postulates that our sense-experience is easily accessible to us, and it can also be empirically tested and verified by other sources. Why are they important? First, both schools of thought are needed because it helps one understand the rationality behind our claims to knowledge. Both reason and experience are needed for our conceptual knowledge. Second, western epistemology is a laden concept, because it is used to explain and understand the facts of a phenomenon; Reason and Experience are applied to conceptual knowledge. Third, it provides a way for comparative purpose to see the better one for acquiring knowledge; reason is valuable to provide reasons for our claims to knowledge and experience is valuable, since it focuses on the individual's knower's culture, religion and ethnicity.

What is African Epistemology?

The question of what African epistemology is cannot be described without the meaning of what African philosophy is. A negative response to the former denotes negative response to the later. To say that there can be African philosophy denotes that there is an African epistemology. The meaning of African epistemology has been in contention for different scholars in African philosophy, however the general view is that there is something that can be referred to as African philosophical thought, which means there is an African ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Simply, Odera Oruka explains, there have been four schools of thought in African philosophy in response of what African epistemology is. These are classified as: "*Ethno Philosophy, Philosophic Sagacity, Politico- Ideological philosophy and professional philosophy*"

Accordingly, the positions among the four schools of thought connote the meaning of African epistemology. The ethno philosopher tries to understand the characteristics of African culture i.e. language, and religious celebrations, for evidence of a theory of knowledge. The

philosopher sage sought answer to question about epistemic knowledge in Africa through elders of his or her community. The politico- ideological is socially oriented in his or her approach to knowledge. The professional philosopher looks for answers by critically studying a global epistemology to update him or herself on the present debate on epistemology- this is a contextualized epistemology that shows characteristics of social epistemology that understands knowledge has been culturally relative.

To understand what African epistemology is, the ethno philosopher's approach towards knowledge is more favoured here. The reason is because an epistemology that is African is needed to be understood through its social context. Epistemology itself is seen as the theory about the nature and limits of know, however the important point here is that any person, human being from the world, irrespective of their culture, tribe or race which makes knowledge to be relative.

Accordingly, from this analysis above, social epistemology is then the tool which African epistemology is suitable to as a claim towards rationality. First, African epistemologists then create a concept of rationality that is appropriate to the African society. Second, African epistemology then is a critical awareness of the intellectual and cognitive traditions of African philosophy, which does not make a negative description of its people.

What then is implication of these analyses for what African epistemology is? This means that a general understanding of what an African epistemology is causes oversimplification of diversity that focuses on African traditional culture and modern Western culture only as two significant terms. The position of the Universalist and relativists as mentioned in the abstract applies here. Universalists in African philosophy argue that African cultures, like all others, participate in a shared human rationality or moral understanding. Relativists holds that **truths, values, and moral principles are culturally dependent**, and must be understood within their specific cultural or historical context- relativists emphasize the uniqueness of African worldviews, languages, customs, and systems of thought that can't be reduced to Western categories.

Concurrently, the subject matter of African epistemology is this. First, it is a presentation of well-establishedgeneral beliefs, concept and theories of African people. Second, it is a presentation of African favoured ways that are institutional in acquiring knowledge and evaluating facts and truth about the African situation. Third, it is the wisdom passed on in the form of proverbs, myths, folk, and tales. Fourth, it is the presentation of African language as African knowledge base. Fifth, it is the presentation of customs and practices in the aspects of religion, judiciary, law and Governance.

To conclude, the task of African epistemology is a long way. First, for one to claim that African epistemology is to be taken in consideration as a theory of knowledge, then the similarities and differences of concepts of knowledge and truth in all cultures on the African continent must be considered. Truth is applicable across a culture, given the fact that there is not difficultly in translating the word 'cultures itself, it is a matter of similitude of meaning, and particulars in as much it is a philosophical concept. Second, for African epistemology to be relevant to modern Africa, it must acknowledge and acquire advancements made in science and technology of the west. Third, the belief that age and gender are used to determine how knowledgeable the knower(s) is, denies the epistemic authority to the young and power to the

old, and this needs to be questioned. An epistemic reasonability then needs to be taken note of by African knowers through critically questioning the traditions which are backward and retaining those knowledge that are valuable.

African Epistemology as a Critique of Western Epistemology

African epistemologyis a universal subject that deals with knowledge of individuals based on their different social context. The claim that African epistemology can critique epistemology is more of a possibility rather than a postulation. This is because our claims to knowledge are evidently based on the knower's social process that uses evidence for his or her claim. This type of evidence needs not only to be rational, but it could also be from other sources of knowing like emotion, feeling, revelation, folktales. In comparison, Western epistemology tends towards rationality and sense experience. When one examines Western Epistemology, Michael Williams argues that it often tries to isolate placeholders of knowledge from their social contexts. He comments: "The argument that western epistemology needs to be 'naturalized', that is, made continuous with one or more of the sciences is confusing and paradoxical in the philosophy of (Kant, 1785; Russell, 1956, Stroud, 1984, Quine, 1970".

Moreover, in my own view, this denotes that Western Epistemology, undermines indigenous thinking, and valuing rationality. For instance, African epistemology is rational enough to critique western theories of knowledge through an appraisal that is of positive contribution to philosophy. The questions to be asked then are:

(i) what are the critiques African epistemology leveled against western epistemology?
(ii) How can these critiques contribute to theories of knowledge?
(iii) Why are these critiques needed for both African epistemology and western epistemology?
(iv) Are these critiques possible at all?

In relation to my first question, the critiques which African epistemology levels against its counterpart are fourfold:

(a) rationality as a restriction in understanding the emotional African knower,
(b) devaluation of indigenous knowledge by western epistemology,
(c) western epistemology as *Racist, Eurocentric, Egocentric*,
(d) western epistemology open and close predicament misconception.

First, about (a), rationality is known to be systematic, logical in evaluation of epistemic judgments of knowledge and emotions is often considered as a sort of sentiment by the west in acquiring knowledge. The rational is seen as more important than the emotional for the Western knower. This misconception only serves to contribute to devaluation of the African ways of knowing. For example, the folktales in African philosophy are classified by the west as not philosophical, but at close inspection, it consists of ethics, logic, aesthetics, and epistemology.

Second, about (b), indigenous knowledge is seen as the unique ways of knowing that is relevant to a culture or tribe. Western epistemology has subject to skepticism this type of knowledge. Moreover, African indigenous knowledge is the raw and original ways of knowing that is acquired through revelation, omens, dreams, divination, oral utterance that shows

instances of logic. For example, when Western Ethnographers came to observe African culture, they saw such epistemology as religious, which for them was not a form of Philosophy. Succinctly, these indigenous ways of knowing in Africa is quite important, since it shows the intersectionality of race, color, politics and ontology which cannot all be disproved as factors of theory of knowledge.

Third, on (c), there is a criticism that Western epistemology is Racist, Eurocentricand Egocentric. *Eurocentric* in the sense that its epistemology is from a congenital European philosophical tradition, like that of G.W.H. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Bertrand Russell; these philosophers in their epistemologies were skeptical and debating whether African epistemic system was relevant as a theory of knowledge. *Racist* in the sense that there was racial profiling system used to evaluating African ways of knowing; Racism itself has always been an issue that African philosophers dealt with, and for Western philosophers to consider the African race as less developed in its production and acquisition of knowledge permeated a lot of disregard for indigenous thoughts that is much original.

Fourth, on (d) the false accepted view that Western philosophy and epistemology is open towards knowledge, and that African philosophy is closed, opens the former for criticism. African epistemologists saw this conception as wrong, because the former and latter has different conceptual schemes of reality and knowledge. Such openness is that there is acceptance of different systems of knowing, and closeness suggests that there is no headway for any alternate source of knowing. African epistemologists argue that its epistemic system is more open than ever because it interacts with other cultures through war, colonialism, globalism, language, music, art.

Moreover, the philosophical benefits that African epistemology offers against the problems posed by western epistemology, through an epistemological revision of cultural traditions and knowledge in Africa is by two factors: (a) academic exploration, (b) cross acculturation. Firstly, Academic explorers are those who are referred to as the cognitive revisionists who make persuasive arguments in their inner mind and African society subscribe to their thought. Secondly, the cross culturalists are African philosophers who became aware of their own culture and others, and this opens conceptual possibilities. For instance, Horton Robin in his '*closed and open predicaments' argument* argued that traditional culture was closed, and modern culture was opened (Horton, 22). But his idea was epistemological irresponsible, since Africa was indeed open in its interactions with other cultures by way of trade, wars, and invasion, and African epistemology is developing not Euro-centrically but afro-centrically in theories of knowledge.

In conclusion, African epistemologists can be credited for trying to defend the heritage of the African knower. For example, we see instances of paper written to appraise traditional thought through philosophical criticism by African philosophers in Africa and in the diaspora. It should not be a case that we still argue about whose philosophies and knowledge is valued more, but how those thoughts could contribute to the development of theories of knowledge. The criticism or critiques leveled are not negative, but only a stern suggestion that Western epistemology should clear away its misconceptions about African ways of knowing; its knowledge(s) are then valid and rational, if there is warrant available to support it through JTB.

Conclusion

Our final thoughts on this matter, is that Western epistemology has been on for a very long time and it has been responsible for the growth of epistemology as a branch of philosophy. However, this does not suggest that it is the only form of epistemology that is worth embracing. As it has been shown in this paper, African epistemology is another form of epistemology that constitutes a viable alternative to Western epistemology. The world of knowledge itself is becoming globalized, and as such, knowledge can be gained by any person in the world regardless of their race, religion, color, and socialization. The idea that a group of people's knowledge of Eurocentric orientation is only valid is wrong; a more relativists approach towards knowledge is needed.

However, a universalized approach is only positive if there is 'equality and equity in reverence of all knowledge as important, but it becomes negative if it debases other cultures as not knowledgeable. A relativists approach is positive, if it tries to study knowledge based on the cultural, political and social conditions of the knower. The problem about western epistemologists relates to its exclusion of other forms of epistemology as constituting viable forms of knowledge. Experience has shown that the world is made up of different cultures, and hence different modes and ways of knowing and perceiving reality.

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John Stuart Mill's Concept of Gender Equality: An African Philosophy Perspective

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Abstract

This paper explored an Afro-philosophical response to John Stuart Mill's concept of gender equality as an avenue for integral African development. This will be done by examining the intersections and divergences between Western liberal feminist thought and African philosophical perspectives on gender and personhood. While Mill's liberal feminist stance in his work The *Subjection of Women* was revolutionary within its Victorian context, this study argues that his theory contains inherent limitations when viewed from African communal and spiritual conception of human person. Mill's advocacy for women's rights and equality is evaluated in light of African cultural values and communal ethics, which prioritize collective well-being and relational ontology. The analysis reveals that while Mill's ideas on individual liberty and equality are influential, they may not fully capture the complexities of gender dynamics in African societies. African philosophical perspectives, such as *Ubuntu* and Igbo feminist thought, offer alternative frameworks for understanding gender equality, emphasizing the importance of community, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Key words: African Philosophy, Communitarianism, Complementarity, Gender Equality, Patriarchy, Relational Ethics

Introduction

The discourse on gender equality has occupied a central position in both Western and non-Western philosophical traditions. One of the most significant Western contributions to this discourse is John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869), in which he advances a radical critique of the legal, political, and social subordination of women. Mill's liberal and utilitarian arguments form the foundation for much of what later evolved into modern feminist thought. However, these arguments are not without their limitations, particularly when assessed from a non-Western perspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). Mill's concept of gender equality rests on the principles of liberty, rationality, and utility. He argues that the subjection of women is not only unjust but also irrational and detrimental to the progress of society (Mill, 1997). While his thoughts were revolutionary within the context of Victorian England, they often carry Eurocentric assumptions about personhood, autonomy, and justice that may not translate neatly into non-Western cultural contexts, especially in African philosophical discourses. In contrast, African philosophical traditions emphasize relational identity, community, and moral responsibility. African feminism, rooted in indigenous knowledge systems and critical of both patriarchy and Western feminist hegemony, interrogates Mill's individualistic framework. Thus, thinkers such as Oyèrónké Oyìwùmí (1997), Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984) and Obioma Nnaemeka (2004), argue for culturally grounded notions of gender justice that highlight complementarity, communal belonging, and negotiation. For this conception, Adidi and Tella (2020) argues that African masculinity and femininity are deeply rooted in metaphysical understandings of personhood, where identity is defined not merely by biology or rights but by moral and spiritual participation in community. This view challenges Mill's tendency to define equality solely in legal and rational terms. Similarly, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014) brings a contemporary voice to African feminism, highlighting how patriarchal structures persist in both traditional and modern spaces, yet affirming that feminist ideals can and must be tailored to the African context.

This paper interrogates Mill's concept of gender equality from an African philosophical conception of the human person, by the understanding of human sexuality and sexual roles for the development of the sense of justice in human relations. It seeks not to dismiss Mill's contributions, but to critique and contextualize them in ways that make room for indigenous African perspectives on gender, personhood, and justice. Through a qualitative, critical, and comparative methodology, it constructs an African response that contributes to the global conversation on gender justice, recognizing both universal aspirations and the need for local relevance.

Methodology

This research adopts a philosophical-critical and comparative methodology. It is philosophical in its reliance on conceptual analysis, moral reasoning, and critical dialogue. It is also comparative because it seeks to juxtapose Mill's liberal feminist thought with African traditional and contemporary perspectives on gender. This methodology enables a

contextualized engagement with Mill's ideas while maintaining fidelity to the normative and ethical foundations of African thought systems. Sources for this research are both primary and secondary. Primary sources include John Stuart Mill's major texts, such as *The Subjection of Women* (1869), *Utilitarianism* (1863), and *On Liberty* (1859). These texts provide direct insights into Mill's conceptualization of liberty, justice, and equality. Secondary sources include scholarly analyses of Mill's gender philosophy as well as key texts in African philosophy and gender theory, such as Gyekye's (1997) Tradition and Modernity, Menkiti's (1984) work on personhood, and feminist critiques from Oyìwùmí (1997), Nnaemeka (2004), Adichie (2014), and Adidi and Tella (2020).

The philosophical-critical method allows for a detailed examination of Mill's assumptions and arguments, especially regarding gender roles, personhood, and the principles of justice. The comparative aspect makes it possible to highlight the disjunctions and resonances between Mill's thought and African philosophical traditions' perspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). For instance, while Mill emphasizes autonomy and individual rights, African philosophy often stresses communal obligations and interdependence (Gyekye, 1997; Mbiti, 1990; Ramose, 2002). This methodology also incorporates a decolonial and feminist hermeneutic lens. This is important in evaluating the epistemic assumptions that undergird Mill's liberalism and the universalist tendencies of Western feminism. A decolonial reading examines the extent to which Mill's work reflects Eurocentric biases that may not align with African worldviews (Mohanty, 2003; Lugones, 2010). Feminist interpretative tools, such as Nego-feminism, are also employed to engage with gender relations in African societies through negotiation, relational engagement, and a commitment to cultural continuity (Nnaemeka, 2004). Moreover, this study is interdisciplinary. It draws from philosophy, gender studies, history, and African cultural studies. By integrating voices such as Adichie (2014), who speaks from a contemporary African experience, and Adidi and Tella (2020), who examines evolving male identities in Africa, the methodology accounts for both historical and current realities. This ensures that the African response to Mill is not merely theoretical but grounded in lived experience. Ultimately, this methodological approach allows for a nuanced philosophical interrogation of Mill's concept of gender equality while engaging African voices that offer alternative visions of justice, identity, and relational ethics.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this work draws from the communitarian and feminist traditions within African philosophy, while also critically engaging the liberal feminist underpinnings of John Stuart Mill's gender theory. This approach reflects a "Gestalt" orientation in philosophical analysis emphasizing that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In this context, gender justice cannot be reduced to legal rights alone, but must be understood as a configuration of moral, cultural, social, and spiritual elements. Just as Gestalt psychology emphasizes the holistic nature of perception (Wagemans et al., 2012; Mather, 2006), African feminist philosophy emphasizes the holistic experience of gender within interconnected systems of community, tradition, and spirituality. This theoretical framework critiques the atomistic assumptions of liberal feminism as presented by Mill (1869/1997), whose emphasis on rational autonomy and institutional reform represents a reductionist view of

gender equality. In contrast, African communitarianismas developed by Menkiti (1984), Gyekye (1997), and Ramose (2002)argues that personhood and justice emerge through relational and communal belonging. These insights align with the Gestalt view that a phenomenon must be understood as a structured whole rather than an aggregate of disconnected elements. In the African context, gender roles are historically shaped by cultural logics that do not always conform to Western binaries. Oyìwùmí (1997) and Amadiume (1987) illustrate how gender in precolonial Yoruba and Igbo societies was organized through age, seniority, and function not necessarily through biological sex. Their critiques expose the limitations of Mill's theory, which assumes gender is a universal and fixed category. This aligns with the Gestalt idea that shifting the configuration of perception can reveal new insights and disrupt entrenched assumptions.

Moreover, Obioma Nnaemeka's (2004) concept of Nego-feminism enriches this holistic framework by emphasizing dialogue, compromise, and the negotiation of gender justice within cultural systems. Her approach mirrors the Gestalt process of restructuring and reconfiguring elements into meaningful wholes. Similarly, Adichie (2014), through her narrative feminism, and Eromosele (2013), through literary analysis, reveal how emotional and psychological dimensions of gender must be included in the broader configuration of equality. Their works emphasize storytelling and embodied experience as essential to feminist epistemology. Adidi and Tella (2020) contribute to this holistic framework by analyzing masculinity, spirituality, and child welfare through an African ethical lens. His call for relational ethics and moral reorientation aligns with both communitarian values and Gestalt's holistic reasoning. Adidi and Obiagwu (2019) situate gender justice not only in legal reform but also in moral consciousness and communal responsibility. More so, other contributors to this theoretical foundation include Nzegwu (2006), who critiques rigid binaries; Steady (2006), who ties feminism to ecology and spirituality; Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), who integrates class and social transformation; and Uchem (2001), who connects theology to feminist ethics. These thinkers expand the philosophical "pattern" of gender justice in Africa into a dynamic, interconnected whole. Therefore, the theoretical framework adopted in this study is not linear or isolated but rather Gestalt-likepatterned, relational, and contextual perspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). It brings together African communitarian ethics, indigenous feminist epistemologies, and a critique of Western liberal models to interrogate Mill's gender theory and develop a culturally grounded response. This comprehensive configuration allows for a more nuanced and authentic understanding of gender equality within African philosophical discourse.

John Stuart Mill's Gender Equality

A critical understanding of John Stuart Mill's theory of gender equality necessitates situating his work, *The Subjection of Women* (1869), within its broader socio-historical and intellectual milieu. Mill's treatise emerged during a period characterized by the entrenchment of Victorian moral conservatism, pervasive institutional patriarchy, and the gradual yet contentious rise of liberal democratic ideals in Britain. Within this context, women were legally and socially subordinated to men, lacking access to property rights, education, suffrage, and meaningful public participation. The legal principle of coverture, for instance, effectively

nullified a married woman's legal identity, merging it with that of her husband and thus rendering her "civilly dead" (Shanley 1998).Mill's intellectual commitment to gender justice was deeply shaped by his relationship with Harriet Taylor, an early feminist thinker and his long-time collaborator. Taylor's influence permeated Mill's philosophical convictions, particularly his belief in the intellectual and moral equality of women's perspectives (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). Mill's advocacy for women's suffrage, educational access, and legal autonomy was considered radical for his time and constituted one of the earliest systematic liberal arguments for gender reform. Central to his thesis was the assertion that the subjugation of women was not a natural condition but a socially and legally constructed form of oppression (Mill 1997).

The economic backdrop of Mill's writing on the Industrial Revolution further contextualizes his views. While industrialization introduced limited labor opportunities for women, it simultaneously reinforced gender hierarchies through a bifurcated labor market and the idealization of domestic femininity. The Victorian archetype of the "angel in the house" relegated middle-class women to the domestic sphere, while working-class women were often subjected to exploitative labor under precarious conditions, largely without legal recourse (Davidoff & Hall 1987). Mill's arguments for gender equality were couched within the Enlightenment tradition of reason, liberty, and social progress, and his utilitarian framework underpinned his belief that a society that suppresses the potential of half its population cannot attain maximum happiness or justice (Mill 2002).However, despite the radicalism of his proposals within the British context, Mill's perspective was not without limitations. His theoretical scope largely revolved around the experiences of European, middle-class women and remained silent on the condition of women within the colonial empire. At the height of British imperial expansion, Mill did not extend his critique of domination to include colonial subjects, particularly colonized women.

Postcolonial feminist theorists such as Mohanty (2003) and Spivak (1988) have since interrogated how Western liberalism, including Mill's, often universalizes its categories while remaining complicit in colonial structures that subjugated non-Western peoples. Mill's failure to address the intersection of gender and colonialism illustrates the imperial blind spots embedded within even progressive liberal frameworks. From an African philosophical standpoint, it is crucial to recognize that precolonial African gender systems were diverse, dynamic, and often structured around principles of complementarity rather than binary hierarchies. Scholars such as Amadiume (1987) and Oyìwùmí (1997) have challenged Western assumptions by documenting how gender roles in precolonial Igbo and Yoruba societies, respectively, were fluid, functional, and socially constructed based on seniority, role, and communal responsibility rather than on biological determinism. Women exercised significant political, economic, and religious authority, and their societal value was not inherently inferior to that of men.

The colonial imposition of European gender norms through missionary education, legal reforms, and administrative structures disrupted these indigenous configurations. The colonial state reified patriarchal authority and systematically excluded women from formal governance and education, thereby reconstituting African gender relations in ways that aligned with Victorian sensibilities (Oyìwùmí, 1997; Nzegwu, 2006). Thus, while Mill's critique

of gender subjugation was groundbreaking within Europe, it failed to reckon with the transformations wrought by colonialism on African gender systems, making his theory culturally and historically partial. John Stuart Mill's theory of gender equality was a pioneering intervention in the Victorian context, articulating a liberal vision of justice that challenged entrenched norms of a male-dominated perspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). Nonetheless, its universalist assumptions and Eurocentric bias render it insufficient when applied across cultural and historical contexts such as Africa. A comprehensive response must therefore critically assess both the strengths and silences in Mill's work while foregrounding African epistemologies, historical experiences, and gender constructs.

The Conceptualization of Gender Equality

Gender equality, broadly conceived, refers to the state in which individuals of all genders enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities across all sectors of society. According to the United Nations (2020), this means that the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female. In liberal thought, especially as articulated by John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), gender equality involves dismantling legal and institutional barriers that prevent women from fully participating in society. Mill (1997) argued that the subjugation of women was rooted in outdated customs and not in any natural difference, and that justice demanded the equal treatment of men and women in education, employment, and political life (Isanbor & Ojebun 2022). However, this liberal conceptualization of gender equality is often rooted in Western individualism, emphasizing autonomy, legal status, and rational agency. Mill's theory does not fully account for relational, communal, and spiritual dimensions that characterize many African societies. As critics such as Mohanty (2003) and Lugones (2010) point out, universalist frameworks of equality often erase cultural differences and impose Western norms under the guise of neutrality. In this sense, Mill's equality is defined more by sameness and competition than by contextual fairness or mutual recognition.

African philosophy offers an alternative approach. Gender equality, from a communitarian perspective, is less about identical roles and more about complementarity, balance, and mutual respect. As articulated by thinkers like Gyekye (1997) and Menkiti (1984), personhood in African ontology is achieved through participation in the community, and roles are often distributed based on contribution and spiritual symbolism rather than mere biology. Oyìwùmí (1997) challenges the imposition of Western gender binaries on African cosmologies, arguing that Yoruba social organization, for example, was not structured around gendered hierarchies but around seniority and function.

Adidi and Tella (2020) provide critical insight into the psychological and spiritual dimensions of gender inequality. In his discourse on *Marriage, Depression, the African (Nigerian) Woman: A Philosophico-Theological Discourse,* he observed that marital structures, shaped by patriarchal expectations, and which often become sites of psychological oppression for women. He calls for a reconfiguration of marital ethics based on African moral traditions and spiritual values. This approach reveals that gender equality must address more than just economic or legal parity; it must engage with mental health, emotional well-being, and the spiritual integrity of women in African contexts. In another study, Adidi and Obiagwu (2019) examine

the role of domestic violence and its corrosive effects on communal relationships. They argue that such violence is not just a breach of individual rights but a moral and philosophical affront to communal harmony and personhood. This further extends the definition of gender equality to include protection from harm within the familya crucial aspect often overlooked by liberal feminism's focus on public life. Adichie (2014) supports the call for African-contextual feminism. In *We Should All Be Feminists*; she advocates for gender equality that resonates with cultural realities while challenging patriarchal abuses. Adichie insists that feminism in Africa should reflect the lived experiences of African women, not simply replicate Western feminist templates.

African scholars like Amadiume (1987), Steady (2006), and Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) echo this approach, suggesting that gender equality must encompass not only formal rights but also cultural legitimacy. For example, Amadiume's work on female husbands and male daughters in Igbo society demonstrates how African systems have long accommodated flexible gender roles without necessarily importing Western liberal constructs. Amadiume (1987/2015) further strengthens the theoretical framework by exploring the fluidity and complexity of gender in Igbo society. In Male Daughters, Female Husbands, she demonstrates that precolonial gender roles in Igbo communities were not strictly tied to biological sex but were socially and spiritually constructed around seniority and a societal functionperspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). Amadiume's analysis reveals that such roles challenged Western gender binaries long before postcolonial scholarship questioned them. Her work deconstructs the idea that patriarchy was universal and suggests that African societies had dynamic mechanisms for gender balance, supporting earlier claims by Oyìwùmí and herself that Mill's theory, based on rigid gender assumptions, cannot be simply transplanted to African contexts.In sum, defining gender equality from an African philosophical standpoint requires moving beyond formalistic legalism to a richer, multidimensional conception (Adidi & Shepkong 2024). It involves psychological wellness, spiritual affirmation, cultural sensitivity, and communal integrity. While Mill's liberal theory offers useful starting points, African thought deepens the conversation by anchoring equality in relationships, responsibilities, and moral harmony.

Afro-Philosophical Critique of J. S. Mill's Conception of Gender Equality

An African philosophical response to John Stuart Mill's concept of gender equality requires more than a simple agreement or disagreement demands a deep rethinking of the assumptions behind Mill's theory and a presentation of alternative values, worldviews, and gender practices. Mill's vision, rooted in liberalism, promotes individual rights and legal equality. While this has universal appeal, it is also shaped by Western epistemologies that prioritize autonomy over community, rationality over spirituality, and law over lived experience perspective (Isanbor & Ojebun, 2022). In contrast, African responses emerge from communal, relational, and often spiritual understandings of the human person and social justice (Adidi & Shepkong 2024). In many African traditions, gender roles were historically constructed based on functionality, complementarity, and moral responsibility, rather than strict biological essentialism. Scholars such as Amadiume (1987) have shown how precolonial Igbo societies recognized “female husbands” and “male daughters” categories that reflect a flexible and role-based approach to gender. This view is incompatible with Mill's binary thinking about men and

women and challenges the universality of his claims. Oyìwùmí (1997) further supports this position by arguing that Yoruba society organized social roles according to seniority and lineage, not gender. Her critique of colonial gender imposition reveals that gender categories in African contexts were often fluid, contextual, and linked to communal responsibilities rather than individual entitlements. Therefore, the liberal notion of equality that Mill advocates equality based on sameness and risks misrepresenting African gender systems that valued balance and mutual obligation.

African feminism, as developed by thinkers such as Nnaemeka (2004), is not adversarial but negotiating. Her concept of Nego-feminism emphasizes dialogue, flexibility, and compromise in the pursuit of gender justice. Rather than rejecting African culture, Nego-feminism works within it to challenge harmful practices while affirming communal values. This directly contrasts with Mill's confrontational legal reform model, and it illustrates how African women pursue justice not only through courts but also through kinship, ritual, and social negotiation. Adichie (2014), though influenced by Western feminism, also argues for culturally relevant gender advocacy. She affirms that African women deserve the same rights and freedoms as men, but she insists this must be grounded in context. Adichie challenges patriarchal norms in family and religion, but she also speaks in a language that resonates with African audiences. Eromosele (2013) adds that Adichie's treatment of sex and sexuality opens up critical spaces for African women to reclaim agency over their bodies and experiences, something Mill's theory leaves underexplored. Adidi and Tella (2020) offers a particularly relevant African male perspective. He argues that achieving gender justice in Africa requires rethinking African masculinity. Further, in his analysis of child labor and the Child Rights Act, Adidi (2024) broadens the discussion of gender to include the ethical treatment of vulnerable populations. His use of African hermeneutics connects children's rights to larger community values, thereby integrating gender, age, and social vulnerability into a single ethical discourse. This holistic approach reflects African traditions where justice is never fragmented but interwoven across all layers of society.

More African scholars also reinforce this culturally grounded view of equality. On this, Steady (2006) promotes an African ecofeminism that ties gender justice to environmental sustainability and spiritual renewal. Nzegwu (2006) criticizes the Western assumption that equality requires uniformity. She argues instead for a system that respects difference while upholding dignity. Uchem (2001) brings theology into the conversation, calling for a feminist theology that challenges patriarchal interpretations of religion and affirms women's full humanity. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) and Okonkwo (2010) also emphasize that African feminism must address class, colonial legacies, and indigenous systems of oppression. They advocate for a gender discourse that recognizes the material and spiritual realities of African women. Such a discourse must be rooted in social transformation, not just formal equality. An African response to Mill must therefore do three things: first, it must acknowledge Mill's relevance belief in education, autonomy, and justice are compatible with African values. Second, it must critique his limitations, particularly his assumptions of universality, individualism, and secularism (Adidi & Shepkong 2024). Third, it must offer alternatives grounded in African philosophy: personhood as relational, justice as harmony, and change as negotiation. By emphasizing community, spirituality, and cultural continuity, African responses do not simply reject Mill;

they decolonize and re-contextualize his ideas. They show that gender equality, to be meaningful in Africa, must be built not only on rights and rationality but on communal ethics, historical memory, and spiritual well-being.

Conclusion

Mill's advocacy for women's rights in the 19th century represented a significant milestone in the history of feminist thought. His liberal emphasis on liberty, education, rationality, and legal equality challenged entrenched patriarchal structures in Victorian society. However, as this paper has shown, Mill's framework is limited by its Western, individualist, and secular assumptions, which may not be wholly applicable in African contexts. Through the application of African communitarian philosophy, this paper has revealed how African ontologies of personhood, justice, and social harmony offer alternative paradigms for understanding gender equality. These frameworks capture the need to pursue gender equality not simply through legal reform but through cultural transformation, spiritual renewal, and moral reorientation. These perspectives have allowed this study to interrogate Mill's theory critically while also constructing a grounded African response. The paper concludes that while Mill's concept of gender equality remains historically significant and ethically compelling in certain aspects, it must be reinterpreted and adapted within African contexts. An African philosophical response requires more than the adoption of liberal values demanding the development of an indigenous feminist philosophy that affirms dignity, justice, and the moral centrality of community. This philosophical interrogation affirms that gender equality in Africa must be decolonized, contextualized, and culturally authentic. It must reflect the continent's historical complexities, spiritual frameworks, and ethical commitments.

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On the Necessity of Normative Ethics: Deontologism in Perspective

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Abstract

The moral values of a society are greatly influenced by the moral rules that guides such society. Hence, what is acceptable as morally right in one society may be said to be morally bad in another society. There are also instances whereby there are no universally accepted moral rules. The implication of this is that there will be inconsistency when it comes to identifying morally right or wrong actions. Deontologism is an ethical theory that emphasizes that morality be based on following rules and duties and not the end result of an action. It asserts that actions are innately wrong or right in themselves, regardless of the rewards or consequences of such actions. There are actions that are intrinsically right or wrong regardless of their outcome, such actions are therefore universally binding on moral agents. This study is therefore an attempt to investigate the theory of deontologism and argues for its indispensable role in preserving normative morality. Deontologism plays this role through its principle of basing morality in duty, and universal principles. The categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant and Ross is used, emphasizing the necessity of a normative morality, whose moral standards can be universally applied in order to bring about justice, ethical responsibility and social order.

Key words: Deontologism, Normative Morality, Duty, Ethical Theory, Universal.

Introduction

The moral values of a society are greatly influenced by the moral rules that guides such society. Hence, what is acceptable as morally right in one society may be said to be morally bad in another society. There are also instances whereby there are no universally accepted moral rules. The implication of this is that there will be inconsistency when it comes to identifying morally right or wrong actions. Deontologism is an ethical theory that emphasizes that morality be based on following rules and duties and not the end result of an action. It asserts that actions are innately wrong or right in themselves, regardless of the rewards or consequences of such actions.

Normative morality refers to the set of moral standards or principles that prescribe how individuals ought to act, outlining what is considered right or wrong, good or bad, and just or unjust in human behavior. It involves evaluating actions, choices, and beliefs based on ethical theories or moral frameworks to determine how people should behave. Normative morality is concerned with guiding human conduct according to certain values, such as fairness, honesty, respect, and justice, rather than merely describing or observing people's behavior.

Deontologism becomes a necessity in a society given the fact that the society consist of people from different backgrounds and the possibility of having various ideas on what is morally right or wrong. For instance, a group of people may hold that murder is not bad if it is beneficial to a large group of people. This becomes a problem; the challenge now is how a line can be drawn to show when murder is right or wrong. If murder is considered right in this instance, what then makes it wrong in another instance? Deontologism as a moral theory tends to provide an answer, a solution to this problem.

This study will therefore examine the necessity of normative morality, using deontologism as a panacea to the problem of evaluating or addressing moral dilemmas. This paper argues that a rule-based normative morality, which sets universal moral standards, is essential to ensure consistent, ethical behavior that upholds justice and fairness in society.

Normative Morality

Normative morality is also known as normative ethics, it is one of the essential branches of ethics. Normative morality concerns itself with the ought. It deals with the principles and standards that should govern human conduct. Williams Frankena describes normative morality as asking what is right, good or obligatory and then give normative judgement about it. It implies that normative morality is concerned about developing a set of rules that guides the conducts of humans. It includes a set of rules that ought to be held by humans to be right and wrong. It is different from descriptive ethics, in that while descriptive ethics deals with what humans believe to be right and wrong which can be relative, normative morality prescribes what ought to be believed as right and wrong. The implication of this is that normative morality is objective, unlike the descriptive morality.

Thus, normative morality refers to the set of moral standards that guide how individuals ought to behave. It goes beyond describing what people do and instead focuses on what people should do based on principles like justice, fairness, rights, or the common good. It raises questions such as: What is the right thing to do? Why should we act this way? What ought we to do? What kind of person should one be? What actions are morally right or wrong? What makes an action right or wrong? What actions should an individual engage in?

Viola Schiaffonati holds that "Normative ethics is the branch of ethics judging morality and trying to formulate normative recommendations about how to act or live." Normative morality inquires into the rightness or wrongness of an action. It is that branch of moral philosophy or ethics, concerned with criteria of what is morally right and wrong. It includes the formulation of moral rules that have direct implications for what human actions, institutions, and ways of life should be like. Wilson Jose holds that "Normative ethics tries to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. It is a more practical task. It is a search for an ideal litmus test of proper behaviour; ..." In a nutshell, normative ethics is essentially concerned about how

ethical theories are formed and how they are justified. The goal of normative ethics is to guide humans in making ethical decisions. It is important to note that normative morality does not describe or dictate actions that should be carried out, it only guides humans in choosing actions. The various ethical theories – deontologism, teleologism, and virtue ethics are the result of normative ethics.

Teleologism is also known as consequentialism. It is a normative ethical theory just like deontologism and virtue ethics. It is derived from 'teleo', Telos is a Greek word which is translated to mean end or purpose. According to Lawhead, "teleological ethics or consequentialism, which claims that the goal or outcome of an action is what determines its moral value."Teleologism just as its name states, places the rightness or wrongness of an action on the end, purpose or outcome of the action. The implication of this will be that actions are neither good nor bad in themselves, it is the outcome of the action that determines the rightness or wrongness of an action.

Virtue ethics, unlike consequentialism which is concerned with ends, is an ethical theory that is concerned with character. It is overly interested in the performer of the action than the action itself. Aristotle is often referred to as the major proponent of virtue ethics based on his position in his book Nicomachean Ethics which is primarily on ethics and virtue. Aristotle believes that humans are naturally not good and so are incapable of good actions. Aristotle holds that, "from this it is plain that none of the moral excellences or virtues is implanted in us by nature; for that which is by nature cannot be altered by training." This influenced the distinction between being good and performing a good action. For him, only a good person can perform a good action, so when a bad person performs a good action, this does not make him or her a virtuous person. According to Abidemi Ogunyomi and Emmanuel Ogundele, "Aristotle belongs to the category of scholars who uphold the view that man acquires his goodness through teaching and conscious self-development." So virtue has to be learnt,

> we learn an art by doing that which we wish to do when we have learned it; we become builders by building, and harpers by harping. And so by doing just acts we become just, and by doing acts of temperance and courage we become temperate and courageous... It is our conduct in our intercourse with other men that we become just or unjust and training ourselves to feel fear or confidence, that we become courageous or cowardly.

So, for Aristotle, virtue goes beyond performing good actions, it is more of a habit of choice. The implication of this is that, only a virtuous person can carry out a morally right action; and one can be a virtuous person only through training.

One fundamental problem with this theory is how to determine the length of time necessary for one to be trained to become virtuous. What is the parameter for judging or classifying an individual as virtuous? This theory, like consequentialism, poses a challenge to having an objective ethical theory. Hence, this study, will examine deontologism as a necessity for normative morality.

Deontological Ethics

Deontologism and consequentialism are basic principles of ethics. Unlike consequentialism, deontologism belongs to the group of moral theories which claim that it is not only the outcome of an action that determines whether it is morally right or wrong. Williams Frakena holds that:

> Deontological theories deny what teleological theories affirm. They deny that the right, the obligatory, and the morally good are wholly, whether directly or indirectly a function of what is non morally good or of what promotes the greatest balance of good over evil for self, one's society, or the world as a whole . . . For them the principle of maximizing the balance of good over evil, no matter for whom, is either not a moral criterion or standard at all, or, at least, it is not the only basic or ultimate one.

Deontologism is a word that was derived from two Greek words, "deon" and "logos". "Deon" means duty, while "logos" means study. It is therefore a moral theory that is concerned with following moral rules and duties, regardless of the consequences. Deontologism as a moral theory posits that some actions are inherently good or bad in themselves. This will mean that the rightness or wrongness of an action is not dependent on the outcome of act, but on the act itself. For instance, actions such as kidnapping, murder, and lying, are considered as morally wrong actions. Hence, one cannot claim that lying is morally right, on the basis that he or she lied to save lives. The implication of this is that an action does not have dual identity. Lying cannot be morally right in this instance and be morally wrong in another instance. If it is wrong, then moral agents have the responsibility to avoid indulging in it.

Olson Robert opines that, deontologism "is an approach to ethics that focuses on the rightness or wrongness of actions themselves, as opposed to the rightness or wrongness of the consequences of those actions."Deontologism is basically defined as an ethics of duty or obligation, due to the fact that advocates of deontologism are of the belief that ethical rules make individuals to be bound to their duty. So, an individual is bound to obey the ethical laws even when their consequences are not pleasant. Christine Korsgaard reiterated the position of Immanuel Kant who argued that it is always wrong to lie, even when a murderer is asking for the location of a potential victim.

C. D. Broad was the first to use the term in 1930 in his book 'Five Types of Ethical Theory'. In an attempt to define deontologism Broad contrasted it with teleologism: he holds that,

> Theories which hold that there is some special connexion between [Moral Obligation and Moral Value]....might take the following forms. The concepts of obligation are fundamental and the concepts of value are definable in terms of them. Thus it might be held that the notion of fittingness is fundamental, and that "X is intrinsically good" means that it is fitting for every rational being to desire X. Such theories might be called Deontological. The concepts of value are fundamental, and the concepts of obligation are definable in terms of them. Such theories may be called Teleological. E.g., it might be held that "X is a right action" means that X is likely to produce at least as good consequences as any action open to the agent at the time.

Rightness or wrongness of an action given does not depend on the circumstances or outcome. Barbara Mackinnon and Andrew Fiala opine that:

> [D]eontological ethics focuses on duties and obligations: things we ought to do regardless of the consequences. One way of describing this is to say that deontological theories emphasize the right over good, by which we mean that deontology focuses on right actions and right intentions, while downplaying the importance of the goods or benefits that are produced by these actions.

There are no variables in deotologism, only constants. In consideration of the story of Robinhood, consequentialists would adjudge the action of stealing from the rich to feed the poor as morally right, because for them, the end justifies the means. However, deontologism considers such an action as morally wrong because stealing is morally wrong irrespective of the rationale.

Deontologism has been propounded by different scholars, hence the tendency of having varying positions as to what deontologism is about. D. W. Ross proposed a pluralistic deontologism. Ross contends that there are seven essential features that should be considered before an action is executed and they are: Duty of beneficence: A duty to help other people (increase pleasure, improve character); Duty of non-maleficence: A duty to avoid harming other people; Duty of justice: A duty to ensure people get what they deserve; Duty of self-improvement: A duty to improve ourselves; Duty of reparation: A duty to recompense someone if you have acted wrongly towards them; Duty of gratitude: A duty to benefit people who have benefitted us; Duty of promise-keeping: A duty to act according to explicit and implicit promises, including the implicit promise to tell the truth. Ross refers to these features as prima facie on the basis that each of the duties has to be considered by an individual when he or she is in the process of deciding on executing an action. The question however is: In a situation whereby one is faced with more than one of these duties which takes priority? For instance, an individual made a promise to his friend to buy a car for him. This promise is now prima facie. However, as the individual was going to get the car a family member was involved in a ghastly accident that needs the exact sum of money s/he intended for the purchase of the car for surgery. What should be done in this situation? For Ross, the duty of beneficence overrides that of promise keeping. It means that the individual is to give the other duty top priority. This does not mean that in all cases, the duty of beneficence must override promise keeping. There are situations whereby promise keeping ought to be prioritized over beneficence. This leads to a critical concern; Ross's position presents a pluralistic deontologism which makes actions to have dual identities. This is somewhat similar to consequentialism that Ross criticized.

Given the above, this study will examine the deontological theory of Immanuel Kant. Immanuel Kant is considered as one of the major proponents of deontologism based on his postulation of the categorical imperative. Kant is famous for the maxim "duty for duty sake", which means that acting in morally acceptable way is acting according to duty. Kant also believes that the outcome of an action does not determine the rightness or wrongness of that action, but the motive with which the action was carried out. For instance, an individual who

does good to another so that he or she can be rewarded, though he or she is doing something right, the act is however morally wrong because the motive is wrong. So, for Kant, for one to act in a morally acceptable way, one ought to act from duty, and the act must be good in itself, that is must be good without qualification.

What does it mean, for an action to be good in itself? An action is good in itself if it does not need any qualification outside of itself to be good. Kant noted that concepts such as intelligence, perseverance and pleasure are not intrinsically good, because they need qualifications to be good. For instance, there are people who find pleasure in watching others suffer. Rapists for instance, derive pleasure in hurting others. It means that pleasure is not intrinsically good. Kant went on to say that, the only thing that is truly good is goodwill; "Nothing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a goodwill."

The consequences of an act done willingly is not the determinant of goodwill, this is because there is the tendency of good consequences emanating from an action that was instigated by the desire to harm another. So, Kant claims that an individual has goodwill on the basis that s/he acts based on the moral laws. An individual is to act out of respect for the moral law because s/he has a duty to do so. Kant's deontological theory is referred to as categorical imperative and it can be summed up into three maxims; Act only according to that maxim by which you can also will that it would become a universal law; Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end; Act as though you were, through your maxims, a law-making member of a kingdom of ends.

Kant holds that, "There is, therefore, only one categorical imperative. It is: Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." It implies that for Kant, morality exists universally and is not dependent on human experience. The first law of the categorical imperative is the universal law, and it states that "Act only on that maxim whereby which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law." The second one is the principle of humanity as an end not a means "So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case at the same time as an end, never as a means only." The third which is the principle of the universal kingdom of ends "Act according to the maxims of a member of a merely possible kingdom of ends legislating in it universally." These three principles are universally binding on moral agents.

The Necessity of Normative Morality in Deontologism

Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative is a form of deontologism that emphasizes on the rightness or wrongness of actions based on their alignment with rules and duty and not on the results the actions produce. Normative morality provides an ethical framework for deontologism through its distinctly stated system of rules, duties and obligations that guide actions. It implies that, normative morality provides the structure that prevents deontologism from falling into the pit of ethical relativism. Relativism makes it difficult for specific actions to be classified as right or wrong.

Normative morality serves as the standard against which actions are judged. The Categorical Imperative of Immanuel Kant is an example of deontologism that provides a universal principle, that guides individuals to act only according to maxims they can will to become universal laws. The emphasis is therefore on the fact that morality is not subjective or relative, but one that is generally or universally binding on all. This is an indication that normative morality, by ensuring that moral duties are objective, consistent, and binding on all moral agents, is protecting the very core principle of deontologism. This is to say that normative morality is an indispensable element in deontologism. Normative morality provides the required framework that deontologism needs by putting forth a universally applicable set of rules and principles.

Kant's categorical imperative which is hinged on the maxim to "act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" exemplifies the necessity of having universally accepted rules binding on all moral agents regardless of location and nationality. What is applicable in Nigeria, ought to be the case in Ghana. For instance, murder is considered to be universally wrong given the categorical imperative of Kant and so it ought to be binding on all moral agents. So, normative morality acts as the pillar of deontologism, by ensuring that claims are not mere expressions of personal preference but objective demands of reason as Kant's categorical imperative, and Ross's theory of prima facie shows the essentiality of normative morality. Although, Ross presented several self-evident duties that have the tendencies of eliciting conflicts, they however possess intrinsic moral status.

Christian Tarsney defines Deontological moral theories,

> as those that endorse constraints: option types, characterized non-relationally (and more particularly, without reference to the consequences of alternative options), whose tokens are prima facie prohibited, and for which the presumptive prohibition cannot be rebutted merely by the fact that all alternative options would have worse consequences.

Importantly, deontologism seems to shift the focus away from the outcome of the action but on the motive itself. Overtime, humans have come to justify actions based on the results and not why it was done. Hence, the reason for the rapid increase in crimes rate in human society today. Imagine a young boy with no job riding a car and living a luxurious lifestyle, there is the tendency of the society applauding him based on his results, compared to a young boy who is hardworking, follows moral rules but not wealthy. Deontologism such as Kant's categorical imperative attempts to change the narrative by paying attention to the motive of an action. According to Freeza and Freeza.

> Kant was suggesting that even if the things we do go wrong, but the motivation was for the goodwill of all they are still moral. We can practice good or bad will inside or outside the law. Therefore, what should be pushing us towards an action is the motive, the good will and not duty to authority.

With deontologism, immorality and vices will reduce, because people will act just as they want others to act, they will perform actions because it is right not because someone is policing them or will punish them if they act otherwise. As Amadi, Nwinya and Ogbu hold "Kant's deontology is a panacea to the several morality challenges in Nigeria."

The necessity of normative morality in deontologism also protects it from the pit of moral relativism and consequentialist thinking. In the absence of firm moral laws, actions could be judged primarily by their results, and so hinders the flow between right and wrong. Deontologism resists this by stating that certain actions, such as lying, breaking promises, and murder are wrong in themselves, regardless of the consequences they might produce. Normative morality thus acts as an anchor, preserving the integrity and categorical force of moral obligations.

Challenges of Deontologism

Deontologism, according to Xu and Ma, "emphasizes the obligation of an individual to adhere to universal moral rules, principle to determine moral behaviour". It on this basis it is often criticized for it rigidity and inflexibility particularly in dicey moral instances. Picture this scenario, a man is obligated to tell the truth at all times regardless of the circumstance, but on a certain day, he was at home with his wife and son and of sudden some hired assassins broke into house demanding for his son who is in the room hiding. Knowing fully well that telling them the truth about his son will result in them killing him, the man is in a dilemma on whether to tell the truth and lose his son or tell a lie and save him. What is he expected to in such a situation? Deontologists like Kant would suggest that he tells the truth regardless of the outcome.

The rigidity of deontologism is therefore a major challenge to its acceptance in society. There are moral dilemmas where moral agents will ask if it is morally acceptable to kill to save others, or just stick to the rule of not killing and having others die. Joshua Greene holds that deontologism, specifically Kant's categorical imperative, used "manual-mode thinking to justify our automatic settings." He is of the opinion that it is merely a rationalized emotional response. Nora Heinzelmann noted that Greene's

> claims that utilitarianism is superior to rival ethical theories, notably deontology. He justifies this, very roughly, as follows: whilst a universal psychological system of cost-benefit reasoning produces utilitarian judgments, non-utilitarian judgments are heavily affected by emotional processes, which are relative to culture and personal experience.

This means that for Greene deontological theories like categorical imperative are based on emotions and cultural affinity and not through reasoning process. The rigid sense of duty that tends to be overly concerned with duty makes deontologism a major target for critics. This also informs the challenge of judging which duty supercedes the other. Is it the case that a duty to one's family supercedes the duty to one's job? Does a duty to save someone in danger surpass a duty not to lie? Responding in either way poses a problem to the theory. Brandon Roby asserts that the problem with Kant's deontological theory is in danger of falling into a kind of

consequentialism, meaning setting certain duties as more important than others, implies weighing them based on circumstances outside the scope of duty or rationality. This is close to relative stringency, i.e., weighing various duties, which is almost forced on deontologists in the case of when conflicts arise between duties. This challenge is referred to as conflict of duties.

Conflict of duties arises based on the fact that deontologism is majorly concerned with moral rules and pays little attention on how to guide moral agents when the rules conflict. For instance, an individual has the duty to always tell the truth and a duty to protect innocent lives. If telling the truth would result in someone being harmed or killed, deontologism provides no vivid answer to this moral dilemma. Kant is said to have been unable to resolve this problem. The deficiency in the application of deontologism particularly in dicey situations or conflicting duties leaves a moral agent morally impotent in situations that demand immediate moral judgment. For Edward Freeman and Patricia Werhane

> However, most of us think that moral standards have exceptions; there are times when one cannot respect all moral rules or respect them equally. For instance, when one's life is threatened, one often must kill in self-defense. However, one can override a rule or standard (e.g., that everyone has a right to life) only when one has good reasons, reasons that other reasonable people would accept as being sound (e.g., self-defense) because they appeal to another standard (e.g., equal rights include my right to life and freedom).

Christian Tarsney also holds that "We are often uncertain about what we morally ought to do. Such uncertainty can arise from uncertainty about the empirical facts: for instance, is this substance that I am about to put in my friend's coffee sweetener, or is it arsenic?" The argument has been, overtime, that morality is relative or context dependent and not rule based. As such in a situation where one finds one's self in a moral dilemma, the rule can be ditched and then informed decision is made in that instance. However, critics argue that the normative, rule-based system (deontologism) challenges moral relativism and pluralism. Alexander and Moore noted also that a "crucial problem with which deontologists must grapple is the problem posed by the conflicts that seem to exist between various deontological obligations."

There is also the challenge of an action which is morally right according to the principle of deontologism producing a negative moral outcome. Deontologists are big on the fact that morality is not judged based on the outcome of an action. There is, however, the possibility of such actions resulting into morally troubling outcomes while trying to preserve the integrity of moral duty. Deontologists' refusal to consider consequences is argued to have the tendency of being detached from the real-world impact of moral decisions, thus reducing its practical relevance in disciplines such as healthcare, politics, business, where outcomes can have remarkable human significance.

Kant's deontological formulation of the categorical imperative demands that one acts only on maxims that can be universally applied. Critics however argue that determining whether a maxim can be universalized is often ambiguous and not objective. This is because, what an individual considers universally acceptable might not be to another. Critics argue that deontologism claims to be objective, but the flexibility in interpretation of moral rules limits the

objective and universal character that deontologism aims to uphold. It also raises concerns about moral relativism, which deontology explicitly seeks to avoid.

Deontologism, inspite of its challenges identified, is an essential normative moral theory that is overly concerned about the dignity of humans and rule-based actions. Not to overlook the challenge that comes with its application, it however has shown that it is a necessity for justice and order in a society. A major problem with deontologism is the conflict of duties. Although, Kant was not able to provide an answer to this problem, the prima facie of Ross is a rebuttal to the problem. According to Alexander,

> the other well known approach to deal with the possibility of conflict between deontological duties is to reduce the force of such duties to that of only "prima facie" duties. Then one can claim that all apparent conflicts of duties are in reality conflicts between merely prima facie duties, which is unproblematic so long as it does not infect what one is categorically obligated to do as one's concrete, over-all duty on some occasion.

Tohaneanu also noted that adopting the prima facie when there is conflict of duties, makes the situation to be unproblematic.

Applications of Deontologism as a Normative Morality

The necessity of a normative morality such as deontologism in society today cannot be overemphasized. One basic reason is because unlike other normative theories, deontologism focuses on the right more than the good. The action of an individual can be said to be good and at the same time not be right. Hence, the good is not the primary concern of deontologists, but the right that aligns with duty. A moral agent has the responsibility to simply be familiar with the rules and then act in accordance to them. Additionally, deontologism provides a more concise and direct account of action that is based on duty and not an ambiguous account that is based on complex moral intuition. For instance, murder is intrinsically wrong in itself, a moral agent does not need to start thinking of under which circumstance they ought to avoid murder or not. It is pretty straightforward, murder should be avoided in every instance, regardless of its outcome or perceived good. It means that deontologism helps a moral agent to make moral decisions at the spur of the moment. In consequentialism, for instance, what is considered morally right in one instance, may not be in another instance. Every instance, requires an improvement, which is not the case in deontologism.

Deontologism can be applied in virtually every sphere of human endeavor. Its universal nature, helps to inform legal systems and the fact that it focuses on duty, rights, and justice makes it essential to the legal systems.

Conclusion

Deontologism states that actions ought to be judged according to their adherence to duty and moral law, rather than by their consequences. In defending the necessity of normative morality, this study emphasizes the intrinsic value of ethical actions based on universal obligations. The categorical imperative of Kant which is a deontological theory places

emphasis on treating individuals as ends in themselves and respecting the moral right of individuals, deontologism provides a foundation for ethical consistency and moral accountability.

Deontologism is a necessary normative morality that has the tendency of addressing the moral decadence in today's society. This rule-based theory that is not dependent on the outcome of an action, but on the intrinsic nature of actions will help to reduce the vices in the society. It is greatly rooted in the morally "right", and not the outcome. Its position is not merely theoretical but profoundly practical in shaping responsible citizens, ethical leaders, and just institutions. Hence, the necessity of normative morality is most convincingly upheld through the lens of deontologism. It demands that we act not merely in pursuit of good outcomes, but in alignment with what is right because it is right. In doing so, it preserves the integrity of moral philosophy and the dignity of human action in an ever-changing world.

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Assessing the Role of Mobile Applications in Enhancing Project Efficiency and Time Management among NGO Field Workers

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Abstract

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) often rely on field workers to manage and execute projects in complex environments where time efficiency and effective task coordination are critical. This study systematically reviews existing literature to explore how mobile applications have been utilised to enhance project efficiency and time management among NGO field staff, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on peer-reviewed studies, technical reports, and documented NGO case studies published between 2010 and 2024, the review identified common patterns in mobile application use for reporting, task scheduling, communication, and data tracking. Guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Activity Theory (AT), the study synthesised findings across diverse contexts to uncover both the benefits and constraints of mobile technology adoption. The results showed that mobile apps have contributed to improved reporting speed, reduced administrative delays, and better coordination among teams. However, challenges such as low digital literacy, poor network infrastructure, and limited organisational support continue to hinder optimal use. The review highlighted key themes around usability, institutional readiness, and the need for context-aware deployment of mobile tools. It also identified significant gaps in the literature, particularly in long-term evaluations and locally-driven implementation strategies. The study concluded by recommending improved staff training, stronger digital infrastructure, and better integration of mobile technologies into NGO operational frameworks.

Keywords: Mobile Technology, NGO Workers, Field Management, Time Efficiency, Project Delivery, Communication Tools

Introduction

In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, development interventions often depend on the work of non-governmental organisation (NGO) field staff, who operate in difficult terrains with limited resources. These field workers serve as the human infrastructure through which projects on healthcare, education, agriculture, and human rights are executed in local communities. However, their work is frequently hindered by issues of coordination, time mismanagement, and delayed reporting. The need for more efficient systems of communication, tracking, and project implementation has led many NGOs to experiment with mobile applications as operational tools in field environments. These digital tools offer opportunities for real-time data collection, communication between headquarters and field teams, and more structured scheduling of activities. Yet, the actual impact of mobile applications on improving time management and project efficiency in these settings remains under explored, particularly within African NGO operations.

The dependence of NGOs on physical paper-based systems has often led to delays in data transmission, duplication of tasks, and poor monitoring of field activities. With the advancement of mobile technologies, there is increasing hope that digital tools can resolve these bottlenecks. Scholars have argued that mobile applications have transformed not only communication patterns but also how data is collected and processed in low-resource environments. For example, Asi and Williams (2018) found that mobile apps used in humanitarian crises improved the speed of reporting and enhanced team coordination. This suggests that when used effectively, mobile technologies can contribute to more organised, time-efficient project delivery. Still, such outcomes are not automatic and often depend on the design of the app, the training of the users, and the conditions of the field.

NGOs working in remote areas face several logistical constraints that complicate daily operations. These include poor road networks, erratic power supply, and weak internet signals. In such conditions, even well-developed mobile applications can fail to deliver impact if they are not properly adapted to the realities of the field. Aker *et al*. (2016) observed that in several West African field interventions, mobile app usage declined over time, not because of software limitations but due to field staff lacking the technical knowledge or resources to operate them. This finding reflects a deeper tension in development work where digital solutions are promoted without adequate investments in human capacity and local infrastructure. Therefore, while mobile apps promise operational improvement, they may also risk being another layer of inefficiency if poorly implemented.

A significant portion of NGO activities involves time-bound deliverables that require strict compliance with reporting and project time lines. For example, vaccination campaigns, food distribution, and health awareness projects often operate on narrow time schedules. In this context, field workers must manage multiple tasks, communicate constantly with different teams, and provide regular updates to headquarters. Without structured digital systems, this process becomes cumbersome and inefficient. Nwaodu and Ilo (2015) noted that Nigerian NGOs still struggle with documentation delays, lost field records, and fragmented communication, all of which undermine their ability to deliver projects on time. These inefficiencies not only reduce the effectiveness of development interventions but can also erode donor confidence.

Recent efforts to digitalise NGO fieldwork have focused on using mobile applications to automate several of these routine functions. Reporting templates, GPS-tagged images, voice notes, and progress tracking features embedded in mobile apps now allow field workers to deliver updates in real-time. These functions reduce the time spent on redundant communication and enable programme officers to have constant visibility over ongoing activities. Bosch *et al*. (2020) argued that, mobile tools can restructure the workflows of field staff, reduce the mental burden of multitasking, and allow better resource allocation. However, these outcomes are not guaranteed as implementation success requires context-specific app design, training tailored to varying levels of digital literacy, and strong institutional frameworks that can support the use of these tools long-term.

Mobile applications in development contexts are typically adopted for specific purposes: data collection, monitoring and evaluation, communication, and reporting. Each of these functions addresses a particular weakness in traditional field operations. For instance, mobile forms with validation checks reduce errors in data entry, while push notifications help coordinate team actions across distances. Despite this, scholars such as Orlikowski and Scott (2015) have warned against over-reliance on digital tools, noting that technologies do not automatically resolve organisational inefficiencies but rather amplify existing dynamics, whether good or bad. This argument is particularly relevant in NGO settings where organisational culture, leadership styles, and accountability mechanisms all shape how technologies are adopted and used. An app may exist, but without leadership endorsement or integration into standard operating procedures, its use may remain optional,

Although the use of mobile apps for NGO work is gaining recognition, there is a lack of empirical studies focused on the relationship between these tools and time efficiency. Much of the existing literature emphasises data accuracy, cost-effectiveness, or general ICT use in development. What remains underexamined is how these tools alter the day-to-day time use of field workers, especially in settings where every hour counts toward achieving project deliverables. This gap is particularly important to address because time wastage in field operations often leads to cascading delays across entire project cycles.This study focuses on synthesising existing research and documented field experiences to understand how mobile applications shape the day-to-day operations of NGO field staff. Rather than generating new data through interviews or surveys, the study reviews published literature, peer-reviewed journal articles, NGO technical reports, and digital development case studies. The goal is to explore how mobile tools have been implemented across different field contexts, what outcomes they have produced in terms of time management and project efficiency, and what institutional or technical factors affect their successful use. This approach draws on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which highlights perceived usefulness and ease of use as central to digital adoption, and Activity Theory, which situates technology within the broader operational environments where people work and interact.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

i. Assess the role of mobile applications in enhancing project efficiency and time management among field workers
ii. Examine how mobile applications are used by NGO field workers for scheduling, task management, and reporting.
iii. Evaluate the impact of mobile applications on project efficiency, particularly in relation to meeting deadlines and reducing redundant tasks.
iv. Explore the role of mobile apps in improving time management practices among field staff.
v. Identify challenges faced by NGO field workers in adopting and effectively using mobile applications.
vi. Make recommendations for improving the design, training, and infrastructure support for mobile application use in field-based NGO work.

Statement of the Problem

Non-governmental organisations play a central role in development anywhere, often filling critical gaps in education, health, human rights, and livelihood projects. These interventions are largely implemented through field workers who operate in dispersed, and sometimes difficult, locations. Their responsibilities range from conducting surveys to mobilising communities, coordinating local partners, and providing regular updates to programme offices. While their role is indispensable, it is also complicated by recurring issues of poor coordination, reporting delays, time mismanagement, and duplicated efforts. These operational inefficiencies have a direct impact on project outcomes, making it difficult for NGOs to deliver interventions on time or within budget.

Despite numerous capacity-building efforts, many NGOs still rely on manual processes and fragmented communication systems. Reporting is often paper-based or spread across multiple channels such as text messages, emails, and informal calls. This fragmentation not only wastes time but also reduces accountability and data integrity. According to Aina and Olatunji (2020 p.215), field reports from Nigerian NGOs are frequently inconsistent and delayed due to weak communication systems and the absence of centralised reporting platforms. The consequence is that decision-makers at head offices are unable to respond quickly to emerging issues on the ground, leading to missed targets or rushed activities near project deadlines.

In response to these issues, mobile applications have emerged as a possible solution for improving the flow of information, reducing delays, and helping field workers manage their time more effectively. These apps are increasingly used for real-time data collection, scheduling, and progress tracking. However, the assumption that mobile applications automatically lead to efficiency improvements is problematic. Adoption varies significantly depending on the capacity of the organisation, the digital literacy of staff, and the level of infrastructure support. For instance, many rural field staff operate in areas with limited network coverage, making real-time communication and uploads difficult. Even where devices are available, the lack of technical support or training can discourage meaningful use. demanding a critical look at the implications.

Literature Review

The increasing reliance on mobile technology by NGOs is largely driven by the need to enhance real-time communication, streamline data collection, and improve the accountability of field operations. NGOs operating in low-resource settings have adopted mobile apps for a variety of operational needs, including field reporting, beneficiary registration, needs assessments, and coordination. Aker and Blumenstock (2015 p.356) notes that, mobile applications represent a transformative solution in Sub-Saharan Africa, helping organisations "overcome geographic and infrastructural constraints to service delivery".

The practical uses of mobile applications in field operations often revolve around three core areas namely, communication, task scheduling, and real-time data submission. Tools like Kobo Toolbox and ODK have become especially popular among humanitarian and development NGOs for their offline data capture features. According to Tomlinson *et al*. (2009), these tools reduced paper-based inefficiencies and improved response time in maternal health interventions across Southern Africa). However, these successes are not automatic and depend on several contextual factors such as connectivity, device availability, and user readiness. A study by Dada *et al.* (2022) on mobile app use among community-based organisations in Nigeria found that while applications improved coordination and reduced duplication of tasks, inconsistent adoption across teams and digital illiteracy remained significant barriers These findings reflect broader concerns in the literature that mobile apps offer great promise, but their full potential remains untapped due to technical, infrastructural, and institutional limitations.

Field reporting is one of the areas where mobile applications have made measurable impact. Real-time uploads of activity reports, photos, and GPS-tagged evidence have allowed NGOs to maintain better oversight of field operations. According to Chib*et al*. (2015), mobile platforms significantly improved the efficiency of frontline workers in low-resource environments by allowing decentralised data sharing between field staff and headquarters. In a study conducted by Tusiime and Gasper (2021), frontline workers in Ugandan NGOs reported improved reporting consistency through mobile apps, but they also identified frustrations tied to app crashes, battery failures, and network constraints. These realities indicate that mobile reporting tools may improve reporting speed in theory, but in practice, their success depends on adequate infrastructure and capacity support.

Despite the growing body of literature on mobile technologies in NGO work, few studies focus explicitly on their impact on time management, a key variable in project efficiency. Time management in NGO fieldwork involves the organisation of daily schedules, prioritisation of tasks, and meeting of deadlines under resource constraints. While reporting speed is often tracked, less attention is paid to whether mobile apps help field workers structure their activities or reduce time wastage. One of the few regionally relevant studies is by Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2020), who examined the role of task management apps in community health initiatives in Kenya. They found that digital scheduling improved field officers' punctuality and reduced delays in monthly reporting cycles. However, they also observed that only staff who received consistent mentoring continued to use the tools beyond the pilot phase.

Similarly, Kyem and Asiedu (2021) observed that in Ghana, mobile reminders and project management dashboards helped NGOs avoid missed deadlines in field-based agricultural projects. However, staff without smartphone literacy or access often relied on informal systems, such as notebooks or peer reminders. These findings suggest that mobile apps can enhance time discipline but are effective only when embedded in a supportive digital culture. Sustained use of mobile apps is shaped not only by individual preferences but by institutional capacity and leadership support. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) explain in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceptions of a system's usefulness and ease of use strongly influence user behaviour. However, in low-resource organisations, staff perceptions are also affected by external factors such as peer influence, access to training, and technical support. In the Nigerian context, Bello and Odukoya (2022) investigated the role of organisational policies in mobile app adoption by Lagos-based NGOs. They found that clear reporting structures, digital on boarding training, and dedicated ICT support units were crucial to app usage. Conversely, organisations without these structures showed a drop-off in app adoption after initial deployment.

This aligns with findings by Asongu and Nwachukwu (2018), who observed that African NGOs that involved staff in the app selection process had higher adoption rates and better feedback loops, compared to organisations that imposed tools from above. These studies collectively underscore that adoption is not merely a technical process, but also an organisational one.

Beyond data collection and scheduling, mobile applications facilitate day-to-day communication between field workers and supervisors. Informal tools such as WhatsApp have become the de facto channels for quick updates, queries, and coordination. These platforms offer real-time messaging, document sharing, and group communication features that are often faster than emails or in-person meetings. However, a study by Egbulefu (2020) on the use of WhatsApp in humanitarian coordination in Nigeria found that while the platform accelerated communication, it also led to information overload, message fatigue, and a lack of documentation protocols. To this end, sensitive project information shared over unsecured channels raised data protection concerns.

Integrating these informal channels with formal workflows remains a challenge which is the reason why Ciborra and Andoh-Baidoo (2017) recommend using structured platforms like mobile dashboards that track messages, generate automated reports, and allow secure archiving. Their study in Sierra Leone found that organisations that structured mobile communications into existing project cycles saw a 32% reduction in duplicated tasks and late submissions. The implication here is that mobile communication tools are effective only when systematically managed and aligned with organisational workflows.

A consistent finding across the literature is the constraint posed by poor infrastructure and digital literacy. Nigeria, like many Sub-Saharan countries, experiences frequent network interruptions, limited broadband coverage in rural areas, and unreliable power supply. According to GSMA (2021), nearly 40% of NGO field workers in northern Nigeria report difficulty using mobile apps due to poor connectivity. Even when mobile signal is available, inconsistent electricity hampers device charging, particularly in areas without solar solutions. Digital literacy further compounds the issue. In a survey by Edewor (2019), over 45% of NGO

field staff in South-eastern Nigeria admitted to needing regular help to fill digital forms, use mobile reporting tools, or troubleshoot app errors. While training is often provided at the on boarding stage, long-term support is rare. This affects confidence as it reduces tool usage and contributes to a cycle where mobile apps are underused or abandoned.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding how mobile applications enhance project efficiency and time management among NGO field workers requires a framework that accounts for both individual decision-making and broader organisational structures. This study draws on two theoretical models which are the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Activity Theory (AT). Together, they offer a robust lens for analysing how mobile apps are adopted, used, and integrated into fieldwork operations in resource-constrained NGO settings.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) originally developed by Davis (1989), the Technology Acceptance Model has been widely applied to studies of user behavior and information system adoption. It identifies two critical factors that influence technology usage which are, Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). PU refers to the extent to which an individual believes that using a system will improve their job performance, while PEOU relates to the effort required to use the system. In NGO fieldwork, these perceptions influence whether field workers adopt mobile applications for reporting, task scheduling, or data collection.

TAM has seen substantial adaptation in development contexts. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) extended the model by integrating additional variables such as social influence and experience, demonstrating that users may still adopt systems perceived as difficult if peer influence or organisational expectations are strong. This is especially relevant for NGO staff who may feel obligated to use mobile reporting tools despite limited training or support.A credible regional application of TAM comes from Alhassan and Adam (2021), who studied the adoption of mobile-based data systems by health workers in northern Ghana. Their findings indicate that PU significantly influenced initial adoption, while sustained use depended more on PEOU and continuous institutional support. This underscores that simply deploying mobile tools is insufficient unless organisations also invest in usability improvements and user training.

In the Nigerian context, Bello and Odukoya (2022) found that while mobile tools offered transparency and reporting gains in NGOs, inconsistent perceptions of ease of use limited their widespread adoption. This supports the application of TAM in this study, helping to examine how both personal and organisational variables affect mobile app usage for time and project management.

While TAM focuses on individual technology adoption, Activity Theory (AT) offers a systemic perspective that captures how tools are embedded in organisational routines and influenced by institutional norms, rules, and divisions of labour. Originally developed by Vygotsky and extended by Engeström (1987), AT conceptualises human activity as an interaction between the user (subject), the goal (object), and the mediating tools (e.g., mobile apps), all within a broader context of community, rules, and role divisions. In fieldwork environments, where tasks are complex and involve multiple actors, AT allows researchers to explore not only how mobile apps are used, but also how they reshape workflows and create

new patterns of coordination. Ciborra and Andoh-Baidoo (2017) used AT in their study of mobile communication systems in Sierra Leone and found that mobile tools improved efficiency only when aligned with pre-existing community norms and institutional structures. Tools imposed without contextual adaptation led to limited engagement.

Similarly, Kyem and Asiedu (2021) examined agricultural extension projects in Ghana and concluded that mobile task applications only became effective when local work divisions and accountability structures supported their use. Their findings captutre how mobile apps are not standalone solutions but must fit into existing organisational environment to achieve the intended impact on time management and project execution. For this study, AT is useful in analysing the contradictions that arise when NGO field workers are expected to adopt mobile applications in environments with limited infrastructure, unclear reporting channels, or poor training. It enables a distinct understanding of how tools mediate tasks and how institutional dynamics affect their success or failure.

Methodology

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine how mobile applications support project efficiency and time management among NGO field workers. Rather than collecting new data through field surveys or interviews, this study relies entirely on existing peer-reviewed literature, NGO reports, and documented case studies to address the research objectives. A systematic review is appropriate here because it provides a structured way to explore and synthesise existing evidence across diverse sources. Petticrew and Roberts (2006 p.16) note that, this method is particularly effective when the aim is to "gather and interpret what is already known about a policy or practice area". Given that mobile applications are already being used across various NGO settings, this approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness, challenges, and practical outcomes without the need for primary data collection.

1. Research Design and Strategy

The review was guided by the central research question: How are mobile applications used to enhance project efficiency and time management among NGO field workers, and what factors influence their successful implementation? To answer this, the study conducted a structured search of existing literature using specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected works were then analysed to identify recurring themes, challenges, and insights relevant to the objectives of this research.

2. Data Sources and Search Process

The review drew from multiple academic and grey literature sources. Databases searched included:

- **Google Scholar**
- **Science Direct**
- **Scopus**
- **JUSTOR**

- **PubMed**
- **African Journals Online (AJOL)**

Additional sources were drawn from reports and digital development publications by:
- **GSMA Mobile for Development**
- **WHO and ITU digital health documents**
- **NGO case repositories** (e.g., Mercy Corps, Pathfinder International, World Vision)

Search terms used included combinations such as:
- Mobile applications and NGO field workers
- Time management and digital tools in NGOs
- Project efficiency and mobile apps and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Technology adoption in humanitarian and development contexts

Boolean operators were applied to refine results, and filters were used to limit the search to materials published between 2010 and 2024, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa.

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To maintain relevance and quality, sources were included if they met the following criteria:
- Peer-reviewed academic articles or credible institutional/NGO report
- Focused on mobile application use in NGO, development, or humanitarian contexts
- Addressed themes related to time management, reporting, task efficiency, or digital adoption
- Located in Sub-Saharan African settings, with priority given to studies involving Nigerian NGOs
- Studies were excluded if they:
- focused on corporate or government use of mobile tools with no NGO relevance
- Lacked empirical findings or clear outcomes
- Were opinion-based without data or theoretical engagement

A shortlist of approximately 40 studies was initially reviewed. After applying inclusion criteria and quality checks, 21 relevant and high-quality sources were selected for synthesis.

Data Analysis and Thematic Synthesis

Each selected study was carefully reviewed to extract key findings. The analysis process involved:
- Summarising main points from each study in plain language
- Taking notes on benefits, challenges, and usage patterns related to mobile apps in field operations
- Grouping similar ideas and outcomes under major themes (e.g., improved reporting, time savings, digital literacy challenges)

This thematic approach helps to identify recurrent patterns across studies without requiring statistical tools. No software or line-by-line coding was used instead, a practical method of reviewing and comparing study findings was adopted. The focus remained on interpreting what the research collectively reveals about mobile applications in NGO practice.

Ethical Considerations

As the study relies solely on published material, no human participants were involved. Therefore, ethical clearance was not required. Nonetheless, all sources are acknowledged appropriately, and data use is in line with academic standards of transparency ad integrity.

Limitations

This method is subject to several limitations. First, it depends entirely on what has already been published valuable insights from NGOs that have not documented their experiences publicly may be missed. Second, most sources are from English-language journals, which could limit the geographic scope. Lastly, while thematic synthesis offers strong interpretive power, it does not provide statistical generalisation. Despite these limitations, this method offers a comprehensive and academically sound basis for assessing mobile technology use in NGO fieldwork.

Findings

1. *Improved Reporting Speed and Real-Time Updates*

A consistent theme across several studies is that mobile applications significantly reduce the time required for reporting by field staff. Digital tools such as CommCare, KoboToolbox, and custom NGO apps are replacing handwritten reports and Excel spreadsheets, enabling real-time submission of data from remote locations. For instance, Bosch, J. *et al*. (2020) reported that a health-focused NGO operating in Northern Nigeria saw average reporting times drop from 5 days to under 24 hours after switching to mobile-based reporting templates. Similarly, Asi and Williams (2018) documented how mobile tools improved coordination and speed during emergency relief operations in Syria and Iraq, allowing "real-time visual updates" via mobile forms. These gains are attributed not only to faster transmission but also to better standardisation and error reduction, as forms often include validation features that prevent incomplete submissions. By eliminating the need for manual consolidation, project managers can respond more quickly to field challenges.

2. *Enhanced Task Scheduling and Time Tracking*

Another major benefit noted in the literature is the role mobile apps play in structuring the daily workflow of NGO field workers. Apps with built-in task lists, reminders, and progress-tracking modules help workers stay on schedule, prioritise tasks, and complete time-bound deliverables more efficiently. Ouma and Mudege (2021), in their study on digital agricultural extension tools in Uganda, observed that mobile tools reduced administrative overload and helped officers better allocate their time between farm visits, data entry, and feedback sessions. Similarly, GSMA (2020) reported on a digital monitoring platform used by field nutrition

officers in Senegal, which enabled real-time task status updates and better supervision by central coordinators. This function is particularly helpful in multi-component programmes like vaccination campaigns or school outreach, where different tasks need to be completed across various locations in a fixed timeframe.

3. *Reduction of Redundant Communication and Delays*

Several studies revealed that mobile tools help streamline communication between field teams and headquarters, cutting down on redundant messages, physical returns to base, or unclear reporting lines. Rather than waiting for in-person updates or email reports, field staff now upload images, geo-tagged forms, or voice notes directly to project dashboards. Aker and Blumenstock (2015), t observed that in Sierra Leone's Ebola response programme, the adoption of mobile tools eliminated up to 30% of repeat calls and unnecessary field movements (. This not only saved time but also cut operational costs and fatigue among overstretched workers. However, the studies also warned that these benefits depend on network reliability. For example, Alhassan and Adam (2021) noted that in Ghana's Northern region, data syncing failures due to poor connectivity undermined the full benefit of mobile platforms, delaying end-of-day reporting.

4. Challenges with Digital Literacy and Technical Skills

Despite the positive outcomes, digital illiteracy among field workers remains a barrier to efficient usage. Many field officers lack the confidence or skill to use advanced mobile apps especially those with multi-step forms, dashboards, or synchronisation features. Edewor (2019) found that over 60% of local NGO staff surveyed in Southeastern Nigeria had no prior training on mobile data tools and relied on informal peer guidance. Likewise, Nwaodu and Ilo (2015) observed that fragmented ICT policies and lack of dedicated technical support slowed down app adoption and limited its use to younger, tech-savvy workers. Where training was provided, such as in the Pathfinder International's mHealth pilot, uptake improved significantly. Field staff involved in the pilot were able to deliver antenatal care reminders, schedule follow-ups, and transmit data with fewer delays (GSMA, 2017).

5. Infrastructure and Connectivity Constraints

Many studies stress poor digital infrastructure as a recurring constraint. These include weak internet signals, low smartphone penetration, and lack of electricity to charge devices. These challenges disproportionately affect rural and remote locations where many NGOs operate. Chib*et al*. (2015), studying digital health applications in rural Kenya, noted that "battery failure and network unavailability were common causes of missed data uploads," resulting in gaps in programme records. Similarly, Aker *et al*. (2016) found that in Mali, despite a strong app design, over 40% of field staff could not use the tool effectively due to SIM card incompatibilities or lack of device ownership. These infrastructural gaps reduce the time-saving and coordination benefits that mobile apps are expected to provide, often requiring hybrid systems that still depend partly on paper reporting.

6. Unequal Access and Organisational Readiness

The organisational context also influences how well mobile apps improve efficiency. Larger NGOs with stable funding and partnerships are often better equipped to deploy tailored mobile solutions and provide staff support. Smaller or local NGOs may lack such capacity and instead rely on generic tools that are not fully integrated into their workflow. Edewor's (2019) study shows that, smaller NGOs in Nigeria were found to rely on WhatsApp or Google Forms due to lack of funding for specialised software or devices. This reinforces a digital divide in the sector, where only a few organisations benefit fully from technological innovations. MacGregor and Fernback (2022) also argue that, these disparities reflect deeper inequalities in access to technical expertise, institutional culture, and decision-making power, often side-lining community-based organisations in the digital transformation process.

7. Sustainability and Long-Term Use

Several sources noted that initial enthusiasm for mobile applications often fades if the implementation is not supported by long-term planning and institutional stability. Apps introduced for pilot projects sometimes become obsolete when donor funding ends or project priorities shift. Aker *et al*. (2016) documented this pattern in West African health campaigns, where mobile apps were widely adopted during the intervention phase but abandoned later due to lack of ongoing support, software updates, or device maintenance. For sustainable use, Bosch *et al*. (2020) recommend that mobile apps be integrated into standard operating procedures, accompanied by recurrent training, monitoring, and feedback loops.

Discussion

The reviewed literature presents strong evidence that mobile applications have positively influenced project efficiency and time management among NGO field workers. However, the benefits of these tools are mediated by complex social, infrastructural, and organisational conditions. This discussion critically explores those dynamics by connecting the findings to the theoretical frameworks and broader development discourse.

1. Mobile Tools as Enablers of Workflow Efficiency

A central theme that emerged across the literature is that mobile applications offer concrete solutions to long-standing problems in NGO fieldwork such as delayed reporting, redundant communication, and fragmented scheduling. These digital tools have reduced administrative burdens, enabling quicker data submission and better alignment of field activities with central timelines (Asi & Williams, 2018; Bosch *et al*., 2020).This aligns well with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), particularly the concept of perceived usefulness. Many of the studies reviewed show that when field workers see mobile tools as making their job faster and easier, they are more likely to adopt them consistently (Alhassan & Adam, 2021). However, this usefulness is not universal or automatic. In contexts where reporting is not directly linked to app use for instance, where paper-based alternatives remain accepted the perceived value of digital tools often diminishes.

2. Efficiency Gains Are Unevenly Distributed

While the literature documents improved time management outcomes in multiple settings, the benefits are unevenly distributed across the NGO sector. Larger organisations with better digital capacity, funding, and external partnerships are better positioned to adopt mobile platforms at scale. Smaller, community-based NGOs often lack access to training, reliable devices, or adaptable app systems (Edewor, 2019). This disparity reflects what MacGregor and Fernback (2022) describe as digital institutional inequality, where access to tools does not translate equally into effective use. Some organisations may possess digital devices but lack ICT personnel, leadership support, or a cohesive digital policy. These conditions dilute the intended benefits of mobile technologies and, in some cases, lead to abandonment after initial implementation. Therefore, digital transformation is not merely a technical upgrade but also a question of organisational maturity and readiness.

3. The Role of Organisational Structures and Support

Field efficiency does not depend solely on individual adoption. Organisational structures including supervision, internal communication, and operational policy also shape how well mobile apps perform. This is where Activity Theory becomes a useful analytical tool helping to shift the focus from the app itself to the full activity system: the tools, rules, division of labour, and community that enable or constrain usage. For instance, studies reporting positive outcomes often describe contexts where mobile app use is embedded in organisational routines with supportive leadership, regular training, and feedback loops (GSMA, 2020; Ouma &Mudege, 2021). In contrast, NGOs that introduced apps as short-term fixes or donor-driven experiments frequently experienced low adoption and poor integration into workflow (Aker *et al.*, 2016).

4. Infrastructure: The Persistent Limitation

Despite technological advances, digital infrastructure remains a major limitation. Weak network signals, erratic electricity, and unreliable hardware all contribute to app under performance. Many NGOs operate in rural environments where phones cannot be charged daily, or where data costs are prohibitive for workers earning modest stipends (Chib*et al*., 2015). The implication is that app effectiveness depends on much more than design requiring infrastructure alignment. A highly functional app will still fail if it relies on always-on connectivity in offline environments. Therefore, mobile app developers and NGOs must prioritise offline feature, local storage features, and power-efficient interfaces.

5. Participation and Design Adaptability

One striking insight from the literature is that user-centred design significantly improves adoption and outcomes. Field workers are more likely to engage with apps that match their work rhythms, task language, and comfort level. Ouma and Mudege (2021) assert, co-designing tools with field workers led to higher usage and fewer errors compared to top-down deployments. This supports the arguments by Orlikowski and Scott (2015), who warn against assuming that technology alone will resolve organisational inefficiencies. In practice, technologies often reflect and amplify existing practices. Thus, participatory design involving

users in app testing, training feedback, and feature iteration is not merely an add-on but a critical strategy for achieving sustained use and actual gains in time efficiency.

6. Sustainability and Long-Term Integration

A recurring theme in the review is the fragility of mobile technology initiatives in NGO settings. Many apps are introduced during donor-funded projects but are not sustained afterward due to funding gaps, absence of ownership, or failure to update and maintain the platform. These short-term implementations often result in tool fatigue, where staff abandon multiple apps introduced without coordination (Aker *et al.*, 2016). For mobile apps to truly contribute to long-term efficiency, they must be treated not just as temporary interventions, but as institutional systems. This includes budgeting for app maintenance, planning for scale, with structuring tools into operational procedures. The value of an app is cumulative as it increases when used consistently over time, enabling NGOs to develop digital records, dashboards, and performance analytics.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the role of mobile applications in enhancing project efficiency and time management among NGO field workers through a systematic review of existing literature. Drawing on sources from health, education, agriculture, and development interventions, the study finds that mobile applications, when appropriately implemented, can significantly improve the speed and accuracy of reporting, reduce delays in communication, and help field workers structure and track their activities more effectively. The application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Activity Theory provided a conceptual framework for understanding how mobile tools are used, not just as technical solutions, but as part of broader systems of human activity. The findings confirm that when field staff perceive mobile apps as easy to use and useful in real-time field conditions, their adoption increases. However, this perception is shaped not just by the app interface but also by training, infrastructure, and organisational support.

Equally important is the recognition that the impact of mobile applications is not uniform. While some NGOs have successfully integrated mobile tools into daily operations, others struggle due to infrastructural constraints, digital skill gaps, lack of funding, and unsupportive organisational environments. This variability points to the fact that mobile tools do not automatically improve project outcomes; their effectiveness depends on being properly embedded in local contexts and operational cultures. Another key insight is the challenge of sustainability with many digital tools introduced during short-term projects failed to gain long-term traction due to inadequate funding, poor follow-up, or the absence of institutional ownership. Without clear strategies for sustainability and continuous improvement, mobile apps may become yet another underutilised innovation in development work.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion, the following actionable recommendations are made for NGOs, technology providers, donors, and development actors aiming to maximise the benefits of mobile applications in field-based project delivery:

1. *Invest in Structured and Continuous Training*

NGOs must ensure that field workers receive hands-on, context-specific training not just at on boarding but regularly throughout the project cycle. Training should cover not only how to operate the app but also how to troubleshoot basic problems, manage data costs, and protect digital security. As observed by Edewor (2019), the absence of in-house ICT support and formal training limits even basic app use in local NGOs. Regular refresher sessions and peer-to-peer support systems can significantly improve adoption and reduce app abandonment.

2. *Design for Low-Infrastructure Environments*

Apps must be optimised for offline functionality, low bandwidth use, and minimal battery drain. Tools that rely heavily on continuous connectivity are often ineffective in rural areas with erratic networks and power supply. Studies like Chib*et al*. (2015) stresses the need for locally adaptive design — including multi-language options, simple dashboards, and compatibility with low-cost devices (p. 195). App developers and NGOs should prioritise features that enhance reliability, not just aesthetics or complexity.

3. *Adopt User-Centred, Participatory Development Processes*

Digital tools for fieldwork must reflect the everyday realities of the users. NGOs are encouraged to adopt co-design approaches where field staff are actively involved in testing, giving feedback, and refining app features. Ouma and Mudege (2021) shows that, such approaches increase user engagement, reduce abandonment, and improve accuracy in data reporting. Participatory design helps avoid creating solutions that are technically sound but practically irrelevant.

4. *Integrate Mobile Tools into Organisational Workflows*

Mobile apps should not be seen as standalone innovations but as part of a broader operations strategy. NGOs must embed app use into Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), staff performance expectations, and reporting frameworks. This institutionalisation creates accountability and ensures sustained use beyond the life span of a project. Bosch *et al*. (2020) noted, mobile tool success increases when app use becomes routine rather than optional.

5. *Conduct More Sector-Specific and Comparative Research*

Current research is heavily concentrated on mobile apps in health and emergency response sectors. There is a need for more peer-reviewed studies on the role of mobile tools in agriculture, education, human rights, and governance-focused NGO work. Additionally, comparative research across regions and NGO types would help identify best practices and adaptable models. Cross-sector learning can also improve implementation quality and scalability.

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Nonverbal Regulators as Gender Signals in Hausa

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Abstract

This study examined nonverbal regulators as gender signals in Hausa culture. It was guided by the understanding that conversation is an organized and structured activity governed by both verbal and nonverbal cues. Within the framework of Conversational Analysis, regulators such as gaze, head movements, pauses, and hand gestures were understood as cues that controlled the rhythm and flow of talk, functioning much like traffic signals. Drawing on video recordings of naturally occurring face-to-face interactions among Hausa speakers, the research investigated how gender influenced the use and interpretation of these regulators. The findings revealed that some nonverbal regulators were distinctly male-specific, reflecting authority, assertiveness, and social dominance; others were female-specific, often associated with modesty, politeness, and deference. Additionally, a category of neuter regulators emerged, used across gender lines to maintain conversational balance. The study concluded that gender in Hausa communication was not only encoded in language choice but also vividly performed through nonverbal regulation, reflecting deeper sociocultural expectations and values.

Introduction

In Hausa society, gender plays a crucial role in determining not only the type of nonverbal signals used in communication but also how and when they are employed, depending on the conversational partner. This paper focuses on exploring the relationship between gender and communication, with particular attention to the nonverbal dimension. Nonverbal

communication refers to the transmission and interpretation of messages without the use of words. It encompasses gestures, facial expressions, posture, gaze, and other bodily cues that convey meaning beyond spoken language. These forms of expression are influenced by several sociocultural factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

Within the Hausa communicative context, nonverbal signals often reflect underlying social hierarchies and cultural expectations tied to gender. Men and women are not only socialized differently but are also expected to display distinct communicative behaviors that align with traditional norms of respect, modesty, and authority. This research therefore seeks to analyze the use of nonverbal signals as gender-specific modes of regulating interaction among Hausa speakers. The study adopts Conversational Analysis (CA) as its theoretical framework, given its focus on the sequential organization of talk and the subtle mechanisms that can be both verbal and nonverbal used by the interlocutors to manage conversational flow and social meaning.

Methdology

The study investigates the role of gender in the use of nonverbal regulators during face-to-face interactions in Hausa culture. A qualitative approach grounded in Conversational Analysis (CA) is employed to analyze naturally occurring conversations. CA focuses on examining the organization of spoken interactions, including the role of nonverbal regulators in structuring conversations. The data for the research is gathered mainly through video recording of natural occurring face-to-face interactions from multiple settings such as schools, street corner chat and wedding ceremonies The video recording is therefore transcribed for analysis. Video recordings are complemented with detailed field notes, being aware of contextual factors such as setting, participant relationships, and cultural nuances. Interviews was also conducted with the participants to understand how why they exhibit certain behaviours. The symbols used for transcription are the following:

↑ rise in pitch
↓ fall in pitch
word underlining signal salient stress
wor:d a colon renders a noticeable sound stretch
° ° softer utterance
(xxxxx) unclear utterance
(.) a short pause
(word) description of nonverbal conduct is placed in parenthesis

Nonverbal Regulators and the Organization of Conversation

Human interaction goes far beyond words. In every social encounter, people communicate not only through what they say but also through how they move, look, and respond. These nonverbal cues perform several functions. They may complement, substitute, emphasize, repeat, contradict, or regulate verbal messages. Duncan (1972) views conversation as an organized and cooperative activity that requires participants to coordinate their turns and avoid verbal collisions. To achieve this, individuals rely on behavioral cues that signal when to speak, pause, or yield the floor.

Nonverbal behaviors used to manage the flow of talk are referred to as regulators. They include subtle actions such as nodding, leaning forward, raising the eyebrows, or extending a hand to indicate continuation or completion of speech. Regulators function like conversational traffic signals, helping speakers and listeners negotiate turns, maintain rhythm, and ensure smooth interaction. For example, a speaker may raise a hand slightly to discourage interruption, while a listener might lean forward or adjust posture to signal readiness to speak.

The regulation of conversation is therefore a shared responsibility between speaker and listener. The speaker may use gestures, posture, or variations in tone to clarify meaning, while the listener provides feedback through nods, gaze, or facial expressions. Together, these nonverbal exchanges sustain coherence and mutual understanding in conversation.

In Hausa communicative culture, the use of regulators is deeply influenced by social and gender norms (Adamu 2020). The society's strong sense of propriety and hierarchy shapes how men and women perform these cues. Male speakers often display assertive gestures and open postures that convey authority, while female speakers typically employ controlled and modest gestures consistent with kunya (modesty) and respect. Thus, regulating conversation in Hausa goes beyond managing turn-taking. It embodies social expectations, gender identity, and cultural values.

Nonverbal Regulators as Gender Signals

It is evident that there is gender difference in nonverbal means of regulation of interaction which is prevalent in Hausa culture. Fast (1977:19) defines gender signals as "masculine and feminine body movements". These are gestures used exclusively and recognized by the society as belonging to a particular gender. In Hausa society, children are taught and made to use gestures and body postures relevant to their gender. For instance, if a girl sits inappropriately she will instantly be cautioned. Gestures regulate the flow of interaction. This is evident in both the same and mixed gender interactions. However, regulators are used differently by the two genders. Some are used strictly by males or females while others are used by both males and females. Hausa nonverbal regulators can be broadly categorized into three namely: Male specific, Female Specific Regulators and Neuter Regulators.

Female-Specific Regulators

These are some regulators that are regarded as strictly feminine by Hausa society therefore any male who tries to use them is rejected . The use of such regulators based on body parts are discussed under three sub-headings, namely: facial expressions, eye signals and hand gestures.

Facial Expressions

The most effective form of nonverbal communication is facial expression. It constitutes movements of parts of the face such as the mouth, the chin and the nose. In Hausa, facial expressions provide a clue about a person's emotional state Labarinzuciya a tambayifuska meaning: The face gives an insight of the mind. This perhaps explains why the face has enormous ability in making limitless array of nonverbal expressions. It is used to measure how effective an interaction will be, since it indicates a person's willingness to participate in an interaction. Moreover, the face serves as an opener of any social interaction. A proverb in Hausa

says this: Shimfiđarfuska ta fi shimfiđartabarma which literary translates to: A welcoming face is better than spreading a mat, meaning from the facial expression of a host, the guest may understand whether he/she is welcome or not. Facial gestures that are female specific are: gàatsɨnée (sneering), múrgùđà-bàakɨ̀i (mouth twisting), zúmɓ ùrà-bàakɨ̀i (lip pouting) and táa ɓè-bàakɨ̀i (mouth disfiguration that may indicate contempt or disapproval). The excerpt as illustrated below shows how zúmɓùrà-bàakɨ̀i (lip-pouting gesture) is used as a nonverbal regulator.

1 Rabi'a: (…..Bintaba ki da mutunci ko ki yi mana wayawaiba mu yijarrabawaba.
We missed our exams because you didn't call to inform us that the exam time has been rescheduled
2 Hadiza: (xxxxx)
3 Binta: (opens her mouth)
4 Binta: aka cekunyi (as she widens her pupils) =
5 Hadiza: = aka cekunyi
I heard you did the exam
6 Binta (tilted her head)
7 Hadiza: Ummii aka ce a jirasai 11 za mu shiga, kuma a ka ce Rabia ta yi
We were asked to wait till 11 and I was told Rabi'a has written the exam.
8 Binta: Rabi'a (she lowered her face, frowned and pointed to a place with her hand) nikuma a cikin nan nagan ki
But I saw you there
9 Rabi'a: (ahhhhh)
10 Binta: (opens her mouth)
11 Hadiza: (pouts and turns her head sideways)

Above excerpt is an instance of female specific facial regulators: zúmɓurà-bàakɨ̀i (lip-pouting gesture) by Hadiza. The gesture was made in response to a statement made by Rabi'a that she has missed her exam! Zúmɓurà-bàakɨ̀i (lip-pouting) indicates condemnation. It is used to replace speech, it indicates anger, disagreement, condemnation or disregard or just pretending to be ill tempered. It is sometimes accompanied by káwárdàkâi (gazing away) and can also be preceded by another gesture kállónbánzáa (contemptuous gaze) especially when the interactants are peers as in this instance.

Eye Signals

Eye signals refer to the use of gaze, eye contact, movement, or pupil dilation to communicate meaning. In Hausa culture, eye behavior performs multiple functions, one of which is the regulation of interaction. Through the eyes, speakers and listeners manage attention, convey emotion, and negotiate conversational turns without necessarily relying on speech. Among Hausa women in particular, eye signals are rich in expressive and regulatory meaning. Common examples include fàrɨ̀i (flickering eyelashes), kállón-wútsɨ̀yàr-ɨ́dò (sideways glance), kállón-kállóo (steady gaze), and kállón-hádɨ̀rɨ̀n-kàaj?i (contemptuous look), among others.

The gesture fàrìi (flickering eyelashes) is especially noteworthy in mixed-gender interactions, where it serves both communicative and regulatory purposes. An excerpt illustrating this behavior in a mixed-gender encounter is presented below.12 Ahmad (smiles at Binta)

13 Binta (smiles at Ahmad)
14 Ahmad ( )
15 Binta: (looks at Ahmad and performs fàrìi)
16 Binta (leaves)

The above interaction is between two students Binta and Ahmad . Binta performs fàrìi (flickering eye lashes) to signal to Ahmad in an intimate manner the termination of their short conversation . Fàrìi is a flirting gesture used by Hausa women as they are expected to be meticulous, hence not allowed to express their feelings verbally. They therefore sometimes express their feelings with gestures such as fàrìi . In courtship (zance) fàrìi is used by females to show their affection, it could also be a nonverbal answer to a suitor who inquires in Hausa Ina son ki, ke faì meaning: I am interested in you, what do you think? The Hausa prostitutes perform it discretely to select males who troop to them all the time.

Therefore, since fàrìi is a flirting signal the expectation would be that it is only practiced in a mixed gender interaction and not among in same-sex partners. However, in this instance it was performed in a same gender interaction at a wedding event. Habiba displayed her goods and while she was trying to persuade the other women to buy the goods, she used fàrìi to call their attention the more. This shows that fàrìi can be used in same gender exchange to emphasize a point and even to hold the floor. In addition, fàrìi is accompanied in this scenario with gìrgìzàkâi (shaking the head) and búgà-cínyàa (patting the thigh). The use of these gestures would more or less capture the attention of the interactants and allow her to maintain the turn. This is shown in the excerpt:

17 Maryam: Habiba inakayan ne?
Habiba where are the goods?
18 Habiba : (xxxx)
19 Habiba: (flickers her eye lashes, shakes her head)
20 Aisha: ita ma ta yi advertising ɗin nata ba!
Yes she should advertise hers also.
21 Habiba: bikinki fa yaha ɓa mutane (she points to the side)
Your wedding is blessed with so many people.
22 Habiba: nan dukbamembobiba ne (spreads her hands as she simultaneously shakes her head)
All these people are non-members.

Similarly, gaze duration and intensity is also determined by the interactional partner. Direct eye contact occurs mostly in an all-female encounter. Though, gaze is vital in any face-to-face interaction as it signifies interest and yields continuous flow of conversation. However, direct eye contact is discouraged in mixed gender and intergenerational interactions lest the female interactant be labeled as not being bashful (kunya) .

Hand Gestures

Hand gestures constitute another vital nonverbal means of regulating interaction. Among the Hausa, hand movements are used to perform various regulatory functions such as, holding the floor, drawing attention, or emphasizing a particular point. Hence, hand gesturing is regarded as largely, if not entirely, a speaker-oriented phenomenon (Yang, 2010). The way the hand is maneuvered, particularly in relation to the face and other parts of the body plays a crucial role in structuring interaction and often reflects gender-based differences in communicative behavior.

In Hausa culture, several hand gestures are specifically associated with women, reflecting broader sociocultural expectations of femininity, modesty, and expressiveness. These include máarîncínyàa (patting the thigh), yárfè-hánnúu (finger shaking), sállàllámíi (clapping the hands repeatedly while invoking the name of God), múrzà-yáatsúu (finger snapping), and túuróođánkwálíigàbá (pushing the headscarf forward). Another distinct example of a female-specific regulator is wáarè-yáatsúu (finger spreading), as illustrated in the excerpt below.

23 Adama: akwai elective a cikingidan Hausa
There are elective courses to be offered in Hausa Department
24 Binta: nawa ne a can (pointing at her back)
How many
25 Adama: ashirin da biyar ne
Twenty five
26 Binta: ai kosis ?in sha takwas ne
There are 18 courses
27 Adama: aa (raised her hand up and spread her four fingers while staring)
28 Adama: (xxxx)

The excerpt above illustrates the use of the hand gesture wáarè-yáatsúu (finger spreading). In this instance, Adama employed the gesture to both hold the floor and emphasize a point. As she spoke, she spread her fingers and maintained the posture for a few seconds to reinforce her statement that the courses carried twenty-five credit loads, emphasizing her insistence. When she concluded, she gently lowered her hand to her lap, signaling her readiness to relinquish the turn to the next speaker. Interestingly, although Adama was discussing numbers, her use of wáarè-yáatsúu was not a counting gesture. She raised four fingers while saying “twenty-five,” suggesting that the gesture was more about emphasis and conversational control than numerical representation.

While wáarè-yáatsúu can be used by both men and women, the manner in which Adama performed it reflects feminine communicative style. Her hand remained close to her body, with a soft, contained move mentraising it only slightly to make her fingers visible without appearing assertive. The orientation of the palm also contributes to the meaning: when the palm faces upward, it may indicate 'give me,' 'begging,' or 'praying,' whereas a palm facing forward or backward with fingers fully extended may be interpreted as abusive or confrontational in Hausa culture. Thus, Adama's restrained and inwardly positioned gesture aligns with culturally expected norms of feminine modesty and decorum, illustrating how even subtle bodily movements are shaped by gendered expectations in Hausa interaction.

Male Specific Gestures

Like the female specific gestures, the male specific gestures represent the body movement and posture unequivocally used by Hausa males when interacting in either same or mixed gender interactions. They include posture, hand gestures and facial expressions.

Posture

Posture as a means of communication is relevant as far as social interaction is concerned. Although posture is not as expressive as the face or eyes, it however communicates a lot about a person's emotional state, self image and identity. Posture is one of the nonverbal devices used to regulate interaction. The way a person sits or stand determines his attentiveness in an interaction. Furthermore, one's posture may signal to the other interactants to take a turn. There are many instances of postural regulators that are male specific such as karkacewaa (tilting), káɗà- ɓáfàa (leg shaking), sáɓùlè- ɗàafáxàa (shoulder shrug), gyárà-zámáa (taking a more comfortable posture), góoyà-hánnúu-à-báayà (hand behind the back), kárkάɗά ɓáfàa (leg shaking), hánnúu-à-àljíhúu (hand in pocket). Below is an example of male postural regulator known as kàrkácéewàa (tilting).

29 Anas: kana can kana barci
30 Bala: (tilted his body backward? a bit and held put his right hand on his waist while looking and listening attentively at Anas) me yafaru?)
31 Anas: (stroked his beard)
32 Anas: (…..)
33 Anas: yanzu akwai wani za mu ba ka
34 Anas: (removed his hand from his face and pointed to the right)
35 Bala: (released his waist and stood straight)

In Hausa culture, tilting the body backward while standing is categorically a masculine gesture. In this instance, Bala's backward tilt served as listener feedback, indicating attentiveness and a lack of immediate intention to take a turn. Once he was ready to speak, however, his posture changed, he straightened his body and released his hand from his waist. This shift in bodily orientation signaled a transition from passive listening to active participation. Notably, the tilting gesture is also common among younger men, often employed as a subtle act of flirtation or self-display, particularly when engaging with women in informal settings.

In the excerpt (line 30), Bala also performed káamà-qúugùu (one-hand akimbo) as a listener response. The fact that he used only one hand, coupled with his steady gaze at the speaker, suggests that he was engaged in the conversation and prepared to yield the floor when necessary. However, when he intended to claim a turn, he released his waist and stood upright. This postural change functioned as a clear turn-seeking cue, illustrating how Hausa men skillfully manipulate bodily gestures to manage participation and signal conversational intent.
The meaning and manner in which káamà- ɓúugùu (hands akimbo) is performed tend to be gender-specific. The gesture can be executed with one or both hands, each carrying a distinct social meaning. Among men, a two-hand akimbo stance often conveys feelings of tiredness, boredom, or anxiety. However, it is considered highly unusual for a Hausa woman to assume a

full káamà-qúugùu posture in public, as such bodily openness is culturally associated with assertiveness and defiance. Traits generally discouraged in female comportment. When a woman performs the gesture, it is typically within same-gender settings, such as among close friends or, in the case of pregnant women, as a gesture of physical relief rather than symbolic assertion.

Among girls, particularly teenagers, káamà-qúugùu carries yet another layer of meaning. It is often employed in moments of confrontation or challenge, especially when preparing for a quarrel or physical fight. In such contexts, the gesture functions as both a display of readiness and a nonverbal assertion of dominance. These variations illustrate how the same bodily formhands-on-hipscan be semantically reinterpreted depending on gender, age, and situational context. Thus, káamà-qúugùu serves not merely as a conversational regulator but as a culturally loaded emblem of identity, emotion, and power within Hausa social interaction.

Hand Gestures

Hand gestures under this category constitute movements made using the hand or related to the hand for communicative purposes.] Hand regulators such as tàafa-hánnúu (clapping each other's hand), gáisàawáa (hand shake) sóosà-déeyàa (scratching the back of the head), sháafà-déeyàa (rubbing the back of the head), kállónàgóogó (looking at the watch), dúndùlè-hánnúu (clenching of fists) and káamàgéemùu (beard stroking) are used by Hausa males.

Instance of male specific regulator is demonstrated in line 31 where Anas performed káamàgéemùu (beard stroking gesture) followed by a short pause. The beard stroking gestures used by Anas indicate that he is thinking hard and fast about the situation at hand. It is also an attempt to yield his turn to Bala who was unwilling to take the turn. Anas however maintained the turn. Káamà-géemùu is sometimes used as a feedback mechanism. In whatever context it is used it is purely a male gesture. Although there is another gesture that is similar to káamà-géemùu (beard stroking), - which is káamà-hávàa (chin stroking) which is mostly used by women.

Neuter Gestures

Some Hausa nonverbal signals are not gender sensitive. Such neuter regulators in Hausa include: gargìzàkâi (head nodding), káwárdàkâi (gazing away), mùrmúshdi (smiling), dàakàtáa (putting ones hand out), núunìi (pointing), gyáđàkâi (bending the head slowly sideways) súnkúyárdàkâi (lowering the head), and kállón -dásà (gazing down).

Núunìi (pointing) Gestures

In Hausa, pointing gesture can be done using the eyes, the mouth, the head and the hand. However, we shall restrict ourselves to finger pointing.

36 Musa: ya exam đin?
how was the exam?
37 Binta: balaifi... an gama
is okay..... we are through
38 Binta: (she points to the back)
39 Musa: he pointed at (those videotaping them using his index finger while shaking it)

Two distinct finger-pointing gestures were observed in the excerpt. Binta performed núunìi using her thumb, intending to alert Musa that they were being videotaped. She did this silently, using gesture in place of speech. Musa, in response, produced a pointing gesture as well, but with his index finger also without uttering a word. The primary distinction between the two, apart from the choice of fingers, lies in the accompanying nonverbal nuances: Musa's gesture was accompanied by a slight shaking of the finger and a smile. While the index finger is commonly used to indicate an object or direction, its meaning changes when the gesture is performed with a shaking motion, as it then conveys a sense of warning, as demonstrated by Musa. This gesture is frequently used among male peers in confrontational or cautionary contexts, but it can also serve as a floor-holding cue in conversation. Among women, the same gesture often functions as a warning, particularly toward children. In Hausa culture, however, pointing directly at a person with the index finger is generally considered impolite.

In contrast, thumb-pointing is typically directed backward and tends to be more static than index-finger pointing. In a different context, it may also serve as a gossiping cue, especially when combined with other gestures a use more commonly associated with women.

Káwárdàkâi (Turning away)

This is used by both males and females. It is demonstrated by turning the head to one side as shown below:

40 Aisha: ga niinajiranki
I am here waiting for you here
41 (Bilki walks towards Aisha)
42 Bilki: ai nafaxamikisaigobe
But I told you to wait till tomorrow
43 Aisha: (smiles… Don Allah)
Please
44 Bilki: (turns her head) ke kikasani.
It is up to you to decide

Káwárdàkâi (turning away) gesture here functions as termination of interaction. It may convey two meanings here: either she is speechless thereby averting her gaze from the speaker or she is irritated by what she heard. This may eventually lead to loss of interest in the discussion as a whole.

G*ì*rg*ì*zàkâi (Head shake)

G*ì*rg*ì*zàkâi is a gesture done by shaking the head up and down or sideways repeatedly. In Hausa, shaking the head up and down denotes agreement, while side by side movement of the head signifies disagreement. Head nodding is not gender specific. In social interactions g*ì*rg*ì*zàkâi is exhibited as a listener feedback. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

45 Binta: ku zo ga kaya
Come and buy
46 Ummi: munazuwa
We are coming

47 Binta: sauri fa nake yi
I am in a hurry
48 Ummi: hmmm ke ta wannan ki ke (walking past Binta)
Just leave me alone
49 Hadiza: (held Ummi's hand and drew her back)
50 Ummi (nodded her head quickly sideways)
51 aa bazansayaba ne
No I don't want to buy

Head nodding may occur either slowly or rapidly, depending on the communicative context and the participant's intention. In this instance, Ummi's quick head nod signified her desire to end the interaction, indicating that she preferred to be left alone. Conversely, a slow head nod is typically produced by a listener to encourage the speaker to continue, functioning as a supportive back channel cue. However, as the listener's intention shifts toward taking the floor, the tempo of the nodding often increases, signaling an attempt to claim a turn in the conversation.

Discussion

The idea that nonverbal cues function as strategies for coordinating social interactions, as noted by Duncan (1972), was affirmed in this study. Hausa speakers consistently relied on nonverbal regulators such as facial expressions, hand gestures, postural shifts, and head movements to sustain coherence and manage turn-taking in face-to-face exchanges. The data obtained from both school and wedding settings revealed that these regulators were not mere accompaniments to speech but served as integral components of conversational organization. In some cases, they were synchronized with verbal messages; in others, they appeared independently, substituting speech entirely and ensuring conversational continuity.

Although conversational turns are often conceptualized as verbal units, the findings of this study support the view that nonverbal signals can also perform turn-management functions. Yang (2010) highlights that bodily actions can carry communicative weight comparable to spoken language. However, identifying when a nonverbal act constitutes a conversational move remains a methodological challenge. Based on contextual and semantic cues, it was observed that Hausa speakers employ certain gestures such as zúmɓùràbàakìi (pressing the lips together) or káwárdàkâi (turning away)to convey clear pragmatic meanings that can initiate, maintain, or terminate interaction. For instance, in Figure 1, when Hadiza performed zúmɓùràbàakìi followed by káwárdàkâi as a backchannel response, the speaker interpreted it as willingness to yield the floor, illustrating how nonverbal cues can negotiate conversational rights and obligations.

The analysis further revealed that some regulators function as speaker-maintaining cues, such as fàrìi (flashing eyelashes) and wáarè-yáatsúu (finger spreading), while others operate as listener responses, including gìrgìzàkâi (head shaking), káamàgéemùu (beard stroking), and káamà-qúugùu (hands akimbo). A few, like fàrìi and káwárdàkâi, serve as indicators of conversational closure. These findings align with the conversational analytic perspective that

communication is multimodal, where meaning emerges from the interplay between verbal and embodied behavior.

Most crucially, gender emerged as a defining factor in how these regulators were employed and interpreted. Hausa men and women demonstrated distinct preferences and constraints in their nonverbal conduct, reflecting broader sociocultural expectations tied to respect, modesty, and authority. Men tended to use expansive or assertive gestures, such as káamàgéemùu (stroking the beard), symbolizing composure and dominance, while women often employed subtle or deferential regulators, such as fàrìi (flashing eyelashes), embodying cultural ideals of kunya (modesty) and politeness.

These findings reinforce the argument that gender in Hausa communication extends beyond linguistic expression into the realm of bodily performance. Nonverbal regulators thus function as gendered semiotic resources through which social roles and power relations are enacted and reproduced. In essence, Hausa interactional behavior reflects an embodied social grammarone that encodes gender norms not merely in speech but in the very rhythms and gestures of everyday conversation.

Conclusion

Interactions are guided by social rules that ensure coordination and the smooth flow of communication. These rules are largely maintained through nonverbal cues that help participants manage the pace and rhythm of their encounters. Gestures and body postures that perform this regulatory function are known as regulators. This study has shown that gender plays a vital role in shaping how these nonverbal regulators are used and interpreted within Hausa communication. Consequently, Hausa nonverbal regulators can be broadly categorized into three types: male-specific, female-specific, and neuter regulators.

Among all forms of nonverbal regulation, facial expression emerges as the most significant in face-to-face interaction. The effectiveness of any encounter often depends on the speaker's ability to communicate emotions, attitudes, and intentions through the face. In Hausa society, such expressions carry deep social meaning revealing respect, modesty, authority, or restraint depending on the gender and social context of the participants. The study therefore concludes that nonverbal regulation among Hausa speakers is not merely a conversational strategy, but a reflection of cultural identity and the gendered values that sustain social harmony.

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Contextualizing Plato's Critique of Athenian Democracyvis-à-vis the Nigerian Democratic Experience

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Abstract

Plato's critique of democracy has been widely interpreted as a rejection of democratic principles. However, a closer examination of Plato reveals a different perspective. Plato's concerns about democracy centered on mob rule, lack of expertise, and corruption. He believed that democratic leaders often prioritized short-term gains and popularity over long-term vision and justice. However, this critique was not aimed at dismissing democratic principles but rather at highlighting the need for a more informed and virtuous form of governance. Plato's ideal system of government, as outlined in *The Republic*, incorporates elements of democracy, such as equality, participation, and accountability. His concept of the philosopher-king, who rules based on reason and justice, can be equated to a democratic leader who prioritizes the common good. This paper argues that Plato's criticisms of democracy were primarily directed at the specific form of democracy practiced in ancient Athens, rather than a rejection of democracy itself. It challenges the common interpretation of Plato as an anti-democratic thinker and presents a purer understanding of his critique of democracy. By examining Plato's works in their historical and philosophical contexts, we gain a deeper understanding of his thoughts on governance and democracy. Drawing from Plato's criticism of democracy, this paper also critiques the Nigerian democracy, which faces numerous challenges, including corruption, insecurity, and economic instability. It explores the relevance of Plato's critique of democracy to Nigeria's democratic experience and argues that Plato's critique of democracy offers

valuable insights into how the Nigerian democracy can be better formulated. It adopts a qualitative research approach with philosophical analysis, while its findings suggest that Plato's critique of democracy remains relevant to the purification of modern-day democracies.

Keywords: Plato, democracy, Nigeria, common good, elections, mob rule, philosopher kings.

Introduction

Post-colonialism has so many expectations in redefining Africa's pathway to political success and economic restoration (Asante, 2020; Mungai, 2015; Okafor, 1998). Thus, since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been on a difficult and turbulent journey of democratic experience. This is because, like most African transition states, the country has had a lengthy history of military takeovers and interventions in its quest for political and democratic evolution post-independence.These events have resulted in conflict, instability, and the undermining of democratic institutions responsible for the strengthening and consolidation of democracy (Jatau & Maza, 2023). This has essentially impacted the establishment and solidification of an ideal political culture. And for Azuwike (2023), "Whereas African nations aspire to develop most aspects of their nations' leadership along democratic lines, democracy remains an ideal yet to be firmly grasped, interiorized, and/or incarnated within the African socio-cultural consciousness."

Democratic institutions in Africa today are under intense threat because a critical appraisal of democracy as a system of government appears not to be yielding the desired fruits of good governance. Scholars often perceive democratic theories and institutions to be of Western origins (Spellman, 2017; Wilson, 1937);hence, scholars who believe democracy is of Western origins are beginning to probe and explore the possibility of abandoning Western democracy due to its undue influence on the African political space (Nehru, 1979). This is consequent upon the failure of democracy in meeting African socio-political and ideological expectations and the realization of good governance, which raises critical questions on the nature of democracy, its origin, and what constitutes democracy. For instance, assessing the pros and cons of Nigeria's democratic experience remains an ambivalent exercise, let alone evaluating the unfolding democratic culture, its maturity, and its gains (Azuwike, 2023). Democracy itself is not a Western invention; rather, it is an ontological reality to human beings as the foundation for democratic rule (Kanu, Adidi, & Omenukwa, 2024).It evolves as an organic process of self-actualization and has no boundaries. Democracy, therefore, is neither a Western nor an African ideology (Obiagwu & Adidi, 2020) but strikes at the political nature of the human person.

Plato's critique of the Athenian democracy has been emphasised to the detriment of elevating democracy above every other system of government. Mukherjee & Ramaswamy (2011) argue that

> The *Republic* was an indictment of the Athenian way of life and its vibrant participatory democratic institutions. Plato dismissed the Athenian practice of happy versatility, whereby every Greek male adult could participate in the political process and offer a political opinion, as amateurism. He attacked democracy for another reason: incompetence

> and ignorance of politicians, for that gave rise to factionalism, extreme violence, and partisan politics, which were the causes of political instability.

When brought to bear on the African experience of democracy, the danger is to begin to reconsider military rule as the best option in Africa. This is obvious in the various military coups that have taken place in African countries over time due to the perceived failure of democracy in those countries. The temptation is for leaders to embrace monarchy or autocratic rule, using Plato's critique of democracy as a justification. It is our considered view that Plato was not anti-democracy in its pure form; he was only critical of democracy as practiced in Athens, and the Athenian form of democracy is not a model for African democracy.

For Azuwike (2023), "in the bid to arrive at the human developmental promises of democracy, multiple nations have since embraced democracy, including African nations to whom the idea, in its classical form, was in large part, alien."To this end, democracy has become a necessary condition for restoring political stability and entrenching the rule of law (Otegwu & Maina, 2024). Every country in its political culture has encountered problems in practicing democracy, and Nigeria (like some other African countries) is not an exception. This does not, however, undermine democracy in its pure form, but employing Plato's critique of Athenian democracy, this paper exposes the problems of Nigerian democracy and underscores democracy as the form of government that has the best promise of authentically driving the principles of the rule of law in Nigerian democratic institutions. This raises the following research question: Is something wrong with democracy in its pure form? What exactly is wrong with the practice of democracy in Nigeria? To what extent can Plato's view of democracy reshape Nigerian democracy? Drawing from Plato's criticism of democracy, this paper critiques the Nigerian democracy, which faces numerous challenges, including corruption, insecurity, and economic instability. It explores the relevance of Plato's critique of democracy to Nigeria's democratic experience and argues that Plato's critique of democracy offers valuable insights into how the Nigerian democracy can be better formulated. It adopts a qualitative research approach with philosophical analysis, while its findings suggest that Plato's critique of democracy remains relevant to the purification of modern-day democracies.

Biographical Sketch of Plato

Plato's background cannot be extricated from the political situation of his time. Plato's concern for politics was basically due to the fact of his parental connection with the Athenian politics of his time. He was born in Athens around 428 or 427 B.C. into an aristocratic family and was a disciple of Socrates. He was a prominent Greek philosopher, known for his theories on the nature of reality. Plato's concern for ethical issues is strongly connected to his political philosophy. As such, political philosophy was also a major concern in Plato's works (Lawhead, 2002). Plato was an ancient Greek philosopher and was also a teacher of Aristotle and the founder of the *Academy*, which was a famous school in ancient Athens founded around 387 B.C. The Academy was located on the outskirts of Athens, on land that was originally a sacred grove. It is considered the world's first university and played a crucial role in shaping Western philosophy and education.

Plato's works are known to be classical, and his philosophical thought has evolved and influenced many scholars from antiquity to contemporary times. According to Adidi and Abiona (2025),

> The penetrating value and vitality of the influence of Plato's epistemic enterprise cannot be taken for granted due to its enriching traits and characteristics from ancient to contemporary epochs of philosophical and historical development. Plato's thought has sharpened and is still sharpening the value of human knowledge despite its ancient flavor that is classical, going through the Middle Ages, reverberating the Augustinian tradition, penetrating the modern era, at the same time reinvigorating contemporary times.

Plato's real name was Aristocles, which meant the "best and renowned" (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011). He was given the nickname"Plato," derived from *platys*, because of his broad and strong shoulders. The son of Ariston (his father) and Perictione (his mother). Plato was born in the year after the death of the great Athenian statesman *Pericles.* His brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, are portrayed as interlocutors in Plato's masterpiece, *The Republic*, and his half-brother, Antiphon, figures in the *Parmenides*. Plato's family was aristocratic and distinguished; his father's side claimed descent from the god *Poseidon,* and his mother's side was related to the lawgiver *Solon* (c. 630560 B.C.). His mother's close relatives, *Critias* and *Charmides,* were among the *Thirty Tyrants* who seized power in Athens and ruled briefly until the restoration of democracy in 403. Plato died in 347 B.C.

The Ontological Nature of African Democracy

The origin of democracy is one that scholars have debated in socio-political philosophy and in the history of political thought. Nonetheless, scholars have taken it for granted to establish that democracy began in ancient Greece (Udebunu, 2009), specifically in Athens, in the 6th century B.C. (Heywood, 2002).We underscore the origin of the concept "democracy" as it emanates from Athens as a nomenclature, but not as regards the nature of democracy. This is because the nature of democracy and its origin are two different concepts. To insist that democracy originated from Athens is to say that the concept of democracy and its nature are of Athens. Therefore, other political cultures do not have democratic traces or characteristics in their geographical extraction. In Africa, the concept of democracy may not have been described in Athenian nomenclature or etymological definition, but that does not mean that Africans lack the language that subscribes to the nature of democracy. It is very possible to say that classical democracy began in Athens because of its gazette as a reference document that sets itself as a political model or political theory. This does not necessarily mean that democracy as a system of government began or originated in Athens, but rather that the Athenian society is only a reference point for documenting and developing it as a model for other democracies.

In Kenya, the term *njamayaitwika* (Kenyatta, 2007) forms the foundation of democratic rule, which has its origin in a revolution that took place before colonial rule, according to the Kikuya tribal legend (Kenyatta, 2007). The *njamayaitwika* is known as *itwika,* derived from the word

twika (Kenyatta, 2007), which means to break away from autocracy to democracy (Kenyatta, 2007),underscoring the originality of the democratic concept in Africa. Thus, to consider African democracy as an offshoot of colonial rule (Ihuah, 2025) undermines the originality of democracy in Africa. It is appropriate to say, therefore, that given the colonial administrative intervention, African democracy became polluted with the tainted nature of Western democracy. Ikechukwu Okodo (2009) laments this tainted political system of democracy when he asserts that "when Europeans came to Africa, they did not see the kind of government obtainable in their home states in Africa, and so, they felt that Africans had no system of managing their state. Nothing is further from the truth. They, nonetheless, conquered Africa in bits as they fought their way through. According to Okodo (2009), "the Igbo people of Nigeria are well known for the practice of democratic principles in their traditional way of life. This is because issues are deliberated and agreed upon at meetings where everyone gets the chance to air their view before it is implemented. This was the case in all aspects of governance. The Igbo people's governance, although different from the modern world's system, was satisfactory insofar as it met their needs for the organization of the society. This underscores Kanu's ontological foundation of African democracy as rooted in Igwebuikecracy (Kanu, 2019). He argues that "Igwebuike is based on the African sense of community, which is the underlying principle and unity of the African philosophical experience…" This is founded on the Igwebuike philosophy. He states:

> Igwebuike carries the idea of the purpose of having a nation the purpose of coming together. It is rooted in the ideology that when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force or strength, and at this level, no task is beyond their collective capability. Without solidarity and complementarity, of what use is the nation? The nation must be one in which everyone participates in the construction and reconstruction of the political community. The people must agree that they are a nation in spite of differences and conflicts, and consent to build it because individual and corporate success depend on national success. For if a nation fails, its individuals fail as well.

This is akin to Kenyatta's theory of collectivism as drawn from two African traditions, which include political democracy and mutual responsibility (Kenyatta, 1965). Democracy as a concept, therefore, is not limited to the Athenian society, but can be traced to other societies in Africa as well.

Democracy operates like a spirited entity (Adidi & Irabor, 2019) that resides in the human person. One basic component of the human being is freedom. Freedom is the life, oxygen, and lungs that make democracy evolve into something new. It is this freedom that breathes life into the concept of "democracy". This freedom is possessed by all human beings, which forms the foundation of human rights. These rights are natural and cannot be given or denied to the human person, and they are abused when freedom is not well utilized. Natural rights are fundamental, universal, and inalienable rights that all individuals possess simply by being human. They are not granted by governments or societies but are inherent and exist

independently of any culture or legal system. This aligns with the thoughts of classical philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacque Rousseau, John Locke, and others who are proponents of the natural rights theory in the modern era. Despite the ample literature from classical philosophers of natural rights, some philosophers disagree that natural rights are derived from a metaphysical foundation. However, some agree that this metaphysical foundation of natural rights and freedom forms the basis of the democratic culture that flows from human nature.

In his *Republic*, Plato was highly critical of democracy because of his view of it as a defective system capable of slipping into tyranny. He saw democracy as a stepping-stone to tyranny, as the instability and chaos it can create provide fertile ground for a powerful leader to seize control. This is because Plato believed that the emphasis on freedom and equality in democracies could easily be manipulated by charismatic characters by appealing to the masses' emotions and getting into power, which may lead to demagoguery and tyranny. He argued that these demagogues could manipulate the public into supporting their self-serving policies rather than the common good, eventually leading to tyranny.

Despite its apparent appeal, he thought that the "rule of the people" lacked the knowledge and experience needed to govern successfully, which ultimately resulted in societal decline. Like any other craft or profession, Plato maintained that governing requires specific knowledge and training. He wondered whether the "best" leaders are naturally chosen or if they need to be educated and trained to make wise choices. In his view, because democracies have leaders without proper skills or morals, it is highly improbable that the most qualified individuals will assume power.

Plato advocated for a system where the philosopher kings those with wisdom and virtue would become leaders, rather than the critical mass of people who are after their own selfish interests. Thus, for him, democracy, which allows anyone to participate in political decision-making, often results in the rule of the unqualified, rather than people of sound judgment (*Republic* Book II).

Democracy, in Plato's view, is typically regarded as a kind of mob rule, albeit in a very different kind of state. This view was influenced by Plato's distaste for the Sophists, who were the teachers of rhetoric to Athenian politicians who were adept at lying to deceive the people. So for Plato, the philosopher-kings are the ideal rulers. This is because they are not only the wisest, but they are also virtuous and selfless (*Republic*, Book II).

Plato and the Athenian Democracy: Context and Issues

The basis on which Plato criticized democracy is situated within the context of the fall of the Athenian society. The Athenian society was known for its political freedom, liberal political ideals, intellectual sagacity, and a humanistic approach to political life that was centered on capacity development and cultural creativity (Perry et al., 2013). Pericles (495429 B.C.), who was then a central figure in Athenian life during the middle of the fifth century, underscores the freedom and liberty of the Athenian society as the "enormous amount of creative energy, making possible Athens' extraordinary cultural accomplishment" (Thucydides, 1954). This political development and accomplishment of the Athenian society was a threat to Sparta and the Peloponnesian states, which were under the control of Athens through the instrumentality

of the Delian League. The Delian League was a military alliance formed in ancient Greece in 478 B.C after the Persian wars. The league was named after the island of Delos, where its headquarters and treasury were located. The primary purpose of the Delian League was to counter Persian influence and protect the members of the Greek city-states from potential Persian attacks. This was to establish and assert that the Greek cities under Persian control were free. Lastly, the Delian League is to offer collective defense against external threats. This gave Athens political power and contributed to its economic prosperity (Perry et al., 2013).

Plato's work came to the limelight when Athens was in difficult political tension after the defeat in the Peloponnesian War. Plato was essentially from an aristocratic and conservative class and was averse to the democratic experiment, which reached its zenith during the time of Pericles (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011), though he was introduced to democratic ideas by his stepfather, Pyrilampas, a close friend of Pericles. Plato's justification for the rejection of the Athenian democracy was on the following grounds: (a) the crass materialism and individualism that was slowly engulfing the Athenian society; (b) the high level of corruption and degradation that existed amongst traders, artisans, merchants, and politicians; (c)hisview of the system as being susceptible to demagogues who would exploit the populace for personal gain, rather than acting in the best interests of the city-state.

In fact, for Plato, the defeat of Athens was a result of the practice of democracy, though most scholars disagree and would rather argue that "the defeat of Athens in the war was due to an error in military strategy" (Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2011). According to Perry et al. (2013), what led to the defeat of Athens was

> The Athenian expedition against Sicily and its largest city, Syracuse. Athenians were intoxicated by an imperialist urge to extend the empire in the west and by the prospects of riches. Swayed by speeches that stirred the emotions, the Athenian populace, believing disaster to be impossible and forsaking caution and reason, approved the Sicilian venture. Launched with extravagant expectations, the Sicilian expedition ended in dismal failure. Athens and its allies lost fifty thousand men and two hundred ships in the venture; the expedition also cost Athens all hope of victory in the struggle with Sparta. Fearful that victory in Sicily would increase Athenian manpower and wealth, Sparta in 414 B.C. had again taken up the sword. Strengthened by financial support from Persia and by the defection of some Athenian allies, Sparta moved to end the war. Finally, with its navy decimated and its food supply dwindling, besieged Athens surrendered in 404 B.C. Sparta dissolved the Delian League, left Athens with only a handful of ships, and forced the city to pull down its long walls ramparts designed to protect it against siege weapons. But the Spartans refused to massacre Athenian men and enslave the women and children, as some allies had urged.

To this end, the strong and revered political life of the Greeks was dismantled, and this led to Plato's recommendation of the restoration, revitalization, and reformation of the aristocratic society that would once again become the basis of civic life.

The Nigerian Democratic Culture and Its Problems

Democracy is not new to the traditional Nigerian culture. Traces of democracy have always been found within the Nigerian traditional system of governance, though the democratic political structure might not have been prevalent in a way that represents the classical democracy of the Athenian society. Although the Nigerian democracy is not documented as that of the classical philosophers, current hermeneutical investigation and contextual analysis of historical antecedents have opened the socio-political world of primordial Nigerian democratic political culture. According to Okodo (2009), the term "democracy" was not coined as the system of governance, but "Igbo traditional democracy had an essential component of the democratic establishment, like the judiciary. "He posits that the Igbo traditional judiciary

> …settles disputes between two persons or groups. It also settles quarrels that involve the gods. One avenue of settling quarrels is to invite relatives to discuss disputes and apportion blame. Where the matter is not resolved within the family, the aggrieved party can seek redress at the meetings of the kindred or the village. That is what Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* refers to when others wonder why Uzowulu took the dispute between him and his in-law, who took away his (Uzowulu's) wife, to the masquerade court of *egwugwu*.

The above reflects the democratic and judicial system of settling disputes in the traditional Igbo culture. Unfortunately, the interruption occasioned by the evolution of the "modern" Nigerian democratic process destroyed the legislative, judiciary, and executive arms of the traditional political system. This interruption was due to the colonial administration, which impeded the development of the native political system (Okodo, 2009).

Post-colonial Nigerian democracy and the emerging definition and nature of African democracy within the context of Nigeria face serious challenges. According to Odife (2009), "the (modern) Nigerian democratic experience has been a torturous and checkered one. "This is because of the military interventions in governance and the instances of people with strong military backgrounds ruling Nigeria for a greater portion of its years as a democracy, a phenomenon that has profoundly influenced democratic culture. The Nigerian democracy thus raises fundamental questions regarding the practical application and relevance of its intra-national democracy. The ambivalence around the African democratic experience has brought about the resurgence of military coups and counter coups in Africa. According to Matthew Hassan Kukah (2009),

> For almost fifty years of Nigeria's independence, the country has been a victim of the strong-armed tactics of the military for almost thirty years. Years and years of coups and counter-coups turned governance into a blood-drenched struggle for power. Each coup created new friends and found old enemies among the populace, but even more so among the political classes. Coups that followed elections in Nigeria were often greeted by the opposition with ecstasy. This further deepened resentment and division within the political class because every regime was keen on

> creating its political proxies with which it could share power. The cumulative impact of all this has been the erosion of ideology and the elimination of any broad-based platform for contest in Nigerian politics.

These incessant coups have affected the Nigerian democratic process and growth, and Nigeria still battles with military hangovers of political administration. Similarly, the legislative arm of government, which is supposed to uphold democratic values and dignity, has shortchanged its oversight functions for personal interest. Kukah (2009) puts this succinctly:

> Sadly, today, the national and state assemblies command very little respect in the popular imagination of most Nigerians. There is a feeling that members are putting personal interests, business, and politics way ahead of lawmaking. And many of them are also ill-equipped for the intricate task of lawmaking. For example, after ten years, we are still stuck with a constitution that has not been reviewed or amended despite a lot of grandstanding.

The fundamental challenge is to understand the role of the National Assembly in entrenching democracy in Nigeria. How robust are the arguments and debates in the National Assembly? Democracy is about arguments and debates, but unfortunately, what currently exists is what most have described as a "rubber-stamp" National Assembly whose oversight functions are devoid of critical values of democratic resilience in interrogating and analyzing issues to deliver democratic dividends and good governance.

> According to Oguejiofor (2009),
> The level of corruption in Nigeria has reached such an alarming state that if it persists at that level, it is well-nigh impossible to obtain functional democracy in the country. Our ten years of democracy have witnessed elections where paid party representatives of small parties take money to sign on to bogus election results against their very own parties. We have seen several situations where elections never took place at all in whole states, and still governors were "elected" and their elections confirmed by courts of law and litigation.

This situation has aggravated to an abysmal level, and the judiciary is infiltrated with the same corruption to the point that "corrupt governments are common and create a severe developmental challenge for Nigeria and most African states. It has undermined the normal functioning of national social, economic, and political systems. This effectively undermines good governance, endangers democracy, and erodes the social and moral fabric of a nation" (Audu, 2009).

Another threat to Nigerian democratic growth is political authoritarianism (Audu, 2009). It is a political system that rejects political pluralism, uses a powerful central government to maintain the status quo, and diminishes democracy, the rule of law, civil freedoms, and the separation of powers (Kalu, 2019). In a broader sense, authoritarian nations are those in which the government and opposition do not switch positions at least once after free elections, or in which human rights like freedom of religion are not upheld (Svolik, 2012). The Nigerian state

today reflects the phenomenon of political parties dwindling towards a one-party state. According to Svolik (2012), nominally democratic institutions like political parties, legislatures, and elections may exist in authoritarian nations, and they are controlled to strengthen the authoritarian grip, which may include rigged or uncompetitive elections. In Nigeria, this authoritarian nature of governance has led to human rights abuses since the reemergence of democracy in 1999 (Omoleke, 2024). These human rights abuses include extrajudicial executions, excessive use of force by security forces, the abuse of office by government officials without any consequences, arbitrary arrests, and arrests without trial (Onwuazombe, 2017).This is a gross violation of the rule of law, which is a basic principle of democracy.

The "rule of law" and "constitutionalism" are closely related concepts that both aim to limit government power and ensure a fair and just society, and are vital for the creation of just and stable societies. The rule of law is a fundamental tenet of a functioning democracy, which states that everyone is subject to the law, including public servants and law enforcement agents. Conversely, constitutionalism is the belief that the constitution, which is the grundnorm, limits the authority of the government. These values are essential for upholding accountability, advancing good governance, and defending human rights. Yet, these important aspects of the democratic process seeminadequate, especially as the judiciary and legislative arms of government either pale or capitulate to the authoritarian hegemony.

The mixture of democratic politics and religion has historically proven to be a recipe for complex political waters. Religious fanaticism only makes matters worse and is a serious threat to the nascent Nigerian democracy. Religion, for some, is supposed to uphold democracy. However, the misapplication of religion has become problematic rather than strengthening its evolving network. Despite Nigeria's constitutional postulation designating it as a secular state, religion has a big influence on politics, influencing social cohesion, legislation, and governance. Religion frequently influences political debates and rhetoric, especially when deciding the place of Sharia law in a constitutional democracy, considering the constitution's position on the establishment of a state religion (Jatau & Maza, 2023). The significant religious divide, mostly between Christians and Muslims, has been a defining feature of Nigeria's democratic experiment (Njoku & Njoku, 2013; Hassan & Umar, 2014; Atoi & Babale, 2021). Unfortunately, religious differences, which are supposed to diversify democratic culture, have affected democratic rationality, political morality (Kanu, Ogabo & Adidi, 2020), and democratic sensibility. These dynamics have led to complex interactions between faith and political power, sometimes resulting in conflict and sometimes in accommodation.

Money, politics, and corruption are other factors that threaten the realization of the democratic promise in Nigeria. The term "money politics" describes the use of cash and other inducements, like food and material items, to sway voters both during campaigns and on election day. In essence, it is the buying and selling of votes whereby material or monetary incentives, rather than the electorate's political views, ideas, or philosophies, influence their electoral choices (Awopeju & Martins, 2022). Vote buying can take various forms, such as a monetary exchange, as well as an exchange for necessary goods or services. Although this is not only a Nigerian phenomenon, its prevalence also cannot be underestimated in the country's electoral exercise. Thus, vote buying affects the fabric of a democratic culture and impedes human freedom (Stokes, 2005) and the right to rationally choose their leaders; and because it

tampers with the ability to use a popular vote as a gauge of public support for proposed government policies, vote buying threatens democracy itself in democratic regimes.

Economic sustainability has a role to play in enhancing African democratic culture. As such, there is a correlation between a weak economy and vote buying. The viability and sustainability of an economy can reduce vote buying and other electoral malpractices that can impede the democratic culture, processes, and evolution (Faye & Nzally, 2022). Nigeria's economy is showing conflicting signs. Even while there are encouraging indicators like faster GDP growth and higher investor confidence, problems like high unemployment, inflation, and insecurity still exist (Udi, 2024). The economy is expected to grow, but more slowly than in prior years. To this end, insofar as the Nigerian economy continues to dwindle, the democratic culture suffers setbacks in realizing its potential. Thus, institutions and procedures of democracy can be seriously threatened by a weak economy. Economic volatility within a democracy can cause political instability, social unrest, and a reduction in public confidence. Similarly, economic inequality undermines social cohesiveness and political division, ills triggered by economic downturns, which makes it more difficult to uphold democratic principles.

Due to the nature of political authoritarianism and its autocratic nature, there is a tendency to have a one-party state in Africa, made possible by the power of incumbency, which underscores the advantage that an individual or party in an elected office (the incumbent) enjoys over their rivals during an election. These advantages accrue from existing ties, name recognition, and access to both official and unofficial resources.

The idea of a one-party system is inherently antithetical to democracy. Multiple political parties must freely and openly participate in the democratic process to foster competition, free choice, and accountability. These aspects of democracy are naturally constrained in a one-party system, in which only one party is permitted by law or by convention (Irabor & Adidi, 2019). These realities lend themselves to the criticism of Nigeria's democracy, akin to the reasons that prompted Thomas Aquinas's critique of the Athenian democracy.

Liberal Democracy and the Imperative of Separation of Powers

Liberal democracy is a form of government and, at the same time, a political philosophy that highlights a system of checks and balances between the several institutions of government, an independent judiciary, and the separation of powers. Liberal democracies are characterized by multi-party systems with at least two enduring, successful political parties. According to Adidi (2023), "It is the accommodation of so many political parties, and these usually exist side by side in a genuine democracy."Liberal democracy may not necessarily be an African-style democracy, but the liberal democracy of Baron de Montesquieu, one of the great political philosophers of the Enlightenment age, along with Thomas Aquinas' mixed democracy, can serve as possible models for emerging from the challenges faced by African democracy as it strives towards political emancipation. These social and political thinkers provide models for recognizing the basic tenets of democracy characterized by elections between multiple political parties, the separation of powers into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyday life as part of an open society, a market economy with private property, and the equal protection of human rights and civil rights, civil liberties, and the political freedom of all peoples (Oreoluwa, 2015).

In *The Spirit of the Laws*(SL), Montesquieu sought to elucidate social structures and human rules. This may seem like an impossible task: positive laws and social institutions are made by imperfect humans who are "subject to ignorance and error [and] hurried away by a thousand impetuous passions"(SL 1.1), in contrast to physical laws, which Montesquieu believed were established and maintained by God. Hence, to leave issues of governance to a selected few without checking them, the use of power can lead to the destruction of society (tyranny as imagined by Plato).The saying "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" means that when a person or a group of persons has unchecked power, they are more likely to abuse it, leading to negative consequences. Hence, in a democracy, the people are sovereign. They may govern through ministers or be advised by a senate, but they must have the power of choosing their ministers and senators for themselves, just as Plato posited in his *Republic*.

The principle of democracy is political virtue, by which Montesquieu means "the love of the laws and our country"(SL 4.5). Characteristics and attitudes deemed necessary for good citizenship and efficient governance within a political society are referred to as political virtues. It includes a variety of attributes that allow people to uphold the values of justice and equity, advance the common good, and engage in public life in a responsible manner (Crick, 1982).According to Montesquieu, certain arrangements make it easier for the three powers to check one another, and only the legislative branch should be able to impose taxes, because it may then deny the executive branch funds if it tries to impose its will without cause. Similarly, the legislature should consist of two houses, each of which has the authority to block acts of the other from becoming law, and the executive branch should have the power to veto legislative actions. People should "fear the office, but not the magistrate," and "the judicial power, so terrible to mankind, … becomes, as it were, invisible" if the judiciary is free from both the legislative and executive branches and limited to applying the law to specific cases in a set and consistent way(SL 11.6). In this regard, the rule of law becomes very vital.

Montesquieu was a fervent supporter of the rule of law, arguing that it is essential for preserving individual liberty and restraining political power. In his view, a government ought to be bound by established, well-known laws rather than capricious rulings by the ruling class. This idea seeks to stop the concentration and misuse of power, as does his notion of the separation of powers. Considering this, Chidi (2020) argues:

> The rule of law is the building block on which the modern democratic society is founded. For a successful functioning of the polity, there must be enforcement of law and of all contracts based on law. One of the prime objects of making laws is to maintain law and order in society and develop a peaceful environment for the progress of the people. The rule of law means that the law is supreme and is above every individual. No individual, whether he is rich, poor, ruler, or ruled, etc.,is above the law, and they should obey the law.

According to Adetokunbo (1961), the Rule of Law has its roots even in African origin. He posits:

> The rule of law is not a Western idea, nor is it linked up with any economic or social system. As soon as you accept that man is governed by law and

> not by the whims of man, it is the rule of law. It may be under different forms from country to country, but it is based on principles; it is not an abstract notion. It exists not only in democratic countries but in every country where the law is supreme, where the dignity of man is respected, and provision is made for his legislative rights. Today, around us, we see countries where basic principles are disregarded, where there are arbitrary arrests and detention without trial; cases of the repression of the opposition in parliamentary government; cases of the negation of social and political rights; and cases of the judiciary stifled and paralyzed by fear and the dismissal of judges. When we look around, we find some of these encroachments of the Executive on the rights of the individuals… in countries ostensibly practicing democracy, but in fact, the individual is subject to such restrictions that deprive him almost completely of his freedom.

The value of democracy is not so much in structures as in the institutionalization of law. The court must be free to carry out its role as the spokesperson for the laws without getting sidetracked by new rulings that lawmakers and policymakers make while deliberating. Most importantly, freedom and equality are necessary ingredients for achieving democratic consolidation in Africa (Doomen, 2014).

Critical Evaluation:

It is generally believed today that democracy, "government of the people by the people and for the people," is the best and only fully justifiable political system. Doubts as to this postulation have been raised regarding African democracy in particular owing to the less than desirable experiences of some African democratic dispensations. However, some of these Achilles' heels of democracy are not new.

In the *Republic*, Plato criticized the direct and unchecked democracy of his time precisely because of its leading features (557a-564a). Firstly, although freedom is for Plato a true value, democracy involves the danger of excessive freedom, of doing as one likes, which leads to anarchy. Secondly, equality, related to the belief that everyone has the right and equal capacity to rule, brings to politics all kinds of power-seeking individuals, motivated by personal gain rather than public good. Democracy is thus highly corruptible. It opens gates to demagogues and potential dictators and can thus lead to tyranny. Hence, although it may not be applicable to modern liberal democracies, Plato's main charge against the democracy he knew from the ancient Greek political practice is that it is unstable, leading from anarchy to tyranny, and that it may lack leaders with proper skill and morals. For Plato, democracy depends on chance and must be mixed with competent leadership (501b). Thus, without able and virtuous leaders, such as Solon or Pericles, who come and go by chance, it is not a good form of government. But even Pericles, who, as Socrates says, made people "wilder" rather than more virtuous, is considered not to be the best leader (*Gorgias*, 516c). If ruling a state is a craft, indeed statecraft, Plato argues, then politics needs expert rulers, and they cannot come to it merely by accident but must be carefully selected and prepared in the course of extensive training. Making political decisions requires good judgment. Politics needs competence, at least in the form of

civil servants. Who then should the experts be, and why? Plato, in the *Republic*, thinks that the wheels of the state should be handed to philosophers whom he called the Philosopher Kings.

The vision of the ideal state is used rather to illustrate the main thesis of the dialogue that justice, understood traditionally as virtue and related to goodness, is the foundation of a good political order, and as such is in everyone's interest. Justice, if rightly understood, Plato argues, is not to the exclusive advantage of any of the city's factions but is concerned with the common good of the whole political community and is to the advantage of everyone. It provides the city with a sense of unity and thus is a basic condition for its health. "Injustice causes civil war, hatred, and fighting, while justice brings friendship and a sense of common purpose" (351d).Thus, the best political order for Plato is that which promotes social peace in the environment of cooperation and friendship among different social groups, each benefitting from and each adding to the common good. Plato, therefore, argues in the *Republic* that the best form of government is a philosophical aristocracy or monarchya traditional polity: the mixed or composite constitution that reconciles different partisan interests and includes aristocratic, oligarchic, and democratic elements. This is because a perfect system would incorporate the positive elements in the other forms of government for the sake of the common good of those governed and to ensure social peace and stability.

Thomas Aquinas refers to "peace" as the aim of the ideal political life. "Peace is cross-categorical, because it is both the natural goal of society as well as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a supernatural gift. …peace in both cases is a special kind of harmony that results from order" (Thomas Aquinas, *De Regno,* c. 3, n. 17). Peace goes beyond mere absence of conflict and is envisioned as a "moral unity" of all citizens in unified pursuit of the same goals. It is as a "moral unity" of all citizens working toward the same objectives, and it goes beyond simply the absence of conflict. Essentially, Plato's focus on popular participation, mixed government, and the common good prepared the way for later advancements in democratic thought. He considers it as "the best form of government since there is one at the head of all. It is aristocracy insofar as a number of persons are set in authority, and it is democracy, i.e., government by the people, insofar as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers" (This is echoed by Thomas Aquinas in his Summa Theologiae, I II, q. 150, a. 1).

From the above, it is obvious that Plato would be no less critical of democracy as currently practiced in Nigeria. One would expect that with over a quarter of a century since the return of democracy to the Nigerian political system, democracy would have matured to a reasonable extent. Sadly, the hooliganism, electoral fraud, ballot stuffing, and ballot snatching that first characterized the electoral process from the beginning have only degenerated to a more bizarre dimension. Today, the cankerworms of tribalism and ethnic bigotry have joined the other electoral ills as witnessed in the 2023 general elections and other elections after that, to the extent that citizens of a certain extraction of the country residing in other parts of the country are tactically disenfranchised by either the denial of voter cards by making it impossible for them to register or the destruction of their cards even after they were produced. Those able to show up for voting, armed with their voter cards, are disenfranchised either by the non-arrival of electoral officers, voting materials, or both or by trumped-up excuses of the non-

functionality of the accreditation machines. In some polling units, the same group of people are harassed, beaten, wounded, and prevented from voting. This has become a recurrent decimal in Nigerian elections under a democratic system that should grow towards perfection rather than disintegrate to anarchy.

The above scenario completely negates the Platonian idea of representative democracy, where the people must participate in the electoral process by having a say in who leads them. Today, elections in Nigeria are nothing but a sham and merely a "selection" of the leaders by the powerful oligarchy constituted of the political class, who have become the biggest enemies of the masses. These powerful figures sit down and pre-decide who would become the president, governor, senator, assemblyman, councilor, and occupants of every available office. On election day, therefore, whatever the people come out to do by way of voting becomes a waste of time and an exercise in futility. This is not democracy. Democracy should never be used to legitimize all kinds of illegitimacies, either by the dictatorship of the proletariat or the oligarchy backed by the judiciary. In history whenever this has happened, it was met by a severe backlash (see Azuwike 2023).

Plato's view is that the people's participation and choice of their leaders is an avenue for peace. The sham elections organised in Nigeria explain the reason why she qualifies today as a "restless nation,"borrowing the title of Adiseshiah and Pearson's book. This is because peace is not achievable in a system where the will of the people is truncated and ignored for the most part. Peace, as "the tranquility of order," is only possible where good order is maintained rather than the near anarchic situation in which the race for political positions is conducted.

Justice is a necessary condition for social peace. In this circumstance, can justice be said to undergird the democratic process? According to Dionysius (Div. Nom. iv), "Peace is the 'work of justice' indirectly, insofar as justice removes the obstacles to peace." The chaos, violence, and injustice that have trailed the electoral process have ensured that Nigeria remains a"restless nation" devoid of peace at every level. Unfortunately, the judiciary, which should be 'the last hope of the common man' and the last guard in democracy's line of defence, has also capitulated to the hegemony of corruption, ethnicity, and the political genocide currently crippling the nation. Baron De Montesquieu's separation of powers has been collapsed into a monolithic system under the executive in which the legislature is only a rubber stamp arm and the judiciary, a puppet simply doing the executive's bidding. What is the remedy in such a scenario? Could this be the reason why a philosopher like Aquinas argued that the best regime is not a democracy but a mixed constitution, which looks "something like a constitutional monarchy," akin to Plato's postulations? One may be tempted to conclude that modern-day democracy may not, after all, be the best form of government and rather advocate with Plato for an inclusive democracy, which is a type of government that comprises the positive features of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy itself a system in which one is bestowed with the power to preside over the rest of the citizens and others with governing powers under him as subordinates. In this system, government is shared by all due to everyone's eligibility to govern and because everyone participates in the process of choosing those who rule.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, African democracy is still an evolving phenomenon. This is with specific reference to the Nigerian democracy that is constantly under siege due to its unpatriotic political actors a situation that constantly disappoints the hope that Nigeria's democracy could be a viable option for laying the foundations of an enduring African democratic culture. Nonetheless, Plato's critique of democracy provides a contextualized alternative in the current circumstances as an ideological framework for the renewal of African democracy, especially given the fact that Africa is familiar with the monarchical system of government and other systems that present positive elements that cannot be drowned altogether by modern-day democracy, especially as practiced in Nigeria. We underscore the truth that every political order has its challenges within its operational process. Thus, no matter the shortcomings of democracy, liberal democracy still holds relevance, political vitality, and a potential for both cultural and social amplification. However, given that African democracy still leaves much to be desired, there is an urgent need for a conscious and honest reform without which it stands the risk of continued slide into dictatorships, political hooliganism, state capture, and widened corruption, as is already happening in the Sahel region of West Africa and, to a large extent, Nigeria. Platonian political thought remains a veritable cognitive guide for the continued evaluation and critique of democracy aimed at its purification and refinement. The quest must continue.

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Language Contact, Translation and the Challenges of Internet Technology

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Abstract

Translation leads to language contact which is a social and linguistic phenomenon by which speakers of different languages (or different dialects of the same language) interact with one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features. It is a major factor in language change. Language contact is unavoidable in a multilingual set up. Languages must interact to develop and no human society can avoid such a linguistic dynamic. This paper examines language contact between English and French from a historical perspective, that is, how the contact came about, and the effects it has on English language and its likely challenge in for the translator with special reference to the concept of Faux-Amis (false friends). The paper also examines the effects of internet on language use and how this could constitute new challenges to translation and translators. We used textual analysis method in carrying out this research. The theory used in this work is functional theory

Keywords: French, English, Language contact, Internet, Translation

Introduction

Stephan (2012) notes that contact with other languages and other dialectal variety of one language is a source of alternative pronunciations, grammatical structures, and vocabulary. Therefore, language contacts have been in focus since philologists became aware that no language is free from foreign elements and that languages influence one another at different levels. At the beginning, the structural approach to the problem of language contact was dominant in most of the investigations carried out by linguists who tried to explain all the intricate relations between two language systems. In the course of its development, contact linguistics has drastically changed its profile in favor of a more complex approach which includes several disciplines closely related to the problem of language contacts. These disciplines are among others: sociology, anthropology, ethnology, and psychology.

Translation is primarily an example of language contact. As an interlingual activity, it requires the presence of at least two languages, two different ways of depicting reality. The major argument in this paper is that apart from the internal or direct consequences resulting from the formal nature of language, translation as an activity, is also faced with a new challenge: the one associated with the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the internet, as a result of which new forms of discourse in new forms of communication platforms have emerged. Discourse has transcended the ordinary face to face communication, where physical distance is not a barrier to create a virtual world where you only know your addressee by what he says. These platforms have adopted a new use of language which has a disruptive effect on the way language is used. What are the challenges associated with the surge of ICT and internet on translation, especially as far as French and English languages are concerned? The rationale behind this choice is that French and English constitute historically an example of language contact. But also, recently, progress in science and technology and the advent of social media has opened a new dimension in the way French and English languages relate. This paper is set out to identify and discuss effects of the historical contact between the two languages and that of the social media and internet technology on translation.

Methodology

The study applied textual analysis as a methodological approach. We used Internet sources and our personal experiences to build up this work. We also consulted other authors' works in the field of translation and language contact.

French and English

Socio-historical exchanges between France and Britain have been more prominent than between other countries in Europe. These exchanges include centuries of conquest and settlements, political alliances, cultural, scientific and commercial exchanges each of which has been reflected especially in the lexicon of the two languages (Wise, p.19). The Norman Conquest made French the language of the ruling class in England for more than two centuries (Barfour, p.26). People accepted the new order as a *fait accompli*; they accepted it as a fact and adjusted themselves to it. The fusion of Normans and English was rapid.

French influence on the English vocabulary

French influence is much more direct and observable upon the English vocabulary. Many English words found their way into the French spoken in England, but their number was not so large as that of the French words introduced into English. The number of French words that included into English was unbelievably great. There is nothing comparable to it in the previous or subsequent history of the language. Two stages can be observed, according to Barfour (2016). The borrowings of the first stage appeared in English before 1250, roughly 900 in number, they were such as the lower classes would become familiar with through contact with French-speaking nobility: Baron, noble, dame, servant, messenger, feast, minstrel, and juggler. Others such as story, rime, and lay, obviously owed their introduction into English to literary channels. The largest single group among the words that came in early was associated with the church,

where the necessity of transference from the clergy to the people. In changing from French to English, they transferred much of their governmental and administrative vocabulary, their ecclesiastical, legal and military terms, and their familiar words of fashion, food and social life, the vocabulary of art, learning and medicine. These borrowed words chiefly came from three major domains: Government and Administration, Religion and Law court. Examples are the words *government, govern, administer, crown, state, empire, realm, etc.* The word office and the titles of many offices are likewise French: chancellor, treasurer, minister, viscount, mayor, chamberlain, marshal, governor, councillor, constable, and coroner. Except for the words like king and queen, lord, and lady.

Designations of rank are French: *baron, nobility, prince, princess, duke, duchess, count, countess, marquis, squire, page, and titles of respect like sire, madam, mistress*. Words relating to the economic organisation**:** *manor, homage, vassal, peasant, slave, servant*. Monasteries and religious houses and objects associated with the service: *religion, theology, sermon, homily, sacrament, baptism, communion, confession, prayer, lesson, passion, psalmody, crucifix, incense, image, chapter, abbey, convent, priory, hermitage, cloister, sanctuary; Indications of rank or class as: clergy, clerk, prelate, cardinal, hermit, dean, pastor, vicar, abbess, novice, friar, hermit*; *Fundamental religious or theological concepts: creator, saviour, trinity, virgin, saint, miracle, mystery, faith, heresy, reverence, remission, devotion, sacrilege, temptation, penitence, redemption, salvation, immortality, piety, sanctity, charity, mercy, pity, obedience*.

However, the change in the traditional trend of English being at the receiving end appears to have changed in the mid-nineteen century with Britain as a super power economically and technologically. A lot of English borrowings into French were related to textiles, fashion, sports, industry, commerce, science and technology and entertainment. English borrowings included words such: jersey, cardigan, blazer, weekend, lobby, jazz, film, star, pullover, pajamas, boycotter, gadget etc. (Barfour, 2016).

The flow of English borrowings gained another momentum around the 1930s and especially after World War II with the United States dominating the world stage economically and militarily. Wise (1997) argues that the development of mass means of communication correlated with the growth and expansion of the United States leading to the marketing of products, ideas and American lifestyle. This is exhibited in the lexical borrowings such as: *snackbar, hotdog, hamburger, bestseller, chips, bluejean, sweater, flash-back, marketing, joking, fan, gag, tee-shirt, bowling, clip, design, zoom* etc.

According to Wise (1997), the number of English borrowings into French outnumbered that of French borrowings into English during this period for the first time in history. Hagège (1987) asserted that the appropriate term to use from that period is *franricain* instead of Étiemble's (1964) term, *franglais.* (Hagège, 1987, cited in Wise, 1997). English borrowings are said to have become more visible through advertising and mass media in recent years leading to severe interventions by language defenders in France to reduce English use in commercial settings. (Barfour 2016).

Linguistic consequences of French and English contact

The term assimilation of a loan word is used to denote a partial or total conformation to the phonetical, graphical and morphological standards of the receiving language and its semantic

system. The degree of assimilation depends upon the length of period during which the word has been used in the receiving language, upon its importance for communication purpose and its frequency. Oral borrowings due to personal contacts are assimilated more completely and more rapidly than literary borrowings, i.e. borrowings through written speech.

1. Loan words not completely assimilated phonetically**.**
   a) Some of them keep the accent on the final syllable: *machine, cartoon, police.*
   b) others, alongside with peculiarities in stress, contain sounds or combinations of sounds that are not standard for the English language and do not occur in native words. The examples are:
      [ç] *bourgeois, camouflage, prestige, regime, sabotage;*
      [wa:] as in *memoir,* or the nasalized
      [a], [î] *mélange.*

   In many cases it is not the sounds but the whole pattern of the word's phonetic make-up that is different from the rest of the vocabulary

2. The pronunciation of words where the process of assimilation is phonetically incomplete will often vary, as in ['foiei] or ['fwaje] for *foyer* and ['bu:lva:]['bu:hva:], ['bu:leva:], ['bu:lva:d] for *boulevard.*
3. Loan words not completely assimilated graphically:
   This group, as Balinskaya (cited in Barfour 2016) shows, it is fairly large and variegated. There are, for instance, words borrowed from French in which the final consonant is not pronounced, e.g. *ballet, buffet, corps.* Some may keep a diacritic mark: *café, cliché.* Specifically French digraphs *(ch, qu, ou,* etc.) may be retained in spelling: *bouquet, brioche.*

The relevance of vocabulary in translation.

Vocabulary is the raw material for speech or writing, when we speak or write we use words. It can be defined as "words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)" (Neuman& Dwyer, 2009). Hornby (1995) defines vocabulary as "the total number of words in a language; vocabulary is a list of words with their meanings". While Ur (1998) states: "Vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we teach in the foreign language. However, a new item of vocabulary may be more than just a single word: for example, post office, and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words but express a single idea. A useful convention is to cover all such cases by talking about vocabulary "items" rather than "words." In addition, Burns (1972) defines vocabulary as" the stock of words which is used by a person, class or profession. According to Zimmerman cited in Coady and Huckin (1998)' vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learning. Furthermore, Diamond and Gutlohn (2006) state that vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speakers' meaning. That is the reason why it is important to learn vocabulary. According to Brysbaert et al, the differing degrees of word knowledge imply a greater *depth of knowledge*, but the process is more complex than that (Brysbaert *et al* (2016).

Translation

Translation is considered as a reasonable way of communication between different cultures and languages. It was defined by Nida and Taber as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida, p.12). Catford, however, claims that "it is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language" (1965). Newmark (1988) supported the idea that translation is based on the importance of preserving the effect of the original text or the source text. He said that translation aims mainly at reaching an "equivalent effect". Yet, it would be difficult to achieve this between languages with considerable cultural differences. Hatem and Mason (1990) assert that words in each language tend to have different meanings; as a result, one-to-one correspondence is rare between any two languages. To settle this difficulty, Newmark suggested a strategy called "cultural equivalent" (1988). According to Baker (1992) this strategy involves replacing a cultural-specific item or expression with target language item which does not have the same propositional meaning.

In this work, we used functional theory. Functionalist approaches to translation **places great emphasis on the vital role of the target text in translation.**They. function within the target text-oriented translation that valorizes the function or purpose of the translation.

Translation and the concept of faux -amis

It is doubtless that translation is not an easy task and the consequences of inadequate translation are misleading. This was explained by Delisle (1981), in Gerding-Salas (2003) article, when he described translation as "an arduous job that mortifies you, puts you in a state of despair". Among the asserted issues that translators face in their tasks is the question of vocabulary. This problem stems mostly from nonequivalence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) and language transfer. Faux-amis for instance, are a thorny problem that belongs to the category of vocabulary issues; therefore, it is not redundant to emphasize the necessity to verge on and deal with such unstoppably recurrent problem. First, it is important to be acquainted with the notion of Faux-amis in order to provide an exhaustive and systematic treatment to them, so it is indefatigable to offer their definition and description According to Iwala, Iwala *Les faux-amissont des termes à la forme procheou identique dans les deux langues maisdont le senses tradicalement différentd'une langue à l'autre. Une bonne connaissance de l'usage permettra d'éviter les calques et les contresens* (Iwala, Iwala,, P. 170). According to these two authors, faux-amis are identical words in two languages but have different meaning.

Concept of faux-amis.

Faux-amis, are words that share the same form and etymology but evolved in the midst of two languages and two different civilizations where they may acquire different meanings. Beside the term Faux-amis, they have others that have been used to describe this linguistic phenomenon such as false cognates, false friends, false pairs, false equivalents, false brothers, deceptive words, deceptive cognates, treacherous twins and belles infidelles (Iwala, Pp.55-58). The idea of faux-amis is defined from various points of view. Koessler and Derocquigny (1975) who examined French words embedded in English and the translation pitfalls that they "constituted" to unsuspecting speakers, faux-amis words whose "identity of form" does not

necessarily lead to the identity of meaning". Koessler (1975) even speaks of faux-amis which exist within the same language. In French, he distinguishes three types: Homonyms which, by their identical form, can be the source of misunderstandings between unilingual speakers. Words having semantic variations in space: these are dialectical words whose regional meanings are different from those of the norm. Words having semantic variations in time due to the natural evolution of the language during which the meanings of the words change. hus, speakers of a given era do not mean by this or that word the same thing as speakers of another era. Some points of this concept survive in Colignon-Berthier defining faux-amis as words of the same language (especially French) that "we use one for the other [...], we interchange their respective meanings, whether because of a more or less close or more or less distant resemblance (paronymy), an approximate synonymy, or for any other reason". What these authors consider as faux-amis are words that are known in linguistics as paronyms or false brothers. As far as the etymological aspect of the definition is concerned, we must count on the history of faux-amis because that is where this problem comes from.

The formation of faux-amis

Faux-amis do not exist in a language (such as synonyms or paronyms): it is the unequal linguistic knowledge of the bilingual speaker that produces them (Iwala, p 26,). During communication, a multilingual speaker, deceived by the similarity of a foreign word with a word of his primary language, holds the two words for equivalents and uses the one in the sense of this one, while ignoring that the meaning of the foreign word is not identical to the one he attributes to it. When faux-amis are observed in communication, it is as a result of lack of knowledge of the different codes and thus belong to the language of the individual and not to the language itself. The emergence of faux-amis can therefore be considered on the one hand from the view point of errors of translation or bilingualism (psycholinguistic aspect), on the other hand from the view point of the process of borrowing (etymological aspect).

Kiss (2002) featured that, contrary to synonyms or paronyms, faux-amis are not innate in any language, but they are yielded in it. Thus, they should be considered first from an etymological perspective and second from a psychological one to envisage their formation.

a) Etymological Perspective

In this concern, Horea (2007) pointed out that etymology is the first accountable for the linguistic confusion. Since language is not determined and steady, it can give and receive a variation of words during given periods and for different purposes. Hence, language borrowing is of a prime cause for the existence of faux-amis. Generally, linguistic borrowers try to keep the same form of the borrowed word; however, as any linguistic sign, the foreign form tries to meet the requirements of its new system. Consequently, it is unavoidable that the borrowed word undergoes many modifications. In addition to the phonological and morphological changes, these modifications may include semantic ones. These mutations were specified by O'Neill and Casanovas (1994) as reversion to [the] original sense, specialization, generalization, and the acquisition of new connotations.

The probabilities of these adaptations have been classified by Kiss (2002) into four groups:

i. The loan word preserves the primeval sense while it is dropped in the original language. If we take the adjective "sensible" with Latin origins we find that English preserved its original meaning "wise" while French changed into "sensitive".
ii. The original language changes or develops the significance of the borrowed word while it remains the same in the new one. Let us consider the example stated by Casanovas and O'Neill when they said that the noun "bug" in Middle English referred to all kinds of insects, yet in the 19 Century came to refer to bedbugs (a type of lice). So, the word has undergone a process of specialization.
iii. The native denotation of the loanword is mislaid in its new milieu while it is maintained in the original one. The two adverbs "eventually" and "actually" constitute a tangible examples of faux-amis . They were borrowed from French earlier where they meant and still do "possibly" and "at the moment" respectively. English has adopted new meaning for them as "finally" for eventually and "in fact" for actually.
iv. The word develops alongside in both languages but differently and by keeping the same morphology. Consequently, it would be wrong to translate these different meanings by the same form and non-equivalent sense; otherwise the meaning will be completely distorted.

b) Psycholinguistic perspective

From this point of view, the occurrence of faux-amis does pose the danger of translating the Target Text in terms of the mother tongue or a previously well-known language, particularly if the two languages are close to each other. In this respect, the inter-linguistic influence of the dominant language within the polyglot explains the most frequent errors. In the case of polysemous words, the learners imagine that they will find the same meanings in the other language. However, they do not exist in the target language, which leads to the emergence of faux-amis. So, when foreign language learners feel familiar with the target language they inevitably establish equivalences and analogies to curtail the distance between the languages in question and reduce stress.

Traps of bilingual vocabulary: faux-amis

Since the birth of the faux-amis , created by Koessler who published his first collection of faux-amis in 19281, specialists (lexicographers, language teachers) and profane speakers still ignore the effective recipe that would help them avoid the pitfalls vocabulary in a foreign language. Here is an example to illustrate the pitfalls of vocabulary. In Cranston Szlakmann's notebook, a Frenchman in front of a (obviously) hippie couple talking about their alternative diet, seems to be quite shocked when he hears them say the following sentence: "We eat food without reservatives". This man, because of his knowledge of imperfect English ("preservative" is a chemical agent used to preserve food, to prevent the alteration, so it means conservative or preservative), was deceived by the formal resemblance of the word English and French "condom", which led to a misinterpretation of the statement. This example shows how faux-amis can disturb communication and that the misunderstanding, caused by faux-amis, can be not only comical, but also painful.

Internet, linguistics and translation concerns

One of the obvious challenges that come with the internet is the rapid introduction of new and alternative vocabulary. In 2013, Oxford English Dictionary declared “selfie” to be their Word of the Year this might be a fitting example of how much vocabulary that got its start on the net has seeped into everyday use (the first known use of “selfie” was in 2002, when the word was posted on an Australian Internet forum, but it started gaining wider popularity in 2013). In addition to “selfie”, “Google” has become a widely accepted verb. But more common than inventing new words, is appropriating existing vocabulary to stand for something different. Think about “wall”, “wireless”, “tablet” and “like” while these words have traditional meanings stretching back for decades (if not centuries), they are now used in a completely new setting.

While creating new vocabulary and evolving is something languages have always done, the Internet serves to hasten this process considerably. Another curious aspect is the speed at which new vocabulary is introduced, used, overused, and discarded in the Internet Age. While the internet creates a new form of language, it is at the same time a great threat to those smaller languages that are not able to absorb the shock. English, as the most dominant language on the Internet, is seeping into everyday use, to start creating a new type of Pidgin. Playfully, this phenomenon is named differently across cultures think Franglais or Denglisch. But, while the bigger languages have the option of absorbing this effect, the smaller ones are under threat of being overwhelmed by English technology-talk.

Linguists are concerned with the influence this system may have on a living language. The Internet, in conjunction with radio and television, telephone communication and printed materials, creates the universal information net, which is called "Cyberspace" and all the people using the online communication are "Netizens" in this net (the word is easily associated with "citizens"). The regular users are "Webies", the new ones -"Newbies". The language we use in the net is "Netspeak" But the internet has also been a springboard for all forms of informal writing. The ability to gather a large following doesn't require so much eloquence and proper spelling as it did in the day of the paper- or hardback. Most online bloggers have no one looking over their shoulder to make proper language use an issue to take into consideration. In an era where anyone can be their own author, editor, and publisher, it might not be surprising traditional grammar rules are being replaced by something more flexible. People unfamiliar with the mechanisms of Online Communication and familiar with the conventions of offline communication, think that there can be no analogy of online communication with speech.

Crystal's views on electronic discourse

The well-known British linguist sees online language, which he also terms as Netspeak, as a non-monolithic /disparate set of communication methods and types such chatrooms, Internet Relay Chat, World Wide Web pages, Websites etc. He suggests that online language is best viewed as a new species of interaction, a genuine "third medium" (besides the written and oral forms of English), which is evolving its own systematic rules to suit new circumstances. (Crystal, p.25). He largely dismisses the common view that online communication is illiterate and dumbed-down language. He agrees that much of it is non-standard, playful, highly deviant in bending the usual rules of language, tolerant of typographic and spelling errors, and

full of new words. But he is fascinated by its variety and innovation and takes a very positive view, suggesting that "The phenomenon of Netspeak is going to change the way we think about language in a fundamental way, because it is a linguistic singularity - a genuine new medium". (Crystal 25).

According to Crystal (2001) technology bears gifts also for linguistic investigation: Netspeak is a new opportunity for academic study. He outlines the "once in a lifetime" opportunity offered by the emerging communication media. A new academic study of "Internet Linguistics" includes, at the very least, a comparative study of the style of different formats and the development of language change within these new media. Participants use all types of shortened forms simply to combat the limiting conditions of the medium itself. The use of syntactically-reduced forms like acronyms, symbols, word clippings are therefore purely for practical reasons they reduce the time and effort necessary to communicate.

Users therefore tend to produce utterances of an average of 6 words. Respect is given to those who can communicate the most information, whether direct or implied in the shortest amount of time. The mainstream lexis is reformed into hybrid, heteroglossic, exclusively narrow, covert norms**,** (lexicalization as defined by Halliday 1978 and over lexicalization as defined by Werry 1996) good examples of which are acronyms simulating laughter:

1. **lol** (laughing out loud, is used to express general laugh),
2. **lmao** (laughing my arse off, is reserved for something very amusing),
3. **rotflol** (rolling on the floor laughing out loud, is used for something wild crazy and very amusing),

The change imposed by internet and the new forms of communication not only pause problem to translation in terms of content, that is the way in which language changes but how to adopt those changes into other languages that are on the use on the social media.

Conclusion

In our discussion of language contact between French and English, we observed that the Normand conquest saw an upsurge of French vocabulary into English language. Though it was very much pronounced from that time, it's worth to mention that the proximity between Normandy and England was partly responsible for presence of some French words in English language. Whatever may be the causes of contact (conquest, trade, diplomacy etc.) language contact has some attending consequences which vary in degree and affect various aspect of language as seen in our discussion. The contact between French and English from the Norman conquest, we could see that the influence was systematic because it affected all walks of life in the English society: Government, Administration, War, Literature, Arts, land tenure, religion, etc. Despite the large presence of French vocabulary in English language, it does not mean words keep the same meaning in various contexts. That is why for example research into the nature of faux-amis has revealed that even the concept of faux-amis came as a result of wrong choice of equivalent in the two languages by bilingual speakers. In addition, faux- amis manifest themselves in different ways as shown in the presentation of their typology. The concept of faux- amis was taken beyond isolated words to group of words. In our discussion we emphasized on idiomatic expressions which also constitute an area affected by language

contact between French and English. Therefore, the concept of faux-amis, whether they phonetic/spelling false friends, cultural false friends, could become obstacles to the translator.

As an activity, translation could face various challenges. Some of these challenges could be inherent to the formal nature of language itself because no two languages describe reality in the same way. The problem of Faux-amis which we discussed here remains a challenge till tomorrow and the translator must reckon with it and try as much as possible to minimize its impact in the process of translation. However, it does not stop there. Revolution in the new information technology has created new ways of communication that are no respecter of the formal characteristic of the language we traditionally know. This disruptive effect of the 'nets peak' will say a lot about the practice of translation and even the language of the translator. Communication on the net will continue unabated and while a translator cannot stop it, he has to be aware of the potentials it has to affect translation activities.

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Opportunities and Challenges for Urban and Regional Development Planning in a Post Subsidy Era in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the implications of the removal of fuel subsidies on the cost of material for urban and regional development in Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to assess the impacts of subsidy removal on increase costs of building materials (housing) and transportation. The study adopted the Central Place theory propounded by Walter Christeller (1933), as its theoretical framework and applied the secondary sources of data collection method. The study found that the removal of subsidies led to significant increase in transportation fare that in turned, adversely affected cost of building materials. This has necessitated the need for cut management and strategic planning for urban and regional renewal programmes. It also emphasized the critical role of infrastructure in driving Nigeria's economic growth and the need for strategic investment in these areas. The study recommended that Nigeria government should carry out stakeholder consultation to develop an inclusive-policies that will stimulate the people to unravel alternative materials for urban and regional development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Fuel Subsidy, Development planning, Opportunities and challenges, Urban and regional planning.

Introduction

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, is experiencing rapid urban transformation with positive effects on rural development especially in the 4th Republic. The transformation has not been without hitches or challenges, especially given Nigeria's unique geopolitical structure with its economic reliance on the oil and gas sector, and the complex socio-economic realities that shape its urban and regional landscapes.

Historically, Fuel subsidies began in the 1970s and became institutionalized in 1977, following the promulgation of the Price Control Act which made it illegal for some products including patrol to be sold above the regulated price. The Nigeria economy has been subsidized in various ways for many years and this includes fuel, education, electricity and forex and so on. The regional development in Nigeria has been shaped by geopolitical divisions, with each region having distinctive development needs and challenges, influenced by natural resource endowments, social structures, and policy approaches (Adelakun & Adebisi, 2022). Nigeria's economic landscape has been dominated by the petroleum sector since the discovery of oil in the late 1950s, resulting in a mono-economy that has been susceptible to global oil price fluctuations, thereby impacting national planning, fiscal stability, and economic resilience (Adewuyi & Akinola, 2019). The heavy reliance on petroleum has shaping Nigeria's economic policies over the decades, including the implementation of fuel subsidies, which have been both a political and economic tool.

The Nigeria government in 2023, embarked on a critical economic reform by removing fuel subsidies, a policy change that was widely interpreted as both necessary and contentious. This shift to a post-subsidy era represents a significant departure from decades of state intervention in fuel pricing, supplying and a step toward allowing market dynamics to dictate the subsector. The subsidy removal, while intended to alleviate the government's financial burden, has generate mixed reactions from citizens, businessmen/women, and policymakers alike. For many Nigerians, the subsidy had become a social contract, and its removal was seen as a breach, given the subsequent increase in fuel prices and the ripple effects on transportation, cost of goods, and overall living expenses (Okeke & Ugochukwu, 2023; Nnadi, 2023). This transition has been marked by increased inflation, with the costs of essential goods and services rising sharply, affecting household budgets, particularly among lower-income populations, who were most dependent on subsidized fuel (Akinyemi & Afolabi, 2023).

The post-subsidy era in Nigeria presents both opportunities and challenges for urban and regional development planning. From a fiscal standpoint, the removal of subsidies has freed up substantial resources that the government can redirect toward rural and urban infrastructural development, especially the much-needed investments in transportation systems, healthcare, education, and housing that are components of rural/urban development (Edozie, 2023). These sectors are essential for sustaining urban growth, particularly as Nigeria's urban population continues to rise at a fast pace. Without the fiscal constraints of subsidizing fuel, the Nigerian government has a chance to invest in sustainable urban infrastructure that can support economic diversification and regional integration (Onyebuchi & Eze, 2023).

Infrastructure projects, especially in the transportation and energy sectors, are critical for enhancing urban mobility, reducing congestion, and creating more livable urban environments. The funds saved from subsidy removal could also be directed toward environmental sustainability initiatives that mitigate the impacts of urbanization, such as waste management, pollution control, and green spaces (Amadi, 2023). However, the post-subsidy period also introduces a host of economic and social challenges that complicate urban and regional development planning. Inflationary pressures resulting from higher fuel prices have had widespread effects on both urban and rural households, leading to increased costs in transportation, food, and other essential goods. For urban planners, this poses a significant

challenge, as the rising cost of living could exacerbate urban poverty, reduce access to housing, and strain public services (Adeola & Yusuf, 2023).

The transportation sector with it trickle-down effect has been heavily impacted, as higher fuel costs have led to increased public transit fares, making daily commuting more expensive for workers and students. Consequently, there is a risk that these increased costs could lead to a decline in urban mobility, reducing productivity and limiting economic opportunities for low-income residents (Nwachukwu & Emeka, 2023). Moreover, the shift in fuel pricing has direct implications for housing and land use planning in Nigeria. The increased cost of building materials, coupled with rising transportation expenses, has placed pressure on housing markets, potentially leading to higher rents and property prices in urban centers. This could contribute to housing insecurity, making it challenging for urban and regional planners to achieve affordable housing goals (Okoye, 2023).

i. Objectives of the Study

The study **aims** at examining the effects of the removal of subsidy on the infrastructure development of rural and urban communities in Nigeria. it also examined measures to explore options in redressing undue reliance on imported building materials in Nigeria. It applied the secondary sources of data collection and adopted the Central Place theory propounded by Walter Christaller (1933), as its theoretical framework. The framework was grounded in the observation that human settlements and economic activities tend to form regular patterns that are predictable and hierarchical, especially in rural areas and regions with minimal geographic constraints. The theory posits that settlements function as central places that provide goods and services to the surrounding hinterlands. The central idea is that these central places form a hierarchy, with larger settlements offering more specialized goods and services and smaller one's catering to more basic, frequently demanded needs. Christaller's work was underpinned by an economic rationale, as he drew heavily on concepts such as market areas, thresholds, and range of goods.

ii. Theoretical Framework

The Central Place Theory is structured around several key assumptions reflecting real-world geography. First, it assumes an isotropic plain, a flat and featureless surface where transportation costs are equal in all directions. Second, it assumes a homogenous population with uniform purchasing power and demand. Third, it presumes that consumers will patronize the nearest central place to minimize transportation costs. Under these idealized conditions, Christaller proposed that settlements would organize into a hexagonal lattice, as hexagons are the most efficient geometric shape for covering a plane without overlaps or gaps, thus minimizing travel distances for consumers. This hexagonal structure ensures that each settlement's market area is equidistant to neighboring market areas. Christaller further introduced three principles governing the spatial arrangement of settlements: the marketing principle (K=3), the transportation principle (K=4), and the administrative principle (K=7). These principles describe how settlements align to optimize different aspects of regional organization, including the distribution of goods, efficiency of transportation, and administrative control.

The **relevance** of the Central Place theoretical framework to this study lies in its emphasis on spatial hierarchy and the distribution of goods and services. In a post-subsidy era, Nigeria faces significant challenges in ensuring equitable access to resources, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Christaller's framework can help policymakers identify optimal locations for infrastructure development, such as transportation hubs, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions, to maximize accessibility and efficiency. Additionally, the theory's principles can guide efforts to balance urbanization and rural development by fostering a network of interconnected settlements that minimize disparities in service provision. However, applying this theory to Nigeria's unique context requires modifications to account for factors such as regional inequalities, population density, and cultural diversity. By leveraging the insights of the Central Place Theory, planners can develop strategies that address both the opportunities and challenges of urban and regional development in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

iii. Statement of the Problem

On the**problem**, the post-subsidy era in Nigeria presents both opportunities and challenges for urban and regional development planning. From a fiscal standpoint, the removal of subsidies has freed up substantial resources that the government should redirect toward infrastructural development in the rural/urban areas, including much-needed investments in housing, transportation systems, healthcare and education (Edozie, 2023). These sectors have been previously neglected because the money was diverted to fuel subsidies. Without further subsidizing fuel, the Nigerian government has ample opportunities to invest in sustainable rural/urban infrastructure that shall support economic diversification with positive effects on rural/urban development (Onyebuchi & Eze, 2023).

Infrastructure projects, especially in the transportation and energy sectors, are critical for enhancing urban mobility, reducing congestion, and creating more livable urban environments. The funds saved from subsidy removal would also be directed toward environmental sustainability initiatives that mitigate the impacts of urbanization, such as waste management, pollution control, and green spaces (Amadi, 2023). However, the post-subsidy period also introduces a host of economic and social challenges that complicate urban and regional development planning. Inflationary pressures resulting from higher fuel prices have had widespread effects on both urban and rural households, leading to increased costs in transportation, food, and other essential goods. For urban planners, this poses a significant challenge, as the rising cost of living could exacerbate urban poverty, reduce access to housing, and strain public services (Adeola & Yusuf, 2023).

Although the post-subsidy era represents a transformative period for Nigeria's urban and regional planning sectors, it is essential for policy-makers to balance short-term economic adjustments with long-term development goals. Through strategic planning and resource reallocation, the post-subsidy landscape in Nigeria offers both the urgency and the opportunity for urban and regional planners to reshape the country's developmental trajectory toward a more diversified and resilient economy (Okonkwo, 2023). Despite the intended benefits, subsidies have had a mixed impact on Nigeria's economy. While they were established to reduce the cost of living and support essential sectors such as transportation, agriculture, and

industry, they have also led to challenges related to misallocation of resources, corruption, and an entrenched dependence on oil revenue, diverting funds from other critical sectors that require development (Ibeanu & Ugwu, 2020; Taiwo & Akanbi, 2021).

The removal of subsidy has resulted to a rise in cost of urban renewable programmes that has slowed down especially between 2015 and 2023, thereby widening the infrastructure gap and limiting urban expansion. Additionally, as more Nigerians grapple with higher living costs, the demand for informal settlements may increase, presenting health, environmental, and security risks that urban planners must address (Obi & Nwosu, 2023). Despite these problems, the post-subsidy period opens avenues for policy innovation and reform that can drive sustainable urban development.

Development planners have the opportunity to explore alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power, which could reduce dependence on fossil fuels and contribute to cleaner cities; and there are few studies found to have examined the negative effect as a result of the removal of subsidy. These studies have not sufficiently linked it to rural/urban development in Nigeria, especially between 2015 and 2023. The studies also seldom identified the opportunities in the post-subsidy era. This study was a departure by establishing a relationship between fuel subsidy removal and rural/urban development in Nigeria. This period, 2015 and 2023 was when the interplay became most visible.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Concept of Subsidy

The concept of a subsidy is one that has been extensively analyzed within economic, political, and social frameworks due to its significance in national and international economic policies. Subsidy represents a financial contribution or incentive provided by a government to businesses, industries, or consumers with the aim of reducing the costs associated with goods or services, for affordability and stabilizing market prices. Economists argue that subsidies serve as critical tools for economic intervention, allowing governments to influence market dynamics and stimulate sectors deemed crucial for social welfare and economic growth (Olaleye, 2019). This is particularly evident in developing economies, such as Nigeria, where subsidies on essential commodities like fuel have been applied as mechanism to alleviate financial burdens on the populace and manage the cost of transportation and energy-intensive goods (Akinyemi, 2020). The Nigerian government's approach to subsidies highlights a broader strategy to address economic inequities, as subsidies are perceived as pivotal in bridging the affordability gap for lower-income households and enhancing access to basic services (Bamidele & Yusuf, 2021).

In Nigeria, fuel subsidies have historically represented a substantial portion of government expenditure, reflecting the nation's commitment to stabilizing fuel prices as a means of managing broader economic challenges. Adelakun and Adebisi (2022) describes subsidy as government financial aid provided to an economic sector, highlighting its role in providing targeted economic relief. Johnson (2021) frames it as a fiscal tool used to stabilize prices for essential commodities, emphasizing its economic regulation function, while Eze and Alabi

(2020) see it as a mechanism to ease the economic burden on the populace, focusing on its impact on public welfare.

Ndubuisi (2021) observes that the primary goal of these subsidies is to mitigate poverty and ensure that even the economically disadvantaged can access essential resources. This approach aligns with the broader economic theory suggesting that subsidies can act as a redistributive mechanism, channeling resources towards segments of the population that are most in need of financial support (Amadi, 2019). According to Akanbi and Ibrahim (2020), subsidies in Nigeria are often seen as a direct response to the volatility of global oil prices, providing a buffer that protects consumers from sharp price fluctuations. This practice not only aids in sustaining local consumption levels but also promotes economic stability by enabling consumers to continue purchasing fuel-dependent goods and services without severe price shocks (Eze, 2019).

In addition to their economic implications, subsidies in Nigeria have significant social and political dimensions. Alabi (2020) describes subsidies as an economic safety net designed to cushion populations facing financial hardship, which aligns with the government's broader social responsibility towards its citizens. By keeping the cost of essential commodities within an affordable range, subsidies foster social cohesion, as they ensure that every marginalized communities have access to fundamental goods and services (Chukwuma, 2021). Political office holders leveraged on subsidy as a means of securing public support, particularly in contexts where socioeconomic challenges could lead to unrest (Olayinka, 2020). The distribution of subsidies, therefore, reflects a balance between economic pragmatism and political strategy, as governments aim to maintain stability while responding to public demands for affordable living standards (Ibrahim, 2021). This dual role of subsidies as both economic and political instruments underscores their complexity, as governments must carefully manage subsidy programs to avoid fiscal deficits and inefficiencies.

Causes of Subsidy

Subsidy is a financial assistance provided by the government to reduce the cost of goods, services and are often instituted in response to various economic, political, and social pressures. In the context of Nigeria, subsidies are particularly focused on fuel due to the nation's reliance on oil as a primary economic driver and the socialization. The primary causes of subsidies in Nigeria are tied to the need for economic stability, political commitments, and the social imperative of supporting citizens' access to essential resources. Historically, subsidies have been a tool used by the Nigerian government to cushion citizens against the volatility of global oil prices, which can significantly impact domestic fuel costs and, by extension, the costs of other goods and services. By lowering fuel prices domestically, the government aims to alleviate economic burdens on its citizens and prevent the ripple effect of high transportation costs on goods and services (Ogunleye, 2020; KPMG, 2019).

However, while subsidies may serve as a short-term economic relief mechanism, they also entail long-term financial challenges and complex interdependencies, given the strain they place on government resources and the risk of inefficiency and corruption associated with their management (Amadi, 2019; Ogundipe, 2021). Politically, subsidies in Nigeria are often used to garner public favor and maintain political stability, especially during election periods. For

instance, maintaining or even increasing subsidies can be a strategic move by politicians to appeal to the electorate, who view affordable fuel as a critical element of their economic well-being. Subsidies, in this regard, become more than just an economic intervention; they are also deeply intertwined with political agendas, as politicians promise to uphold or even expand subsidies to secure votes. The political significance of subsidies has become evident through policy fluctuations that correspond with election cycles, with governments either increasing or reducing subsidy levels in response to public demand or political expediency (Adewuyi, 2019; Umar & Umar, 2020).

International financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), often exert pressure on countries like Nigeria to reduce or eliminate subsidies as part of broader economic reform agendas aimed at enhancing fiscal sustainability. Nevertheless, local political factors frequently override such external pressures, as Nigerian leaders prioritize short-term public satisfaction over long-term fiscal considerations (Ogunbanjo & Adebayo, 2020). The social dimension of subsidies cannot be understated, as they are viewed by many Nigerians as a means of social welfare, especially given the country's high poverty rates and economic inequality.

In Nigeria, where a large segment of the population lives below the poverty line, subsidies provide critical relief by reducing the cost of fuel, which in turn lowers transportation costs and prices for other essential goods and services. This function of subsidies as a form of social support is particularly crucial in an economy marked by limited social safety nets. The removal or reduction of subsidies often sparks public outrage, as seen in the widespread protests during periods of attempted subsidy removal, such as in 2012 and again in more recent years (Ajibola & Adesina, 2021; Nwankwo, 2018). These social pressures make it challenging for the government to phase out subsidies without facing significant backlash from the populace, who perceive subsidies as one of the few tangible benefits derived from Nigeria's oil wealth.

Despite these intended benefits, subsidies in Nigeria have been plagued by inefficiencies, corruption, and mismanagement, which have eroded their effectiveness and raised questions about their sustainability. The subsidy regime has often been exploited by corrupt officials and private sector actors who inflate claims and siphon funds intended for subsidy payments. This widespread corruption has led to significant revenue losses for the government, undermining the initial purpose of subsidies as a tool for economic relief. Furthermore, a lack of transparency in subsidy allocation and distribution has exacerbated these challenges, with many Nigerians expressing concerns over the accountability of subsidy programs (Olaniyi, 2020; Ibrahim & Omotosho, 2018).

Concept of Post-Subsidy

The concept of a post-subsidy economy, especially in contexts such as Nigeria, represents a significant shift in governmental policy, whereby previously subsidized goods or services are now exposed to the market forces of supply and demand without direct financial intervention from the government. A subsidy, in its most basic form, is a form of financial aid or support extended by the government to reduce the cost of a product or service, thereby making it more accessible to the public (Adewuyi, 2022). In developing economies, subsidies have often been employed as a social protection measure to make essential goods, such as fuel, affordable for

the majority of citizens, as noted by Williams and Amadi (2021). However, the post-subsidy phase removes these financial supports, thereby allowing prices to reflect actual market values, which is theorized to encourage competitive pricing, greater efficiency, and improved allocation of resources within the economy (Okeke & Ugochukwu, 2023).

In Nigeria, the post-subsidy context is especially relevant within the energy sector, where fuel subsidies have historically been a major fiscal problem to the federal government. According to Olayinka and Adigun (2021), Nigeria's government has spent 13.7 trillion naira on fuel subsidies between 2005 to 2021, with the objective of keeping fuel prices low for consumers. However, these subsidies have also been criticized for draining public resources that could have been invested in critical infrastructure, healthcare, or education, thus limiting the country's potential for sustainable economic growth (Edozie & Onwunli, 2020). The decision to remove these subsidies, therefore, reflects a strategic attempt to redirect fiscal spending towards long-term developmental goals that promise broader societal benefits, even if it means short-term hardship for consumers.

The impact of post-subsidy policies on Nigerian consumers, however, is complex and multifaceted. While proponents argue that subsidy removal leads to enhanced market efficiency, increased foreign investment, and the fostering of competitive markets, the immediate outcome is often characterized by increased costs of living, as consumers bear the full brunt of market-based pricing (Udeh & Eze, 2022). For many Nigerians, this adjustment poses a financial burden, as higher prices on essential goods, especially fuel and transportation, affect household budgets significantly (Ogunleye, 2021). Moreover, as Ogbuehi and Ayoola (2023) observe, subsidy removal tends to disproportionately impact lower-income populations who are most dependent on affordable access to fuel and related commodities.

The post-subsidy environment is seen as a catalyst for structural reforms and economic diversification, particularly for countries that rely heavily on a single commodity, such as oil in Nigeria's case (Ibrahim & Salami, 2022). By removing subsidies, Nigeria is encouraged to move beyond oil dependency and focus on diversifying its economy, potentially opening avenues in sectors like agriculture, technology, and renewable energy. This shift aligns with global trends in sustainable development, which emphasize the reduction of fossil fuel dependency in favor of renewable and sustainable energy solutions (Oladele, 2021). Okeke and Ugochukwu (2023) further suggest that a post-subsidy economy can create a platform for private investment in the energy sector, as market-based pricing structures attract foreign and domestic investors looking for stable, predictable returns on investment. In this way, the post-subsidy concept not only promotes economic efficiency but also aligns with broader goals of sustainable development and resilience in the face of fluctuating oil prices on the international market (Edozie & Onwunli, 2020).

Concept of Development

Development within the context of urban and regional planning also involves fostering infrastructure that supports diverse aspects of public life, such as transportation, healthcare, housing, and education. Scholars such as Sachs (2020), highlight that creating infrastructure which improves the quality of life for all is central to sustainable development practices. Infrastructural development in urban spaces is not merely about physical structures but also

about enhancing access to services and opportunities. For example, improved transportation systems reduce travel times and facilitate economic activities by connecting residential and commercial areas, fostering economic growth and enhancing productivity (UN Habitat, 2019).

Accessible and quality healthcare facilities are essential in supporting healthy populations and ensuring a workforce capable of contributing effectively to the economy. Similarly, educational institutions equipped with adequate resources contribute to human capital development by creating a skilled labor force that can drive innovation and address regional challenges. Thus, development in urban planning is a multi-layered effort aimed at creating cities that offer not only economic opportunities but also an environment that supports human flourishing (World Bank, 2020).

According to environmental perspective, development in urban and regional planning involves strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of urbanization and industrialization on the environment. Rapid urbanization often results in ecological degradation, increased pollution, and significant changes to natural landscapes, which can harm ecosystems and biodiversity (Elliot & Lynch, 2018). Therefore, sustainable development practices are essential, involving measures such as green architecture, waste management, and policies for reducing carbon footprints. Scholars like Meadows et al. (2018) argue that sustainable development must include eco-friendly policies and urban designs that prioritize renewable energy, green spaces, and sustainable building materials.

Socially, development in urban and regional contexts focuses on fostering inclusive communities where citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities. Social development initiatives aim to reduce inequality by addressing barriers that limit access to quality education, healthcare, and employment, particularly for marginalized groups (UNESCO, 2021). Scholars such as Stiglitz (2019) argue that inclusive development is fundamental to maintaining social stability and fostering civic engagement. Urban planners are increasingly adopting people-centered approaches that involve community members in decision-making processes, thus empowering them to take ownership of development projects. Socially inclusive policies can lead to improved social cohesion, where residents feel valued and connected to their communities, which is essential for long-term development (Sen, 2019). Thus, the social dimension of development underscores the importance of creating equitable and inclusive urban spaces that respect cultural diversity and foster community solidarity.

Concept of Urban and Regional Development

Urban and regional development is a multidimensional concept encompassing the planned and systematic improvement of infrastructure, socio-economic conditions, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life within urban and regional settings. According to Obidairo and Olukotun (2021), urban and regional development aims to create harmonious growth by addressing the unique needs of both densely populated urban areas and relatively sparse regional areas. In this context, urban development focuses primarily on enhancing infrastructure, housing, and transportation systems within cities to address challenges arising from urbanization, such as overcrowding, pollution, and traffic congestion (Agboola, 2019). Regional development, meanwhile, looks at improving resources and services

in less populated areas, often to reduce disparities between urban and rural communities, thereby promoting a balanced socio-economic development that ensures equitable resource distribution and access to essential services across all regions (Lawanson & Aliyu, 2020). In the Nigerian context, urban and regional development has received increasing attention, driven by the need to address rapid urban growth and provide essential services to rural communities that risk being left behind in the development process (Adedayo & Fakorede, 2018).

Furthermore, urban and regional development in Nigeria aims to create a sustainable and resilient environment that fosters economic opportunities and improves living standards across diverse communities (Okeke et al., 2022). A central element in Nigeria's regional development strategy involves reducing the socio-economic inequalities between urban and rural areas through targeted policies and investments (Egunjobi, 2020). These efforts include fostering economic growth in underdeveloped regions, improving agricultural productivity, and ensuring that rural areas have adequate access to healthcare, education, and social amenities (Ilesanmi, 2021). Subsidy policies play a pivotal role in this context, as they are often employed to reduce the financial burden on rural communities, thereby making essential services and resources more accessible and affordable (Adewale & Omotayo, 2023). Subsidies in agriculture, transportation, and basic commodities are critical for fostering regional development, as they help equalize opportunities for economic participation and mitigate rural-urban migration pressures that strain urban infrastructure (Daramola et al., 2021).

Subsidies are instrumental in promoting urban and regional development by providing financial support that reduces the cost of living and operational expenses for residents and businesses in targeted areas. In urban settings, subsidies can be directed towards public transportation systems to make commuting more affordable, thus reducing traffic congestion and pollution (Adebayo & Ayodele, 2019). Similarly, housing subsidies help in making affordable housing available to low-income urban residents, thus addressing the issues of homelessness and informal settlements in densely populated cities (Oluwaseun & Adekunle, 2020). For regional development, subsidies often target agricultural production by reducing costs associated with farming inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, and machinery, thereby supporting rural livelihoods and enhancing food security (Ojo & Akinwande, 2022). According to Ibukun et al. (2021), these subsidies not only bolster the rural economy but also contribute to stabilizing urban centers by reducing the rates of rural-urban migration, which is often driven by economic disparities.

Moreover, subsidies contribute to the development of essential infrastructure that underpins sustainable urban and regional development. Government-subsidized investments in renewable energy, sanitation, water supply, and waste management are vital in improving the quality of life in both urban and rural areas, fostering sustainable and resilient communities (Uche & Chinedu, 2022). According to Omotayo and Kazeem (2023), these subsidies make infrastructural projects more economically viable, especially in regions where the return on investment is low, encouraging private sector participation in areas that may otherwise be neglected. This approach is critical in Nigeria, where vast geographical disparities exist, and many rural areas remain underserved (Aliyu & Yaro, 2021). Without the implementation of subsidies to offset the financial risks for investors, development in these regions would likely

remain stagnant, further exacerbating the urban-rural divide and hindering inclusive development.

The role of subsidies in Nigeria's urban and regional development strategy cannot be overstated. They serve as a financial mechanism to facilitate growth in underserved areas and create economic opportunities that promote balanced regional development (Idowu & Ayeni, 2020). The targeted application of subsidies is essential to achieving equitable development outcomes, especially in contexts where market forces alone are insufficient to ensure inclusive growth (Ajibola et al., 2019). For instance, transportation subsidies in Nigeria help improve mobility for people in both urban and rural areas, enabling easier access to markets, employment opportunities, and social services (Balogun & Yusuf, 2021).

Empirical review

Table 1 below, highlighted the selected effects of subsidy removal on sectors of the economy critical to rural/urban development.

Subsidy Removal on Infrastructures in Nigeria

Table 1: Effects of Subsidy removal on infrastructure and other basic services

S/N	Variables (Infrastructure sector)	Impact of Subsidy removal	Description
1	Transportation	Increased operational costs	Subsidy removal raises fuel prices, impacting public transportation costs and road maintenance expenses (Adebayo, 2023)
2	Electricity and power	Higher electricity tariffs and operational costs	Fuel cost for power generation increases, resulting in higher tariffs for consumers and reduced operation efficiency (Doe 2022)
3	Healthcare	Reduced funding and services delivery	Increased energy costs for healthcare facilities, affecting access to essential services and affordability (Ibrahim, 2021)
4	Education	Reduced educational funding and infrastructure	Higher energy costs, limited fund for educational infrastructure and services (Olatunji, 2020)
5	Water and Sanitation	Increased water supply	Costs for water treatment and distribution rise due to increased energy expenses (John, 2019)

S/N	(Infrastructure sector)	Impact of Subsidy removal	Description
6	Housing and urban development	Higher construction costs	Fuel and energy costs hikes affect material and transportation, increasing housing project costs (Eze, 2021)
7	Agricultural infrastructure	Increased cost of machinery and distribution	Fuel costs impact agricultural production, affecting distribution infrastructure for agricultural products (Ogun, 2023)

Source: Author's compilation, 2025.

Table 1 shows that subsidy removal has far-reaching effects on various infrastructure and social services like healthcare, electricity, water and transport services. For transportation, the removal of fuel subsidies increases costs for public and private transport, affecting both affordability and accessibility (Adebayo, 2023). This has ripple effect on road maintenance and the overall efficiency of transportation networks. Similarly, in the electricity service, the reduction in subsidies raises the cost of fuel for power generation, leading to higher tariffs for consumers and potentially lower service quality (Doe, 2022).

In healthcare, there was increased in operational costs due to subsidy removal which affect the affordability of essential services, with facilities facing challenges in maintaining service delivery amid rising expenses (Ibrahim, 2021). Education sector also faces setbacks as increased energy costs divert resources away from funding schools, classrooms, and technology improvements (Olatunji, 2020). Water and sanitation services are similarly impacted, as the cost of water treatment and distribution rises, putting pressure on public water supply and sanitation projects (John, 2019).

Housing and urban development projects face increased construction costs, largely due to the higher cost of transporting materials and machinery a direct consequence of subsidy removal (Eze, 2021). Finally, the agricultural sector, which depends on affordable energy for machinery and transport, is also adversely affected, as increased production costs reduce the efficiency of distribution infrastructure for agricultural products (Ogun, 2023). Overall, the data suggest that subsidy removal, while aiming for economic adjustments, presents significant infrastructure challenges that need strategic government intervention to mitigate its impacts.

In table 2, we have further highlighted the effects of post-subsidy removal on variables that are having direct bearings on rural/urban developments.

Table 2: Effects of the Post-Subsidy Era on Housing and Transportation in Nigeria

S/N	Infrastructure Area	Impact of Subsidy removal	Data
1	Housing	Increase in rental costs due to rising transportation and material costs	Average rental prices in urban areas rose by 20-25% in 2023.
2	Road Transportation	Rise in public transport fares, affecting daily commuting costs	Fares for local routes increased by 30-40% after subsidy removal.
3	Housing Construction	Higher costs of building materials, affecting housing development	Cement prices increased by 15%, steel by 20% since subsidy cut.
4	Urban Infrastructure	Delays in public housing projects due to budget reallocations	Federal and state housing projects reduced by 10%.
5	Fuel Distribution	Increased fuel prices impacted both construction and transportation industries	Diesel and petrol prices doubled, affecting logistics and housing projects.
6	Private Vehicle	Higher fuel prices leading to decreased private vehicle use	Reduction in private car ownership by 5%.
7	Ownership Rental Housing	Increased demand for housing near urban centers to reduce commuting costs	Demand for apartments near city centers rose by 15%.
8	Demand Commercial	Increased logistics costs, affecting prices of goods and services	Logistics costs increased by 30%, impacting retail prices.
9	Transportation Public Transport Quality	Pressure on public transport infrastructure due to increased demand	Overcrowding increased by 25% in major cities.

Sources: Culled fromNational Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (2023), World Bank, 2023, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), (2023), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), (2023).

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion are tilted towards four (4) major issues, beginning with opportunities;

(a) Opportunities for sustainable development

The removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria opens various avenues for promoting sustainable development, particularly through the adoption of alternative energy sources and environmental conservation efforts. With the eradication of subsidy expenditures, substantial funds can be redirected toward investments in renewable energy infrastructure, such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power systems. This shift aligns with the global transition toward cleaner energy sources and reduces dependency on environmentally damaging fossil fuels (Ighodaro & Eze, 2023). In this context, subsidy removal is not only an economic policy but also an environmentally strategic move that can position Nigeria as a leader in renewable energy within the African continent, creating both environmental and economic benefits. According to Ayodele (2023), Nigeria's abundant solar energy potential, particularly in the northern region, presents a unique opportunity for the government to develop large-scale solar farms, which could serve as a sustainable alternative to the traditional, carbon-intensive fuel sources.

(b) *Stimulation of private sectors investments*

Moreover, the shift in policy enables the Nigerian government to establish a framework for incentivizing private sector investment in sustainable energy technologies. Without subsidies that artificially lower fossil fuel prices, there is a more competitive market for renewable energy, thus encouraging businesses to explore environmentally friendly energy options that were previously cost-prohibitive (Okeke, 2023). For instance, the reduced-price distortion in the energy sector could attract foreign investors interested in developing Nigeria's renewable energy sector, enhancing energy security and diversifying the economy. Such investments can create job opportunities, stimulate innovation, and reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with fossil fuel consumption. The World Bank (2023), highlights that countries which have transitioned from subsidy-heavy economies to alternative energy systems have experienced significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improvements in air quality, making subsidy removal a critical step toward achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those related to affordable and clean energy and climate action.

(c) *Investment in energy sector*

By reallocating resources previously spent on subsidies, the government can invest in improving the energy infrastructure, making it more efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels. This is particularly critical for Nigeria, where infrastructural decay has often led to energy shortages and increased pollution from backup generators. Edeh and Johnson (2023) argue that subsidy removal can free up funds to modernize the energy grid, which would reduce transmission losses and improve energy distribution efficiency across the country. Improved energy infrastructure can facilitate the integration of renewable energy sources, ensuring that clean energy reaches even remote regions. This infrastructural enhancement not only supports sustainable development but also improves the overall quality of life by providing reliable and

accessible energy to all Nigerians. According to Okafor and Emeka (2023), the enhanced energy infrastructure resulting from subsidy removal could lead to a more equitable energy distribution system, addressing regional disparities and fostering socioeconomic development in underserved areas.

(d) *Sustainable environmental conservation*

Another key aspect of sustainable development linked to subsidy removal is environmental conservation. Nigeria's reliance on fossil fuels has led to significant environmental degradation, including oil spills, gas flaring, and pollution, which adversely affect biodiversity and the health of local communities. By promoting renewable energy sources, the government can mitigate these environmental risks and contribute to the preservation of natural ecosystems (Ogbonna & Yusuf, 2022). The move away from subsidized fossil fuels also aligns with international climate agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, under which Nigeria has committed to reducing its carbon emissions. Removing subsidies, therefore, not only facilitates domestic environmental protection efforts but also enhances Nigeria's credibility on the international stage as a country committed to climate action. According to Babalola (2023), the elimination of subsidies can lead to a cleaner environment, as the decrease in fossil fuel consumption will reduce emissions, limit pollution, and improve public health outcomes.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The post-subsidy era in Nigeria represents both a profound challenge and an unprecedented opportunity for urban and regional development planning. The removal of fuel subsidies, while initially creating economic shocks, offers the potential for the government to redirect substantial resources towards critical sectors such as infrastructure, renewable energy, and social services, which are pivotal for sustainable urban growth and regional equity. The fiscal space freed from subsidy expenses could be leveraged to address the structural gaps in transportation, housing, healthcare, and education, providing a foundation for improved urban mobility, affordable housing, and enhanced public service delivery. However, the increase costs of fuel have placed considerable economic pressure on households and have intensified the urban planning challenges related to affordability, mobility, and public infrastructure demands.

Urban and regional planners, therefore, face the complex task of designing resilient, adaptive strategies that incorporate both short-term relief measures and long-term sustainable solutions. Embracing alternative energy sources and fostering public-private partnerships could further support Nigeria's shift towards a diversified, low-carbon economy, creating an environment conducive to innovation and resilience. Ultimately, for Nigeria to fully harness the opportunities presented by the post-subsidy landscape, policymakers must pursue an inclusive approach that prioritizes socio-economic equity, environmental sustainability, and infrastructural resilience, setting a transformative trajectory towards a balanced and diversified national development model.

Based on the results and discussion, the study recommended that:

1. The Nigerian government should increase investments in alternative energy sources to reduce dependency on fossil fuels in order to bring down the cost of materials for rural and urban development in Nigeria.
2. Public transportation systems should be expanded to counter its effects on the masses.
3. Citizens and government at all levels should prioritize affordable housing scheme to enhance the standard of living of low-income residents.

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An Analysis of Emergence and Holism on the Limits of Reductionism in Quantum Mechanics

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Abstract

Examining emergent properties in quantum systems and their implications for scientific explanation is an interdisciplinary research that holds enormous benefits for new insights and gains. This study explored the limitations of reductionist approaches in quantum mechanics through a philosophical analysis of emergence and holism. This study shall challenge the dominant reductionist paradigm using the critical method of Philosophy. The findings revealed the importance of holistic perspectives in understanding complex quantum phenomena as it contributes to the ongoing debates in the philosophy of science.

Keywords: Reductionism, Emergence, Holism, Quantum Mechanics, Scientific Explanation, Complexity.

Introduction

Quantum mechanics is one of the fundamental branches of physics, depicting the behavior of matter and energy at the smallest scales. Its progress mostly depended on the reductionism approach, which, according to Licata (2009), explains that we may understand multi layered systems by breaking them into simpler systems and studying the interactions between their parts and components. Entanglement, superposition, and non-locality are some features of quantum systems that make their behavior rooted in quantum mechanics much more challenging, and in fact, these phenomena question the application of reductionism, which has been so successful in other branches of science (Taylor *et al.*, 2020). These phenomena more than often underdetermine the behavior of the whole (Macklem, 2008) suggesting that grasping the intricacies of quantum behavior may require a paradigm shift that focuses on the system and not the parts.

Emergence is the phenomenon in which complex systems exhibit new and novel properties that cannot be predicted from the individual parts, and holism, the doctrine that systems tend

to be greater than the sums of their parts, provides different viewpoints (Anderson, 1972; Bohm, 1980). They are much more useful in in-depth analysis and problem solving and focus on the understanding of interrelations and interactions of a system to provide solutions. The phenomenon where entangled particles seem to affect each other's behavior irrespective of the distance between them calls for a deep reflection. Bell's theorem showed that local, part-based explanations of quantum systems are false (Bell, 1964). Along the same lines, emergent phenomena such as superconductivity, which is the complete absence of electrical resistance in certain materials, also emphasize the collective, rather than individualistic, aspect of systems. These examples show that even though reductionism is useful, it is equally important to have a comprehensive viewpoint as holism stresses the predominance of the whole as well as the properties of the whole rather than the parts. This theory provides a framework that is perhaps better suited for quantum systems.

This paper examines the limitations of reductionism as regards quantum mechanics. It focuses on how emergence and holism contribute to our understanding of quantum phenomena and questions if reductionism can explain the complexities of these phenomena. We can gain a deeper understanding of quantum behavior that goes beyond the usual models by examining how these ideas interact. This examination could lead to new methods that better fit the complexities of quantum systems and how they behave, an interdisciplinary matrix showing how a holistic approach can create a better framework for understanding particle behavior and their interactions in the quantum realm.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

i.. Investigate the limitations of reductionist approaches in explaining quantum mechanical phenomena, such as entanglement and emergent behaviors.
ii. Analyze the role of emergent properties in quantum systems and their implications for scientific explanation.
iii. Evaluate holism as an alternative framework for understanding complex quantum behaviors.

Research Questions

This broad questions shall guide the study:

1. Are Emergent and holistic quantum system properties real (ontological) or merely epistemic?
2. Is failure in reductionism in specific cases (e.g., entanglement, decoherence) interpretable as a more general critique of the explanatory value of reductionism?
3. What are the consequences of these findings for the structure, purpose, and methods of scientific explanation?

Statement of the Problem

The reductionist tradition influenced scientific method and thought for millennia. It offered a powerful explanatory framework: to understand a system, deconstruct it into its component parts, study those parts, and reassemble the system's behavior from this investigation. This

paradigm that was founded upon early modern science's mechanistic vision and later codified within the analytic and logical positivist traditions, was wonderfully productive in classical physics, chemistry, and molecular biology. Quantum mechanics, however, expresses conceptual and empirical limits within this tradition.

Quantum mechanics reveals phenomena that challenge reductionism's default assumptions. Furthermore, the quantum mechanical measurement problem resists reductionist explanation. The implications are that quantum systems possess properties that cannot be accounted for or forecast on the basis of their most detailed parts, no matter the accuracy or thoroughness of the account.

Despite such problems, reductionism remains steadfast not merely within physics but also within the philosophy of science, persisting to influence disputes concerning scientific realism, theory unification, and the causality of objects. The more remarkable fact that this paradigm remains even when confronted with quantum anomalies raises a basic philosophical and methodological question such as are we attempting to impose quantum phenomena onto a conceptual framework no longer capable of embracing them?

The challenge, therefore, is not so much technical but ontological and epistemological. Once the universe's building blocks of nature operate in ways irreducible to atomism, the metaphysics and explanatory structures provided by classical science are in peril. There is now need for new conceptual frameworks, specifically in emergence and holism.

Literature Review

Quantum mechanics is a giant leap in science, changing the way that we understand the physical world. Traditionally, physics made the reassuring assumption that any physical system is deconstructive into its individual parts, and that by analyzing those parts, one would not lose any significant information regarding the system as a whole (Fan & Dongping, 2014). This has been interpreted by scholars as a challenge to the reductionist framework.

However, quantum mechanics contradicts this standpoint. It shows that there are characteristics and dynamics that become evident only when one views the whole system as an integrated unit. The components themselves do not necessarily display or hold all the information required to rebuild the system state. In other words, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This realization undermines the groundwork of reductionist philosophy.

In addition, measurement in quantum mechanics comes with a new twist. The inseparability of observer and observed implies that one cannot isolate or distinguish between individual elements of a quantum system without changing their nature (Shafiee, 2008).

The other feature that compels reductionism to be hard in quantum theory is the law of superposition. In quantum theory, a system exists in multiple possible states simultaneously until its measurement. This means that, contrary to what happens with classical objects, quantum systems are in a mixture or combination of states at the same time. This is beyond our everyday experience and classical intuition. This principle leads to philosophical issues for quantum mechanical attempts at calculation or prediction of the behavior of quantum systems from their constituent pieces alone. Particles can be in many states simultaneously, and the system as a whole can have properties richer and more diverse than any description in terms of disentangled pieces (Alzeer & Benmerabet, 2024). Simon (2018) notes that such dynamics

present difficulties for explanation through purely reductionist approaches.

The reductionist philosophy has its beginnings in the period of the Scientific Revolution. This period saw the movement away from explanations of the natural world toward mechanisms and mathematics. Thinkers like René Descartes and Isaac Newton set the stage for understanding nature as a grand machine that consisted of more minute parts whose workings and interactions accounted for larger things. Descartes, famous for his methodic doubt in philosophy, hypothesized that by analyzing things into their fundamental building blocks, we can build knowledge from the ground up. Physical reality, he imagined, amounted to matter in motion whose movements were governed by laws allowing the prediction of all physical outcomes. Similarly, Newton's laws explained how gravity and motion govern the movements of bodies, integrating celestial and terrestrial mechanics with gorgeous mathematical truths. This framework offered the foundation for thinking about scientific disciplines hierarchically. The premise was that more advanced sciences like chemistry, biology, and so forth were finally reducible to physics because all physical phenomena in principle are explainable in terms of fundamental laws and interactions among constituent parts (Nagel, 1961). In this tradition, some early quantum scholars like Paul Dirac were optimistic. Dirac (1931) was optimistic that fundamental physics was mostly complete, with the supposition that the Schrödinger equation embodies the laws that govern the universe and in the quantum mechanical formalism. This assumption was taken by some as supporting a reductionist program aiming to explain natural phenomena entirely through quantum principles.

While traditionally dominated by reductionism, it was increasingly challenged, especially as scientists examine increasingly complex systems and phenomena. Philip Anderson's (1972) argued that understanding the parts does not necessarily enable understanding the whole. Anderson pointed out that novel principles and laws may emerge at collective or higher organizational levels, which are not simply deducible from the fundamental lower-level laws. These emergent phenomena have new properties, patterns, and behaviors that we must explain in terms that are not reducible to constituent parts. For example, we cannot explain the properties of magnets or superconductors by examining individual electrons. Anderson's argument led scholars to question the boundaries and scope of reductionism, particularly in condensed matter physics and biology.

Science of complexity further deepened this criticism as scientists like Stuart Kauffman examined how self-organization and non-linear dynamics result in complex biological form. He studied autocatalytic sets, which are molecular networks that catalyze one another's formation, and found that these cannot be fully accounted for by chemistry's microphysical laws. Kauffman and others showed that intricate systems exhibit behavior that is sensitive to initial conditions, context-dependent, and non-deterministic and thus oversimplified bottom-up explanations are insufficient. These results point to the insufficiency of reductionism in explaining biological and complicated physical systems holistically (Kauffman, 1993).

In philosophy, emergence refers to when properties or behaviors arise at a collective or systemic level that do not appear at the level of individual components. Emergence is often classified into two types which are Weak Emergence: Where system-level properties are unpredictable in practice due to complexity, but they are, in principle, reducible and explainable from lower-level components. The other is Strong Emergence where the system-

level properties are genuinely novel and cannot be fully explained or predicted based on parts. These properties often have causal powers that influence the parts themselves.

Philosophers such as Mark Bedau (1997) defend weak emergence, emphasizing that complexity and unpredictability do not violate scientific naturalism. Others, including Jaegwon Kim (1999), critique strong emergence as it can imply violations of causal closure; the principle that physical causes are sufficient to explain physical effects. While Kim's causal exclusion argument questions strong emergence, proponents like Silberstein & Chemero (2015) argue that quantum contextuality provides a naturalized framework for downward causation. Some scholars connect these debates to results from Bell-type experiments, which illustrate quantum non-separability.

Discussions about emergence become especially relevant within the context of quantum mechanics. Quantum phenomena such as entanglement suggest that we cannot simply reduce or predict properties of the whole system from the parts' properties. For instance, two entangled particles have outcomes that are not determined by either particle individually. This questions reductionist frameworks and suggests that strong emergence may be a useful or necessary concept to capture the reality quantum theory describes. The systemic properties appear novel and ontologically significant, leading some philosophers and scientists to rethink traditional metaphysical assumptions about causality and explanation in physics.

Holism offers an alternative philosophical outlook centered on the idea that we must understand systems as irreducible whole. In quantum mechanics, holism comes into focus due to the failure of separability. The famous Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen (EPR) paradox (1935) pointed to the phenomenon that two particles, once interacted, could remain correlated in ways that defied classical ideas of locality. Later, John Bell's theorem (1964) formalized this challenge by proving that no local hidden variable theory could replicate quantum mechanical predictions. This theorem suggested that quantum phenomena are inherently non-local and holistic, directly contradicting reductionist assumptions.

In existing scholarship, reductionism and holism are often presented as opposing approaches, though there are researchers who might hold them to be complementary to each other in describing quantum phenomena. According to the literature, reductionism has played a key role in precise predictive modeling within physics, while holism has become increasingly relevant in explaining emergent properties and relational aspects of quantum systems.

Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework stands at the basis of two interrelated philosophical constructs which are **emergence** and **holism**. Together, these concepts provide an alternative perspective to the reductionist paradigm traditionally used to interpret the nature and behavior of quantum systems.

Emergence in Quantum Mechanics

In quantum mechanics, emergent phenomena such as superconductivity and Bose Einstein condensation demonstrate how behavior at the macroscopic level can dominate behavior at the particle level. At the single-particle scale, the dynamics are set by the Schrödinger equation:

$$i\hbar\frac{\partial}{\partial t}\psi(\mathbf{r},t) = \hat{H}\psi(\mathbf{r},t)$$

The equation gives the time evolution of a particle's quantum state, with Ψ **(r, t)** being the wave function and $\hat{\mathbf{H}}$ is the Hamiltonian operator of energy of the system. Although this formalism is satisfactory for a single particle, it is insufficient by itself to account for the emergent new properties exhibited by many particles when they interact with each other as a collective. Phenomena such as superconductivity or Bose Einstein condensation cannot be accounted for by simply solving the Schrödinger equation for uncoupled particles, but instead require a description of how emergent behaviors arise at the system scale.

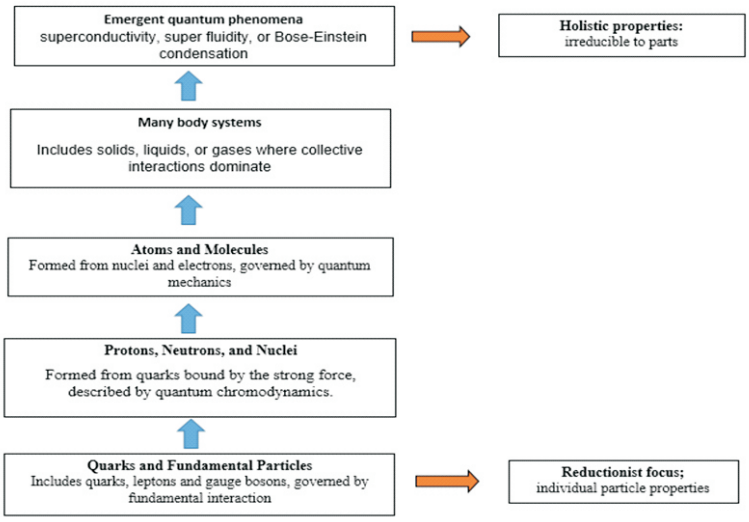
David Bohm's (1980) concept of implicate order emphasizes the interconnectedness of quantum systems. Similarly, quantum entanglement exemplifies this interconnectedness, where particles share a state such that measurements on one particle affect the other. We can mathematically express this phenomenon through the Bell state equation:

$$|\Psi\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|0\rangle_A|1\rangle_B - |1\rangle_A|0\rangle_B)$$

This state questions the reductionist assumption that we can understand parts independently.

Integration of Emergence and Holism

Emergence and holism, while conceptually distinct, converge in the context of quantum mechanics. Emergence accounts for novel, irreducible properties, whereas holism explains the non-decomposable relational structure of quantum systems. Together, they form a framework for interpreting phenomena that are otherwise inexplicable under traditional reductionist paradigms. Philosophically, the integration of emergence and holism serves as a counterpoint to scientific monism which is the idea that we can derive all truths about the world from a single, unified theory at the most fundamental level. Instead, this framework supports ontological pluralism and explanatory pluralism, suggesting that different levels of reality may require distinct but equally valid conceptual models.



Methodology

In this study, a qualitative, interdisciplinary, and philosophical approach that integrates conceptual analysis with interpretative engagement in quantum physics was adopted. There was no need for any testing a hypothesis in the normal empirical sense; instead, the objective is to critically evaluate the background assumptions of quantum theory, extract insightful lessons from quantum phenomena, and evaluate different explanatory frameworks especially in light of recent advances in quantum science.

Findings

The findings of this study are not experimental within the conventional laboratory context but are actually founded on a close, interdisciplinary-focused consideration of quantum phenomena as understood within modern physics and philosophy. They show the constraints of rigorous reductionist structures and the necessity to adopt holistic and emergentist strategies in order to fully explain the behavior of quantum systems.

Entanglement as a Case of Ontological Holism

Quantum entanglement is perhaps the most egregious threat to reductionist metaphysics. In an entangled system, the states of the elements are not independent entities; rather, they are inextricably connected within a single, non-factorable quantum state. The system is described by a single wave function so as to define the state of every particle only with respect to the whole.

The experimental Bell inequality tests (initially demonstrated in Alain Aspect's landmark experiments in the 1980s and later refined by Anton Zeilinger and others) exclude the possibility of explaining the correlations through the use of local hidden variables. This implies that the components' dynamics are not just a function of their local surroundings but are indeed fixed by a more transcendent, non-local structure to which the entire system is subject. Entanglement demonstrates that ontological reductionism fails in certain contexts as the whole's properties cannot be reduced to, or inferred from, the properties of the parts. Quantum reality demands a system in which systems exist as indivisible wholes, reaffirming metaphysical holism as an interpretive necessity.

This study therefore finds that entanglement reveals a failure of ontological reductionism; the properties of a quantum system cannot always be deduced from the properties of its parts. Instead, the system must be treated as a holistic unit, supporting metaphysical holism in quantum theory.

Quantum Superposition and the Collapse of Classical Part Whole Logic

Superposition introduces a level of conceptual strangeness that goes beyond classical classification. In everyday common sense, an object will be in one state or the other; it cannot be both at once. But in quantum mechanics, particles and systems can be in coherent superposition of states until measurement causes the wave function to collapse to a specific outcome. Schrödinger's cat thought experiment illustrates this explicitly: the cat is neither dead nor alive before observation; the cat is analogous to the superposed quantum state of the system to which it is coupled. A strict reductionist understanding would maintain that the microphysical details

only determine the cat's fate. Yet in reality, this micro-to-macro relation is neither deterministic nor linear.

This study finds that superposition violates the classical presupposition that macroscopic behavior is nothing but the summation of microscopic states. It calls for emergentist treatment, where certain properties, such as classical definiteness are emergent only at higher organization levels and cannot be fully derived from the isolated constituents.

Decoherence and Environment-Induced Emergence

Decoherence provides a dynamical account of why quantum systems appear classical without wave function collapse. When a quantum system becomes entangled with its surroundings, coherence between certain states is effectively lost, and "pointer states" emerge as robust configurations. This process provides an account of why we never observe determinate outcomes but rather superpositions at the macroscopic scale.

But decoherence does not destroy the holistic entanglement between system and environment as it simply moves the relevant correlations to degrees of freedom that are non-observable. Classicality is thus contextual arising from the dynamics of a system and its environment, rather than as an intrinsic feature of the system.

This study finds that decoherence shows that emergent classical patterns depend on context and are not explicable on the basis of a closed system's properties alone. This favors a relational ontology in which stability and definiteness are not inherent but a function of a system's environment interaction.

Contextuality and the Bounds of Objectivity

Another finding is the contextuality of quantum properties by nature. Classical physics possesses the feature that measurements disclose pre-existing features in a system. The value measured in quantum mechanics relies on the context of measurement, a contextuality realization formalized by the Kochen-Specker theorem.

It follows from this that no fixed set of hidden variables can specify definite values for all the possible measurements simultaneously. Quantum systems do not possess a total set of objective, observer-independent properties. Instead, measurement co-defines the property itself.

This study finds that contextuality demonstrates that even our most fundamental intuitions about physical existence, that things have definite properties regardless of measurement, need to be corrected. This finds favor with an interpretation of quantum mechanics in which properties are relational, having arisen from particular measurement contexts and not being intrinsic.

Discussions

The findings of this study show the conceptual tension between the dominant reductionist paradigm in science and the non-classical features of quantum mechanics. The following discussion will situate those findings in the framework of three grand-scale philosophical dimensions which are the nature of scientific explanation, the ontological status of emergent properties, and the implications for metaphysical and methodological pluralism in science.

Rethinking Scientific Explanation: Beyond Reductionism

In the traditional covering-law theory of explanation (as developed by Hempel and Oppenheim), a phenomenon is explained by showing how it can be subsumed under general laws, often grounded in microphysics. However, the behavior of quantum systems especially in cases involving entanglement and decoherenceresists this approach. Such phenomena cannot be fully explained by appealing only to the laws or properties of isolated subsystems.

This limitation invites consideration of alternative explanatory frameworks, such as mechanistic explanation, which accounts for phenomena in terms of the organized interactions of parts within a structured system. Yet in quantum systems, the underlying "mechanisms" are often non-decomposable and relational, meaning that the system cannot be broken down into independent parts whose properties and behaviors explain the whole.

As a result, macro level behaviors must be understood as emergent from micro-level processes, but not reducible to them. This resonates with context sensitive explanations, where the behavior of individual components is constrained or even determined by the system as a whole.

Consequently, a shift is required: from a bottom-up reductionist perspective to a more pluralistic approach to explanation what might be called middle-out or top-down explanatory pluralism. This shift is especially crucial in quantum systems, where relationality takes precedence over local, isolated properties.

Emergence as an Ontological Fact

Some philosophers, such as Jaegwon Kim, question whether emergence exists or is only epistemic (i.e., the result of our ignorance of the micro details). Yet, in quantum mechanics, emergent structures e.g., classicality via decoherence are not epistemic artifacts but exhibit real ontological changes. The supervenience thesis (higher-level properties depending on, but not reducible to, lower level ones) may perhaps be insufficient in accounting for non-decomposability and context-dependency in entangled systems. This is in support of the strong emergence view, where higher-level properties have causal powers not found at lower levels and these properties arise from new relations and interactions, not merely from aggregating simpler constituents. For instance, a traditional object like a pointer or measuring device gains determinacy only once it has interacted with the quantum system and its environment, which is a non-local emergent relation in itself.

Holism: From Epistemology to Ontology

Science holism has classically been treated as epistemological, a focus on what we can't know about the parts independent of the whole. Quantum mechanics forces a shift to ontological holism, where the whole doesn't just constrain but determines the reality of the parts. Non separability of quantum states demonstrates that particles possess no intrinsic properties independently of their relations. Relational ontology appears in line with solutions in relational quantum mechanics (e.g., Rovelli), where system properties exist only in relation to other systems. This relocates the metaphysical assumptions from substance based metaphysics to relation based metaphysics and from isolation based objectivity to objectivity from interaction.

Such an approach is consistent with systems theory, ecological philosophy, and even non-Western philosophy emphasizing interdependence over individuality.

Philosophical Implications

This study finds from a philosophical lens that reductionism doesn't hold universally as its power is localized in entanglement, contextuality, and non-locality areas. Emergence and holism are not just abstractions, but they are a requirement for understanding quantum phenomena consistently. Scientific realism must be reconsidered, if the world is relationally fundamental just as objects aren't the basic reality building blocks, but relations are. In addition, epistemology must counteract metaphysical transformation, because the nature of explanation, observation, and reality itself becomes more interdependent. Quantum mechanics opens up the prospect of a scientific metaphysical transformation away from atomistic reduction toward a more holistic, contextual and relational view of nature.

Conclusion

This study critically reviewed the limits of reductionism in explaining quantum phenomena, framing the debate through the philosophical traditions of emergence and holism. Through the examination of essential quantum features of entanglement, superposition, and decoherence, the study finds that quantum mechanics does not simply push the boundaries of reductionist thinking but actively contravenes its assumptions. The traditional reductionist approach, that one can entirely explain the behavior of a system through the properties and interactions of its component pieces, is wanting when confronted with the necessarily non-local, non-separable, and context-dependent nature of quantum systems.

The empirical and theoretical findings come together to point toward a world where the whole is more than a sum of parts. Philosophically, the consequences are far-reaching;should the ontology of the quantum realm be holistic, then we must revise reductionism's methodological hegemony in physics and the philosophy of science.

These results suggest a broad paradigm shift in scientific inquiry, calling for a return to a more interdisciplinary vision that unites physics, philosophy, and complexity science. The challenge, and perhaps the problem, is to construct conceptual devices and theoretical tools that can describe both the definite properties of the micro-world and the emergent structures of the macro-world without collapsing one completely into the other.

Recommendations

On the basis of the conceptual, scientific, and philosophical insight examined in this research, there are many concrete recommendations that emerge for the further evolution of both the theoretical and applied understanding of quantum phenomena viz:.

Redesign Philosophical Frameworks to Accommodate Emergence and Holism

Philosophers of science should therefore:

i. Rethink models of explanation to include systems where entire properties are not deductible from isolated parts.

ii. Pay greater attention to non-reductive metaphysics that put context-sensitivity, relationality, and interdependence between system and environment front and center.
iii. Establish longer contact with other approaches, such as process philosophy, relational ontology, and systemic realism, which can yield metaphysical foundations more hospitable to the non-intuitive facts of quantum theory.

Encouraging Methodological and Epistemic Pluralism

Scientific communities need to accept explanations at various scales, microphysical (mesoscopic, and macroscopic) on an equal basis, without falling into the fallacy that one has to be necessarily "more fundamental."

Scholarly communities, funding agencies, and journal editors must promote theoretical pluralism across scales and fields, granting importance both to systematic understanding and coherence and to formal correctness.

i. Philosophically inclined scientists must extend the conditions for explanatory adequacy to include contextual strength, coherence across scales, and capacity to capture emergent order, rather than just law-based predictability.

Strengthening Interdisciplinary Collaboration

We cannot address quantum mechanics' theoretical issues from within a single discipline by itself. The emergence of holistic structures in quantum systems, structures not in harmony with classical expectation, requires collaboration between physicists, philosophers, complexity theorists, and systems scientists.

Rethinking Reductionism in Science Education

There is a pressing need to rethink the way science education accounts for the relationship between wholes and parts, particularly physics. The reductionist myth, that everything can eventually be reduced to being explained by microphysical laws, must no longer be given as the sole or ultimate framework. Instead: Students must be introduced early to emergence, systems thinking, and relational models as necessary and workable scientific perspectives.

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Notions of return Migration in Chimamanda Adichie's "Americanah" and Imbolo Mbue's "Behold the Dreamers"

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Abstract

This paper highlights the portrayal of return migration in Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah (2013) and Imbolo Mbue's Behold the Dreamers (2016). Through the application of the principles of postcolonialism, the study establishes that return migration is the last phase of the migration cycle. Through a textual analysis of the novels, this paper indicates that postcolonial African migrant characters engage in both voluntary and forced return migration to their home land, especially when they cannot continue to live happily in the host land. Some of the returnees are forced to return home due to their inability to integrate into the host society, while others though successful, and opt to return home voluntarily because they feel that there is no place like home. This paper concludes that the unequivocal presentation of return migration in the texts doubles as advice to African immigrants, to return home voluntarily especially when living abroad becomes fraught with difficulties.

Word count: 150

Key terms: Notions, Transnational Migration, Return Migration, Postcolonial (Theory, Voluntary Return, Forced Return.

Introduction

Migration and its associated concepts have become some of the most topical subjects in contemporary literary discourse. This is, especially, the case with the discourse of African literature and the literature of postcolonial societies in Asia and Latin America. Migration, is a social and geographic process in which people move from a particular country, like Nigeria to another, or from one region to another, Ikeagwuonu (2020:212) notes that migration describes

the movement of people to a new place or country. The causes of migration, according to the author are varied and diverse. This means that people migrate for different reasons which include: to search for a new geographical location to satisfy their needs; to acquire wealth and fame; to seek a better educational foundation; and, to explore business or job opportunities .The submissions above underscore the push and pull factors that are largely responsible for migration in Africa and other postcolonial societies which are well engaged in literary discourses.

However, there is an aspect of or a stage in, migration which appears not to have received commensurate attention in the discourse of migration in African literature. This stage is the stage of return migration. This essay, therefore, engages the notion of return migrate on in African literature using Chimamada Adichie's *Americanah* and Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers.*

Conceptual Foregrounding

Return migration represents the last phase of migratory flow during which a migrant goes back to his/her home land after living for a significant period in the host land. It constitutes one of the major phases of migration, because the plan of returning to the home country is often a possibility for any transnational migrant. Return migration, therefore, incorporates the short return visits and long-term return of many migrants to their country of origin to resettle permanently or to emigrate again after staying at home for a period of time.

George Gmelch provides a definition that forecloses the possibility of a repeat migration by stating that the concept is the "movement of emigrants back to their home lands to *resettle"* (1980: p. 136; (emphasis added).Gmelch conceives return migration as the final phase of the migration cycle which ends in a resettlement back home after the transnational migrant may have spent many years of sojourn abroad. Gimelch identifies three distinct types of returnees namely: (i) those who intended temporary migration, whose time to return migration is determined by the objectives they set out to achieve prior to migration; (ii) returnees who intended permanent migration but were forced to return by external factors; and (iii) return migrants who intended permanent migration but chose to return due to homesickness, and/or their failure to adjust or integrate into their country of destination (p. 138).

However, Dumont and Spelvogel (2008:163) reveal the lack of accurate and comprehensive statistics as a major setback in understanding the phenomenon of return migration. These two scholars propose four reasons that explain the concept. According to them, "failure to integrate into the host country, individuals' preferences for their home country, achievement of a saving objective, or the opening of employment opportunities in the home country, thanks to experiences acquired abroad, which can instigate a return migration." This implies that return migration can either be voluntary or forced. Despite the voluntary or involuntary nature of return migration as elicited by the above four reasons propounded by Dumont and Spielvogel, (2008:190) assert that "some of those returning home have been forced out by a removal order for having broken the laws on immigration of residency."

Nevertheless, Cassarino (2004: 17) presents a different perspective in his theorization of return migration. He argues that successful return migration is a product of the returnee's preparedness and resources mobilization. Cassarino explains that while preparedness refers

"... not only to the willingness of the migrant to return home, but also to his readiness to return", resources mobilization. "... pertains to tangible (financial capital) and intangible (constants, relationships, skills, acquaintances) resources that have been mobilized during the migration experiences abroad." Return migration, therefore, "must be supported by the gathering of sufficient resources and information about post-return conditions at home" for it to be successful.

Return migration, "a reversal of migration and of the psychology for leaving the home nation" (Okolocha, 2016: 147) constitutes a major thematic focus in contemporary African literature, especially fiction. According to cousins and Dalson-Katiyo (2016:1).The fact that the thirty-fourth issue of *African Literature Today,* the oldest journal on African literature in the world, is strictly devoted to "Diaspora and Returns in Fiction' is glowing evidence that supports this claim. The authors reveal that contemporary African fiction "...has represented returnees in a range of different positions" including belonging and locating in the ideal home, alienated and dislocated in the home and experiencing multi-placedness (2016:1). For instance, the picture of the returnees popularly known as the `been-to' remains the usual protagonist of the return migration narrative. AyiKwei Armah's Baako Onikpa of *Fragments* aptly represents the returnee or `been-to' typically portrayed as "a man educated abroad (usually in the colonial country or the US) who was returning home".

Expectedly, this portrayal has changed especially following the emergence of many diaspora African writers most of whom were born, raised and educated in countries of the Western world, or who are children of mixed parentage, or who were born in Africa but migrated at an early age with their parents. Some of these writers have used their works to explore the concept of return migration in its various dimensions. Some of them used their writing to depict their personal experiences of return to their home countries. Thus, the twenty-first century has witnessed the mutation of the `been-to' into different forms, and this mutation explains the complicated diversity of the experiences of transnational migration and return. These varied portrayals of the returnee protagonist are captured in novels such as Helen Oyeyemi's *The Icarus Girl* (2005), Aminatta Forna's *Ancestor Stones* (2006), Saidiya Hartonan's *Lose Your Mother* (2007), Benjamin Kwakye's *The Other Crucifix (2010),* Pede Hollist's *So the Path Does not Die (2012),* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013), and Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* (2016), among others.

This paper interrogates the diverse portrayals of return migration in twenty-first century African fiction with particular reference to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*. In these novels, the authors, both migrant writers, approach the concept of return migration from different perspectives. They also present varying pictures of the returnees.

Theoretical Framework: Postcolonialism

The emergence of modern African literature, especially as it is currently constituted, has provenance in European balkanization and colonization of Africa. Modern African literature, a form of postcolonial writing, emerged as an overt reaction and counter-narrative that challenged and subverted the dominant master-narratives of Europe, which placed the colonized in a pitiably peripheral position. Tade Akin Aina reveals that European colonization

of Africa is one of the incidents that changed the social and political setting of the continent (Aina 1995: p.41). This suggests that colonization altered the composition of pre-conlonial Africa, and also inaugurated certain changes that characterize capitalist modernization.

Postcolonial theory, by implication, developed in response to the then emerging body of writings produced by colonized subjects in assertion of their humanity, culture and history, which hitherto, were grossly altered, undermined and deleted by the master-narratives of imperial Europe. Therefore, postcolonial theory and practice are founded "in the `historical fact of European colonialism, and the diverse material effects to which this phenomenon gave rise" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1995, p.2).Bressler (2007) situates the foundational basis of postcolonial theory and practice in a four-thousand-year history of strained cultural relations between colonies in Africa, Asia, South America and the West which crystallized into colonization, where the West became the colonizers while the peoples of the continent became the colonized. Thus, Bressler (2007) echoes Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995) in locating the fundamental underpinnings of postcolonialism in the historical process of colonization.

Young (2001: p.5) insists that the founding moment of postcolonial theory can be situated in the launching of the postcolonial journal *Tricontinental*by the Havana *Tricontinental* of 1966, which inaugurated the first global alliance of the peoples of the three continents against Imperialism. It is imperative to mention that some of the definitive tests of postcolonialism were published prior to 1966 when *Tricontinental* was launched. For example, Frantz Fanon's two seminal books: *Black Skor, White Monks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* appeared in 1952 and 1961 respectively, Aime Cessaire's *Discourssur le Colonialisme* was published in 1955 while Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apar*t, now a classic postcolonial novel, followed in 1958.

These and some other works provided the insights for the formulation of postcolonial theory and practice. Interestingly, other remarkable texts such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's (1989), Gayatri Spivak's *The Postcolonial Critic* (1990), HomiBhabha (ed.) *Nation and Narration* (1990), Edward Said's *Culture and lmperialism* (1993) and the very important works of Benita Parry, Abdul Jan Mohamed, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Robert Young etc., have since appeared. The texts attest to the consolidation and wide acceptance of postcolonialism by tricontinental intellectuals.

Essentially, postcolonial theory and practice are premised on the fallouts of colonization and its consequent effects on the colonized in the postcolonial time frame. This means that postcolonialism highlights present functional arrangements and power structures and relations as they affect once colonized peoples. Postcolonial criticism therefore, reconsiders colonization as a historical event in the light of its continued effects that the postcolony and its peoples still live in the aftermaths of its violently ruthless disruptions and thus, treats the sally grim realities prevalent in postcolonial societies in the present as having provenance in colonization.

Expectedly, the continuing existence of the cultural assumptions and the politics of knowledge predicated on postcolonialism, and the economic hegemony of neocolonialism have engendered the survival and growth of postcolonial theory and practice in the so-called "third world". In other words, the ongoing imperial suppression and different forms of cultural, economic and political domination of former colonial subjects by their erstwhile colonial masters have given impetus to postcolonialism. The numerous extant social realities

that now characterize postcolonial societies, especially as the material effects of colonialism and neocolonialism have given rise to a diversity of issues which postcolonialism takes within its purview. Thus, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin(1995:2) reveal that postcolonialism:

> involves discussion about experiences of various kinds, migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being.

Indeed, the dynamic nature of the postcolonial era, from which diverse issues emerge, especially as the material effects of colonialism and neocolonialism, has made it possible for postcolonial scholarship to pay attention to identities in a globalized world, where large groups of people have, for various reasons, left their home lands, producing diasporas, population flows, and émigré groups (Abrams and Harpham 2009:278). It is also in this regard that Young (2001:2) infers that "... postcolonialism has become associated with diaspora, transnational migration and internationalism..." This study takes within its purview the historical event of colonization along with its attendant material effects such as transnational migration and return.

Therefore, postcolonialism will enable the analysis of the notion of return migration in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers.* Of course, as mentioned earlier, postcolonial criticism engages the issue of migration and return - how some persons, due to certain social realities, leave their home land and settle elsewhere, and how certain different social realities again compel them to leave their host land and go back to their home land. Through the adoption of a postcolonial perspective, this paper reveals that those postcolonial social issues - bad governance, political instability, corruption, unemployment, etc - which compel postcolonial African characters to leave their home lands, and those social realities in the host land such as racism, identity crisis, marginalization, racial profiling and stereotyping class, etc - which force postcolonial African transnational migrant characters to leave their host lands and return to their home lands have provenance in colonialism and neocolonialism.

Voluntary and Forced Return Migration in Adichie's *Americanah*

An explanation of the term, "Americanah; seems to be a convenient starting point in the discourse on return migration in Adichie's *Americanah.* This is so because it symbolizes return migration. According to Adichie (2013:385)"Americanah" refers to a person who returns from America and behaves like the Americans. An Americanah is a returnee from America who "looks at things with American eyes" (p.385).

The title of the novel, therefore, suggests the preeminence of return migration as a thematic focus. It also implies that Adichie is interested in proposing return migration as the necessary end of the migration narrative. *Americanah* centres on the migration experiences of Ifemelu and Obinze, two young Nigerians who are compelled to migrate to America and England respectively, by the unfavourable living conditions which are prevalent in their home country.

The novel highlights their return migration after some years of sojourn in their respective host lands. Adichie projects both voluntary and forced return migration in *Americanah,* but she seems to project or prefer to? Voluntary return migration over the forced type.

The first return migration portrayed in Americanah is the voluntary return of Ifemelu from America to Nigeria. Her return home is an unexpected twist in the return migration narrative, and also expands the typologies of returnees explored in most postcolonial literary works. This is so because during her bitter years sojourn in the United States of America through a scholarship, Ifemelu grows into a successful and accomplished immigrant, and acquires the American citizenship. This implies that a return migration to Nigeria is not an option for her, especially with the unfavorable conditions of living, and the poor economy of her home country. Ifemelu is, therefore, not constrained to become a returnee. However, despite the facts that "her blog was doing well, with thousands of unique visitors each month, and she was earning good speaking fees, From Public Speaking and she had a fellowship at Princeton and a relationship with Blaine,

> Yet there was cement in her soul... an early morning disease of fatigue, a bleakness and borderlessness... amorphous longings, shapeless desires, brief imaginary glints of other lives she could live, that over the months melded into a piercing home sickness". It is interesting that despite Ifemelu's accomplishments in America,"...layer after layer of discontent had settled in her and formed a mass that now propelled her" into taking the seemingly senseless decision to return to Nigeria.(pp: 6,7).

Ifemelu's decision to return home after living in America for thirteen years is not an easy one. It is deeply fraught with uncertainties, and is received with surprise and disbelief by the people around her. She is perturbed by the uncertainty which her return migration is likely to generate, and therefore, unsure whether her decision is right or wrong. In her effort to overcome the doubts created by the perceived future gloom which a return to Nigeria portends, Ifemelu begins to search for signs that suggest the rightness of her decision. The narrative voice reveals that

> She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees, to start an investment company, a music production business, a fashion label, a magazine, a fast-food franchise. She looked at photographs of these men and women and felt the dull ache of loss, as though they had poised open her hand and taken something of hers. They were living her life (p.6).

This discovery that many young people have moved back to Nigeria and are successfully engaged in one enterprise or the other convinces Ifemelu that Nigeria is where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil" (p.16).

In telling a return migration tale that expands the borders of conventional return migration narrative, Adichie creates Ifemelu, an indefatigable African migrant woman who stands valiantly alone in her resolve to voluntarily move back home after living in America for thirteen years. Her decision to return home is obviously an unreasonable one, especially when her status as an accomplished migrant who has acquired the American citizenship, is considered. This explains the shock and disbelief expressed by almost all the people who hear about her decision to move hack to Nigeria: "everyone she had told she was moving back seemed surprised, expecting an explanation and when she said she was doing it because she wanted to, puzzled lines would appear on foreheads" (p.13). For example, Aunty Uju fails to see rationality in Ifemelu's voluntary return migration: "You are closing your blog and selling your condo to go back to Lagos and work for a magazine that doesn't pay that well", Aunty Uju had said and then repeated herself, as though to make Ifemelu see the gravity of her own foolishness (pp.13-14).

It is instructive that Ifemelu eventually returns home permanently. Adjusting to her new life and home is very challenging to Ifemelu due to her long absence from home. On her arrival, "... Lagos assaulted her, the sun-dazed haste, the yellow buses full of squashed limbs, the sweating hawkers racing after cars, the advertisements on bulking billboard... and the heaps of rubbish that rose on the roadsides like a taunt" (p.385).

Apart from the deplorable condition of her new Lagos environment, the mannerisms and culture of the people are a discomfit to Ifemelu. It, thus, becomes challenging for her to adjust and adapt to the new life that her return migration engenders. Expectedly, within a short period, Ifemelu as a quintessential returnee readjusts and readapts to the cultural and behavioural norms that are prevalent in the home land that she returns to. This prompts Ranyinudo, her friend, to tell her "You are no longer behaving like an Americanah!" (p.395). At this point, when Ifemclu has completely reintegrated into the Lagos society and culture, and no longer sent Ranyinudo texts about what to do", she tells herself "I'm really home. I'm home" (p.411).

Apart from the voluntary return migration by Ifemelu, Adichie also portrays the forced removal of Obinze from London. This comparative portrayal helps Adichie in advancing her projection of the concept of return migration, whether forced or voluntary, as the meaningful end of every migration experience. Obinze's migration route to England is through a six-month visa as a false research assistant to his lecturer-mother who is attending an academic conference in London. This comes as a last resort for him after four failed attempts at securing an American visa. After overstaying the six months that his visa permits, Obinze is forced to live invisibly on the margins of the British society for two years and six months. As a tourist, Obinze's visa does not permit him to work, and for him to survive, he must resort to fraudulent activities. He has no option than to adopt the wise counsel of his older cousin, Nicholas:

> If you come to England with a visa that does not allow you to work, ... the first thing to look for is not food or water, it is an N1 number so you can work. Take all the jobs you can. Spend nothing, marry an E.U. citizen and get your papers. Then your life can begin (p.239).

Obinze metamorphoses into Vincent Obi, gets a National Insurance Number and begins to work.

He saves money and starts a relationship with a European Union citizen Cleotide from Portugal. His intention is to have a sham marriage with her in order for him to attain a valid immigration status. However, Obinze's last hope of becoming a legal migrant is foiled fifteen minutes before their court wedding. As they step into the civic centre where the marriage is to be conducted, Obinze is arrested by an immigration officer for overstaying the six months that his visa allowed. Consequently, he faces the indignity of incarceration as he "... end[s] up at a holding facility in Manchester Airport" (p.280) where he meets other inmates, many of them Nigerians. From Manchester, Obinze is moved to Dover, a former prison, before being eventually forced to return to Nigeria.

Arguably, Adichie portrays forced return migration in the case of Obinze. He expresses his willingness to return to Nigeria, and refuses to engage in any immigration litigation. The following conversation between Obinze and the lawyer that the immigration officer brings to defend him is insightful, The government has a strong case and we can appeal, but to be honest it will only delay the case and you will eventually be removed from the UK, he said... "I'm willing to go back to Nigeria, "Obinze said..." The lawyer looked surprised, Okay then, he said" (p.279)

The lawyer is shocked because Obinze's refusal to prolong his stay through litigations, and his willingness to return to his home country are unusual. Most illegal immigrants in his situation would likely start a legal battle or even do something absurd so as to avoid being removed from the UK. This is exactly what Obinze's cellmate at Dover tells Obinze he will do:

> ... his cellmate, another Nigerian, told him that he was not going to allow himself to be deported. He had a hardened fleshless face. I will take off my shirt and my shoes when they try to board me. I will seek asylum, he told Obinze. If you take off your shirt and your shoes, they will not board you. He repeated this often, like a mantra (p.283).

Obinze's desire to return to Nigeria without resorting to litigations or other pretentious acts expedites his forced removal. His return migration is the forced type, and differs from the voluntary return of Ifemelu. It aligns with the submission of Dumont and Spielvogel (2008) that "... some of those returning home have been forced out by a removal order, for having broken the laws on immigration or residency. Some of those forcibly removed will have been imprisoned or held in detention centres since their arrival in the territory" (p.190). Indeed, despite Obinze's willingness to return home, he is still a deportee. Though he voluntarily decides to go back to Nigeria so as to save himself from the indignity of illegal immigration, he is still forcefully removed from the UK. The narrator portrays his deportation thus:

> He was with two women and five men, all handcuffed, all bound for Nigeria, and they were marched, at Heathrow Airport, through security and immigration and onto the plane, while other passengers stared. They were seated at the very back, in the last row of seats, closest to the toilet (p.283).

Expectedly, this disparaging treatment does not end in the UK. The narrative voice reveals that "As the plane began its descent into Lagos, a flight attendant stood above them and said loudly. "you cannot leave. An immigration officer will come to take charge of you" (p.283).Obinze's return migration is, therefore, a deportation, and not a voluntary return like that of Ifemelu, and the Jongas in Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*

Involuntary Return Migration in Imbolo Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers*

Imbolo Mbue uses her debut novel, *Behold the Dreamers* to represent the concept of transnational migration and return as a subject matter around which other themes such as racism, class stratification, cross-border relationship, etc are built. Mbue aligns with Dustmann and Weiss (2007: p.237) who reveal that lack of economic opportunities and the need to escape from persecutions or natural disasters are the two main motivations for migration.

Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* centres on Jende Jonga and his wife Neni, two Cameroonians who are forced to migrate to the United States of America because of poverty and persecution. The deprivation and persecution which Jende suffers as a result of his social class in Cameroon, and the lack of economic opportunities prevalent in his home country are the factors that push him into migration. He tells his employer, Clark Edwards:

> my country is no good, sir... I stay in my country, I would have become nothing. I would have remained nothing.... In my country. Sir... for you to become somebody, you have to be born somebody first... someone like me, what can I even become in a country like Cameroon? I came from nothing. No name, no money. My father is a poor man. Cameroon has nothing... (pp.39-40)

Truly, Cameroon has nothing to offer people like Jende except to make them become poorer. His social class inhibits his relationship with Neni when she becomes pregnant before their marriage. It is Instructive that Neni's father refuses to give consent to their marriage mainly because Jende is poor, and Neni's family is not.

Therefore, Jende resorts to migration as the only means of escaping poverty, humiliation and persecution. His migration to America changes the narrative of his life. For example, his antagonistic father-in-law (Neni's father) becomes friendly, and grants approval to their marriage. Jende explains "once I come to America and send my father-in-law a nice transfer through Western Union, he sees that maybe I am going to be a rich man one day, he changed his mind" (p.43). The return migration experience that Mbae projects in *Behold the Dreamers* is the involuntary type which aligns with Gmelch's categorization of returnees. The Jongas are among those return migrants who intended to live in their host country permanently, but chose to return due to their failure to integrate into their country of destination. Superficially, it might seem as if the Jongas are forced to return home only by external factors such as the great depression that hit Wall Street, Jende losing his job as a chauffeur to Clark Edwards, a top Wall Street executive, and the consequent hardship that he suffers. However, Jende and his family choose to return home because of their failure to integrate into the American society.

It is necessary to recall that JendeJonga went to America on a visitor's visa, and exceeded the length of stay that his visa permitted, thus turning himself into an illegal immigrant. But, in a bid to perpetuate his stay in America as he initially intended before emigration, Jende applies for asylum. Sadly, after a protracted immigration verification process, his application is denied, thereby forcing him to choose return migration. This suggests a forced return migration as a letter the US immigration sends to him indicates:

> On the basis of being admitted to the United States in August of 2004 with authorization to remain for a period not to exceed three months and staying beyond November, 2004 without further authorization, it has been charged that he [Jende) is subject to removal from the United States...He was to appear before an immigration Judge to show why he should not be removed from the country (p.224).

Interestingly, Mbue essentially transforms what would have been a forced removal into a partial voluntary return migration by portraying a Jende who is already willing to return home. This manifests on two different occasions. Firstly, when Jende's deportation case is adjourned after the first hearing, his lawyer, Mr. Bubakar, suggests that they use the adjournments to prolong his stay,Jende refuses because he sees the adjournments as "a rather pathetic way of postponing the inevitable... [and] would much rather be truly free" (p.259). He follows up by opting to leave America. The narrative voice explains that: Bubakar agreed to do as Jende wanted. He would petition the judge to close the deportation case in exchange for Jende leaving the country on his own.... voluntary departure is what they call it."Bubakar said, 'you leave quietly within ninety days. The government will be happy" (p.326),

As a result, Jende prepares to return home, and gets ready before the judge grants his request for voluntary departure. He happily tells Mr. Bubakar: "No, please don't worry for me, ...I saw an advertisement for good tickets on Air Morac. The price was so good, I bought out tickets... We are leaving in August" (p.347).

Secondly, the transformation of Jende's forced return migration into a voluntary departure manifests the day he pays a goodbye visit to his former boss - Clark Edwards. In the course of their interactions, Clark surprisingly discovers that Jende is returning to Cameroon because his application for asylum, so that he could become a permanent resident, was denied. He feels sorry for Jende, and offers to help him: "Listen... I've got a good friend from Stanford who's an associate director of immigration... it might not be too late,... maybe you could reschedule your flight, give me some time to contact my friend and see if we can help you" (p.373). Jende politely declines by telling him that the offer is coming too late, and that the judge will not allow a reversal. His last statement is insightful. He tells Clark:

> even if he [the judge) did the truth,... is that my body may still be here, but my heart is already gone back home. It is true I came here to escape a hard life and I did not want to go back. But when I had no choice but to go back, I found myself happy thinking about home, sir (p.373)

This reveals that Jende has already decided to go back home and is, therefore, unwilling to accept any help that could work in the contrary. Mbue seems to be suggesting that return migration is always the best decision an African immigrant, who could not integrate into the American society, should make. The author, arguably proposes voluntary departure as the only means of averting the indignity of a forced removal.

Essentially, Mbue builds her portrayal of Jende's voluntary departure within the notions of return migration propounded by Jean-Pierre Cassarino. Cassarino (2004:17) explains that while "... the returnee's preparedness refers to a voluntary act that must be supported by the gathering of sufficient resources and information about post-return conditions at home", resources mobilization refers to "financial capital, contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances that have been mobilized during the migration experience abroad". Jende's involuntary return migration is anchored on preparedness, readiness and resource mobilization.

Immediately Jende's asylum application is denied, and his case is transferred to an immigration judge who is to start forceful removal proceedings against him, Jende makes up his mind, and becomes willing to embark on voluntary departure. His readiness is underscored by the way he stands by his decision to return home despite his wife's protestations, and by buying their tickets even before the judge approves his application for voluntary departure. He begins to prepare himself and his family for their return migration, firstly, by regulating his spending habit, so that they will have enough money for life after return migration, and secondly, by gathering necessary information about prevailing circumstances in Cameroon. Jende reveals: "I am holding on tightly to my savings so that I'll be ready for the day when worse comes to worst..." (p.304). Eventually, by diligently saving some money during the good times in which they (Jende and Neni) earned salaries, the Jongas are able to mobilize financial capital, and "would be returning home with close to ten million CFA Francs, enough to restart their life" (p.352) in Cameroon with ease and relative comfort.

Furthermore, as Jende and his family prepare to leave America, they do not only gather enough money, but also seek information about the Cameroons theyare preparing to go back to. This is to enable him to adjust and re-integrate into his home land. He engages in purposeful interactions with people at home who provide him with the needed information. He reveals: "The girls in Limbe now, I hear they all look like Beyonce. And no one wants to drink *country mimbo* anymore. Palm wine is falling out of fashion. Everyone is American or European now, Emmanu told me a club in West End even sells Crystal glass by glass" (p.354).This shows that prior to his return to Cameroon, Jende is already aware of the prevailing circumstances, trends and recent developments at home.

Indeed, Mbue's *Behold the Dreamers* unarguably portrays return migration as the last phase of transnational migration. The author uses the migration experiences of the Jongas to advise African immigrants to opt for voluntary departure when faced with unfavourable living conditions abroad. Instead of becoming stuck in the host land, it is better to return to the home land without waiting to be forcefully removed, It is, therefore, significant that the story ends with an actual return to Limbe, and with the word "home" (p.382)

The authors, Chimamanda Adichie and Mbolo Mbue in their texts exhibit a unique and distinctive way of writing. This encompasses their choices of language, sentence structures, tones and other elements that make their work special. The texts *Americanah* and *Behold the Dreamers* employ the third-person omniscient point of view. This means the narrator is outside the story, observing all characters and their thoughts, feelings and motivations. The narrator is not limited to one character's perspective, but can see into the minds of multiple characters, allowing the reader to understand the complexities of their relationships and internal struggles.

Evidently the message in *Americanah* is encoded using the English language. Thus, English is the medium of communication among the characters, and also the language of narration. However, the Igbo characters sometimes borrow and use words and expressions from the Igbo language during conversations. Such loan words and foreign expressions are set apart using italics, Igbo words and expressions such as *Keduebeino* (21), *Àsà,Ugo* (22), *o gini* (23), *o diegwu* (24 and 47), *Ngwa* (49), *rapuba* (240), *Biko* (89,117 and 250), *Akotaifekaubi, e lee oba* (61), etc., stand out from other English words and expressions due to their italicization. Also, the use of loan words and untranslated Igbo expressions and their being captured in italics are stylistic devices. The use of Igbo expressions bestow authenticity on the Igbo characters who occasionally resort to their mother tongue during conversations.

One of the conspicuous style markers which Mbue uses is italics. The italicization of some words and expressions makes them to stand out and become obviously different from the rest of the words and expressions in the text. Mbue uses italics to announce loan words, songs, messages, poems, non-English expressions, movies,among others.Mbue makes ample use of loan words, non-standard English words, as well as words borrowed from other languages and cultures. For example, the following loan words/expressions, *grand boubou* (15), *papier*(19), *caraboat* (21) *mamiwata* (38), *wahala* (34), *worwor* (81), *okrika* (277), *Molongo* (106), etc., are italicized in the text. The songs in the text are also captured in italics. NeniJonga is portrayed as a character that uses songs to express herself in moments of happiness and sadness, when she is overwhelmed by intense feelings. Neni uses these songs:

E weniLowa la manyaka
E wenilowa la manyaka
Lowa la nginya. Na wetamiseli
E weniLowa la manyaka (31)

Conclusion

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Imbolo Mbue use their *Americanah* and *Behold the Dreamers* and respectively to project return migration as the unavoidable end of the migration narrative. The authors' projection of return migration is inflected through what seems to be an intertextual connection between the two novels. While Adichie uses Americanah to refer to Nigerians who have been to the U.S. and returned to Nigeria with American mannerisms, Mbue uses American Wonder to refer to the Cameroonian counterpart of Americanah. In a 2013 interview, Adichie explains that Americanah is a:

> Nigerian word... that is used for people who have been to the U.S. and come back and pretend that they no longer understand Igbo or Yoruba or Hausa. Or who came back to Nigeria from the US, and suddenly won't eat Nigerian food, everything is about when I was in America.
> (https://www.npr.org/transcripts/ 195598496?storyId=195598496).

Interestingly, the narrator of Mbue's*Behold the Dreamers* similarly explains that American Wonder refers to:

> ... those Mburukir who went to America and upon their return spoke with laughable American accents, spraying "wannas" and "gonnas" all over sentences. They strutted around town wearing suits and cowboy boots and baseball caps, claiming to understand very little of Cameroonian culture because they were now too American (p.355).

Thus, Adichie's Americanah is recreated in Mbue's American Wonder. Essentially, Adichie and Mbue use Ifemelu and Obinze as well as Jende Jonga, the protagonists of their respective novels to highlight their preference for return migration irrespective of the status of the migrant, whether legal or illegal, successful or unsuccessful. The authors' projection of return migration seems to constitute counsel for African immigrants to return home voluntarily instead of continuing to live unhappily on the fringes of the host society. There seems to be a message underlying this counsel. It is a corresponding plea to African leaders to make the home lands suitable places by initiating policies and programmes that would make Africans to succeed in their home land. This would mitigate the spate of migration in Africa as well as encourage African migrants to return home. Therefore, Adichie and Mbue use *Americanah* and *Behold the Dreamers* respectively to propose a kind of transnational migration narrative that necessarily ends with a return migration to the home land.

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N-Power Programme and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State Perspective

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Abstract

Unemployment has always been an important challenge in the way of societal development in Nigeria, with crime and social disturbances being some of its consequences. Growing concerns over unemployment in Akwa Ibom State were reported by the World Bank and the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics. To stem youth unemployment and foster economic empowerment, the Federal Government of Nigeria initiated a social investment program called N-Power in 2015. Our study considers the impact of the N-Power program, focusing on N-Health, N-Agro, and N-Tech under Akwa Ibom State. Using descriptive research and survey research designs, they collected data form secondary sources like textbooks, journals, and government bulletins. The analysis revealed that although the N-Power program aimed to impart job-ready skills to youth, problems such as inadequate coordination, politicization, and resource misallocation increasingly diminished the programs' effectiveness towards youth employment. Hypothesis testing results showed that there was no significant relationship between skill development in health through the N-Health program and job creation in agriculture through the N-Agro program. Likewise, N-Tech was considered to be irrelevant to the local labor market. Common challenges faced across all programs were

obsolete curricula, poor hands-on training, inadequate funding, and poor partnership with industries. Therefore, it was concluded that improved program design, adequate resource allocation, and cross-sector collaboration are pivotal in rectifying these problems that stand in the way of strengthening N-Power's ability to deliver on its promises of employment and empowerment. Also, the study recommended an urgent need for curriculum update in line with current agro-industries; enhancement of infrastructure; and improvement of partnership with related sectors towards long-term viability and performance of the programme within Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State, in particular.

Keywords: N-power, Poverty, poverty Reduction, employment generation

Introduction

Unemployment has become an important anti-social issue, a very crucial social issue that confronts most nations because it greatly influences socio-economic development in the country. Hence job creation has become the paramount concern of various governments, for it has a strong correlation with the wellbeing of their citizens. Beyond generating economic inefficiencies, unemployment prevents countries from developing, maximizing, and utilizing their human resources, especially in rural areas. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), Nigeria at a 38% unemployment rate stands on a record high. Mostly youth, who are above half of Nigeria's population, still suffer unemployment that they could really help the economic advancement of the country (Koro & Bassey, 2018).This very high rate of unemployment has led to social and economic instability in the country with most youth engaging in criminal activities such as armed robbery, cultism, prostitution, and kidnapping, as means of survival (Ajufo, 2013).

The niggling unemployment condition has inspired several Nigerian administrations into launching a wide variety of social investments and programmes designed on the twin potencies of poverty alleviation and wealth creation: Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), since 1986; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1976; Green Revolution of 1980; National Directorate of Employment (NDE) since 1986; National Poverty Eradication Programme of 2001; National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) of 2003; Subsidy Reinvestment Programme of 2012; Presidential Youth Empowerment Scheme of 2021; and N-Power, to name a few (Abin, 2018). All of these were brought in to reduce poverty and curb increasing unemployment in Nigeria; however, the usefulness of such programmes is still being debated to-date. They at times were able to provide some sort of economic scaffolding but often times, they never could.

Being different from other youth empowerment projects, the N-Power programme, initiated by the Nigerian government in 2015, had its inception in 2016. Its primary objective was to provide relief to the Nigerian youth in terms of unemployment and poverty by providing job opportunities, human capital development and skills acquisition: (N-Power Information Guide; 2017). The programme further aims to resolve teacher shortages in rural areas and workforce shortages in healthcare and agriculture; it, therefore, contributes to the

development of Nigerian human capital (Okoro & Bassey, 2018).For these achievements, the N-Power programmes are divided into various sectors: N-Agric, N-Teach, N-Health, N-Tax, N-Build, N-Software and N-Creative; they particularly target both graduates and non-graduates. The overall thrust of the programme is to empower Nigerian youths to enable them to realize their potential in critical sectors like agriculture, health and education.

The perceived failure of the service delivery programme to mitigate unemployment has been the subject of debates with respect to N-Power (especially in Akwa Ibom State). The lack of coordination, monitoring and evaluation is one of the issues that affect the success of the programme. This politicization of the programme in that local politicians have exercised control over its operations has led to favouritism and diversion of resources away from the intended beneficiaries to other purposes. Aggravating this scenario is the conflicting operations of federal, state and local government agencies that lack coordination, which in turn translates into duplicated efforts and conflicts detrimental to the programme. On the contrary, citizens' negative attitude towards government empowerment initiatives and non-utilisation of funding have further frustrated the objectives of the programme. On this note, the research will therefore endeavour to determine the impact of N-Power on unemployment reduction and wealth creation among youths in Akwa Ibom State. The study's primary objective is to examine the relationship between the N-Power programme and employment generation in Akwa Ibom State, with particular reference to how N-Agro and N-Tech have enhanced employment opportunities in the state.

Conceptual Review

Social Policy

Social policy such of **N-Power** connects with the set of policies adopted by governments to see to welfare and social protection, yet it also denotes the ways of developing welfare for a society. In principle, social policy mainly concerns itself with social services and the welfare state; however, in another perspective, it involves a great many issues outside the scope of the actions of government.-For example, with the evolution of welfare, consideration is given to how welfare is advocated for and the socio-economic context within which its evolution occurs (Roseline & Charlse, 2020). Certainly, interrelated are these components; however, social policy implications stretch far beyond mere legislation.

Social policy can be perceived in no fewer than three meanings. It is first perceived as an output (namely, a policy or a set of policies), their execution, and the social impact generated thereby. The second definition treats social policy as a discipline-a field of inquiry. Third, social policy is perceived as a process for the attainment of social welfare. In this regard, Bisong (2019) sees social policy as a plan or strategy set by any governmental or institutional organization meant to advance or change society in a certain form. Omoniyi (2016) views it as any government initiative that seeks to meet a pressing social need (for example, employment, education, health, and housing). These policies are designed on purpose to improve human welfare: education, health, employment, crime prevention, and poverty alleviation. Marshall, Ibrahim, and Fatim (2019) describe the social policy as those policies through which a state seeks to secure the welfare of the citizenry. According to Erskine (1998), social policies concern

public policies that relate to market operations, private consumption, and interpersonal relations that either advance or frustrate the well-being of individuals or groups.

This is to say that social policy operates within sophisticated social, political and institutional contexts that produce welfare, distribute it, and consume it. Social policy paradigm intends to identify the normative framework upon which processes lead to welfare or work against it, which encompasses moral and political debates as to what should be the subject of intent. According to Aderonmu (2017), social policy is concerned with the welfare of the individual citizen as well as that of the society as a whole. It is a system for the allocation of welfare or well-beingamong groups of people against basic life-oriented assumptions such as health, education, income and employment. Such importance is underscored by the fact that both individual and social well-being are inextricably tied to the quality of relationships within society. There is no doubt that these relations are a lot hard to map and make sense of, but still, it is very much important for the theorists and practitioners to understand these dynamics to enable them to formulate proper policies.

N-Power Programme

The N-Power Programme was founded with the goal of helping curb unemployment and skill development of Nigerians, mainly the youth, both those educated and uneducated. This initiative furnishes young people with educational opportunities, training and stipends at N30,000 monthly. Thus, the programme should seek to eliminate poverty and malnutrition, self-reliance, and consumption-based development (Bennel, 2018). As it stands today, the N-Power initiative admits Nigerians between ages 18 and 35. Skill building platform access is granted to all participants listed under the programme, so long as the candidates fulfil the eligibility requirements of the various programmes. Candidates shall be selected on the basis of:

(a) the ability to develop the necessary skills;
(b) having genuine interest in the field of their choice;
(c) willingness to undertake relevant assessments; and
(d) willingness to emerge from their comfort zones.

The Tech started offering its services in seven main categories--N-Power Agro, N-Power Tax, N-Power Build, N-Power Creative, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach and N-Power Tech (Hardware & Software) (Obadan, 2017). However, for certain individuals, this means of skill cultivation does not really go far, as the results of such programmes largely depend on whichever level of engagement is set on by the participants, as well as the socio-economic setting in which they are implemented.

The Corps N-Power Volunteers calls Nigerians aged 18 to 35, especially those who have gotten some post-tertiary education, to join in a two-year paid voluntary work. The volunteers are engaged in local service activities, but each volunteer is given a computer on which there are basic work information and resources for continuing education and training. After 200,000 N-Power Volunteers were taken into service by the federal government in 2016, another 300,000 followed the year after. By June 2017, the Graduate Category alone had come into application,

but N-Power volunteers contribute through mentoring, education and instruction in four major areas (Bennel, 2018). Although this programme has provided some relief at the moment to the beneficiaries, it remains to be seen whether it will have as far-reaching an implication as anticipated.

One other objective (aim) of the N-Power platform was to support the diversification of the Nigerian economy. By giving Nigerian youths the caliber of training and credentials needed in the information economy, N-Power enables them to become innovators in both local and international markets. The scheme creates jobs in areas such as software development, hardware servicing, animation, graphic design, building services, and craft. According to the Federal Ministry of Youth Development (2017), emphasis in N-Power is placed on imparting non-graduates with practical, commercial, and technical skills to better employability and enhance the quality of their lives (Obadan, 2017). Nevertheless, statistics show that 500,000 laptop computers, containing relevant information to facilitate participation and continual progress, would be given to graduates participating in the N-Power Corps scheme. This initiative targets four major sectors: agriculture, health, power technology, and community education. Being multifaceted in nature, the approach is essential as it accounts for the broad spectrum of demands a fast-growing economy has.

Objectives of N-Power Programme

The bjectives of N-Power programs include:

i. The immediate intervention aimed at raising the level of life for a huge chunk of unemployed youth in Nigeria.
ii. To pave the way for imparting technical, entrepreneurial, and employment skills through an advanced mechanism.
iii. Working towards setting up infrastructure for restoring broken public services and strategies for diversifying government.
iv. The expansion and consolidation of Nigeria's knowledge economy.

Broad Categorization of the N-Power Program

i. N-Power Health

It concentrates on children, pregnant women, and other vulnerable members of society. The volunteers are further required to lobby for preventive healthcare in their communities among these target groups.

ii. N-Power Teach

This class of beneficiaries provides assistance in teaching in Nigerian public schools, thereby ensuring smoother functioning of the nation's basic education system. They help in governmental primary and secondary schools in areas of teaching and instructor support to complement understaffing across the country. N-Power Teach is a programme that recruits young graduates willing to teach in elementary school. They serve as teaching assistants in

primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. They provide support in the classroom, assisting with instruction, school management, and other duties as required (Aderonmu, 2017).

iii. N-Tax

This aspect of the N-power programme involves tax administration and enhancement. The volunteers in this category work as community tax liaison officers for the tax administrators in their respective states. They are tasked with educating members of the community about tax compliance, including responding to questions raised online.

iv N-Agro

The N-Agro Programme is basically the agricultural development and promotion across the country. The sole objective of the programme is to develop the agricultural sector in the country and also to inculcate into Nigerian youths the culture of embarking on agricultural production for survival instead of depending on the government or its agencies on non-existent white-collar jobs. The youths in this area of the N-power programme are expected to be enlisted in at least one or two areas of agriculture such as fishing, crop farming or poultry farming, among others (Aderonmu, 2017).

Unemployment

Unemployment signifies the existence of a problem widespread in Nigeria, since its definition has been offered in multiple ways by academics and international organizations alike. Udu and Agu (2015) define it as a situation in which persons capable and willing to work fail to secure appropriate employment for themselves. The International Labour Organization (2017) describes such a group as being actively looking for work and yet remain unemployed. Hornby (2018) says it is a state of being without a job; meanwhile, Anyanwa (2008) considered the situation to occur when capable persons cannot find work at current market rates. Ekpo (2018) opined that unemployment arises when individuals are ready and willing to work but find no paying job available to them. The unemployment rate, expressed as a proportion of the labor force that is without job, varies depending on the conditions, which are, however, generally agreed upon in the definition of the labor force itself-being especially in respect of determining the criteria for an employed status.

Unemployment is a very serious problem in Nigeria and one of the oldest developmental crises (Akwara et al. 2013). The snag has turned into an alarming socio-economic issue; thus, efforts must be more than just in words. It affects the youths greatly; the other is impeding in economic growth for the nation (Ipaye 2019). According to Udu and Agu (2015), the number one factor that has given rise to increasing unemployment is the lack of reliable data on the actual magnitude of the problem. Ezie (2017) puts forward that the economic condition in Nigeria is such that a huge segment of the labor force cannot be absorbed, thereby fostering rising crime rates and social unrest. Entrepreneurship now receives the major thrust of the strategy. Unemployment, as defined by the International Labour Organization (1989), refers to a situation in which a very high segment of the population, willing and able to work, is unable to find jobs. However, the World Bank (2020) posits that a significant number of people resign voluntarily from paid employment to commence business activities, thereby contributing to

entrepreneurship growth.

Plenty of literature have elucidated some fundamental factors that contribute to youth unemployment in Nigeria. Adebayo (2019), Alanana (2018) among others, emphasize urbanization, rapid population increase, and rural-urban migration as chief causes of the problem. Nigeria's urban labour force grows much faster than the provision of jobs to meet the rising demand, thereby worsening the incidence of unemployment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Corruption is another incubus as it means that funds that should have been used for development projects are often diverted through the back door to undermine the economy and entrepreneurship (Okafor, 2011). Adeniyi (2013) averred that if trends continue, the Nigerian labour force will grow substantially in forthcoming decades and unemployment will remain a big challenge. The unemployment rate was forecasted to be approximately 15.07% between 2011 and 2020, but this might become higher in the next two or three decades if proper policies are not put in place (Adeniyi, 2018).

Empirical Literature

The production of several hundreds of research works by various studies concerning the National Directorate of Employment programmes and their influence on employment generation in Nigeria yielded methods and results of diverse nature. Udofia and Udom (2020) tested the influence of the NDE programmes in Kaduna State using secondary data and interviews, concluding that these programmes were barely helping graduates in the search for jobs. Therefore, they suggested that the programme should be subjected to deeper analysis and perhaps overhaul. It further concluded that skill acquisition and training at the grassroots level might go a long way in curbing unemployment. In line with this, Emeh, Anyadike, and Ukah (2020) also studied some factors militating against unemployment in Nigeria and put forth the argument of the paradox wherein fast-paced economic growth is accompanied by increasing poverty. They insisted that for no other reason than the 2014 recruitment stampede tragedy, the government should remain fairly active in addressing youth unemployment.

An agricultural employment study was undertaken by James, Rebecca, and David (2020), who deployed a quantitative methodology to evaluate the success of the N-Agro programme in Akwa Ibom State. It was found that--to the extent that--the programme had distributed jobs to its beneficiaries, improving rural livelihoods. It was recommended that the development of agriculture infrastructure and access to markets through secondary support be promoted to maintain the positive implementation of this programme. Similarly, Roseline (2020), in her quantitative evaluation of health employment under the N-Health programme in Akwa Ibom State, revealed that the N-Health programme indeed significantly created job opportunities in the health sector while developing health services. Therefore, it was suggested that more investments be made in health infrastructure and that participant training continue.

In Anyadike et al. (2021), the potential worsening of unemployment in Nigeria was acknowledged. This paper gave an expert opinion: entrepreneurship should find a place in the national curriculum, and there should exist a purposeful reengineering of the NYSC scheme as it regards entrepreneurship for job creation. On the other hand, Adeyemi and Ogunyemi (2021) made an empirical analysis of the effects of Npower and found that there were positive effects on employment in reducing the period of unemployment and increasing levels of job

satisfaction; hence, their results emphasized the diversity of such programmes across demographic groups and recommended the scaling up and quality enhancement of training. Ibrahim and Aliyu (2022) also attempted to determine if Npower had any substantial impact on unemployment alleviation and found that there was indeed an improvement in employment levels; it also improved skills acquisition among the participants. The study thereby recommended that such interventions be evaluated so as to guide policy. Effiong (2022), finally, analyzed the regulatory barriers to N-Tech in Akwa Ibom. Using qualitative methods, the study found that bureaucratic inefficiency and excessive complexity in licensing stood as barriers to job creation. The study recommended that the regulations be simplified with incentives for N-Tech startups to improve job generation.

By their study of Nwankwo, 2022, the paper looked into the relationship between youth empowerment and the N-Power programme. Therefore, the study was design to measure the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection to obtain enough evidence to support it. Findings of this research highlighted some strengths and weaknesses of the programme such as the acquisition of vocational skills and enhancement of avenues for the self-employment of youth and as such, the study recommends that the programme must always be assessed so that it does not succumb to irrelevance among Nigerian youths. Meanwhile, Ayodele and Ibrahim (2023) examined the N-Power scheme on youth employment via a national survey. The study concluded that the scheme positively impacted employment as most of the beneficiaries were either placed in employment or began to work for themselves; however, they noted some regional disparities in the efficacy of the programme and called for improved regional execution, alongside entrepreneurial resources and placement support strategies.

According to Adewale and Olaniyi, the study pertains to sustainability aspect of the Npower programme and whether it offered a permanent employment solution. A mixed method approach was adopted in the study with quantitative data gathered on retention in employment and qualitative information collected with respect to funding and programme design. The study went on to emphasize that funding should be made sustainable and that stakeholders should be involved wherever possible, so as to be able to collaborate on the long-term success of the programme. The study recommended the adoption of these initiatives to ensure sustainability for good. Okafor and Anyanwu (2023) carried out a study on the N-power programme and skills impartation for employability concerning Nigerian youths. The study reported that the programme enhanced the technical and soft skills of beneficiaries, including spheres such as communication and problem-solving. The study insists on skill development and entrepreneurial training as the solution to youth unemployment and economic empowerment.

While Musa and Abdullahi (2024) looked at the employment context with the purposes or against the generation of employment, wherein changes existed, in some instances positive growth was realised in the provision of skills and support for entrepreneurship, whereas in others, issues such as lack of long-term employment opportunities still persisted. Hence, the author recommended that greater coordination and monitoring of the scheme would enhance its effectiveness and scaling up. Ahmad and Hassan (2024), meanwhile, study different

contributions of Npower to skill development and employability in Nigeria. They detected an array of Npower impacts which contribute to improving the skills of the participants and increasingly ameliorate their job prospects. They thus suggested that N-power should focus more on targeted training for high-demand areas and evaluation-based job placement services. Training targeted to the relevant areas could be facilitated more, and cooperation with industry players should be encouraged to at least modify the objectives of the program to fall within the market needs.

N-Agro and Employment Generation in Akwa Ibom State.

Being a part of the broader Nigeria National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), N-Agro is therefore a strategy that works toward agricultural development and at the same time tackles unemployment in the socio-economic context of Akwa Ibom State. Having the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development as the government on the ground, the programme is geared toward increasing agricultural production and stimulating job opportunities nationwide for the growing population of youths (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, 2020). With its huge agricultural potential in the State and unemployment siege, N-Agro can thus become an important means through which the crossroads of these concerns can be addressed.

Hence, the strategic positioning of the N-Agro beneficiaries among different agricultural ventures in the Akwa Ibom State becomes necessary, not just in realizing an increase in agricultural production but in economically empowering the youth of this State.The programme equips the beneficiaries with new skills while continuously supplying them with equipment and machinery so that they can be kept busy in the various stages of production including those of crop, animal, and agro-processing. The programme serves as a means of ensuring food security by equipping indigent youths with the know-how and resources needed to undertake agriculture, provide the agro-sector as a means of livelihood with income, and create employment (Udofia&Udom, 2020).

Another idea about rural development and poverty alleviation mechanisms in Akwa Ibom State catalysed by N-Agro. Due to the grave involvement of the youth in agricultural activities, this energizes a movement in the rural areas, building an entrepreneurial spirit and undue dependence on oil revenues (which should be discouraged) in the area. When involved in production, processing, marketing, and distribution, these value chains provide an increased local economy for those participating, thereby contributing to inclusive growth and rural development (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, 2020).

The implementation of the N-Agro programme in Akwa Ibom is hindered by a lot of problems, which tend to make its implementation not so feasible. The processes include, firstly, inadequate access to farmland; secondly, lack of infrastructure; and thirdly, non- availability of support services. There is need for intervention to address these challenges whereby the government, actors in the private sector and development partners would come to the aid of the programme by way of providing sufficient resources, building the required infrastructure and

offering technical assistance to N-Agro beneficiaries (Udofia & Udom, 2020). In Akwa Ibom State, the N-Agro scheme stands as a major avenue of change in agriculture and for the generation of jobs for the growing unemployed youths within the State. The programme thus becomes an economic force alongside rural development and poverty alleviation within the State to enable youths to go into agriculture in earnest; hence, supportive measures, investment support, and concerted efforts must whittle away impediments toward realizing in full the promise of the N-Agro programme for agricultural development and job creation within Akwa Ibom State.

N-Power and Employment Generation

The N-Tech encompasses much latitude in view of the diverse technological inventions, skills development, and employment peculiarities in Akwa Ibom State against the fast-changing socio-economic fabric. Via this mechanism under the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, youths are able to learn technical skills that are peculiar to the present era and that can be used for the generation of employment in several areas (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, 2020).

The N-Tech somehow attempts to tackle the complementary issues relating to the surge in the youth population and the burgeoning demand for skilled manpower in the State of Akwa Ibom, Nigeria. N-Tech imparts skills by training and supporting youths in various technological fields, including software development, digital marketing, cybersecurity, and data analysis, so that these young minds can thrive in the rapidly evolving digital economy (Udofia & Udom, 2020). These skills render them employable; they also encourage entrepreneurship and innovation, and thus economic growth and development within the state.

The N-Tech is contributing towards Social Development Processes and poverty alleviation measures in Akwa Ibom. In this context, technology fills the gaps in skills and creates more chances for gainful employment. This helps in economic generation, keeps unemployment low, and encourages social integration for the socially deprived communities. N-Tech-trained graduates will be working in making a digital economy, thus providing the groundwork for research and competition in industries such as IT, telecoms, or e-commerce (Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, 2020).

With Akwa Ibom State at the helm, N-Tech becomes the hope spot for youths who want to acquire relevant skills and opportunities in the digital space. Technical skills for innovation-oriented entrepreneurship may be further harnessed to spur economic growth, social empowerment, and poverty reduction within the state. However, implementation challenges warrant a sustained investment in the partnerships and interventions in specific areas so that the full focus can be cast upon N-Tech to help it fulfill its untapped potential as a vehicle for technology development and generation of employment in Akwa Ibom State.

N-power Programme in Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State Perspective: the Challenges

Poverty comes in the gamut of hierarchal problems with unemployment under the Nigerian skies, where a high number of her people are condemned to extreme poverty.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2020), 17.7 million people were supposedly poor in 1988, which then reached 66.7 million in 2004, and later estimations stated that about 75% of the populace was below the poverty line in 2022. This very development almost led to Nigeria being crowned the poverty capital of the world, having dethroned India, bearing 86.9 million of the extremely poor (Bisong, 2023). However, over half of Nigerian youths are unemployed and are faring severely (UNDP, 2021; Anyebe, 2022). These, beyond empirical datum, are clear indicators of the growing divide between unemployment and poverty, decrying the systematic breakdown that needs immediate redress.

While the Nigerian government has tried to curb unemployment-a plague-It has looked into different ways of doing so. N-Power being the largest of the interventions, it was initiated by the former President Muhammadu Buhari to absorb Nigerian youths aged 18-34 years in its creche., Therefore, both the graduate and the non-graduate were targeted under this scheme in those years. The programme intends to teach skills that can be used in diverse sectors, namely, Teaching (N-Teach), Health (N-Health), Agriculture (N-Agro), and Technical (N-Build, and N-Tech), with a view to equipping the recipients with sufficient skills such that either they can be employed or become independent in establishing their businesses. (N-SIP, 2018; National Employment Policy, 2017). Yet, the systemic constraints still prevent a lot of young people from getting jobs despite a large number of youths being benefitted.

So far from it, the N-Power programme has experienced massive challenges ever since it was instituted. Being four thousand participants from Ikwa-Ibom, stipends are paid monthly; therefore, the programme has not been able to have any significant impact on unemployment in the state. There are some major concerns: poor coordination, lack of supervision, and blatant neglect (participants absent themselves without whatsoever penalty). At the end of the day, the issue is on the extent to which the programme could solve youth unemployment (Okoro & Bassey, 2018). Some feel that corruption and inefficiency, together with political unwillingness, have reduced the implementation and work of the programme to the lowest possible levels after huge investment, unless it is found that poverty could otherwise have been erased through the money channeled into the programme (Abu, 2015; Anyebe, 2020).

Some writers maintain that the N-Power programme has somewhat helped alleviate youth unemployment (Abayomi, 2020), while others contest the notion (Effiong 2022; Akujuru & Enyioku, 2019). Research also shows that the programme has neither significantly equipped the participants with job skills nor given them opportunity for gainful employment in the longer run (Obukohwo, 2020). The situation stands further aggravated by the sudden withdrawal of the N-Power volunteers who were supposed to be given an exit package but had none; this exit package was to support them but without which the programme itself stands crippled (Okoro & Bassey, 2018).

Programmes such as these have undergone other challenges owing to poor coordination at various levels of government. Problems central to identification have remained unresolved for the purpose of beneficiary targeting. Similarly, they have found beneficiary identification and targeting systems to be more of a bottleneck than a force for increasing the programme to its successful implementation scale. Another pressing challenge is the lack of an all-encompassing and credible database to serve as one of the very few tools available for planning and decision-

making. Lack of an acceptable M&E system; ill functioning grievance and redress mechanisms, and so on, have until now been the major factors limiting the positive impacts of the programme. However, donor-government-partner coordination always reduced to an optimum level of alignment between objectives and resources. Of late, the program's integrity has suffered a blow due to the absence of a transparent and effective payment system to facilitate the direct Government-to-Person (G2P) payments by the Government. Apart from the magnitude and coverage of the programmes, the accountability mechanisms are insufficient to provide adequate feedback and measure the overall impact (Okoro & Bassey, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The Elite Theory of public policy-making popularized by Anderson(1975) is used as theoretical framework of the study. The theory addresses, in a very broad way, levels of power and influence that characterize the composition of societies. Anderson extensively contemplated how elites draw their political processes and social structures in view of studies done by early thinkers like Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca (Anderson, 1975). Central to Elite theory is that power structure responsible for policy making is manned by a small but powerful group of individuals of high status enhanced by prestige or salient social position who shape social values and influence policy making.Situating the N-Power programme's implementation in Nigeria within Elite theory framework, it is argued that it reflects the interests of a small, powerful elite rather than the masses, leading to corruption, poor monitoring, and resource misappropriation despite the programme's good intentions to alleviate youth unemployment and poverty. Research indicates that the governing elites make decisions about the programme, and the stipend amounts, for example, don't align with extreme poverty lies, pointing to a disconnect between policy implementation and the tree need of the beneficiaries.

Without the support of the elites, such a project may never see the light of day. The elites ensure that the beneficiaries' ranks are legitimated and accepted by the masses. However, this also implies that the implementation of N-Power program could be deviated and co-opted into serving the interests of the elites rather than the objectives towards the intended beneficiaries; this corresponds to Anderson's conception that the elites have to keep themselves in position through some form of strategic interactions with the larger society (Bisong, 2023). Anderson also presents a version of fluid groups of elites, a very observable variant from the shifting alliances and rivalries that exist among political factions in Akwa Ibom State. These emerging dynamics shall henceforth inform how N-Power resources will be distributed and certain groups favored over others. As a result, elite competition influences the program's outcome in a manner that potentially leads to an uneven distribution of benefits among groups and thereby reinforces existing power hierarchies.

Corroborating this view, Ayinde (2008), averred that “only a matter of coincidence if the policy decisions of the elite reflect the interests of the masses”, as they sometime do. For instance, in Borno State, the N-Power Scheme to reasonable extent has reflected interests of the beneficiaries as large chunk of activities in the scheme is service sand rural based.

Research Methodology

Descriptive and documentary research methods were employed. Secondary data were used in the study were obtained from books, journals, academic articles, newspapers, and the Internet, depending on relevance and accessibility to enrich the study. Content Analysis was then used to evaluate each variable built around sub themes. In this way, the researchers tried to gather the most complete and balanced data for the investigation.

Discussion of Findings

The study on the impact of N-Power toward reducing unemployment in Akwa Ibom state considered programs pertaining to N-Tech, N-Teach, and N-Health. The result shows that N-Power has not been a significant employment-generating factor in the areas of health, teaching, and technology due to poor implementation. This observation agrees with that of Udo and Ekanem (2021) when they stated that the N-Power program in Nigeria never achieved the set goals because of a weak curriculum. The curriculum usually fails to keep abreast with changes in current practice and technology in the healthcare industry and, therefore, does not adequately equip participants with the relevant skills to be able to succeed in a fast-developing industry. A lack of proper training on digital health technologies, patient management, and healthcare delivery practices poses a challenge in preparing the youth adequately for job pursuit in the health sector (Eyo & Akpan, 2020). Furthermore, Inyang and Etim (2019) also noted the theory-practice disconnect within N-Health and observed that limited opportunities for clinical placements and actual hands-on training greatly detract from the effectiveness of this initiative. This leads to graduates being unable to apply what they were taught to real-life healthcare situations, thus weakening the program as a vehicle for acquiring skills.

Drawing from the status reports, it can be said that the program has largely remained insignificant in providing employment to the youths through imparting modern agricultural skills to them. Thus the studies could find no worthy relationship between enrolment into the N-Agro program and employment generation for the youths in agriculture. Supporting this view are Ajayi et al. (2021) who maintain that many agricultural training programs in Nigeria, including those under the so-called N-Agro, mostly do not have curricula that adequately cater for the present-day and local intents and needs of their beneficiaries. These programs mostly teach outdated agricultural and farming methods, which are not in keeping with modern agricultural methods and hence land applicability-the very core of practical usefulness. Further, Akinwumi, (2020) and some others found that lack of infrastructure, such as poor irrigation facilities and nonavailability of improved seeds, limited the practicing of modern farming techniques by the youths trained above. Such-a-scenario-with-lack-of-infrastructures-and-resources-will-prevent-the-high-quality-trainings-from-being-provided,-thus-hampering-the-youths'-ability-to-think-of-agriculture-as-a-lucrative-profession. Moreover, Okereke and Mbah (2022) shed light on the increasing hindrances to funding for the ex-NAgro participants. These beneficiaries find themselves worthy of neither credit nor start-up funds post-training, disenfranchising the profitable application of the acquired skills in agriculture. This negative action is aggravated by the fact that the program does not in any way facilitate the integration of its participants into existing agricultural markets, driving a wedge between them and marketing their recently acquired skills and products (Ibrahim & Olaniyi, 2019).

The survey further showed another fact: gaining employment by acquiring technology-related skills was not therefore, among the objectives of the N-Tech program. The training, being fairly generic, did not make the acquired skills adequately compatible with local industries, thereby narrowing the avenues of job creation available to the trainees. In the Nwafor, Eze, and Ogbu (2019) view, the quality of N-Tech training is, in many centers, hampered by the use of aged equipment and poor facilities. Without the required infrastructure, those programmes could not have been able to impart the really needed hands-on training; hence, the resultant poor effects. Another highlighted factor was the few opportunities available for graduates to gain work experience through internships or placements if not strategically aligned with local companies (Ojo and Olatunji, 2021). This lack of collaboration prevented the creation of a network that would have assisted youth in obtaining jobs in the technology industry.

Conclusion

Akwa Ibom State has been exposed to huge operational lapses affecting the outputs of the skill acquisition programs. These trainings are meant to empower the youths to secure business or employment; however, in the case of Akwa Ibom State, bigger N-health, N-Agro, and N-Tech skill acquisition programs are proving to be largely ineffective. Without the sweeping reforms in the curriculum to emphasize on practical training, in infrastructure and industrial partnerships, the programs may never see the fulfillment of their promise for skills and jobs. This, therefore, implies that there is a strong argument by this study for a rethinking on how these training programs are being carried out so that the training can adequately address some particular problems that confront the endangered local economy and the youth in their backside Â± immediate environment.

Recommendations

i. Make curricula more relevant and keep training materials and equipment up to date:

Basically, the N-Power programs-N-Health, N-Teach, and N-Tech-are the ones to have their curricula updated in accommodating alterations in their respective sectors. The updates may touch on changes in technology, healthcare, and teaching so that participants learn contemporary skills that are wanted by the market. Standard supplies may be furnished to the training centers. For example, in healthcare, digital health tools may be among those needed. Modern teaching aids/instructional materials and technology devices shall be furnished to the training centers such that the training will gain actual worth.

ii. Enhance Practical Training and Industry Collaboration:

Internships are all-important losses, alongside the increasing gaps of theory versus real-life. Hence, partnership should be formed by local industries, health institutions, and educational organizations with N-Power programs for internships, job placements, and supervised training opportunities for the participants. Thus, through these partnerships, the participants will gain some practical experience that will increase their employability in their trades.

iii. Fund and Market Linkage Strengthening:

Programmes like N-Agro should scale programs that help participants get financial assistance and credit upon finishing their training. They could, for instance, provide young farmers and technology entrepreneurs with startup grants or loans. These connections to actual agricultural and technology markets will provide participants with skills and products to sell, thereby retaining employment.

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Existentialism as a Framework for Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the relevance of existentialism as a philosophical framework for reimagining education in Nigeria. It argued that the prevailing educational system, marked by rigid curricula, overcrowded classrooms, and examination-driven pedagogy, has produced graduates who often lack creativity, resilience, and authentic self-direction. By engaging key existentialist thinkerssuch as Kierkegaard, Sartre, Beauvoir, Marcel, and Camus, the paper foregrounds themes of freedom, responsibility, authenticity, and meaning-making as vital to educational reform. Drawing from African communitarian philosophy, particularly the Yoruba concept of omoluabi, it considered how existentialist principles can be reconciled with Nigeria's communal values to cultivate learners who are both individually responsible and socially committed. Potential objections are also addressed, including concerns about existentialist individualism, policy constraints, cultural authenticity, and religious sensitivities. The paper concludedthat existentialism, when critically adapted to Nigeria's socio-cultural and religious contexts, offers a transformative model of education capable of nurturing reflective, responsible, and resilient citizens who can contribute meaningfully to national development.

Keywords: Existentialism, Philosophy of Education, Nigerian Education, Authenticity, Communitarianism

Introduction

Education in Nigeria has long been both a source of hope and frustration. On the one hand, it is widely regarded as the key to national development, individual empowerment, and social mobility. On the other hand, it is frequently criticized for being rigid, exam-oriented, and overly focused on the acquisition of certificates at the expense of genuine learning and personal growth. Scholars have noted that Nigerian schools often prioritize conformity and rote

memorization rather than cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and independent judgment (Ocho, 2005). This has led to a system where learners are too often passive recipients of pre-packaged knowledge, rarely encouraged to question, to doubt, or to wrestle with the meaning of their own existence in a rapidly changing society. The mismatch between educational goals and the existential needs of learners has produced graduates who are literate but not necessarily empowered to live authentic and responsible lives.

The search for an alternative philosophical grounding for education in Nigeria is therefore not a matter of luxury but of necessity. A philosophy of education is not merely an abstract reflection; it shapes the way societies envision their learners, their teachers, and the purposes of schooling. As John Dewey (1916) famously argued, education is the means by which a society renews itself, and its philosophical orientation determines whether learners are shaped into docile conformists or responsible, creative citizens. In the case of Nigeria, the colonial legacy of education, which was designed to produce clerks and administrators for the colonial bureaucracy, still lingers in the emphasis on standardized testing and credentialism (Fafunwa, 1974). What is missing is a philosophical orientation that speaks to the lived experiences of Nigerian students, that affirms their individuality, and that challenges them to take responsibility for their lives in the face of uncertainty.

Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, offers such a framework. Thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre confronted the human condition with remarkable honesty. They were concerned not with abstract systems but with the concrete realities of freedom, choice, responsibility, and the quest for meaning in an often indifferent world. Sartre's dictum that "existence precedes essence" captures the existentialist conviction that individuals are not born with predetermined roles but must define themselves through their choices and commitments (Sartre, 1943). In education, this implies that learners are not empty vessels waiting to be filled but free beings who must discover themselves, confront their possibilities, and live authentically.

Educational theorists have long recognized the relevance of existentialism to pedagogy. George Kneller (1958) argued that existentialist philosophy liberates education from the tyranny of uniformity, allowing students to pursue their own meanings and purposes. Van Cleve Morris (1966) suggested that existentialist education is concerned not with transmitting a fixed body of knowledge but with engaging students in the drama of human existence, where choice and responsibility are central. Maxine Greene (1973), building on these insights, emphasized the importance of imagination and the teacher's role as a "stranger" who provokes learners to question, to doubt, and to envision alternative possibilities. These perspectives resonate strongly with Nigeria's current educational challenges, where conformity and exam preparation too often eclipse authentic intellectual and moral development.

The problem, then, is clear: Nigeria's educational system is trapped in a cycle of rote learning and credentialism, leaving little room for learners to become authentic, self-directed individuals. The central question this paper addresses is: How can existentialism serve as a philosophical framework for reimagining education in Nigeria? Three sub-questions flow from this:

1. What are the key existentialist principles relevant to education?
2. How can these principles address the specific challenges of the Nigerian educational system?
3. What practical and cultural considerations arise in attempting to apply an existentialist framework in the Nigerian context?

Methodologically, this study employs philosophical analysis and critical reflection. Philosophical analysis involves unpacking existentialist concepts such as freedom, authenticity, responsibility, choice, and meaning, and clarifying their implications for education. Critical reflection involves interrogating the Nigerian educational system and assessing how existentialist insights may provide a viable alternative. This is not an empirical study but a normative one; its concern is not to describe what *is* but to prescribe what *ought* to be, drawing on philosophical resources to chart a path forward.

The significance of this inquiry is twofold. First, it enriches the philosophy of education in Nigeria by drawing on existentialism a tradition that has not been widely applied in African educational discourse. While African philosophers of education such as Nyerere (1967) and Fafunwa (1974) emphasized communalism and functionalism, existentialism shifts the focus to individuality, freedom, and authenticity. This does not negate communal values but complements them, reminding us that communities are composed of individuals who must first embrace their freedom and responsibility before contributing meaningfully to collective life. Second, this study contributes to the broader debate on educational reform in Nigeria by offering a philosophical lens that moves beyond pragmatism and credentialism.

This paper contends that existentialism, with its insistence on freedom, choice, and authenticity, offers a promising philosophical framework for reimagining education in Nigeria. It is an invitation to see learners not as passive vessels but as active agents in the project of their own becoming. In the words of Sartre, "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (Sartre, 2007, p. 22). Nigerian education must therefore be reoriented to empower students to make something meaningful of themselves, not merely to pass examinations or secure certificates. The challenge is formidable, but the promise is profound.

Existentialism: Philosophical Foundations

The term "existentialism" designates a diverse but interconnected body of thought that places the individual human being at the center of philosophical inquiry. Unlike rationalist systems that begin with universal principles or scientific laws, existentialism insists that philosophy must grapple with the lived reality of existence: the experience of freedom, the burden of choice, the inevitability of death, and the struggle for meaning in a contingent world. It is less a doctrine than a movement, unified not by strict agreement on principles but by a shared orientation toward existence itself.

Kierkegaard and the Primacy of Subjectivity

The roots of existentialism are often traced to Søren Kierkegaard, the 19th-century Danish thinker who rebelled against the abstractions of Hegelian philosophy. For Kierkegaard, philosophy must begin not with "the system" but with the individual standing before God. He

argued that truth is not something external and objective, but rather something appropriated subjectively. "Truth is subjectivity," Kierkegaard (1992) declared, meaning that authentic existence requires inward passion, decision, and commitment. For him, education in the deepest sense is not about acquiring information but about choosing oneself before God, in faith and responsibility.Kierkegaard's insistence on personal choice resonates strongly with educational contexts, particularly in societies where students are pressured to conform to rigid paths. His idea that each individual must take a "leap of faith" into authentic existence challenges any educational model that denies the learner's freedom. Nigerian education, still shaped by colonial structures and societal expectations of conformity, often leaves little space for such individuality. Kierkegaard reminds us that genuine learning involves not only intellectual growth but existential commitment.

Nietzsche and the Call to Self-Overcoming

If Kierkegaard rooted existentialist thought in the Christian struggle for authentic faith, Friedrich Nietzsche took the opposite path, critiquing religion as a force of conformity and life-denial. Nietzsche's provocative declaration that "God is dead" (Nietzsche,1974) was not a celebration of atheism but a diagnosis of the collapse of metaphysical certainties in modernity. With the old absolutes gone, Nietzsche challenged individuals to create their own values and to embrace the project of self-overcoming. His notion of the *Ubermensch* (often translated as "overman" or "superman") symbolizes the human capacity to transcend mediocrity and live creatively, courageously, and authentically. Nietzsche's thought offers important insights for education. He warned against what he saw as the "herd mentality" promoted by conventional morality and institutions. In his view, education should not merely reproduce societal norms but should cultivate individuals who can think independently and creatively. This critique speaks powerfully to the Nigerian educational context, where emphasis onrote memorization and certification often suppresses originality. Nietzsche calls educators to "philosophize with a hammer," to dismantle inherited idols and open space for learners to craft their own values. While Nietzsche's tone is radical, his underlying point that education must cultivate strength, creativity, and authenticity offers a sharp critique of systems that prize conformity over individuality.

Heidegger and the Question of Being

Martin Heidegger carried existentialist concerns into a deeper ontological register. In *Being and Time*(1962), he argued that philosophy must return to the "question of Being," which had been neglected since Plato. Heidegger described the human being as *Dasein*, literally "being-there," a being uniquely aware of its own existence and possibility. For Heidegger, existence is characterized by "being-in-the-world," which emphasizes that human beings are always situated within particular contexts, histories, and relationships. Heidegger introduced the concept of authenticity, which involves confronting one's own mortality and taking ownership of one's possibilities, rather than living in the anonymity of "the they." His description of the individual lost in the crowd, absorbed in idle talk, curiosity, and distraction, rings true in societies where superficial conformity is valued over personal reflection. For education, Heidegger's analysis implies that authentic learning must awaken students to their own

possibilities and finitude. To educate is not merely to provide skills for the labormarket but to call learners to face their own "being-toward-death" and thus to take their lives seriously.

In the Nigerian context, where education is often instrumentalized as a means of securing employment, Heidegger's thought challenges educators to think beyond utility. Education should not only train workers but also nurture authentic individuals capable of asking the fundamental questions of existence.

Sartre and Radical Freedom

Jean-Paul Sartre brought existentialism into the public sphere with remarkable clarity. In *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), he articulated the slogan that "existence precedes essence," meaning that humans are not born with predetermined natures but must define themselves through their actions. This radical freedom is both exhilarating and terrifying, for it places the burden of responsibility squarely on each individual. Sartre rejected excuses and determinisms; to claim that one is bound by fate, society, or nature is, in his words, an instance of "bad faith."For Sartre, education becomes a site where individuals are confronted with their freedom and encouraged to assume responsibility for their choices. He insisted that man is "condemned to be free," which means that even refusing to choose is itself a choice (Sartre, 1943). In the classroom, this implies that teachers must not impose meanings but create conditions in which students can recognize their freedom and responsibility. Sartre's political engagement, particularly in his critiques of oppression and colonialism, also offers resonances for postcolonial contexts like Nigeria. He would likely have rejected any system that turns education into mere indoctrination.

Camus and the Absurd

Although Albert Camus resisted being labeled an existentialist, his reflections on the "absurd" complement existentialist concerns.Camus(1942) described the human condition as absurd, and humans seeking meaning in a universe that offers none. Yet rather than collapsing into nihilism, Camus urged us to embrace life with defiance and creativity. His image of Sisyphus, condemned to roll a boulder up a hill only to see it fall again, captures the resilience of the human spirit.For education, Camus's philosophy suggests that learners must be prepared to confront the difficulties and uncertainties of life without illusions. To educate existentially is to cultivate resilience, courage, and the capacity to find meaning even in struggle. In Nigeria, where students face systemic challenges, from underfunded schools to uncertain futures, Camus's insistence on affirming life in the face of adversity has profound relevance.

Educational Implications of Existentialism

Existentialism is not a philosophy that remains confined to abstract speculation; it is inherently concerned with how individuals live, act, and make meaning. Because education is one of the primary sites where societies shape individuals, existentialist themes inevitably spill into educational theory. If, as Sartre argues, existence precedes essence, then education must be conceived not as the imposition of a predetermined essence but as the facilitation of authentic self-discovery. To educate existentially is to affirm the learner as a free being, situated in a particular context, yet capable of transcending it through choice and responsibility.

Freedom and Responsibility in Learning

Perhaps the most important existentialist contribution to education is the emphasis on freedom. For Sartre, every individual is "condemned to be free" (Sartre, 1992). This paradoxical phrase underscores the inevitability of human freedom: whether one likes it or not, one must choose. Applied to education, this means that learners are not passive vessels into which knowledge can be poured; they are free beings who must actively engage with knowledge and make it their own.

George Kneller (1958), argues that existentialist pedagogy begins with the recognition of student freedom. The teacher's role is not to dictate but to provoke, not to prescribe meanings but to open horizons of possibility. Similarly, Van Cleve Morris (1966) stresses that existentialist education avoids "indoctrination" by encouraging students to confront problems, dilemmas, and paradoxes rather than memorizing fixed answers. Learning, in this sense, is not about reproducing the teacher's thought but about exercising freedom responsibly. This insistence on responsibility tempers the danger of freedom degenerating into anarchy. For existentialists, freedom is not license but accountability. As Sartre (1946) insists, when one chooses for oneself, one also chooses for humanity, because one's choices contribute to the construction of human values. In the classroom, therefore, existentialist education encourages learners not only to make choices but to take responsibility for them. Assignments, projects, and classroom discussions are not simply tasks to be completed but opportunities for students to own their learning, to see themselves as responsible for the consequences of their intellectual and moral decisions.

Authenticity and the Critique of Conformity

A second existentialist theme with strong educational implications is authenticity. Heidegger's (1962) distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence highlights the danger of being absorbed in "the they"the anonymous crowd that dictates norms and conventions. Nietzsche earlier warned against the "herd morality" that suppresses individuality. Both concerns resonate with the tendency of mass education to produce conformity rather than authentic individuals. Maxine Greene (1973)applies this insight to education by insisting that the task of the educator is to disrupt complacency and provoke students to think for themselves. She argues that education must awaken students from the slumber of conformity, encouraging them to imagine alternative possibilities and to live reflectively. For Greene, the teacher is not merely a transmitter of knowledge but a provocateur, a stranger who unsettles taken-for-granted assumptions and opens new horizons.

This perspective is profoundly relevant in contexts where education is reduced to examination preparation. Nigerian schools, for instance, often produce students adept at reproducing information but hesitant to ask "why" or "what if." Existentialist education insists that authenticity cannot be fostered by memorization alone; it requires space for questioning, for doubt, for dialogue. This does not mean discarding content knowledge but reframing it as material through which learners grapple with their own existence. Literature, philosophy, and history become not mere subjects but windows into the human condition, challenging students to situate themselves authentically within their world.

Education as Self-Discovery and Meaning-Making

A third existentialist contribution is the conception of education as self-discovery. Kierkegaard's insistence that truth is subjectivity reminds us that knowledge is not simply external information but something that must be appropriated inwardly. This is why, for existentialists, the educational process is less about transmission and more about transformation. Kneller (1958) puts it succinctly: existentialist education is not concerned with the "what" of knowledge but with the "who" of the learner. It asks: Who is this student? What are their possibilities? What choices confront them? Similarly, Van Cleve Morris (1966) emphasizes that existentialist pedagogy is problem-centered: it situates learners in dilemmas where they must wrestle with alternatives and make commitments. The point is not to shield students from anxiety but to help them face it, to cultivate the courage to live meaningfully in an uncertain world.

Paulo Freire, although not strictly an existentialist, provides an important complement to this view. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/2000), Freire critiques the "banking model" of education, where teachers deposit knowledge into passive students. He advocates instead for dialogical education, where teachers and learners engage in mutual inquiry. While Freire's concerns were primarily socio-political, his pedagogy aligns with existentialist emphases on freedom, dialogue, and responsibility. Both traditions reject the objectification of students and insist on their active participation in meaning-making.

Anxiety, Choice, and Educational Growth

Existentialism also emphasizes the role of anxiety in human growth. Kierkegaard described anxiety as the "dizziness of freedom," the unsettling awareness that one can choose but does not know what the outcome will be. For Heidegger, anxiety reveals the nothingness at the heart of existence, pushing us toward authenticity. In education, this suggests that discomfort and uncertainty are not obstacles but necessary conditions of growth.

Educational theorists have recognized this. Greene (1973) argues that teachers must create spaces where students can confront dilemmas, ambiguities, and contradictions. Rather than rushing to provide easy answers, educators should allow students to wrestle with uncertainty, to feel the anxiety of freedom, and thereby to grow. This is especially pertinent in a globalized world where Nigerian students must navigate complex cultural, economic, and moral landscapes. Shielding them from ambiguity does not prepare them for life; guiding them through it does.

Critiques and Limitations

Existentialist education is not without its critics. Some argue that its emphasis on individuality risks neglecting communal values, which are particularly important in African contexts. Others worry that existentialist pedagogy may be too vague, offering lofty ideals without concrete methods. Indeed, as Kneller (1958) admits, existentialist education resists codification because it insists on the uniqueness of each learner and context.However, these criticisms may also be seen as strengths. By resisting rigid methodologies, existentialism keeps education flexible and adaptable. And by emphasizing individuality, it does not necessarily deny community but seeks to ground community in authentic persons rather than conformist

masses. As Sartre (1946) insists, freedom and responsibility are inseparable; one cannot authentically choose without recognizing the implications for others. Thus, an existentialist framework for education can coexist with African communal values, provided the latter are not used to suppress individuality.

Toward an Existentialist Pedagogy

Bringing these insights together, the contours of an existentialist pedagogy begin to emerge in a manner that is both challenging and liberating. The classroom, rather than being conceived as a site of monologue in which the teacher dictates information to passive learners, is reimagined as a space of genuine dialogue. In this setting, both teacher and student participate in the co-construction of knowledge, with the teacher serving as a facilitator who opens up questions, encourages inquiry, and acknowledges the lived experiences of learners. Such dialogical engagement prevents education from degenerating into indoctrination, as it creates room for learners to grapple with issues that are personally meaningful and socially relevant.

Equally significant is the existentialist insistence that education must provide learners with opportunities to make real choices and embark on projects that engage their freedom. It is not enough for students to merely repeat formulas or memorize facts; they must be placed in situations that call for decision and initiative. In doing so, they come to recognize that knowledge is not a static body of information but an unfolding process in which they themselves are participants. This experience of choice also introduces them to the burden and dignity of responsibility, for every decision entails consequences both for the self and for others. In an existentialist classroom, therefore, critical reflection becomes indispensable. Learners are encouraged to question assumptions, to interrogate inherited traditions, and to evaluate the ideas presented to them rather than accept them uncritically. By cultivating intellectual independence in this way, education fosters individuals who are not merely compliant followers of convention but reflective agents capable of assessing their own values and commitments. Such reflection naturally leads students into confrontation with dilemmas that do not admit of simple or predetermined solutions. Here, the role of the educator is not to provide definitive answers but to guide learners as they wrestle with uncertainty and ambiguity. In this process, students develop courage, resilience, and the capacity to make authentic choices even in the absence of absolute security.

Finally, existentialist pedagogy underscores that freedom, far from being a license for unrestrained self-assertion, is always tethered to responsibility. Students must come to appreciate that their choices are never purely private but ripple outward, shaping the lives of others and the community at large. Thus, existentialist education is not a celebration of atomistic individualism but an invitation to assume responsibility for both personal integrity and the well-being of society. When learners internalize this dual orientation toward authentic selfhood and toward solidarity with others they are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world and to contribute meaningfully to the renewal of their communities.

Such a pedagogy does not discard structure or content, but it reframes them within the existentialist conviction that education is about becoming an authentic person. As Morris (1966) observes, existentialist education is not about preparing students for life but about helping

them live life here and now, meaningfully and responsibly.

The Nigerian Educational Context: Challenges and Prospects

Any attempt to apply existentialist philosophy as a framework for education in Nigeria must begin with a sober recognition of the context in which education takes place. Nigeria's educational system is a complex product of colonial legacies, socio-political instability, economic constraints, and cultural dynamics. It faces daunting challenges, ranging from infrastructural decay and underfunding to the prevalence of rote learning and examination-driven pedagogy. Yet, it also holds prospects for reform, especially if reconceived through lenses that emphasize authenticity, freedom, responsibility, and creativity.

The roots of Nigeria's current educational problems are traceable to its colonial history. Colonial education was not designed to cultivate independent thinkers or authentic persons but to produce clerks, interpreters, and low-level administrators who would serve the colonial bureaucracy (Fafunwa, 1974). In this sense, colonial education was instrumental rather than humanistic: it aimed to create subjects who conformed to imposed norms rather than individuals who could interrogate and transform their world.

Even after independence, this legacy persists in the form of rigid curricula, examination-focused learning, and a utilitarian orientation that views education primarily as preparation for employment rather than as a process of personal and communal self-realization. As a result, many Nigerian students go through schooling without developing critical thinking skills, creativity, or the courage to make authentic choices. Here, existentialist critiques of conformity and "herd morality" resonate sharply: Nigeria's system too often suppresses individuality in the name of uniformity.

One of the most widely criticized features of Nigerian education is its obsession with examinations. Success is measured almost exclusively in terms of grades, certificates, and test scores. This creates a culture where rote memorization is rewarded over understanding, and students are pressured to reproduce information rather than to engage with it critically The existentialist critique of inauthentic existence is helpful here. Heidegger warns against the absorption of the individual into "the they"the anonymous collective that dictates what is acceptable without reflection. Nigerian students, caught in the web of exam-driven conformity, often study not for themselves but for "the system." For instance, they ask: What does WAEC want? What will JAMB mark correct? rather than What does this mean for me as a human being? The result is a generation of learners who may hold degrees but struggle to live authentically or responsibly in the face of life's uncertainties.

Another challenge is the predominance of teacher-centered pedagogy. In many Nigerian classrooms, the teacher is viewed as the unquestionable authority, and students are expected to absorb information passively. Freire's (1970) metaphor of the "banking model of education" aptly captures this practice: teachers deposit knowledge into students, who merely store it for future regurgitation.

From an existentialist standpoint, this is deeply problematic. If learners are free beings responsible for constructing their own meanings, then a pedagogy that reduces them to passive receptacles of knowledge undermines their humanity. Existentialist education would instead advocate dialogical engagement, where teachers and students engage in mutual inquiry. In

such a classroom, students are not objects but subjectsco-authors of their own learning journey.

In addition to philosophical and pedagogical problems, Nigerian education faces serious structural challenges. Chronic underfunding has led to decaying infrastructure, inadequate teaching materials, and overcrowded classrooms (World Bank, 2020). The frequent strikes by university lecturers often in protest against poor funding and working conditions further destabilize the system, leaving students uncertain about their educational future.

This uncertainty is fertile ground for existential reflection. As Kierkegaard reminds us, anxiety is not merely negative; it is the "dizziness of freedom," the recognition that one must choose in the face of uncertainty. Nigerian students already confront uncertainty daily about whether their institutions will remain open, whether they can secure employment after graduation, or whether their degrees will be recognized abroad. The tragedy is that the system does not equip them with the existential courage to confront this uncertainty constructively.

Beyond its structural weaknesses, Nigerian education is also plagued by issues of corruption, malpractice, and ethical decay. Examination malpractice is rampant, with students, parents, and even teachers sometimes colluding to secure undeserved success. Certificates are often valued more than competence, leading to the phenomenon of "educated illiterates"individuals who possess credentials but lack authentic knowledge or skills.

Existentialism's emphasis on responsibility and authenticity provides a corrective here. For Sartre, to act in bad faith, that is, to deny one's freedom and responsibility, is to live inauthentically. When students cheat or when teachers sell grades, they are not only violating ethical standards but also denying their own potential to live as free and responsible beings. Education that integrates existentialist principles would stress integrity as inseparable from authenticity: to cheat is not only to fail morally but also to evade one's own freedom.

Prospects for Reform: Existentialism as an Alternative Framework

Despite these challenges, the Nigerian educational system also presents prospects for reform. Several reforms in curriculum and pedagogy have already attempted to move beyond rote learning toward creativity, critical thinking, and student-centered approaches (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). However, these reforms often remain superficial because they do not rest on a clear philosophical foundation.

Existentialism offers such a foundation. By grounding education in the principles of freedom, responsibility, and authenticity, Nigerian educators can move beyond the colonial and examination-driven legacies that still shape the system. Existentialist pedagogy places the learner at the center of the educational experience by transforming them from passive recipients into active co-creators of knowledge. Rather than focusing on rote memorization of facts, it emphasizes a deeper engagement with ideas, dilemmas, and questions that challenge students to think critically and reflectively. This approach links the freedom of learning to a profound sense of responsibility, reminding learners that the choices they make in their academic journey mirror the choices they will face in life. At its core, existentialist teaching seeks to cultivate authenticity, encouraging students to approach education not merely as a pathway to employment or societal approval, but as a vital process of self-discovery and the shaping of one's identity and purpose. The prospects are especially promising in the age of digital learning and globalization. Nigerian students increasingly access global conversations

through technology. If guided existentially, they can engage with these conversations not as imitators of Western thought but as authentic contributors from their own cultural context.

Balancing Existential Individualism and African Communalism

One potential challenge in applying existentialism to Nigeria lies in reconciling its emphasis on individual freedom with African communal values. African philosophy often emphasizes community, interdependence, and the Ubuntu ethic of "I am because we are" (Mbiti, 1969). Existentialism, by contrast, foregrounds the individual's responsibility for choice.This tension, however, need not be seen as a contradiction. Existentialist education in Nigeria can stress that authentic individuals are not isolated atoms but beings-in-the-world, whose choices inevitably affect others. Sartre himself acknowledged this: every choice is simultaneously a projection of values onto humanity. Thus, existentialist education can complement African communalism by grounding community in authentic individuals who freely and responsibly choose solidarity, rather than in conformity enforced by tradition.

Existentialism and the Transformation of Nigerian Education

The challenge before Nigerian education is not merely infrastructural or administrative; it is deeply philosophical. Reform efforts often falter because they focus on surface-level issues funding, curriculum adjustments, examination reforms without addressing the underlying assumptions about what education is for. Existentialism provides a critical alternative framework. By insisting on freedom, authenticity, and responsibility, existentialism reorients education away from conformity and mere credentialism toward personal transformation and societal renewal. In this section, I argue that existentialism, far from being a foreign philosophy, offers insights that can resonate with Nigeria's present needs. The discussion will proceed by outlining key areas where existentialism can guide transformative reforms: pedagogy, curriculum, teacher-student relationships, ethical formation, and the reconciliation of individuality with community.

The first site of transformation lies in pedagogy. Nigerian classrooms are often dominated by the teacher-centered model, where teachers are the authorities and students the passive recipients. Paulo Freire's critique of the "banking" model captures this reality vividly: students are treated like accounts into which teachers deposit information (Freire, 1970). Such pedagogy stifles creativity, undermines responsibility, and cultivates dependency. Existentialist pedagogy offers an alternative. Sartre's insistence that humans are "condemned to be free" means that students cannot be reduced to objects of instruction; they must be engaged as subjects. Dialogue, rather than monologue, becomes the central method of teaching. Greene (1973) highlights the transformative role of teachers who position themselves as co-inquirers rather than dictators of truth. Teachers, in this sense, are not simply authorities but companions who provoke students to think, to question, and to own their learning.

Applied in Nigeria, this would mean fostering classroom practices where students debate issues, challenge assumptions, and connect knowledge to their lived realities. Literature classes, for instance, could move beyond plot summaries to discussions of existential themes in Achebe or Soyinka, encouraging students to grapple with questions of fate, choice, and authenticity. Science education could be reframed to emphasize inquiry and problem-solving

rather than memorization of formulas. Such shifts would not only make learning more meaningful but also cultivate the very independence and courage needed to confront Nigeria's social and political challenges.

The second site of transformation is the curriculum. Much of Nigeria's curriculum remains overly utilitarian, geared toward producing employable graduates rather than reflective citizens. While employability is important, existentialism reminds us that education must also address the deeper question of what it means to be human. Kneller (1958) insists that existentialist education is less about the "what" of knowledge than the "who" of the learner. In practice, this calls for a curriculum that integrates humanistic disciplines literature, philosophy, history, and the arts with vocational and scientific training. Nigerian students need not only technical competence but also opportunities to engage questions of meaning, values, and purpose. For example, philosophy could be introduced earlier in the curriculum, not merely as an academic discipline but as a practice of questioning life. Students could be encouraged to reflect on existential themes in African oral traditions, myths, and proverbs, thereby grounding existentialist insights in indigenous wisdom. Courses could also integrate case studies of moral dilemmas in contemporary Nigeria corruption, religious extremism, unemployment challenging students to confront ambiguity and make responsible choices. Such curricular reforms would balance technical skills with existential reflection, producing graduates who are not only employable but also authentic and responsible citizens.

Existentialist thought also calls for a radical redefinition of the teacher student relationship. In many Nigerian classrooms, the relationship is hierarchical: the teacher commands, the student obeys. This reproduces conformity and discourages initiative. By contrast, existentialist pedagogy envisions a more egalitarian relationship grounded in mutual respect. For Sartre, to treat another as an object is to engage in "bad faith." Authentic relationships require recognizing the other as a free subject. Applied to education, this means teachers must resist the temptation to treat students as empty vessels or mere exam candidates. Instead, they should see students as unique beings with possibilities to be nurtured. Greene (1973) goes further, arguing that the teacher must be a "stranger"someone who interrupts the familiar and opens new horizons for the student.

In Nigeria, this would entail creating classrooms where teachers encourage questions rather than suppress them, where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth rather than failures to be punished. Teachers themselves would need to be re-trained to see their role not as authoritarian figures but as facilitators of authentic dialogue. Teacher education programs, therefore, must be redesigned to incorporate existentialist insights, emphasizing empathy, dialogue, and ethical responsibility.

One of the gravest problems in Nigerian education today is ethical decay. Examination malpractice, plagiarism, and corruption erode the credibility of the system. Existentialism's insistence on responsibility offers a philosophical framework for addressing this challenge. For Sartre (1946), freedom is inseparable from responsibility: when we choose, we choose not only for ourselves but for humanity. In educational contexts, this means students must be made to see that cheating is not merely a violation of rules but a denial of their own authenticity. To cheat is to live in "bad faith," pretending one is capable without actually being so. Education that

stresses existential responsibility would therefore frame academic integrity not simply as compliance but as an expression of one's humanity.

Practical reforms could include integrating ethics across the curriculum rather than relegating it to occasional civic education courses. For instance, students in science could be exposed to the ethical dimensions of research, while business students could engage with case studies of corruption in Nigeria. By embedding ethical reflection into all disciplines, Nigerian education could cultivate graduates who see responsibility as inseparable from freedom.

Existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger highlight the centrality of anxiety in human existence. Kierkegaard describes anxiety as the "dizziness of freedom," while Heidegger sees it as revealing the nothingness of existence. Anxiety, for existentialists, is not a pathology to be eliminated but a reality to be confronted and transformed. This insight is highly relevant for Nigerian students, who often face profound uncertainty regarding their academic future amid strikes, about employment prospects in a struggling economy, and about security in unstable regions. Traditional education tends to ignore or suppress such anxieties, focusing instead on standardized achievement. Existentialist education would acknowledge anxiety as part of learning. Teachers could help students confront uncertainty by engaging in reflective discussions, encouraging resilience, and affirming the courage to act despite ambiguity.

In practical terms, this could involve integrating reflective practices such as journaling, group discussions on life's challenges, or mentorship programs where students openly discuss the anxieties of career, identity, and nationhood. Such practices would not remove uncertainty but would equip students with the courage to live meaningfully in its midst.

Perhaps the most delicate issue in applying existentialism to Nigeria is reconciling its emphasis on individuality with African communal values. Critics might argue that existentialism, with its insistence on personal freedom, undermines the communal ethos central to African life (Mbiti, 1969). However, such a view may rest on a misunderstanding of both traditions. Existentialism does not advocate solipsism; Sartre himself acknowledges that one's freedom is always exercised in relation to others. Likewise, African communalism does not erase individuality but situates it within community. As Kwame Gyekye (1997) argues, African philosophy embodies a "moderate communitarianism," which balances individual autonomy with communal belonging. An existentialist framework for Nigerian education can thus complement, rather than contradict, African communal values. Students can be taught to see that authentic freedom entails responsibility for others. Group projects, community service, and cooperative learning can provide practical ways of integrating individuality with communal responsibility. In this sense, existentialist education in Nigeria would not undermine community but strengthen it by rooting communal life in authentic individuals who freely choose solidarity.

Prospects for Policy and Practice

The transformation of Nigerian education through existentialism cannot occur at the classroom level alone; it requires systemic change. Policymakers must recognize that philosophical frameworks shape educational practice. A national policy that explicitly integrates existentialist principles freedom, responsibility, authenticity could guide reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher education.

The *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) already acknowledges the need to produce citizens who are creative, resourceful, and morally upright. Existentialism provides the philosophical grounding to realize this vision. Teacher training institutions should be restructured to include courses in philosophy of education, with emphasis on existentialist thought. Curricula should integrate reflective and dialogical methods across disciplines. Assessment systems should be diversified to include not only examinations but also projects, portfolios, and reflective essays that encourage originality and responsibility. If implemented thoughtfully, such reforms could gradually shift Nigerian education from conformity to authenticity, from credentialism to character, and from rote learning to responsible freedom.

Critical Reflections and Possible Objections

No philosophical proposal is without tension, and existentialism as a framework for education in Nigeria is no exception. While the preceding sections have highlighted the promise of existentialist pedagogy its capacity to foreground individuality, authentic choice, and self-responsibilityit is essential to recognize possible objections and critically evaluate whether these ideas can be sustained in the Nigerian educational and socio-cultural context. Engaging such criticisms does not weaken the argument but rather strengthens it by acknowledging limitations and clarifying how existentialist insights might be fruitfully adapted.

One major criticism centers on the perceived individualism of existentialism. Philosophers such as Sartre (1943) emphasize radical freedom and personal responsibility, a perspective that may appear to conflict with the communal orientation of African societies. Nigerian traditional values, often expressed through the philosophy of *ubuntu* or Yoruba notions of *omoluabi*, stress the importance of community, respect for elders, and social harmony. Critics may argue that existentialist education risks undermining these communal values by elevating individual autonomy above collective responsibility. As Gyekye (1997) has observed, African communitarianism places identity within the context of social relations, making it difficult to fully endorse an educational philosophy that emphasizes the solitary burden of choice. Yet, the apparent opposition between existentialist individualism and African communalism is not insurmountable. Nyerere (1968), in his reflections on education in Africa, emphasized that genuine freedom cannot exist without responsibility toward the community. Similarly, existentialist thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir (1997) argue that authentic existence involves recognizing the freedom of others and working toward a shared world. In this light, existentialist education in Nigeria could be reframed not as a rejection of communal values, but as a call to cultivate individuals who take ownership of their role in sustaining and renewing the community. The existentialist stress on authenticity might actually strengthen Nigerian communal values by ensuring that participation in tradition and social structures is a matter of personal commitment rather than blind conformity.

A second objection relates to practical policy constraints. Nigerian schools often operate under rigid government curricula, overcrowded classrooms, and examination-oriented assessment systems. Critics might argue that existentialist ideals of open-ended dialogue, freedom of inquiry, and personalized learning are impractical in a context where teachers are

overburdened and resources are scarce. It may be contended that existentialist education is a luxury for well-resourced Western systems, not for an underfunded Nigerian one. However, this objection underestimates the adaptability of existentialist pedagogy. As Greene (1988) suggests, existentialist approaches do not demand vast resources but rather a reorientation of the teacher's role, one that moves him from authoritarian transmitter of knowledge to facilitator of meaning-making. Even within large classrooms, teachers can introduce practices that invite self-expression, critical questioning, and reflective choice. Moreover, Nigeria's ongoing curriculum reforms (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013) already emphasize creativity, problem-solving, and learner-centered pedagogy, which aligns with existentialist principles. Thus, existentialist education may be less a radical disruption than a deepening of reforms already underway.

A third critical concern arises from religious and cultural sensibilities. Nigeria is deeply religious, with Christianity and Islam shaping much of its moral and educational landscape. Some critics may argue that existentialist themes of radical freedom, the absence of predetermined essence, and confrontation with absurdity may be perceived as threatening to religious convictions about divine purpose and moral order. For instance, Sartre's atheistic existentialism, captured in his dictum that "existence precedes essence," might jar with the theological claim that God endows human beings with essence and purpose. Nevertheless, existentialism is not reducible to atheism. Thinkers like Kierkegaard (1989) offer a theistic existentialism that emphasizes faith as a passionate choice, while Marcel (1963) highlights the role of hope, fidelity, and transcendence. An existentialist framework for Nigerian education can therefore be appropriated in a way that resonates with religious perspectives by focusing on the shared existentialist commitment to authenticity, responsibility, and the seriousness of human freedom. Indeed, Kierkegaard's emphasis on the "leap of faith" might even speak powerfully to Nigerian students navigating the tension between tradition and modernity.

Another objection concerns the psychological burden of freedom. Critics might argue that introducing existentialist notions of radical responsibility could overwhelm students already facing socio-economic hardships. If every learner is told that they alone must shape their future, without sufficient structural support, the result may be anxiety rather than empowerment. This worry echoes Camus' (1942) recognition of the absurd: the confrontation between human longing for meaning and the apparent indifference of the world.

Yet existentialist education does not leave learners isolated. As van Deurzen (2010) reminds us, existentialism acknowledges anxiety as an inevitable aspect of human life, but also as a catalyst for growth. By helping students face uncertainty with courage, existentialist pedagogy prepares them for the realities of Nigerian society, where economic instability, corruption, and political upheaval are common. Rather than shielding students from these difficulties, existentialist education equips them with the resilience to confront them authentically. The challenge, then, is not to minimize anxiety but to guide learners in transforming it into a resource for responsible living.

Finally, there is the question of cultural authenticity. Some may ask whether applying existentialism, a European philosophical tradition, risks perpetuating intellectual dependence rather than fostering an indigenous Nigerian philosophy of education. This objection resonates with critiques from African philosophers such as Hountondji (1983), who warns against

uncritical adoption of foreign frameworks. This concern is crucial, but existentialism need not be imported wholesale. As Wiredu (1996) and Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992) argue, African philosophy can fruitfully engage with global ideas through critical appropriation. Existentialist principles can be harmonized with indigenous values such as *omoluabi* (Yoruba virtue ethics), which also emphasizes integrity, responsibility, and authentic moral character. By interpreting existentialism in dialogue with African thought, Nigerian education can achieve a genuine synthesis rather than mere imitation.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has sought to demonstrate that existentialism, though often perceived as a Western philosophical tradition, provides a fertile framework for reimagining education in Nigeria. At its heart, existentialism emphasizes freedom, responsibility, authenticity, and the pursuit of meaning in an uncertain world. These principles speak directly to the challenges of Nigerian education, where rigid curricula, exam-driven assessment, underfunded schools, and socio-political instability frequently reduce learners to passive recipients of information rather than active creators of knowledge. By foregrounding the lived experience of students and calling for education that nurtures personal responsibility and authentic choice, existentialism offers a path toward renewal.

One of the central insights developed in this paper is that existentialist education does not imply an uncritical embrace of individualism. While thinkers such as Sartre (1943) stress the radical responsibility of the individual, other existentialists, including Beauvoir (1997) and Marcel (1963), highlight the relational dimension of freedom and the necessity of recognizing others as co-authors of meaning. When interpreted in dialogue with African communitarian values such as *omoluabi* and the broader ethos of solidarity that characterizes Nigerian society, existentialism need not undermine communal life but can instead enrich it. Authentic individuals are not isolated beings but committed participants in sustaining the social fabric.At the same time, existentialism equips learners with the resilience to navigate the crises of contemporary Nigeria. The recognition, emphasized by Camus (1942), that life entails absurdity and uncertainty resonates with the lived realities of Nigerian youth who face unemployment, corruption, and instability. Rather than offering false assurances, existentialist pedagogy prepares students to confront these conditions with courage, creativity, and a sense of ownership over their futures. This resilience, cultivated in the classroom, has the potential to radiate outward into society, fostering citizens who are capable of questioning, resisting conformity, and engaging in constructive transformation.

Of course, adopting existentialism as a framework for Nigerian education is not without its challenges. Concerns about resource scarcity, cultural authenticity, and religious sensibilities are legitimate and must be addressed. Yet, as argued, existentialism is adaptable: its emphasis on freedom and responsibility can harmonize with theistic worldviews; its pedagogical practices can be integrated even in under-resourced classrooms through dialogical methods; and its global insights can be critically appropriated alongside African philosophical traditions to avoid intellectual dependency. The critical reflection section has shown that objections, far from being insurmountable, open avenues for contextual reinterpretation that can make existentialist education genuinely Nigerian. In practical terms, existentialism invites Nigerian

policymakers, teachers, and curriculum developers to shift emphasis from rote learning to inquiry-based, student-centered education. It calls for classrooms where learners are treated not as vessels to be filled but as individuals engaged in the project of becoming. It also urges teacher education programs to cultivate facilitators who can guide learners through existential questions rather than impose prefabricated answers. At the level of policy, existentialism reinforces current educational reforms that emphasize creativity, problem-solving, and learner agency, but it grounds them in a deeper philosophical vision.

Future research could further explore how existentialist pedagogy might intersect with indigenous African philosophies of education, thereby producing a genuinely hybrid model. Empirical studies could also examine how existentialist-inspired practices influence student engagement, resilience, and critical thinking in Nigerian classrooms. In this way, existentialism would not remain a purely theoretical proposition but would translate into measurable educational outcomes.

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Professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force: Historical Influences and Challenges, 1960–1999

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Abstract

This paper explored the historical development of professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) from 1960 to 1999, analyzing it amid a dynamic historical context. The study utilized historical analysis drawing on primary sources including government reports, police records, and archival materials, alongside secondary scholarly works. It assessed how professionalism, characterized by ethical conduct, accountability, and public trust, evolved within the NPF. The investigation revealed that the force's colonial origins, extended periods of military rule, and internal challenges significantly influenced its professional standards. Systemic corruption, political interference, inadequate training, and resource shortages emerged as persistent barriers, undermining the NPF's operational capacity and contributed to public disillusionment. This erosion of professionalism manifested in the force's struggles to address escalating crime rates and civil disorder, alongside the growing reliance on vigilante groups by communities. By tracing these developments across the post-independence era, the paper underscored the lasting impact of historical factors on the NPF's institutional framework. These findings illuminated the intricate relationship between historical context and law enforcement efficacy, offering valuable perspectives for understanding ongoing challenges in Nigerian policing.

Introduction

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF), established under British colonial rule in the 1930,(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007) emerged as the nation's primary law enforcement agency following independence in 1960. The NPF inherited a complex legacy rooted in a colonial framework which was designed for control rather than service(Audu, 2025). That foundation shaped its post-independence trajectory. This paper examined the historical experience of the NPF from 1960 to 1999, focusing on the concept of professionalism and its evolution, challenges, and impacts during this period. Professionalism in law enforcement is defined here as ethical conduct, accountability, competence, and public trust(Afegbua, 2025). It was critical for

maintaining law and order and fostering societal cooperation, particularly in a post-colonial state like Nigeria, where the police navigated the dialectics of national identity, military dominance, and socio-economic upheaval(Hills, 2007).

Historical Background

The NPF's post-independence journey began with its formal establishment as a centralized force in 1960, unifying regional police units under a national mandate(Tamuno, 1970). Initially modeled after the British constabulary, the NPF was tasked with maintaining law and order in a newly sovereign state(Audu, 2025). However, this transition was disrupted by the 1966 military coup, which dissolved regional forces and centralized authority under the Inspector-General, aligning the police with the federal government's agenda(Ojo, 2009).

Post-Independence and First Republic (19601966):

The struggle for legitimacy of The Nigeria Police Force followed independence in 1960. It continued to operate alongside local administration police forces in the Northern and Western Regions. According to Sunday Effiong (2024), policing in the early 1960s relied more on visibility as violent crimes were not as prevalent, and people were generally more cautious in the presence of police officers. Ahmad Abdulramin Madori (March 25, 2025) interviewed believed that the highest level of police professionalism in Nigeria occurred in the 1960s.

However, the local police forces coexisting with the NPF were reportedly poorly trained, corrupt, and used for partisan political purposes(Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010). Some of such purposes included the brutalization of opponents, by traditional rulers, politicians, and political parties.

The Military Era (19661979): Militarization and Decline in Police Professionalism

Nigeria's first four decades after independence were dominated by successive military dictatorships(HRW, 2010). The military rule had a negative impact on police professionalism. According to Victor Olaliwaju,(2024) the military frequently undermined the rule of law, which was the police's responsibility to uphold. This therefore placed the police in a challenging position. Such challenges limited their ability to maintain professionalism and public trust. Police repression reportedly became increasingly intensified under successive military regimes after 1966(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000).

The Second Republic and Renewed Reforms (19791983)

Nigeria transitioned to civilian governance in 1979. This ushered in the Second Republic. During this period the Nigeria Police Force received favourable attention. This period saw Police Mobile Force PMF squadrons equipped with Armoured Personnel Carriers APCs and new rifles. Officers were receiving promotions regularly. Various incentives were being provided. For Sunday Effiong (2024, this gesture undoubtedly spurred officers to perform their best and enhanced professionalism. Despite the reported positive developments, the military era returned in 1983.

Muhammedu Buhari /Idiagbon military regime (19831985)

Police professionalism in Nigeria was shaped by a mix of militarization, discipline-oriented governance, and anti-corruption campaigns. The administration projected a strong stance on law and order. Its methods often conflicted with democratic norms and undermined aspects of police professionalism. The regime viewed law enforcement through a militarized lens. The police were subordinated more directly under military rule and were often used as an enforcement tool to execute government decrees without civilian oversight. These affected police professionalism in multiple ways. Under Buhari and Idiagbon, the police were made to serve as instruments of fear. Though discipline was the slogan, it came at the expense of civil liberties. Officers were expected to enforce laws with military precision, often ignoring legal procedures and rights(Alemika E. , 1993).

A central hallmark of the regime was the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) which was launched in March 1984(Udoette, 2025). The Nigeria Police played a key role in implementing this program. It aimed to enforce public morality and social order. While it promoted a facade of professionalism, in practice, it often turned the police into moral enforcers rather than professional law enforcement officers(Udoette, 2025). Ironically, the period saw more attention to discipline and moral behavior within the police force itself. Officers were expected to model the behaviors the regime sought to enforce in society, including punctuality, neatness, and sobriety. However, this was more cosmetic than structural reform. The police training curriculum was not fundamentally altered. What changed was the expectation of immediate, visible discipline. And this demand rarely translated into internal professionalism or systemic improvement(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007, p. 119).

The Babangida Era and the Challenges of Reform (19851993)

During this time, the military reportedly confiscated APCs and other riot control equipment meant for civilian policing(Effiong, 2024). This contributed to a decline in morale and productivity. For Effiong, “My CRO remained as Inspector for more than ten years.”Constables remained in one rank and cadre beyond ten to thirteen years. A senior military officer was quoted as stating a preference for not "training two militaries in a country,” Effiong highlighted this as a prejudicial attitude towards the police and a major origin of the NPF's poor performance during certain periods. Despite these challenges, he recalled instances of professionalism within Nigeria during domestic operations in this era. For example, in 1986-1987, it reportedly took a high level of professionalism for the NPF to track down the notorious Anini robbery gang. For him police "apprehended them and prosecuted them" despite press descriptions of the gang leader's elusive nature. Furthermore, Effiong mentioned that the Force successfully quelled the Maitatsine riots in Kano in the 1980s. He concluded that considering the available logistics, the NPF discharged their duties effectively during this period. Although effectiveness can be subjective. There was the existence of training and retraining programs, including police colleges and the Police Staff College in Jos and POLAC in Kano. This also demonstrated a commitment to professionalism.

However, the period equally witnessed public reactions and demonstrations against the structural adjustment program from 1986 to 1990. Here police and soldiers were reportedly deployed to quell the riots. This led to casualties. Successive military governments installed few

effective checks on abuses of police authority. This encouraged misconduct and corruption to flourish, and contributed to declining morale. Poor remuneration, delayed promotions, and a lack of public appreciation led to frustration among officers(Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010).

The Sani Abacha regime (19931998)

This marked one of the most repressive and militarized periods in Nigerian history. Under his rule, police professionalism suffered severely. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was subordinated to the state's authoritarian agenda. The force was used less as a civil protector and more as an instrument of political suppression, surveillance, and control(Usoh, 2012). The police became deeply politicized. They were routinely used to harass, detain, or torture critics of the regime, especially pro-democracy activists, journalists, and opposition figures. For Alemika(1993), the Abacha years were a descent into fear. Police stations, once centers of civil complaints, became holding cells for regime critics. Professional standards were subverted by a new loyalty to state terror.

The Nigeria Police Force suffered neglect in funding, training, and equipment. Despite being used extensively by the regime, officers lacked the resources and modern techniques to engage in professional law enforcement. What existed was a hollow shell of a police force; they were uniformed, armed, and deployed, but untrained, unpaid, and unaccountable. Professionalism was not merely lacking; it was structurally discouraged(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).

The image of the police as servants of the people was thoroughly eroded. Citizens feared police checkpoints, dreaded being arrested, and avoided police institutions, knowing they were extensions of military despotism. Police professionalism was undermined by widespread corruption and nepotism. Promotions were politicized, and some senior officers were appointed based on loyalty to the Abacha regime rather than merit. It became a force where loyalty to a dictator ensured promotion, and professionalism withered. Integrity was often either undermined or punished; while "compliance" was rewarded(Erhabor, 2025).

General Abdulsalami Abubakar transition period (19981999)

This marked a period of critical interregnum between militarized repression and nascent democratic reform. It was a moment of cautious hope, but it also exposed the structural hollowness of the Nigeria Police Force after years of abuse under military regimes. General Abdulsalami Abubakar assumed office on June 8, 1998, following the sudden death of General Sani Abacha. His regime was essentially transitional. It was tasked with organizing elections and returning the country to democratic rule within a tight timeline of less than one year.

Although the police were expected to play a neutral and supportive role in the electoral process, the force was still plagued by the legacy of decades of politicization, militarization, and mistrust. The Abubakar regime did not undertake comprehensive reforms of the force; instead, it prioritized the political handover. According to Arase, the police remained in a reactive state, burdened by systemic dysfunction. Though the political atmosphere had relaxed, the police were institutionally unprepared to support the demands of a democratic transition(Arase &

Iwuafor, 2007). By 1998, the Nigeria Police Force had been severely underfunded, poorly trained, and lacked modern logistical equipment. Many officers were demoralized and unmotivated, while the public harbored deep suspicion toward the force due to its complicity in repression under Abacha. Despite the change in government, the culture within the police had not shifted. Brutality, extortion, and abuse remained widespread, reflecting institutional decay rather than the political climate alone.

The 1999 general elections, which ushered in the Fourth Republic under President Olusegun Obasanjo, were a major test of police neutrality and professionalism. The police were deployed across the country for security and electoral support duties, but their performance revealed serious shortcomings. During the 1999 elections, the police lacked electoral policing training. Many were unaware of rules of engagement in civil matters. In some areas, they were either complicit in electoral fraud or unable to control violence(Lekan, 2024).

Despite this, the elections were deemed relatively peaceful, more due to public enthusiasm for civilian rule than effective police professionalism. The short-lived Abubakar administration made no attempt to address the internal weaknesses of the police force. No new training institutions were introduced, no policy framework was implemented, and the structural culture of impunity persisted. According to Alemika, the failure to begin institutional police reform during the transition was a missed opportunity. The police entered the Fourth Republic with their authoritarian baggage intact. And as the civilian rule resumed on May 29, 1999, the Nigeria Police Force remained a broken structure operating within a new democratic framework(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007, p. 4). The need for reform was acknowledged but deferred. This left the Obasanjo government to inherit a force ill-equipped to support democratic governance.

Military Use and Abuse of the Police

Military regimes redefined the role of the police from law enforcement to regime preservation. Police officers were often co-opted to enforce draconian decrees. And this militarized role engaged them to suppress dissent, detain political opponents, and manage the dynamics of "order" while the real administrative power lay in military hands(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). This created a hybrid security arrangement in which the police were both subordinate to and scapegoated by the military. Under successive regimes, the police became an instrument of state power, often prioritizing regime security over public safety(Ojo, 2009).

Civilian Governance and Reform Rhetoric

In contrast, the brief civilian administrations of the First (19601966) and Second Republics (19791983) projected a more humane vision of policing. There was rhetorical emphasis on constitutionalism, civil liberties, and professionalism. However, the translation of these ideals into policy was marred by political manipulation and weak oversight structures(Erhabor, 2025).

Political elites often used the police to harass rivals, rig elections, or suppress protests. Although State governors lacked operational control over Commissioners of Police, they often used informal channels to influence postings and deployments(Ewah, 2025). The result was a politicized force caught between loyalty to the federal command architecture and subservient

to state actors. The brief civilian Second Republic (1979-1983) offered a momentary shift, but its collapse under military intervention in 1983 reinforced the NPF's subordination to authoritarian control.

Significant Events and Changes

Several pivotal events marked the NPF's evolution. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) necessitated a militarized approach, as the police supported the army in quelling the Biafran secession, blurring lines between civil and military roles(Tamuno, 1970, p. 245). This period saw an influx of demobilized soldiers into the force. This further entrenched a paramilitary culture in the police.

Concept of Professionalism in Law Enforcement

Professionalism in policing entails adherence to ethical standards, disciplined conduct, and a commitment to public service(Argungu, 2025). It refers to the degree to which officers demonstrate competence, ethical conduct, and commitment to the rule of law, guided by institutional standards, specialized training, and a public service ethos. It is not merely the wearing of uniforms or hierarchical rank but the consistent display of lawful behavior, procedural fairness, and civic responsibility. For Hashimu Argungu, Police professionalism is a broad concept encompassing all facets of police work, from station management to complaint handling and investigative procedures, along with adherence to laws and ethics. According to him, it is written down in the code. Despite these written standards, Argungu noted a gap between the standards and their actual implementation. While standards were often written down, the challenge lied in officers obeying them. For the NPF, this ideal was articulated in its official codes, such as the Police Act of 1967, which mandated impartiality and competence(Alemika E. , 1993). However, translating these principles into practice proved challenging. Training programs, such as those at the Police College in Ikeja and Staff college Jos, aimed to instill professionalism, but they were often underfunded and outdated, reflecting colonial curricula rather than post-independence realities.

Alemika (1993) further expands this in the Nigerian context: “Professional policing entails training, adherence to lawful procedures, respect for rights, and continuous performance evaluation. It must serve not rulers, but citizens, in an accountable and transparent manner.” Professionalism in the Nigeria Police Force involves:

(i) Upholding the Nigerian Constitution and criminal laws without fear or favor.
(ii) Discharging duties with discipline, restraint, and respect for human dignity.
(iii) Being accountable to civilian oversight bodies, and responsive to community needs.
(iv) Avoiding acts of corruption, partisanship, brutality, and unlawful detention.

In essence, professionalism is both a standard to strive for and a measure by which public trust in policing is judged. Between 1979 and 1999, this standard was repeatedly compromised, as this study demonstrates.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma police professionalism include:

Accountability and Oversight Principle

Accountability is a cardinal element of democratic policing. The legitimacy of the police in a democratic society depended on public acceptance and support. The dynamics of modern Nigerian society and increased public awareness placed police activities under public scrutiny, demanding accountability(Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010).

Internal Disciplinary Mechanisms:

There was a goal to strengthen internal discipline mechanisms. Enforcing discipline was to be done without fear or favour (Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).Police Regulations contained sections for police discipline, offences, reporting, investigations, punishments, and appeals. Disciplining superior police officers for breaching the code of ethics was covered in the curriculum. It outlined processes and procedures in line with the constitution, civil service rules, Police Act…, and Police Service Commission Act (NPF, 2025).

Code of Conduct Enforcement:

A Police Code of Ethics sets the standards for ethical behaviour. The code stated that officers must uphold the law regardless of the offender's ethnic or social status. They must not abuse their powers for special treatment or personal gain, nor use excessive or unnecessary force. Officers were expected to hold themselves to a higher standard of behaviour, both professionally and personally.

The Police Regulations contained the Code of Conduct for Nigeria Police officers. The Code of Conduct, along with Police Ethics and etiquette, was a topic covered in police training and curriculum. It was aimed for attitudinal change(NPF, 2025). According to the Police Act(LFN, 1990), every police officer is personally liable for any misuse of powers or acts exceeding their authority. Officers are required to use their best endeavour to uphold the force's good name and further good relations with the public. They must be determined and incorruptible and have strict regard for the correctness of their general behaviour.

Legislative initiatives were needed to review the Police Act and Regulations to include explicit guidelines conforming to international conventions and principles on law enforcement conduct. Disciplining officers for breaches of the code of ethics was part of the procedure for superior police officers(NPF, 2025).

Respect for Human Rights

Respect for human rights was a fundamental aspect of policing in a democratic society(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).Respect for human rights, particularly concerning arrest, detention, and interrogation, was declared as part of the new order of police service delivery. Police were expected to uphold qualitative justice delivery. This included obeying lawful court orders and facilitating the conviction of the guilty and acquittal of the innocent. Priority was to be given to the pre-trial rights of accused persons. And extrajudicial punishment of suspects by police officers was abhorred.

Challenges to Professionalism

The NPF's colonial origins posed a foundational obstacle. Designed to enforce imperial control, the force retained a legacy of coercion rather than community service, a trait that persisted post-1960(Ahire, 1991). Military rule exacerbated this, as the police were frequently deployed to suppress dissent, undermining their autonomy and ethical grounding(Olukoshi, 1995). The integration of military personnel and the emphasis on order over justice further distanced the NPF from professional ideals, creating a force more akin to a paramilitary unit than a civilian agency.

According to Arase, in discussing Police Colleges and Historical Evolution of Training in the Nigeria Police: "Training is an invaluable tool for the effective policing of any society. An untrained or ill-trained police officer lacks the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude for effective crime control and is also a threat to the society"(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007). This clearly ties into how neglecting professional values and civil rights training undermined police effectiveness and public trust throughout the period under review.

To confirm the colonial origin of the College and the outdated curriculum retained after independence, Arase argued that: "The Police College Ikeja, established in 1930, served as the apex institution for training police officers in Nigeria... its training emphasized drill, discipline, parade and colonial-style law enforcement, which remained largely unchanged well into the post-independence era."(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007)

Poor Training and Human Resource Development

A central challenge that significantly impeded the professionalization of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was the pervasive issue of poor training and inadequate human resource development. This deficiency affected officers from recruitment to advanced levels. It limited their capacity, competence, and ability to effectively and ethically police a post-colonial, and increasingly complex, society.

The foundation of police training in Nigeria was deeply rooted in its colonial origins. It significantly shaped its initial philosophy and curriculum(Osayande, 2008). The colonial police forces were established and maintained primarily for order maintenance, repression, and protecting colonial interests. It was rather not meant to serve the indigenous population(Effiong, 2024).

Despite the evolution of the Nigerian state and society, the training curriculum was limited. It largely failed to adapt to the demands of democratic policing and civic engagement. Erabhor indicated a lack of overhauling of the curriculum. This resulted in training that lacked relevance to real-world challenges and left officers feeling underprepared. The content was often described as narrow in scope, deficient in liberal subjects. These were crucial for understanding human behaviour and the dynamics of a complex society:

> The content of the training is deficient in liberal subjects such as sociology, psychology and political science. Furthermore, refresher training for officers is infrequent. These inadequacies associated with selection, screening, testing and refresher training of officers at different times in their career adversely impact on discipline, orientation, attitude,

performance and conduct of Nigeria Police.(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000)

This perpetuated a style of policing often characterized by a "master-servant" relationship inherited from the colonial structure. And it hindered self-expression and innovation among officers(Effiong, 2024). Institutions like the Police Staff College and the Police Academy were established and it offered various courses. However, the overall impression of training quality was often one of limitations and a lack of innovation in teaching methods.

Beyond the initial training, the NPF suffered from a significant lack of structured and continuous retraining programs(Erhabor, 2025). Officers were often not provided with adequate refresher courses throughout their careers. Some never had commensurate course before or after promotions or new postings. This infrequent refresher training meant that officers' knowledge and skills stagnated. It failed to keep pace with evolving crime patterns, societal changes, and advancements in policing techniques(Erhabor, 2025). The absence of consistent professional development hindered the force's ability to improve its services and adapt to new challenges.

The necessity of compulsory refresher courses for officers with significant years of service had been suggested as a critical area for attention.

The outdated curriculum and lack of retraining contributed to a negligence in teaching. Crucial principles of ethical conduct, civil rights, and community policing were relegated(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). There were initiatives like the introduction of Fundamental Rights Enforcement training and Personnel and Civil Populace relationship studies. However, these efforts appeared to have been insufficient to fundamentally alter the force's orientation. The paramilitary focus inherited from the colonial era meant that training prioritized command and control over community engagement and human rights(Olaliwaju, 2024).

The lack of training in liberal subjects, psychological methods, and social dynamics meant officers were often ill-equipped to handle complex interactions with the public. They were less likely to understand the socio-economic factors contributing to crime(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). This fostered mutual hostility and prejudice between the police and citizens. Reorientation workshops were suggested to help officers acquire a proper mindset for policing a democratic society and to enlarge the curriculum to include human rights education and international codes of ethics. There was global emphasis on community policing. Nigeria was no exception with the establishment of Police Community Relations Committees. Despite this, the force struggled to genuinely embrace this philosophy, partly due to the ingrained "colonial mentality" and lack of trust(Effiong, 2024).

Gender Sensitivity and Training Gaps

The exclusion of women from operational responsibilities limited the diversity and responsiveness of the force(Jibrin, 2025). Until the late 1990s, gender was not a significant concern in police recruitment or deployment. Female officers were often relegated to administrative or clerical roles, with limited exposure to operational or leadership functions(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007). As regards equality and justice, available information show that the police had not fared well. In 1993, women constituted 4.8% (6,900) of the 137,734 officers in the Nigeria Police Force. Further broken down, women constitute 4.1% and 8.0% of the junior

and senior officer cadres(Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010). Women officers suffered statutory discrimination in the areas of marriage and posting. In a study of gender relations and discrimination in the Nigeria Police Force, 44.6% and 57.6% of male and female police respondents reported that there were discriminations in the Force(Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010).

The Police Service Commission and the Police Council

Civilian oversight of the police became formalized through two constitutional bodies: The **Police Service Commission (PSC)** and the **Nigeria Police Council (NPC).** The PSC had broad powers to appoint, promote, discipline, and dismiss all police officers except the Inspector-General. It also set guidelines for these processes. "The Police Service Commission shall have the power to (a) appoint persons to offices in the Nigeria Police Force; and (b) dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding any office" (Alemika E. , 1993).

Despite its authority, the PSC was often inactive, especially under military regimes. It lacked staff, funding, and support. Yet, its mandate remained critical to professionalism in the force. The oversight body meant to ensure proper functioning of the NPF (the Police Service Commission) did not operate for greater number of years of military rule. Its long absence affected effective human resources management.

The **Nigeria Police Council,** created in the 1963 and 1999 Constitutions, included the President, State Governors, the PSC Chairman, and the Inspector-General. Its duties involved supervising police administration and advising on IGP appointments. The Constitution defined the functions of the Police Council to include:

- the organization and administration of the Nigeria Police Force.
- the general supervision of the Nigeria Police Force (Alemika & Chukwuma, Analysis of police and policing in Nigeria A desk Study on the Role of Policing as a Barrier to Change or Driver of Change in Nigeria, 2010).

Unfortunately, just like the experience of PSC the Police Council rarely met and failed to fulfil its policy and oversight role.

Inadequate Funding and Logistical Constraints

A major obstacle to the development of police professionalism in Nigeria was the chronic problem of inadequate funding and severe logistical constraints. This persistent underfunding hindered effective policing. The challenge was not merely a periodic setback but a fundamental structural problem. It undermined every facet of police operations and development, contributing significantly to institutional decay. The problems of poor funding were often compounded by poor management(Osayande, 2008) of the scarce resources that were made available. However, in the midst of the purported paucity of funds, analyst observed that few Generals and their accomplices were observed to be stupendously wealthy, suggesting the possibility for "kleptocratic compromise"(Anonymous, 2025).

Budgetary Neglect and Inequitable Resource Allocation

Throughout the period under review, the NPF suffered from consistent budgetary neglect. Funding allocated to the police was often insufficient to meet their operational requirements. This led to significant shortfalls. At independence in 1960, the Nigeria Police Force had approximately 12,000 officers. By 1979, this number had increased to around 80,000, many of whom were poorly trained and equipped(Watch, 2025). During this period, the military governments perceived the NPF as a potential threat to their power and, as a result, deliberately underfunded the force. Between 1984 and 1988, the NPF's operating budget remained in the ₦360 million to ₦380 million range. In 1988, it increased to ₦521 million(Wikipedia, n.d.). Despite these investments, an NPF study in late 1990 concluded that the force's budget needed to double to meet its operational needs.

By the 1990s, the NPF's reputation for corruption was well-established. A 1994 report noted that "most people just join the police to make money."(Watch, 2025) In 1986, the National Security Organization was dissolved, and the State Security Service (SSS) was created. Initially, the SSS drew from the police's budget. This further strained the NPF's financial resources. Inefficient budgeting processes continued. The NPF lacked autonomy in determining its priorities. It relied heavily on the Ministry of Finance. This centralized budgeting process often resulted in misallocated funds and unmet basic resource needs(Africa: Nigeria Police Budget Process, n.d.).. There was overemphasis on recurrent expenditure. A significant portion of the NPF's budget was consumed by salaries and allowances. This left little for training, logistics, or infrastructure development(Wikipedia, n.d.). Political interference continued. Frequent regime changes and centralization hampered consistent long-term budgeting or reform. This led to a lack of effective checks on abuses of police authority and allowing misconduct and corruption to flourish(Watch, 2025).

According to Parry Ossayande (2008), there was not only under budgeting but also a failure to release budgeted funds in full. For him, the method of budgeting in the country does not take adequate care of all the requirement or priorities of the Police. Coupled with this is the non-release of some of the estimated funds in the annual budgets. A close study of the funding of the Nigeria Police Force shows that:

> from 1984 to 2007 the highest the Police had was 7.7% of the total Federal budget. An analysis of the budget figures also reveals that the allocations attained the highest peaks of 7.6% and 7.7% of the total budget in 1999 and 2007 respectively during which period the government expected much from the Police by way of maintenance of law and order in a democratic society as ours. It is necessary to observe that over 60% of the total Police budget is devoted to the payment of the emoluments of Police personnel, leaving less than a meager 40% for overhead cost and capital expenditure. The implication is that this has been a serious hindrance to effective Policing (Osayande, 2008).

This situation was exacerbated by the perception, particularly within military regimes, that the police, being larger than the military at independence, were a potential counter-force, leading to their marginalization and neglect. Successive military governments were criticized

for installing few effective checks on police authority abuses, partly by failing to adequately fund the force, allowing misconduct to flourish as officers resorted to unofficial means for survival and operational costs.

Evaluation, Disciplinary Systems, and Merit-Based Promotions

To encourage discipline and reward excellence, the NPF developed clearer rules for evaluating officers. Misconduct was handled through a well-defined disciplinary code. Offences included corruption, insubordination, and discreditable conduct. Punishments ranged from fines and suspension to dismissal.

> The power to enforce discipline among the officers and men of the police is spread across the upper ranks of the police hierarchy. The Inspector General of Police can mete out punishment to officers from the ranks of Inspector downwards. Senior officers from the ranks of Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner, Assistant Inspectors General and Deputy Inspectors General of Police can take disciplinary action against officers below the rank of Inspector. They can also hand out minor reprimands to officers of the Inspectorate cadre. Officers from the ranks of Assistant Superintendents to Assistant Commissioners have the authority to give minor disciplinary punishment to all other officers below the rank of Inspector.

The Nigeria Police Force had introduced and refined various accountability mechanisms. Internal units like the X-Squad and Provost Marshal played important roles in curbing misconduct. The re-establishment of the Police Service Commission and Police Council created constitutional avenues for civilian oversight. Evaluation systems and disciplinary rules emphasized professionalism, even though they were imperfectly enforced. These measures laid a foundation for a more disciplined and ethically grounded police force. However, they also highlighted the limits of reform in a context marked by military rule, underfunding, and weak political will.

Failures in Oversight and Accountability

The lack of internal control mechanisms contributed to a culture of impunity, where erring officers operated without fear of sanctions. There were no effective internal control mechanisms to check excesses of officers... The failure of government to discipline erring officers encouraged impunity, and internal complaints systems either did not exist or were viewed as mere formalities. Officers Morale and Welfare was low:

> Throughout military rule, morale in the police force was significantly undermined by poor welfare conditions, irregular promotions, and lack of institutional support. Many officers lived in appalling conditions, with no water or electricity, and had to buy uniforms and stationery from their salaries. Promotions were delayed, morale was low, and corruption became a survival mechanism rather than a vice(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).

Corruption and Its Impact

Corruption became a defining feature of the NPF from 1960 to 1999, eroding its professional integrity. Bribery, extortion, and collusion with criminals were rampant, as documented in government inquiries and public accounts(Agbiboa, 2013). During the oil boom of the 1970s, corruption escalated with economic opportunities, while the austerity of the 1980s and 1990s deepened it, as officers supplemented meager salaries through illicit means(HRW, The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities, 1999). This undermined the NPF's credibility, transforming it into an institution often feared rather than respected.

Political Interference and Its Effects

Political interference was a persistent barrier to professionalism(Ewah, 2025). Military regimes used the NPF to enforce authoritarian policies, as seen in the brutal suppression of the 1990s anti-SAP protests and the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995. Civilian governments, too, manipulated the force, notably during the Second Republic's electoral disputes(Ojo, 2009). This subordination stripped the NPF of independence, aligning its operations with political agendas rather than public welfare.

Inadequate Training and Resources

Chronic underfunding plagued the NPF, limiting its capacity to develop a professional workforce. Training facilities were inadequate, and equipment, such as vehicles and communication tools, remained outdated(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). The integration of poorly trained ex-soldiers during military rule further diluted skill levels, while low morale and pay fostered unprofessional conduct(Odekunle, 1979). These deficiencies hindered effective policing, particularly in addressing rising crime rates in urban centers like Lagos and Port Harcourt.

Conditions of Service, Salaries, Welfare, and Psychological Effects

The condition of service remained poor through much of this period. Salaries were low, housing was substandard, and medical care was unreliable. The welfare gap was so severe that many officers resorted to extortion and bribery to survive (Lekan, 2024).

> In Nigeria, the average policeman is inadequately educated for the roles he is expected to play. Further, he is inadequately trained for the police work, he is poorly remunerated and equipped and resented by the public... As a result, discipline and motivation of officers suffer(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000).

Some efforts were made toward improvement. Welfare insurance schemes, barracks rehabilitation, loan schemes, and pension reforms gave modest support (Arase & Iwuafor, 2007, p. 225).

Public Perception and Trust

Public perception of the NPF as corrupt, brutal, and inefficient deepened over the decades. Surveys from the period indicate widespread distrust, with citizens often turning to vigilante groups for protection(Effiong, 2024). This cycle of alienation reduced cooperation, further impairing the NPF's ability to function professionally.

Impact of Professionalism on Police Efficiency

Influence on Duty Performance

The NPF's lack of professionalism compromised its operational effectiveness. High crime rates, including armed robbery and communal violence, persisted in the 1980s and 1990s, partly due to the force's inability to adapt to Nigeria's growing urban challenges(Odekunle, 1979).

Effect on Public Trust and Cooperation

Unprofessional conduct, which was evidenced by human rights abuses and extortion, severely eroded public trust. The recurrent crackdown on pro-democracy activists after the annulment of June 12 1993 election, often involving arbitrary arrests and torture, exemplified this breach(HRW, The Price of Oil: Corporate Responsibility and Human Rights Violations in Nigeria's Oil Producing Communities, 1999). As trust waned, citizens increasingly relied on informal justice systems, such as the Bakassi Boys in the Southeast, signaling a rejection of NPF authority. This dynamic weakened the force's societal role, perpetuating a cycle of inefficiency and illegitimacy.

Arase observed that the resultant consequence of these led to trust deficit:

> The public's perception of the police shaped their cooperation with law enforcement, which in turn impacted on the overall security outcomes. The average Nigerian perceived the police as corrupt, abusive, and ineffective. The police had become alienated from the people they were meant to serve, with fear replacing trust and suspicion replacing cooperation(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007, p. 198).

Erosion of Civil Values in Policing

There existed no independent body or internal mechanism with the power or will to monitor police conduct, review operations, or sanction erring officers in any meaningful manner during the years of military rule. The police remained focused on regime survival and public order, not civil liberties or professionalism. Officers were often more afraid of their superiors than of violating the rights of the citizens. Senior police officers were routinely incorporated into leadership positions, including taking political appointments as state administrators(Ekpoudom, 2025.) It went without saying then that whatever may have been the compelling arguments for the intrusions of the military into politics; the Nigeria Police Force was as culpable for the descent to the grim harvest of military rule in Nigeria(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).

Role of Professionalism in Aligning Policing with Democratic Norms

With the end of military rule in sight, the police introduced some measures to improve their human rights record. One example was the establishment of the **Human Rights Desk** in Lagos State police divisions, and later the **Police Duty Solicitor Scheme (PDSS).** These were steps toward ensuring constitutional rights in police custody (Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).

Nevertheless, these efforts were limited and late. Most police officers had internalized the practices of the military era. Arrest without warrant, brutality, and contempt for due process had been prevalent. The officers and men of the Nigeria Police became faced with the arduous duty of reorienting themselves from the old policing methods prevalent in the military dispensations to the new policing ethics that suit a democratic society. In this new dispensation, citizens' rights were to be encoded in the constitution and the state had the responsibility of protecting such rights from violation by either its agents or other citizens. The difficulty of this change in attitude explained why some police personnel were still indulgent in the use of unwarranted and excessive force in the discharge of their duties. Conflicting Stakeholders' interests had hindered the development of community-oriented policing. Thus, professionalism was often aspirational rather than actualized. The gap between the legal mandate and the operational reality remained wide.

Conclusion

From 1960 to 1999, the Nigeria Police Force evolved under the weight of colonial legacies, military dominance, and internal frailties. Its transition from a colonial tool to a national institution was marked by a struggle to embody professionalism, thwarted by corruption, political interference, and resource scarcity(Imobighe, 1990). These challenges did not only undermine the NPF's effectiveness but also entrenched a public perception of it as an oppressive rather than protective institution(Onoge, 1993). The period's legacy revealed a force shaped by Nigeria's turbulent history. This was centralized under military fiat, strained by economic crises, and challenged by societal expectations. While the return to democracy in 1999 offered hope for reform, the NPF's professional deficits which was rooted in decades of systemic neglect, persisted(Arase & Iwuafor, 2007).

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A Critique of Jus Ad Bellum and Jus in Bello as Considerations for War

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Abstract

The principles of Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello, which are also referred to as the laws of just war, have been widely discussed and debated by scholars and policymakers for decades. These principles aim at regulating the conduct of war and ensuring that conflicts are conducted in a just and ethical manner. While these principles have been widely accepted and applied by the international community, they also carry several limitations, including subjectivity and interpretation, enforcement and accountability challenges, complexity and ambiguity in application, as well as susceptibility to power dynamics and selective application. This paper with the aim of critiquing the two principles, adopts analytic and hermeneutic philosophical methods. It questions the possibility for strict adherence to these principles for a just war. It argues that there are some challenges (limitations) associated with humans and their personal gains that often may becloud consideration of these principles for just war. This paper urges the contemporary society to shift its focus from justifying war and regulating combatant activities to the prevention of war and the promotion of dialogue for mutual co-existence. This approach leads to stronger alliances, increased trust and a greater potential for finding shared solutions to global challenges. Moreover, from an ethical standpoint, the prevention of war aligns with fundamental principles of human rights, justice, and compassion. The promotion of harmony reflects our collective responsibility to protect and respect the dignity and well-being of all individuals. Humans should promote non-violence and means to peaceful resolutions that is the means to uphold the values of empathy, understanding, and equality.

Introduction

Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello are two important concepts within the field of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that govern the conduct of armed conflicts. These principles provide guidelines and regulations for the ethical and legal aspects of engaging in war and how to conduct oneself during armed conflict. By interpretation, Jus ad Bellum means "right to wage war", it focuses on the justification and legitimacy of resorting to war. While Jus in Bello means "the law of war or the law of armed conflict", it governs the behaviour of parties involved in armed conflict. In other words, the former outlines the conditions under which a state is justified in using military force against another state. These conditions include just cause, right intention, last resort, proportionality, and reasonable prospect of success. While the later outlines the ethical principles that should govern the conduct of soldiers and the treatment of civilians during war. These principles include the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the principle of proportionality, and the principle of necessity. These two IHL principles have been crucial in their potential to promote ethical conduct during armed conflict and minimize human suffering. However, like any complex ethical framework, Just War Theory is not without its critics.This paper critically examines the foundations, implications and limitations of Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello.

Jus ad Bellum

Jus ad Bellum, which translates to "justice of war" in Latin, is a concept within international law that focuses on the criteria and principles for determining when a state is justified in resorting to war. It provides a framework for assessing the legitimacy of a state's decision to engage in armed conflict. The origins of Jus ad Bellum can be traced back to ancient times, with its development and evolution influenced by various legal, philosophical, and religious traditions. To be specific, the concept of Jus ad Bellum finds its roots in classical antiquity, specifically in ancient Greece and Rome. Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle contributed to the understanding of the justifications for going to war. Plato, in his work *The Republic,* argued that war should only be waged for defensive purposes or to promote justice (45). Aristotle, in his work *Politics,* elaborated on the concept of "just war" by emphasizing the importance of a just cause and proportionality in war (112).

The principles of Jus ad Bellum were further developed during the Middle Ages within the framework of Christian theology and natural law theory. St. Augustine of Hippo, a prominent Christian theologian, laid the foundation for the Christian understanding of just war in his work *The City of God.* Augustine argued that war could be morally justified under certain conditions, such as self-defense, protection of the innocent, and restoration of peace (325). However, he also emphasized the importance of conducting war with restraint and in accordance with moral principles. His ideas influenced subsequent theologians, including St. Thomas Aquinas. Hence, Aquinas in his masterpiece *Summa Theologica,* expanded upon Augustine's ideas and formulated the foundational principles of Jus ad Bellum within a Christian moral framework. Aquinas outlined three essential conditions for a just war:

(1) a legitimate authority declaring war,
(2) a just cause, and
(3) a rightful intention (147).

He also emphasized the importance of proportionality and the avoidance of unnecessary harm to non-combatants.

The modern formulation of Jus ad Bellum began to take shape with the emergence of the modern nation-state system and the development of international law. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked a significant turning point, as it established the principle of state sovereignty and recognized the need for legal frameworks to govern interstate relations (1-5). The Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius made significant contributions to the field with his work *On the Law of War and Peace*. Published in 1625, this influential treatise outlined the principles of just war theory based on natural law. Grotius also argued that war could be justified in cases of self-defense, defense of others, and the punishment of wrongdoing (58). However, it was not until the twentieth century that the principles of Jus ad Bellum were codified and widely accepted by the international community. During this era, the development of international law and the establishment of international organizations further shaped the principles of Jus ad Bellum. The United Nations Charter, adopted in 1945, contains provisions aimed at preventing aggression and promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force in international relations, except in cases of self-defense or when authorized by the UN Security Council (United Nations, 15).

In a nutshell, Jus ad Bellum focuses on the justification for resorting to war. It establishes the conditions under which a nation can ethically and legally engage in armed conflict. According to Brian Orend, a prominent scholar in the field of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the main criteria for Jus ad Bellum include just cause, legitimate authority, right intention, last resort, probability of success, proportionality, and the principle of reasonable hope (43). Just cause entails the presence of a significant and morally acceptable reason for initiating war, such as self-defense against an armed attack or protection of innocent civilians from egregious human rights violations. Legitimate authority refers to the authority of a recognized government or an internationally mandated body to declare and engage in war. Right intention emphasizes the importance of pursuing just and fair outcomes rather than selfish or malicious motives. Last resort implies that all peaceful means of resolving the conflict have been exhausted before resorting to war. Probability of success considers the likelihood of achieving the desired outcome through military action. Proportionality requires that the projected benefits of the war outweigh the expected harm. Lastly, the principle of reasonable hope stipulates that the expected benefits of the war should outweigh the costs and risks involved. Jus ad bellum incorporates all these principles with a prime motive of preventing unnecessary wars and promoting a just and peaceful international order.

Jus in Bello Principle

Jus in Bello, also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict, is a set of legal principles and rules that govern the conduct of parties engaged in armed conflict. It focuses on establishing limits and regulations for the use of force and protecting individuals who are not or no longer taking part in the hostilities (Smith 15). The term "Jus in Bello" is derived from Latin words, "Jus" meaning law and "in Bello" meaning in war, put together, it translates to "the justice in war" or "the law in war". It aims to balance the military necessities of armed conflict with the principles of humanity, proportionality, and respect for human dignity (Jones 27). In

other words, Jus in Bello establishes the ethical and legal rules that govern the conduct of belligerents during armed conflict. Its primary goal is to limit the suffering inflicted upon individuals and protect their dignity even in the midst of war. These principles are especially crucial when it comes to differentiating combatants from non-combatants and regulating the means and methods of warfare. For example, the principle of distinction requires that combatants must distinguish between military targets and civilians, and they are prohibited from directly targeting civilians or civilian objects (Bartels 127). This principle, rooted in the principle of discrimination, requires parties to the conflict to distinguish between those who are taking part in the hostilities (combatants) and those who are not (civilians) (Johnson 42). The principle is enshrined in numerous international treaties and conventions, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols. It is aimed at minimizing the harm inflicted on civilians and preventing their direct targeting.

Another interrelated but important principle of Jus in Bello is the prohibition of targeting civilians and non-combatants. Parties to the conflict are prohibited from deliberately targeting civilians or carrying out attacks that would cause excessive civilian casualties (Brown 58). This principle is closely related to the principle of distinction and is meant to ensure that civilians are not subjected to unnecessary suffering and harm during armed conflict. The principle of proportionality is also a key aspect of Jus in Bello. It requires that the anticipated military advantage of an attack must outweigh the expected harm to civilians and civilian objects (Miller 73). Clearly put, the principle of proportionality inherent in Jus in Bello requires that the harm caused to civilians and civilian objects must not be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage gained. It therefore implies that the use of force must be proportionate to the legitimate military objective. This principle serves as a safeguard against excessive and indiscriminate use of force, ensuring that the harm caused during armed conflict is not disproportionate to the military advantage sought.

Furthermore, Jus in Bello prohibits the use of certain weapons and tactics that cause unnecessary suffering or violate the principle of discrimination. Examples of prohibited weapons and tactics include chemical and biological weapons, indiscriminate attacks, and torture (Anderson 89). To be concise, Jus in Bello encompasses other rules such as the prohibition of unnecessary suffering, the prohibition of torture, and the obligation to provide medical care to the wounded and sick (Bartels 139). These rules aim to safeguard the rights and well-being of individuals directly affected by armed conflict, even if they are combatants. It is essential to adhere to these principles in order to preserve humanity and minimize the suffering inflicted upon individuals caught in the midst of war.

A Critique of jus ad Bellum and Jus ad Bello

The significance of Jus ad Bellum lies in its ability to provide a moral and legal framework for evaluating the legitimacy of war. It serves as a guide for policymakers, military leaders, and international institutions when considering the use of force. By establishing clear criteria, Jus ad Bellum helps to prevent the abuse of power and promotes accountability in the international arena. Furthermore, Jus ad Bellum has had a significant impact on the development of international law and the establishment of institutions dedicated to maintaining peace and security. The United Nations, for instance, was founded with the goal of preventing future wars

and promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts. Its Charter incorporates many principles of Jus ad Bellum, such as the prohibition of the use of force except in self-defense or with authorization from the Security Council. The International Criminal Court (ICC) also plays a crucial role in enforcing Jus ad Bellum principles by prosecuting individuals responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Jus in Bello is of significant importance as it establishes legal and moral standards for the conduct of armed conflict. It provides guidelines to minimize human suffering, protect civilians, and preserve human dignity during times of war. By upholding the principles of Jus in Bello, nations and combatants can strive for a more civilized approach to warfare and work towards the prevention of unnecessary harm and devastation. However, while Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello are useful framework for regulating the use of force between states, they have several limitations that must be taken into account.

In the realm of cyber warfare and information operations, there have been several critics of the traditional framework of Jus ad Bellum, which refers to the justification for resorting to war. Peter W. Singer and Allan Friedman argue that the traditional criteria of Jus ad Bellum, such as just cause and proportionality, are ill-suited to address the complexities of cyber warfare (52). They highlight the difficulty in attributing cyber attacks to specific actors and the potential for escalation without clear rules of engagement. Michael N. Schmitt, an expert in international law, explores the challenges of applying traditional legal frameworks, including Jus ad Bellum, to cyber operations. He suggests that new legal interpretations are needed to adapt to the unique characteristics of cyber warfare, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of the term "armed attack" in the context of cyber activities (248). Gary P. Corn and Bradley J. Strawser critically examine the compatibility of just war theory, which encompasses Jus ad Bellum, with the challenges posed by cyber warfare. They argue that traditional just war principles need to be reconsidered to account for the distinct nature of cyber operations and the difficulties in applying concepts such as proportionality and discrimination to the cyber domain (247).

Another obvious critic of Jus ad Bellum is its subjectivity and potential for varying interpretations. The principles outlined in Jus ad Bellum, such as just cause, proportionality, and reasonable prospects of success, are open to subjective judgments. As Walzer points out, "moral and legal interpretations of Jus ad Bellum can vary widely" (23). Different policymakers, legal experts, and scholars may interpret these principles differently, leading to divergent conclusions about the justification for war. Another limitation of Jus ad Bellum lies in its enforcement and lack of accountability mechanisms. While Jus ad Bellum provides criteria for the just initiation of war, there is no established international body responsible for enforcing these principles or holding nations accountable for violations. Tesón observed this when he posits that, "Jus ad Bellum is largely unenforceable, leaving each state to decide for itself whether to comply with the principles or not" (121). As a result, states have significant discretion in determining the legitimacy of their own actions, which can lead to abuses and conflicts.

Jus ad Bellum faces the challenge of complexity and ambiguity in its application. The principles and criteria outlined in Jus ad Bellum do not always provide clear-cut answers or straightforward guidelines for decision-making. In concordance, May contends that "the

complexity and uncertainty inherent in international relations make Jus ad Bellum difficult to apply consistently" (134). Consequently, real-world situations often involve intricate geopolitical dynamics, diverse stakeholder interests, and contested interpretations of facts. As a result, the application of Jus ad Bellum can be highly complex and subject to interpretation, making it challenging to reach consensus on the justification for war.

More so, Jus ad Bellum is susceptible to power dynamics and selective application by dominant nations. Powerful states often have the ability to shape the narrative and interpretation of the principles outlined in Jus ad Bellum to suit their own interests. As Falk argues, "Jus ad Bellum is often applied selectively, reflecting the power dynamics within the international system" (183). This can lead to biased assessments of the justifiability of war and allow powerful nations to engage in military actions that may not meet the established criteria. Bellamy challenged Jus ad Bellum for its focus on the initiation of war rather than the conduct of war. For him, "Jus ad Bellum criteria require that states have just cause, right intention, proper authority, last resort, reasonable chance of success, and proportionality before going to war" (51). However, once the war has begun, there are no clear guidelines for how the war should be conducted. This gap in the framework can lead to significant human rights violations and humanitarian disasters during the course of the war. Jus ad Bellum is limited by its focus on state sovereignty. The framework is designed to regulate the use of force between states, but it does not adequately address the use of force by non-state actors, such as terrorist groups or transnational corporations. This gap can lead to situations where non-state actors are able to engage in violence without consequences, undermining the legitimacy of the framework. Additionally, Jus ad Bellum fails to account for the systemic causes of war. The framework assumes that wars occur as a result of individual state actions, rather than structural factors such as poverty, inequality, or resource scarcity (Buzan 56). This limitation can lead to a narrow understanding of the causes of war and limit the effectiveness of efforts to prevent conflicts.

One of the main limitations of Jus in Bello is the difficulty of applying its principles in practice. As philosopher Jeff McMahan notes, "The principles of Jus in Bello, as they have been formulated, are far too general and abstract to provide guidance in specific cases" (57). For example, the principle of proportionality, which requires that the harm inflicted on non-combatants be proportional to the military advantage gained, is difficult to apply in practice because it requires making complex judgments about the value of military targets and the potential harm to non-combatants. In many cases, it may be difficult to determine what counts as a military target, or how much harm to non-combatants is too much. Another limitation of Jus in Bello is that it may be difficult to enforce in practice. A political scientist Cécile Fabre affirms this when he reviews that, "The enforcement of Jus in Bello is notoriously difficult, since it is often impossible to monitor compliance with the rules of war" (73). This means that combatants may be able to violate the principles of Jus in Bello with impunity, which can undermine the effectiveness of the principles themselves.

Jus in Bello does not provide a clear moral distinction between combatants and non-combatants. By moral distinction, this work argues that Jus in Bello should be able to state that before any war commences, those who are not soldiers and the civilians not involved in the war should be separated. As philosopher Michael Walzer notes, "There are no clear lines of demarcation between soldiers and civilians in contemporary wars" (68). This can make it

difficult to apply the principle of distinction, which requires that combatants distinguish between military and civilian targets and refrain from attacking civilians. In many conflicts, combatants may be embedded among civilians, making it difficult to distinguish between the two. Furthermore, Jus in Bello is limited by the fact that it is primarily concerned with the conduct of individual soldiers, rather than the broader political and social factors that contribute to armed conflicts. As political theorist Andrew Linklater observes, "Jus in Bello is oriented towards individual conduct in war, rather than the structural causes of war" (84). This means that Jus in Bello may not adequately address the root causes of armed conflicts, such as economic inequality, political instability, or ethnic tensions.

Evaluation and Conclusion

The challenges associated with Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello necessitate a shift in our approach towards preventing war and promoting harmony. War inflicts immense suffering upon individuals and communities. It causes the loss of innocent lives, the displacement of populations, and the destruction of infrastructure, leaving behind deep scars that take generations to heal. War and armed conflicts have a destabilizing effect on regions and the world as a whole. They create power vacuums, fuel extremism, and lead to the proliferation of weapons. By prioritizing the prevention of war, we can work towards safeguarding human lives and reducing the devastating impact of armed conflicts on vulnerable populations. Shifting our focus to preventing war and promoting harmony can contribute to global stability and security. By addressing the root causes of conflict, such as economic inequality, political grievances, and social injustices, we can mitigate the conditions that give rise to violence and aggression. Obviously, War diverts substantial resources away from productive sectors of society. Enormous sums of money are allocated to military budgets, which could otherwise be utilized for education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and poverty reduction. By preventing war, societies can redirect these resources towards building strong economies, improving living conditions, and enhancing the overall well-being of their citizens.

Shifting our focus to preventing war requires a fundamental change in our approach to international relations. Instead of viewing other nations as adversaries, we should strive for cooperation, dialogue, and diplomacy. By promoting harmonious relationships between countries, we can foster mutual understanding, collaboration, and the resolution of conflicts through peaceful means. This approach leads to stronger alliances, increased trust, and a greater potential for finding shared solutions to global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and disease. Moreover, from an ethical standpoint, the prevention of war aligns with fundamental principles of human rights, justice, and compassion. The promotion of harmony reflects our collective responsibility to protect and respect the dignity and well-being of all individuals. By embracing non-violence and seeking peaceful resolutions, we uphold the values of empathy, understanding, and equality.

In conclusion, due to the limitations (challenges) inherent in Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello, the contemporary society should shift its focus from justifying war and regulating combatant activities to the prevention of war and the promotion of dialogue. By doing so, we prioritize humanitarian considerations, foster global stability and security, enhances economic prosperity, encourage international cooperation, and uphold ethical and moral imperatives.

Through concerted efforts to address the root causes of conflict and to resolve a dispute peacefully via dialogues, every party involved is heard and their needs trashed. By so doing, we can work towards a more peaceful, just, and harmonious world.

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Post-Truth Ideological Framework and the African Knowledge Dilemma

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Abstract

The emergence of post-truth as a central ideological current where emotion and belief often override evidence and rational argument has sparked global debates about truth, authority, and the nature of knowledge itself. For African knowledge systems, long subjected to the distortions of colonialism and epistemic marginalisation, this shift raises urgent questions. This study investigated how the ideological framework of post-truth criss-crosses with Africa's ongoing struggle for epistemic self-determination and the recognition of indigenous knowledge forms. It interrogated the extent to which post-truth culture further complicates or perhaps reopens the space for reasserting local epistemologies that have historically been discredited or silenced. Employing a literature-based methodology and grounded in decolonial thought and critical epistemology frameworks, the study draws from diverse scholarly works across philosophy, political discourse, media studies, and African intellectual traditions. The study acknowledged that while post-truth culture may challenge dominant Western epistemologies by destabilising rigid orders of knowledge, it simultaneously introduces risks such as the blurring of fact and fiction, the co-option of indigenous narratives into misinformation, and the vulnerability of traditional knowledge systems within algorithmic and digital environments. Findings suggest that the African knowledge dilemma in the post-truth age is not merely one of recognition but of survival within an environment of epistemic legitimacy. The study concluded with a call for epistemic vigilance in culturally grounded criteria for knowledge validation, stronger policies on digital literacy, and a reinvigorated commitment to reinventing education systems that centres on African thought.

Keywords: Post-truth, African epistemology, decolonial knowledge, digital culture, epistemic justice, indigenous thought.

Introduction

The growing relevance of post-truth politics has raised fundamental questions about the fate of knowledge and its ideological uses in modern societies. What makes the African situation peculiar is that the epistemic uncertainties of the post-truth condition are based upon an older knowledge dilemma shaped by colonialism, cultural suppression, and external ideological impositions. Harsin (2018) observes that "post-truth is not simply about lies but about the strategic manufacturing of doubt and the erosion of trust in knowledge systems" (p. 11). When this erosion of trust is considered in the African context, it reveals a deeper crisis because knowledge institutions on the continent have long been weakened by ideological domination from colonial epistemologies and the marginalization of indigenous systems of thought.

The post-truth era is frequently described as one in which objective facts hold less sway than appeals to emotion and belief. McIntyre (2018) describes it as "the cultural condition where facts are less influential in shaping opinion than emotion and ideology" (p. 5). For Africa, this dynamic is problematic because knowledge has always been politicized, not only by colonial powers but also by postcolonial elites who mobilize ideology as a tool of control. As a result, the spread of misinformation, fake news, and epistemic distrust echoes with much older struggles about whose knowledge is legitimate and whose should be dismissed. The African knowledge dilemma can be understood as the tension between two competing epistemic authorities that is, the imported Western epistemological frameworks that dominate educational and political institutions, and the indigenous traditions of knowledge that persist marginally. Mudimbe (1988) describes this as "the invention of Africa," where colonial scholarship constructed Africa as an object of knowledge rather than a producer of knowledge (p. x). This invention set the stage for the long-term epistemic dependency of African institutions. Even in the present, when Africans attempt to assert indigenous knowledge as legitimate, they are often confronted with accusations of backwardness or lack of universality. The post-truth condition complicates this situation by intensifying distrust in all knowledge systems, making it harder for African epistemologies to reclaim their authority.

One of the reasons this dilemma persists is that ideology functions as both a mask and a weapon. Crouch (2017) argues that "in the post-truth environment, ideology fills the vacuum left by the weakening of factual authority" (p. 4). In Africa, ideology has historically served the colonial project by legitimizing domination, and it continues to shape postcolonial governance through nationalist, religious, and ethnopolitical discourses. These ideological currents manipulate knowledge flows in ways that reinforce power rather than truth. Thus, while post-truth is often discussed as a recent Western problem, its African articulation reflects a longer history in which ideology routinely supplanted objective knowledge for political ends.

Philosophers of African thought have long emphasized the need to decolonize epistemology to resolve this knowledge dilemma. Wiredu (1998) calls for "conceptual decolonization" to liberate African thought from the "epistemic categories imposed by colonial languages and frameworks" (p. 21). This is not simply a matter of cultural pride, but of epistemic survival in an age where misinformation erodes even established authorities. If post-truth politics destabilizes knowledge globally, then in Africa, it magnifies an already fragile epistemic order that was never fully healed from the ruptures of colonialism.

The role of indigenous knowledge within this discourse cannot be overstated as Ramose (1999) grounds his work in the concept of *Ubuntu*, emphasizing that African epistemology values relationality and community as much as rationality (p. 49). In a context where post-truth privileges emotional persuasion over factual truth, the African emphasis on relational truth could serve as both a challenge and an alternative. However, these indigenous systems remain side-lined by state institutions that privilege Western paradigms. Hountondji (1997) warns that, "endogenous knowledge has been systematically excluded from the institutional framework of African modernity" (p. 35). Post-truth amplifies this exclusion by casting doubt not only on indigenous epistemologies but on all knowledge claims.

This study, therefore, situates the African knowledge dilemma within the broader discourse on post-truth and ideology. It aims to clarify the stakes of epistemic justice and the urgency of decolonial approaches. The objectives of the study are threefold: first, to analyse the conceptual interrelations between post-truth, ideology, and the African knowledge dilemma; second, to examine how colonial and postcolonial ideologies have shaped epistemic dependency; and third, to explore possible pathways for reconstructing African epistemologies in the post-truth age. The following sections will build on these foundations by clarifying key concepts, reviewing existing literature, and developing a theoretical framework that situates the African epistemic struggle within global debates about truth, knowledge, and ideology.

Conceptual Clarifications

Post-truth

The term post-truth gained prominence in political and media studies to describe a cultural situation where emotions and personal beliefs overshadow facts in shaping public opinion. McIntyre (2018) explains that in the post-truth condition, "truth ceases to be the common ground for public debate" and is replaced by rhetorical appeals to emotion (p. 5). This does not simply mean that lies dominate but that truth itself becomes contested. Harsin (2018) goes further to argue that post-truth is a product of systemic forces such as media fragmentation, the proliferation of fake news, and the erosion of institutional authority (p. 11).

While post-truth is often discussed as a Western problem linked to populism and digital disinformation, its African relevance is undeniable. The African public sphere is also saturated with emotional appeals, propaganda, and manipulated truths, often amplified by weak media regulation. More critically, post-truth interacts with Africa's colonial legacy of epistemic dislocation, where truth itself has always been a contested category. Thus, in African contexts, post-truth must be understood not just as a media phenomenon but as part of a larger epistemic crisis where facts, cultural knowledge, and authority are deeply entangled with power.

Ideology

Ideology is best understood as the system of beliefs, ideas, and values through which power is exercised and legitimized. Eagleton (1991) defines ideology as the "ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination" (p. 5). In the post-truth era, ideology plays a central role by filling the vacuum left by the decline of factual authority. Crouch (2017) points that

"where facts are distrusted, ideology becomes the organizing principle of public reasoning" (p. 4).In Africa, ideology has historically functioned as a tool of domination. Colonial powers imposed ideological narratives that justified conquest by presenting African knowledge systems as inferior (Mudimbe, 1988). After independence, postcolonial elites continued to use ideology whether nationalist, ethnic, or religious to consolidate political control. This dual role of ideology reveals why Africa's knowledge dilemma persists as truth and knowledge are not neutral but are always mediated through ideological tensions. As a result, the African engagement with post-truth cannot be separated from the ideological histories that have long shaped its epistemic order.

Knowledge Dilemma

The African knowledge dilemma refers to the unresolved tension between indigenous epistemologies and Western frameworks that dominate schools, universities, and political institutions. Hountondji (1997) points out that endogenous knowledge has been consistently excluded from formal spaces of learning (p. 35). Similarly, Wiredu (1998) argues that African philosophy requires "conceptual decolonization" to escape dependency on categories imposed by colonial languages and intellectual traditions (p. 21).This dilemma is not only about neglect but also about epistemic injustice. Fricker (2007) identifies testimonial injustice when people are not believed due to prejudice and hermeneutical injustice when their experiences are misinterpreted because of conceptual gaps (p. 1). Africans have long experienced both forms, where their knowledge systems are dismissed and their realities misrepresented through external categories. In the post-truth age, the dilemma deepens, because misinformation undermines not only imported knowledge but also indigenous systems, leaving Africans with no stable epistemic ground.

Scholars such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) see in this dilemma a possibility for renewal. He calls for epistemic freedom noting, "the right to think, theorize, and produce knowledge from African experiences and locations" (p. 25). Similarly, Ramose (1999) emphasizes that Ubuntu philosophy provides a foundation for reconstructing African epistemology based on relational truth (p. 49). These perspectives suggest that the knowledge dilemma, while a crisis, is also an invitation to rethink Africa's place in the global knowledge order in ways that respond to both historical injustices and contemporary challenges.

Statement of the Problem

The preceding clarifications show that the African knowledge dilemma is not an abstract philosophical curiosity but a lived crisis of epistemic survival. The central problem is that Africa confronts the global post-truth condition from a position of epistemic vulnerability. The post-truth age undermines institutional trust everywhere, but in Africa those institutions were already weakened by colonial legacies and postcolonial ideological manipulation. Mudimbe (1988) argued that Africa was "invented" through colonial scholarship that denied its role as a producer of knowledge (p. x). This invention created an epistemic dependency that has remained unresolved. Thus, when misinformation and disinformation destabilize truth globally, Africa bears a heavier burden because its own epistemic foundations were historically fractured.

The problem deepens when ideology is consideredjust as Eagleton (1991) noted that, ideology sustains relations of domination by shaping meaning in ways that preserve power (p. 5). In Africa, colonial ideology framed indigenous knowledge as superstition, and this framing has not been fully dismantled in postcolonial institutions. Postcolonial leaders often perpetuate similar patterns by appealing to ethnic, nationalist, or religious ideologies to consolidate power. Crouch (2017) observes again that in post-truth environments, ideology becomes the substitute for factual authority (p. 4). In the African case, this means that ideological struggles continue to overshadow genuine epistemic development, leaving knowledge claims vulnerable to manipulation.

The problem clearly then is the compounding effect of post-truth ideology on Africa's unresolved knowledge dilemma. The concern is not only that truth is in crisis globally, but that in Africa the crisis exposes deeper fractures in epistemic sovereignty. Unless these fractures are critically examined and reconstructed, African societies risk remaining in a cycle of epistemic dependency where truth is always mediated by external powers or internal ideological manipulations.

Literature Review

The concept of post-truth has attracted wide scholarly attention because of its implications for politics, media, and knowledge. McIntyre (2018) defines post-truth as a situation where "objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (p. 5). This definition points to the erosion of truth as the common ground for public reasoning. Scholars have linked this to the spread of misinformation, the decline of trust in institutions, and the polarisation of societies (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017).Harsin (2018) stresses that post-truth should not be seen simply as the result of lies but as a product of systemic conditions such as neoliberalism, media fragmentation, and declining journalistic authority (p. 12). These structural factors mean that the post-truth condition is not random but embedded in political and economic arrangements. Waisbord (2018) adds that journalism itself has been destabilised because "news is no longer seen as a conveyor of truth but as one narrative among many" (p. 1870).

Although these debates often focus on Western democracies, their relevance to Africa is clear. Suiter (2016) explains that the "post-truth moment is global, but it manifests differently depending on local histories and institutions" (p. 26). This insight is critical for Africa, where truth was historically mediated by colonial ideology. The global crisis of truth thus meets an already fractured epistemic environment. Ideology plays a central role in shaping how truth is understood and contested. Eagleton (1991) argues that ideology is the "medium through which meaning sustains relations of domination" (p. 5). This makes it a powerful lens for examining post-truth, where meaning is no longer anchored in fact but in emotion and power struggles. Crouch (2017) observes that in post-truth societies, ideology replaces fact as the organising principle of political discourse.

Mudimbe (1988) demonstrated how colonial ideology invented Africa as a site of lack, portraying indigenous knowledge as irrational and inferior (p. x). This ideological framing was not merely descriptive but it legitimised colonial domination. Even after independence, ideology has continued to shape African epistemologies. Wiredu (1998) notes that African

philosophy still grapples with "concepts imposed by alien languages and traditions" (p. 21), a reminder that ideology persists in postcolonial settings. Hall (1996) adds that ideology should be seen as an ongoing process, not a fixed system. In African contexts, this means that competing ideologies whether nationalist, ethnic, or religious continue to vie for authority, often undermining the stability of truth. Thus, ideology is the bridge that links the global post-truth condition to the African knowledge dilemma.

Wiredu (1998) argues for "conceptual decolonization" to free African thought from categories imposed by colonial epistemologies (p. 21). His call reflects the frustration with a knowledge system that delegitimises local categories of understanding. Ramose (1999) offers Ubuntu philosophy as an example of an indigenous framework that can reorient African epistemology, noting that it places relationality and community at the centre of knowledge (p. 49).Appiah (1992) presents another layer of the dilemma arguing that African intellectuals operate in a space of "double consciousness," drawing from both indigenous and Western traditions but often being evaluated only within Western frameworks (p. 8). This hybrid creates creativity but also dependency. Mudimbe's (1988) position shows that the knowledge dilemma is deeply historical, rooted in the very structures of colonial domination that still influence African thought today. These studies confirm that the African knowledge dilemma is not only philosophical but also practical. The destabilisation of truth through media disinformation directly affects governance, democracy, and cultural life. In this way, the global dynamics of post-truth merge with local epistemic challenges to create a crisis that is both intellectual and institutional.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts decolonial thought and epistemic justice theory as its main frameworks for analysing the post-truth ideological condition in Africa. These approaches provide the conceptual tools for understanding how colonial legacies, ideological manipulation, and the destabilisation of truth is interwoven to create the African knowledge dilemma.

Decolonial Thought

Decolonial thought emerged as a response to the persistence of coloniality beyond the formal end of colonial rule. Quijano (2000) explains coloniality as the "enduring patterns of power that emerged from colonialism and continue to shape culture, labour, and knowledge production" (p. 533). This idea is central because it shows that Africa's epistemic crisis is not accidental but the outcome of long-standing systems that privilege Western epistemologies. Mignolo (2011) expands this point by arguing for "epistemic disobedience," which requires breaking away from Western categories of thought to open space for other ways of knowing (p. 44). His position pinpoints that Africa's knowledge dilemma cannot be solved by simply adding African perspectives into Western frameworks; instead, there must be a shift in the very rules of knowledge production. This connects to Mudimbe's (1988) earlier position of the "invention of Africa" as an epistemological category defined by the West (p. x). Together, these arguments stress that post-truth dynamics in Africa cannot be studied without recognising the colonial structures that still dictate what counts as legitimate knowledge.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) introduces the idea of "epistemic freedom," which he defines as the right of formerly colonised peoples to think, theorise, and know from their own lived experiences (p. 25). His call is timely in the post-truth age, where global instability around truth can be turned into an opportunity for Africa to assert new epistemic directions. In this sense, decolonial thought curate the African knowledge dilemma not only as a problem but also as a site for potential transformation.

Epistemic Justice

While decolonial thought explains the historical and structural roots of the knowledge dilemma, epistemic justice theory helps to understand the moral and ethical dimensions. Fricker (2007) introduces the concepts of testimonial injustice, where someone's credibility is unfairly diminished, and hermeneutical injustice, where whole groups lack the conceptual resources to make sense of their experiences. These concepts are directly relevant to Africa, where indigenous epistemologies were downplayed under colonialism and continue to be undervalued in modern institutions. Santos (2014) describes this condition as "epistemicide," which is the systematic erasure of alternative knowledges (p. 92). His work extends Fricker's argument by situating epistemic injustice in the global South, where knowledge systems have been destroyed or side-lined. Grosfoguel (2007) adds that epistemic justice requires a "pluriversal" approach, where multiple epistemologies coexist without being ranked according to Western standards (p. 213).From these insights, the framework seeks to positions epistemic justice as a necessary response to both the colonial inheritance and the contemporary pressures of post-truth. It insists that Africa's knowledge systems cannot be fully stabilised unless they are recognised as legitimate and valuable in their own right.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design anchored in interpretive analysis. The nature of the research question how post-truth ideology interacts with Africa's knowledge dilemma requires an approach that prioritises meaning, context, and critical reflection rather than quantifiable measurements. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) describe qualitative inquiry as an effort to "make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 10). In this sense, qualitative methods are appropriate for studying questions of truth, ideology, and knowledge, which are not reducible to numerical variables.

Interpretive Orientation

The interpretive approach guides the analysis by situating knowledge within its cultural and historical contexts. Schwandt (1994) explains that interpretation is central to qualitative research because human understanding is always mediated by language, tradition, and social location (p. 118). This insight is important for Africa, where knowledge systems are deeply rooted in indigenous philosophies and experiences. Applying an interpretive orientation allows the study to engage African epistemologies on their own terms, rather than forcing them into Western categories of analysis.In practice, the interpretive method will be applied to textual sources, including philosophical writings, decolonial scholarship, and contemporary studies on post-truth. These texts are not treated as neutral data but as sites of meaning shaped

by ideological and historical conditions. This aligns with Gadamer's (1975) hermeneutic idea that understanding involves a "fusion of horizons," where the researcher brings their own context into dialogue with the text (p. 306). For this study, the interpretive task involves reading texts in light of Africa's colonial history, epistemic struggles, and post-truth realities.

Data Sources

The data for this research are drawn primarily from academic works in philosophy, communication, and African studies. These include both classical texts (such as Mudimbe 1988 and Wiredu 1998) and contemporary analyses of post-truth (McIntyre 2018; Harsin 2018). The use of such sources reflects the study's concern with conceptual and theoretical clarity. Since the topic is philosophical, the data are not survey responses or statistics but intellectual arguments and discourses. Flick (2018) notes that in qualitative research, the richness of textual material can itself serve as data for analysis, provided it is approached systematically. The process of selecting texts was guided by relevance to three key themes which are post-truth as a global condition, ideology and knowledge, and the African epistemic dilemma. These themes emerged from the research questions and were further refined through the literature review. This ensured that the sources analysed were not random but aligned with the focus of the study.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed a critical discourse approach where Wodak and Meyer (2016) describe discourse analysis as a way of examining how language constructs social realities and power relations (p. 5). This was particularly relevant to the study because ideology and post-truth are mediated through discourse whether in philosophical texts, political narratives, or media representations. The procedure involved three steps. First, the texts were read closely to identify key arguments, definitions, and claims. Second, these arguments were examined for their ideological underpinnings, asking whose interests they serve and which knowledge systems they privilege. Third, the insights were interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of decolonial thought and epistemic justice. This process allowed the study to move beyond summarising texts to critically engaging their meaning in relation to Africa's knowledge dilemma.

Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflexivity was built into the methodology as Finlay (2002) argues that qualitative researchers must acknowledge how their positionality shapes their interpretations. As a study conducted within an African context, reflexivity involves recognising both the colonial history of knowledge production and the researcher's role in reinterpreting texts. This helps to avoid reproducing the very epistemic injustices that the study critiques.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the African knowledge dilemma is intensified by the post-truth condition in three key ways: the erosion of trust in knowledge institutions, the ideological manipulation of epistemic flows, and the persistent marginalisation of indigenous epistemologies. This section discusses these outcomes in relation to existing scholarship and

the theoretical frameworks of decolonial thought and epistemic justice.

Trust and Institutional Fragility

The erosion of trust in African knowledge institutions reflects a broader global crisis but is deepened by local historical conditions. McIntyre (2018) notes that post-truth societies are marked by a collapse of consensus on basic facts (p. 9). In Africa, this collapse interacts with a colonial history in which institutions of knowledge were already fragile and heavily influenced by external models. Waisbord's (2018) view that truth is now contingent on narrative suggests that African institutions have even less capacity to maintain credibility in the face of competing narratives. Wasserman and Madrid-Morales (2018) show how disinformation in African contexts thrives because citizens already hold deep scepticism toward media institutions. From a decolonial perspective, this is not surprising. Quijano's (2000) idea of coloniality shows that African institutions were built on structures that privileged Western epistemologies, leaving little space for local legitimacy. The finding on trust therefore supports the argument that decolonial transformation is essential if institutions are to withstand post-truth destabilisation.

Ideology and the Contestation of Knowledge

The role of ideology in shaping epistemic flows also emerged strongly from the findings. Eagleton (1991) defined ideology as the means through which meaning sustains domination. Mudimbe's (1988) critique of the colonial "invention of Africa" (p. x) shows that Africa's knowledge environment was structured ideologically from the beginning. What the findings add is that ideology has not only persisted but adapted to the post-truth era. Hall (1996) argued that ideology is constantly shifting in response to changing contexts. This explains why misinformation in Africa cannot be understood only as false information but also as the re-articulation of older ideological struggles in a new form. Ethnic and religious identities, often politicised, are now blended with global post-truth dynamics, producing environments where knowledge is judged by loyalty to group identity rather than correspondence to fact. From an epistemic justice perspective, this ideological manipulation deepens testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007) because some voices are automatically discounted, not on the basis of evidence but on perceived identity or affiliation.

Indigenous Epistemologies and Epistemic Justice

The most pressing concern remains the marginalisation of indigenous epistemologies. Hountondji (1997) showed that African universities historically value Western frameworks while suppressing endogenous knowledge (p. 35). The findings confirm that this trend continues, compounded by the instability of post-truth conditions. Wiredu's (1998) call for conceptual decolonisation and Ramose's (1999) advocacy of Ubuntu provide concrete pathways for reintegrating indigenous epistemologies, yet these remain largely excluded from mainstream academic practice. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) emphasises that epistemic freedom is necessary for Africa to escape the trap of dependency. From the perspective of epistemic justice, this exclusion is a form of hermeneutical injustice, where African societies are denied the resources to make sense of their own experiences (Fricker, 2007). Santos (2014) adds that such

exclusion amounts to epistemicide, which has long-term effects on the survival of African ways of knowing.

In the post-truth situation, this marginalisation is even more dangerous. Because facts themselves are contested, indigenous epistemologies that were already vulnerable are easily dismissed as unscientific or irrelevant. Yet, as Grosfoguel (2007) argues, the solution lies in embracing a pluriversal epistemology that recognises multiple coexisting knowledge systems. The findings therefore point to the urgent need for Africa to move beyond defending its epistemologies on Western terms and instead assert them as legitimate and necessary frameworks for stabilising knowledge in a fragmented world

Overall, the discussion shows that Africa's knowledge dilemma is not separate from the global post-truth crisis but is uniquely shaped by colonial legacies and persistent ideological manipulations. Decolonial thought explains why these vulnerabilities exist, while epistemic justice theory points at the ethical imperative to address them. The findings suggest that the post-truth era, while destabilising, also opens opportunities for Africa to reconstruct its epistemic order by affirming indigenous knowledge and demanding epistemic freedom.

Conclusion

The study has critically and analytically shown that the African knowledge dilemma cannot be understood outside the broader condition of post-truth, where truth is routinely contested, and facts are shaped by competing narratives. The findings and discussion reveal that trust in African knowledge institutions is severely weakened just as ideological structures continue to manipulate epistemic flows, and indigenous epistemologies remain marginalised in ways that limit Africa's capacity to claim epistemic freedom. These insights show that Africa's knowledge dilemma is both historical and contemporary. It is rooted in colonial legacies yet intensified by the uncertainties of the post-truth era. The theoretical frameworks of decolonial thought and epistemic justice provide the tools for making sense of this dilemma as decoloniality exposes the structural nature of epistemic domination, while epistemic justice emphasises the moral urgency of addressing testimonial and hermeneutical exclusion. The conclusion that emerges is that without a conscious reassertion of indigenous epistemologies, the African knowledge system will remain vulnerable to both external domination and internal destabilisation.

Recommendations

The analysis demonstrates that Africa's knowledge dilemma in the post-truth era requires both institutional reforms and intellectual reorientation. Addressing this challenge calls for deliberate interventions at the levels of policy, education, and scholarly practice. First, there is an urgent need for African governments and universities to strengthen the credibility of institutions of knowledge. In Africa, this means that universities and media organisations must not only deliver reliable information but also invest in transparency and accountability. Policies that enhance independent media, academic freedom, and open access to research would help restore public trust. Second, decolonial approaches should guide curriculum reform. To break this cycle, African universities should embed indigenous philosophies, languages, and epistemologies in their curricula, moving beyond token inclusion. Third, scholars should

commit to advancing indigenous frameworks as legitimate and robust systems of knowledge. Fourth, collaboration between policymakers and academics is essential. African governments should therefore consult knowledge communities when designing policies that rely on facts, such as public health or environmental protection. Likewise, scholars must translate their research into accessible language to reach broader audiences. This would bridge the gap between academic knowledge and public understanding. Finally, continental bodies such as the African Union should adopt knowledge sovereignty as a strategic goal. By supporting regional centres of excellence, funding African language publishing, and protecting intellectual property for indigenous knowledge, the African Union can position epistemic freedom as a cornerstone of development.

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An Appraisal of the Rights of Women under the Shariah

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Abstract

The status and rights of women under Shari'ah remain among the most misunderstood aspects of Islam. This research employed a qualitative and analytical approach to address these misconceptions, arguing that they largely stem from cultural practices and selective interpretations rather than the principles of Islamic law itself. The study juxtaposes the systematically dehumanizing conditions for women in pre-Islamic Arabia with the revolutionary rights granted by Shari'ah, in spirituality, economics, education, and law. The analysis confirms that Islam provided a comprehensive protective framework for women's rights centuries before modern international conventions. The study concluded that the challenge lies not in the divine sources but in their human application, advocating for a return to authentic interpretations to realize Islam's inherent commitment to gender equity.

Keywords: Shari'ah, women's rights, Gender justice, pre-Islamic Arabia, misconception

Introduction

Islam is a monotheistic faith revolving around the declaration that, "there is no deity worthy of worship except God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" ((Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.; Oxford Reference, 2009; Islamic Relief Australia, 2025). Approximately, one-fifth of the world's population are Muslim, with most living in at least fifty-seven Muslim-majority states (International Centre for Human Rights Education, 2009). As against, popular belief, only fifteen percent of Muslims are Arabs, while the largest Muslim populations exist in Indonesia, followed by Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Egypt, and Nigeria (International Centre for Human Rights Education, 2009).Therefore, any, discussions on Islam, including debates about women's rights, must be understood within this multifaceted and global context.

It is against this background that gender issues, particularly women's rights, is regarded as and remains an age-long controversy which cuts across various religions, cultures, and customary practices (Yusuf, 2009). In an Islamic society, the place of women is determined by the Qur'an, the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and interpretations of Islamic law

influenced by social customs and practices (Academy for Peace and Development, 2002). Through Qur'anic revelation and Prophetic Sunnah, Islam liberated women from unacceptable conditions that dominated the pre-Islamic Arabian tribal society.

Yet, the status and rights of women in Islam are among the most misunderstood and misconceived issues of our time, largely due to lack of in-depth knowledge of the Qur'an and outright prejudices against Islam (Naik, 2015).This is affecting not only non-Muslims but also average Muslims and even those ostensibly well-versed in Qur'anic text.The controversy around women's rights under Islamic law is further compounded by cultural practices that are wrongly attributed to Islam because in many cases, these practices contradict the core injunctions and standards of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hence, understanding women's rights under Shari'ah requires returning to authentic sources and disentangling cultural distortions from divine legislation which is one of the main aim of this study.

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to:

i. Examine the rights of women under Shari'ah.
ii. Assess the status of women under Shari'ah.
iii. Provide solutions to clear misconceptions transmitted about women's rights under Shari'ah.

Research Questions

i. Do women have rights or are denied certain rights under Shari'ah?
ii. What was the status of women in pre-Islamic Arabia and other societies?
iii. iii. What are the misconceptions about women's rights under Shari'ah?

Statement of the Problem

The fight to liberate Muslim women from the "supposed arbitrary fang" of Shari'ah is championed by activists and feminists, both non-Muslims and Muslims alike. This disposition, however, could be attributed to lack of Shari'ah knowledge, mistaken beliefs, or deliberate misrepresentation of Shari'ah's actual intent. Therefore, there is a pressing need for immediate response to clear these issues. Although laudable efforts have been made by Islamic writers to dispel such impressions, these efforts seem to have yielded no satisfactory result; this is partly because of the dearth of literature- especially those written in English which is a widely used language worldwide- on women's rights under Islamic law, which when compared to works available on women's rights under secular law, remains under-researched.

In addition to this is the socio-political environment in many Muslim societies that continues to complicate effective implementation of Islamic provisions, leading to practices that are inconsistent with Qur'anic injunctions and as a result this discrepancy between theory and practice propels stereotypes about Islam, particularly regarding the treatment of women. Consequently, the problem this study seeks to address is not merely to add to existing body of scholarship but to also proffer practical suggestions, with significant implications for legal reform, gender justice, and human rights discourse in Muslim societies and beyond.

Literature Review

Several works have been published on rights of women under the Sharî'ah geared towards enlightening and clearing the misconceptions and misunderstanding about the real intent of the Sharî'ah. However, it is very imperative to ensure that the effort is not merely extolled but also encouraged by lending more voices to the quest, as no effort can be held to be enough until the goal is maximally, if not totally achieved. The topic of Muslim women's rights is vast, and even as Muslim jurists have been writing about it for centuries, the paucity of scholarship on it is still bemoaned by Muslim scholars.

Yusuf (2009), in recognition of this deficiency aptly opined that, such rights can never be exhaustively treated in one write up due to so many reasons, among which are the deliberate presentation of falsehood on Islamic issues by some groups and the lack of understanding about a lot of Islamic issues especially concerning women, even among Muslim scholars. In concurrence, Uwais (2009) states that Islamic law and institutions are subjects of gross misinformation and misunderstanding, and as such, Law students in Nigeria and the world over, particularly the western world enter the legal profession as fully-fledged lawyers without any exposure to the Islamic law.

In modern society, many Muslims and non-Muslims lack the in-depth knowledge of the rights of women in Islam, because many Muslim societies have deviated from the ideals of Islam with respect to the status of the woman, thus a wide gap is created between what Muslims are supposed to believe in and what they actually practice (Yusuf, 2009). Supporting this position, Kaura (2003) argues that improper implementation of Shari'ah is perhaps what gave birth to the low acknowledgement of the Muslim woman's rights especially in Nigeria. Scholars like Keddie (1990) underscored the challenges present in the quest to dispel misconceptions on the rights of women under the Shari'ah. He observed that the topic of the rights of a Muslim woman may be particularly wrenching for a scholar who wishes to overcome widespread prejudice against Islam on the one hand, but not ignore the problems of Muslim women on the other hand.

Lending a voice to the acknowledgement of women's right under the Sharî'ah, while drawing support from Chapter 4, Verse 1 of the Quran and the saying of the Prophet (SAW), Khamenei (1989) noted that the Islamic faith and its viewpoint in regard to women's human rights are considered as a big and glorious revolution of women in the world. It is a common consensus amongst Islamic jurists that women's rights under the Islamic law are well guaranteed and protected because Islam ensures that women enjoy virtually all kinds of rights.

Additionally, instances abound in the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PPUH) emphasizing unequivocally and repeatedly the high status of women, gender equality, and the protection of the rights of women. For instance, Qur'an 3:194 translates thus; "...so their lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other." Again, the Qur'an addressing the mutual rights of men and women states: "And they (women) have rights (over their husbands) similar to the rights against them, in kindness, but men have a of responsibility over them. And Allah is Al-mighty All-wise."

In a Hadith reported from the Prophet (PPUH) he said that; "Non- gives respect to women but they are themselves respected,' non gives disrespect to women but they render themselves

disrespectful,' 'fear from Allah for two weak ones, firstly orphans and secondly women', for the man is the same punishment if he teases a woman" That's why authors like Hassan (1996) suggests that the issue of women's rights in Islam is more of a key arena of the debate between traditionalists and contemporary Islam, since there exist documented evidence of Islam's radical revolutionary support for women's due rights and status, even in the days of ignorance, over 1,400 years ago. Again, in some societies, the existence of a vice-like influence of social, cultural and material factors rather than the Islamic teachings seem to be what determines the position of women which has somewhat led to high rate of women's rights subjugation.

In another vein, Mukhtar (2009) stated that there is sufficient historical evidence of Muslim women's participation in the choice of rulers, in public issues, in law making, in administrative positions, in scholarship and teaching, and even in the battle field Thus, reiterating the contents of t Islamic history books , which clearly chronicles the progressive roles played by men and women, both earning respect as scholars and teachers of the Faith, as can be found in the books of Rijal (Reporters of Hadith) which contain the names of many prominent women, beginning with 'Aishah and Hafsah (Hassan, 1996).

According to Marsot (1978), economic and political exigencies are what count, and religion/ideology is used only to legitimatize whatever has been required. She observes that in wartime, women are encouraged to work outside the home, but after the war, domesticity is urged. Furthermore, Bullock (1423AH/2002CE) noted that the methodological problems and biased perspectives have particularly affected Western perceptions of Muslim women and the veil, a line of argument also towed by Isah (1999) who avers that Muslim women in secular states continue to have educational and intellectual rights that are often overlooked or misunderstood.

While Khan (2008) in presenting a comprehensive examination of women's status in Islam, focused on addressing some misconceptions and providing clarifications based on Qur'anic teachings and Prophetic traditions, Doi (1983) on the other hand, emphasizes that women in Shari'ah law have comprehensive rights that were revolutionary for their time, predating many modern legal protections by centuries. It is therefore imperative that the Qur'an and the Hadith must and can be interpreted in a gender-equitable manner. It is not the Qur'an itself, but the patriarchal interpretation of the secondary religious texts by some scholars, that is responsible for the subordination of women.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there exists the need or gaps rather to constantly enlighten the public on the original nature and intent of the Shari'ah, especially in the area of women's rights and in a language that traverses the globe. In addition to contested questions of interpretation, there is also the problem that in-depth analysis, especially in women's rights as guaranteed by the Shari'ah, remain rare, although many scholars and certain countries, are now working to overcome this, as depicted by the Aceh, province in Indonesia, where in 2008, a Charter on Women's Rights, that illustrates the efficacy of a religious-based approach in the struggle to curb gender-specific discrimination was enacted, a laudable step which the teachings of the Shari'ah supports and greatly encourages, as long as such instruments do not in any way trivialises the Shari'ah.

Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative and analytical approach in light of the stated problems and questions. Relevant primary and secondary instruments closely and remotely related to the topic were consulted. In addition, comparative analysis of the status and rights of women under Shari'ah, other religions, and societies before Islam was carried out, leading to deductions and useful recommendations.

Findings

This study undertakes an in-depth investigation of women's rights under Islamic law that reveals a distinct historical narrative which essentially disputes prevailing misconceptions about Islam's treatment of women. The paper specifically attempts to uncover a systematic transformation from pre-Islamic oppressive state to revolutionary empowerment, followed by a detailed analysis of the all-inclusive rights framework established by Islamic law.

Before Islam, pre-Islamic Arabian society demonstrated systematic dehumanization of women as tribal systems that reduced women to mere property, devoid of legal personality or social agency, where men would exercise absolute authority over women's lives, treating them as chattels to be bought, sold, or inherited alongside material possessions were common practice (Zafaran, 2009). That period saw to the birth of a female child as a trigger for profound shame, alongside the practice of female infanticide which was a natural reflection of the extreme rejection of women.

Women were denied their basic rights, such as, inheritance right, property ownership and had no recourse against physical abuse. (Academy for Peace, 2002)Notably, these practices were not peculiar to Arabia, as ancient China, Hindu society, Greek civilization, Roman law, and even Jewish traditions reflected systematic discrimination against women, often treating them as inferior, dependent, or unworthy of education and property, thereby placing women's subjugation as a global reality rather than a regional peculiarity. (Womenin Islam.ws, 2015).

It was against this background that Islam's emergence in seventh-century Arabia marked a revolutionary transformation through the Qur'anic injunctions and Prophetic guidance which recognized women as spiritually equal, economically empowered, socially dignified, legally protected, and politically acknowledged, translating the explicit Qur'anic proclamation on the spiritual equality of men and women into lived experiences which established the foundation upon which other rights rested. (Q4:124; Q16:97; Q33:35).

Similarly, women were granted economic rights that saw them exercising control over property, dower (mahr), maintenance (nafaqah), and inheritance, while socially, daughters, wives, and mothers were accorded dignity and respect. In the aspect of education, the pursuit of knowledge became an obligatory act for all Muslims, male and female alike, with women like Aisha (RA) emerging as leading scholars. Legally, women gained access to justice, property rights, and protections against false accusations and they were also politically empowered to participate in public service, advised leaders, and engaged in community governance.

Furthermore, evidence from Islamic history demonstrates that women served as warriors, nurses, and community leaders during the Prophet's (SAW) era and beyond as stated in the record of Al-Tabari, where the involvement of women such as Nusaybah bint Ka'ab (RA) in defending Medina during the Battle of Uhud, illustrated women's active participation in

societal defense. Again, records have attested to women acting as legal witnesses and petitioners before Caliphs, thus, confirming their recognized legal standing within early Islamic governance.

The findings also significantly unveil the fact that contemporary misconceptions about women's rights in Islam often stem from cultural practices, selective interpretations, or deliberate misrepresentations rather than from authentic Shari'ah principles, especially in the subjects of testimony giving, polygyny, and leadership, where context has been ignored or distorted. In addition, the study pin points that many discriminatory practices presently associated with Muslim societies are remnants of pre-Islamic customs or colonial impositions, rather than reflections of Shari'ah. For example, the denial of women's inheritance in some communities contradicts clear Qur'anic injunctions, as scholars such as Mir-Hosseini (2006) argue that such practices persist because patriarchal structures resist reforms that would empower women socially and economically.

Additionally, the findings suggest that contemporary Muslim women are increasingly reclaiming their rights through education, activism, and reinterpretation of classical jurisprudence as this development reflects a growing awareness that Islam not only permits but encourages women to assert their God-given rights, challenging both cultural distortions and orientalist misrepresentations.

Discussion

The findings reveal that Islam granted women comprehensive rights over fourteen centuries ago, preceding modern international human rights instruments. Also, the comparative analysis shows that women's status in pre-Islamic societies was uniformly oppressive across civilizations, whereas Islam introduced revolutionary improvements, through the Qur'an and Sunnah, which provide a framework addressing spiritual, economic, social, educational, legal, and political dimensions of women's lives. Importantly, the study unveiled the fact that many misconceptions about Islamic law and women's rights arise from lack of authentic knowledge, cultural influences, and deliberate misrepresentation, because a proper understanding and implementation of Islamic law would necessarily provide a balanced approach that considers both individual freedom and social harmony to women's rights.

It is also significant to note that Shari'ah demonstrates adaptability in addressing emerging social challenges through methodological tools like ijtihad (independent reasoning) and maslahah (public interest), for when these mechanisms are correctly and sincerely applied, they can serve and also pave way for reforms that uphold women's dignity in changing circumstances without compromising core Islamic principles. For example, reforms in family law in area such as child custody, polygyny requirements, inheritance laws, protection for women amongst others, across countries such as Tunisia and Morocco reflect attempts to reconcile Qur'anic injunctions with contemporary gender justice concerns.

Furthermore, scholarship suggests that the marginalization of women in some Muslim societies is not inherent in Shari'ah but is perpetuated by socio-political structures that exploit religion, because patriarchal interpretations have often been reinforced by authoritarian regimes that suppress reformist voices. Mir-Hosseini (2006), clearly indicating that the

challenge lies less in the divine sources and more in their human interpretations and applications.

Conclusion

The intersection between international human rights frameworks and Islamic law is germane because of the universal principles that guides justice. While critics often claim irreconcilable conflict, scholars such as Baderin (2003) argue that significant areas of compatibility exist, particularly concerning justice, dignity, and equality, hence, opening a path for constructive dialogue rather than antagonism. In practice, Muslim-majority countries have engaged with international conventions such as CEDAW, though with reservations, reflecting attempts to balance global commitments with local religious norms.

In addition, contemporary Muslim women scholars like Amina Wadud and Asthma Barlas ,are reshaping the discourse by reclaiming interpretive authority, calling for rereading Qur'anic texts through inclusive interpretation, emphasizing justice and equality as central Qur'anic themes, illustrating that women are not only subjects of Shari'ah but also active agents in its interpretation and application.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to inform policy, practice and future research.

i. Muslim women should be encouraged to seek knowledge while observing Shari'ah guidelines on women's appearance in public. for future mothers of Muslim society.
ii. Promoters of equal rights for men and women need to review their agenda. While no one denies that women in some communities are denied rights, it is unrealistic to think that equality is the same as being identical, because Allah has created man and woman to play distinct roles in human society.
iii. There is a need to carry Muslim women along in Shari'ah implementation by allowing female membership in implementation committees and agencies at all levels, with strategic planning to reach women, especially in rural areas.
iv. Comparative study of different religions should be introduced from the early stages of education through to tertiary level, so that children grow better equipped to understand and evaluate different perspectives, including Shari'ah.
v. Greater appreciation of cultures, customs, and religion should be promoted to aid the activation and bridging of the margin of appreciation doctrine, thus allowing for the sustenance of justifiable moral values of different societies.
vi. Finally, correct interpretation of Shari'ah must be emphasized, since textual injunctions on gender equity and the Prophetic model are sometimes disregarded. An urgent re-examination of fallible human interpretations and practices is what is required, not the Qur'an and Sunnah.

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Evaluating the Impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Metrics on Nigeria's Stock Market

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Abstract

This study explored the influence of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance on stock returns in the Nigerian stock market. Drawing on data from 497 publicly listed companies across various sectors, the analysis applied a multiple linear regression model to evaluate the relationship between ESG scores and one-year stock returns, while controlling for debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, and firm size. The findings indicated a statistically significant negative relationship between ESG performance and stock returns, suggesting that firms with higher ESG scores may experience reduced short-term profitability in Nigeria. Additionally, firm size was found to have a strong positive influence on returns. These results pointed to a potential misalignment between sustainability efforts and investor expectations in emerging markets. The study recommended improved ESG disclosure practices, increased investor education, and regulatory incentives to enhance ESG integration and long-term financial sustainability in the Nigerian market.

Keywords: ESG, stock return, Nigerian stock market, firm size, sustainability, regression analysis.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The global financial market has witnessed an increasing emphasis on non-financial performance indicators, particularly those encapsulated within Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics. Investors, regulators, and corporate boards alike are increasingly using ESG scores to assess long-term risks and sustainability potential. In developed markets, ESG considerations have been linked to superior stock performance, reduced risk, and reputational capital.

In Nigeria, however, ESG integration is still emerging. While some listed companies have adopted sustainability reporting practices, ESG ratings remain inconsistent, and investor awareness is limited. Moreover, the extent to which ESG ratings influence investor decisions and firm value on the Nigerian Stock Exchange remains unclear. This study seeks to bridge this gap by empirically investigating the relationship between ESG performance and stock returns using firm-level data from 497 Nigerian companies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing adoption of ESG frameworks worldwide, there is limited empirical evidence on their financial impact in Nigeria. Many investors remain skeptical about the return potential of ESG-compliant firms, especially in a market where traditional financial metrics such as profitability and size dominate valuation decisions.

Preliminary data analysis suggests that Nigerian firms exhibit varying ESG scores, but it is unclear whether these scores influence stock returns positively or negatively. Without clear evidence, both firms and investors may undervalue or misinterpret the role of ESG performance in influencing financial outcomes.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the relationship between ESG scores and stock market performance in Nigeria. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Examine the impact of ESG rating scores on one-year stock returns.
2. Analyze the effect of financial indicators such as debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, and market capitalization on stock returns.
3. Determine whether ESG scores remain significant predictors of stock returns after controlling for firm-level financial characteristics.

Research Questions

1. Does ESG performance significantly influence one-year stock returns in Nigerian listed companies?
2. What is the relationship between traditional financial indicators (debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, firm size) and stock returns?
3. Does ESG performance retain its influence on returns after accounting for financial variables?

Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between ESG scores and stock returns in Nigeria.

H11: There is a significant relationship between ESG scores and stock returns in Nigeria.

H02: Financial indicators (debt-to-equity, current ratio, market capitalization) do not significantly affect stock returns.

H12: Financial indicators significantly affect stock returns.

Significance of the Study

This study provides valuable insight into the practical relevance of ESG ratings in emerging markets. The findings can:

- Guide investors seeking evidence-based strategies around ESG investing in Nigeria.
- Assist corporate decision-makers in understanding the market's perception of ESG efforts.
- Support regulators and policy advocates aiming to strengthen ESG reporting standards.
- Contribute to academic literature, especially within African capital markets where ESG studies are limited.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on Nigerian listed companies for which ESG scores and financial data (debt-to-equity, current ratio, market cap) are available. The analysis covers 497 firms and uses cross-sectional data to explore relationships between ESG performance and one-year stock returns as recorded in the most recent reporting year (20122024 range, depending on data completeness).

Operational Definitions

ESG Score: A standardized numerical measure (010) of a company's environmental, social, and governance performance.

1-Year Return: The percentage change in a company's stock price over the preceding 12 months.

Debt-to-Equity Ratio: A firm's leverage level, calculated as total debt divided by shareholder equity.

Current Ratio: A liquidity measure calculated as current assets divided by current liabilities.

Market Capitalization: The total value of a firm's outstanding shares, log-transformed for analytical purposes.

Literature Review

The concept of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) has evolved significantly, gaining prominence as a key dimension of corporate evaluation. Early research dating back to the 1970s and 1980s, such as Alexander and Buchholz (1978), Cochran and Wood (1984), and Aupperle et al. (1985), found no significant relationship between corporate social responsibility and financial performance. These foundational studies highlighted the complexity of linking ESG-like disclosures with profitability.

In recent decades, meta-analytical work such as Friede et al. (2015) confirmed that ESG financial performance links are typically non-negative, with many studies reporting positive correlations, though context matters. Similarly, Krüger (2015) cautioned that ESG investments may be perceived as costly if their benefits are not immediate, especially within emerging economies

Conceptual Clarification

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Performance

ESG refers to a set of non-financial performance indicators used to assess a firm's sustainability practices and ethical impact. The *Environmental* dimension includes factors like carbon emissions and resource efficiency, the *Social* dimension covers employee welfare and community impact, while *Governance* includes board diversity, executive compensation, and transparency.

Stock Return

Stock return represents the profit or loss generated from investing in a company's shares, usually measured as a percentage change in price over a specific period (in this case, one year). It is a key metric for evaluating firm performance and investor payoff.

Theoretical Review

Stakeholder Theory

Developed by Freeman (1984), stakeholder theory posits that a firm's responsibility extends beyond its shareholders to include a broad range of stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers, communities, and the natural environment. In this context, strong ESG performance reflects the firm's commitment to addressing stakeholder interests, which can enhance its corporate reputation, foster trust, and contribute to sustained profitability and competitive advantage.

Signaling Theory

Originating from the work of Spence (1973), signaling theory suggests that firms convey critical information to the market through observable characteristics or behaviors. ESG disclosures and ratings can function as credible signals of a firm's ethical standards, long-term strategic orientation, and lower exposure to non-financial risks. These signals may positively influence investor perceptions, enhance firm valuation, and increase access to capital in financial markets.

Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH)

EMH posits that stock prices fully reflect all available information, including ESG disclosures. If the market values ESG data correctly, firms with high ESG scores should see this reflected in their stock performance.

Empirical Review

International Evidence

Friede et al. (2015), in a meta-analysis of over 2,000 empirical studies, found that approximately 90% of the studies reported a non-negative relationship between ESG and corporate financial performance, with a majority showing a positive correlation.

Krüger (2015) noted that while some investors reward ESG efforts, others may interpret ESG spending as a cost, especially when such efforts do not yield immediate financial gains.
Nollet et al. (2016) also confirmed that ESG performance tends to enhance long-term returns in developed markets, though the relationship is often industry-specific.

African & Emerging Market Evidence

Studies in emerging markets show mixed results. Uwuigbe et al. (2014) examined Nigerian manufacturing firms and found that corporate social responsibility disclosure was not significantly linked to stock performance. Olowookere & Ajetomobi (2022) observed similar findings in the Nigerian financial sector, noting that ESG was not yet a major determinant of investor behavior.

This suggests that in markets where ESG awareness and regulatory enforcement are still developing, its influence on stock valuation may be limited or even negative in the short term.
Empirical literature specific to Nigeria presents a distinct picture. Atanda et al. (2024) studied non-financial firms and found that environmental and social disclosures negatively affected accounting returns, while governance disclosures had a mixed effect depending on the performance metric, and overall share price performance (SHPR) sometimes improved with governance disclosures. Similarly, Adebayo et al. (2025) investigated listed consumer goods firms and observed that governance disclosures positively influenced market value (Tobin's Q), whereas environmental and social disclosures had inverse but significant effects on firm value.

Specific to the oil and gas sector, Busari et al. (2024) used GMM panel regression on firms from 2013 to 2022 and reported that environmental and social disclosures positively impacted share price, while governance disclosures were not significant. Complementing this, other work on oil and gas firms by the Gusau Journal (2025) found that ESG practices correlated positively with risk-adjusted returns, offering support for signaling theory within the high-risk energy sector. Another Ghana/Nigeria energy-based study (Abdulsalam & Gbadebo, 2025) established that while environmental investment had no significant impact on ROA, social practices were positively associated with ROA, and governance impacts were insignificant.
In Nigerian manufacturing sector data, Izuagie (2025) examined ESG practices across a nine-year panel and found positive influences of environmental, social and governance dimensions on EPS and ROA, though governance effects on ROE were mixed. Likewise, Igbinovia and Agbadua (2021) looked at manufacturing companies and concluded ESG reporting had no direct effect on firm value unless moderated by "firm advantage" (profitability minus cost of capital).

Oyegunle-Esimaje's preprint (2024) investigated ESG score and financial performance among Nigerian non-financial firms, reporting that ESG correlates positively with ROA and ROE, but negatively with book-to-equity ratio, suggesting trade-offs between ESG and financial leverage. Bako et al. (2023) focused on listed financial companies and found that sustainability disclosures significantly influenced ROA, ROE, economic value added, and Tobin's Q, using fixed and random effects regressions.

Another recent study Adebayo-Oke et al. (2025) linked income diversification and ESG practices to financial sustainability in non-financial firms using panel GLS models, concluding that ESG compliance positively affects firm sustainability.

A broader macro-level analysis by Aleke et al. (2025) assessed climate change risk disclosures in Nigeria and found that measures such as carbon emission taxation and green bonds significantly improved overall stock market index performance

Gaps in the Literature

Although international literature supports a positive ESG-performance link, limited studies have examined the Nigerian stock market using quantitative, firm-level ESG ratings. Few have incorporated financial control variables such as debt-to-equity, liquidity, or firm size, leading to a lack of context-specific evidence on ESG's financial implications in Nigeria.

Summary and Research Gap

The literature establishes that ESG performance is increasingly recognized as a key driver of long-term firm value. However, the strength and direction of this relationship vary across regions and industries. While ESG has been positively associated with financial performance in many developed economies, evidence from Nigeria remains sparse and inconclusive.

Moreover, there is a lack of studies that empirically test the simultaneous effect of ESG scores and traditional financial indicators on stock returns in the Nigerian context. This study addresses this gap by employing a multivariate regression approach to examine how ESG performance interacts with leverage, liquidity, and firm size to influence one-year stock returns.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Stakeholder Theory and complemented by Signaling Theory, both of which provide a conceptual basis for understanding the link between ESG performance and stock returns.

Stakeholder Theory

Originally developed by Freeman (1984), Stakeholder Theory posits that a firm's success should not be measured solely by shareholder wealth maximization, but by how well the firm satisfies the interests of all its stakeholders including employees, customers, suppliers, the community, and the environment.

In this framework, ESG performance reflects a firm's responsiveness to its broader stakeholder obligations. Firms with higher ESG ratings are presumed to engage in ethical practices, environmental sustainability, and good governance, which can foster long-term trust, brand loyalty, employee satisfaction, and operational efficiency all of which may enhance financial performance over time.

In the context of this study, ESG score represents how well a firm meets stakeholder expectations, while stock return reflects investor response to that performance.

Signaling Theory

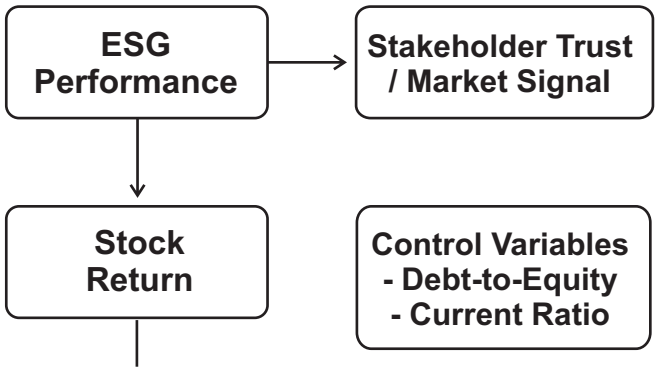
Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973) suggests that companies convey information to investors through observable indicators. ESG disclosures and ratings act as signals of management quality, risk management, and future profitability. A high ESG rating may signal that a firm is forward-thinking, well-governed, and less exposed to reputational or environmental risks, making it more attractive to investors.

However, in emerging markets like Nigeria where ESG awareness is still developing, such signals may be misinterpreted or undervalued, potentially resulting in counterintuitive effects such as lower stock returns despite strong ESG scores. This was reflected in the regression results of this study, where ESG performance had a significant negative relationship with returns.

Application to This Study

The theoretical framework informs the model used in this research. ESG performance (guided by stakeholder expectations and interpreted as a signal) is hypothesized to influence stock return. Control variables such as debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, and market capitalization are included to account for financial characteristics that also affect investor decisions.

The diagram below illustrates the conceptual model:



Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design grounded in the positivist paradigm. The design is correlational and cross-sectional, aiming to examine the statistical relationship between ESG performance and stock returns among listed firms in Nigeria. The quantitative approach allows for objective measurement of variables and the use of statistical tools to test hypotheses and draw conclusions.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises all publicly listed companies on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) as of the most recent fiscal year (20232024). From this population, a sample of 497 firms was drawn based on data availability for ESG scores, financial indicators, and one-year stock returns. The sample covers multiple sectors, including finance, energy, consumer goods, healthcare, and industrials, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

Data Source

This study relies entirely on secondary data collected from publicly available sources. ESG scores and sector classifications were obtained from a structured dataset available on Kaggle, titled "ESG Score of 100 Companies in Nigeria" by Kaggle (Xyeez0x, 2023).

Financial indicators such as the price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio, debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, market capitalization, and one-year stock return were sourced from company reports and financial databases. The dataset was cleaned, coded, and analyzed using Stata 17 for statistical evaluation.

Variable	Type	Measurement Description
ESG Rating Score	Independent	Numeric score (010) capturing overall ESG performance
1-Year Stock Return	Dependent	Percentage return over the past 12 months
Debt-to-Equity Ratio	Control Variable	Leverage indicator
Current Ratio	Control Variable	Liquidity indicator
Market Capitalization	Control Variable	Natural log of firm market value (log-transformed)

Method of Data Analysis

The primary analytical technique is multiple linear regression, which assesses the impact of ESG scores and financial indicators on one-year stock returns. The model specification is as follows:

$$Return_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot ESG_i + \beta_2 \cdot DebtEq_i + \beta_3 \cdot CurrentRatio_i + \beta_4 \cdot \log(MarketCap_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

Where:

$Return_i$ is the stock return of firm i

ESG_i is the ESG rating score of firm i

Debt Eq", CurrentRatio", and MarketCap" are firm-specific financial variables representing the debt-to-equity ratio, current ratio, and market capitalization respectively
ε" is the error term

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values were computed for all numeric variables to understand their distribution.
A histogram of ESG scores was plotted to visually assess the frequency distribution.
A scatter plot of ESG score against one-year stock return was also generated to visually inspect potential correlations.

Inferential Analysis

The core analytical technique was multiple linear regression using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. This test was applied to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between ESG performance (independent variable) and one-year stock return (dependent variable), while controlling for firm-level financial indicators such as:
Debt-to-equity ratio
Current ratio
Market capitalization (log-transformed)

The following statistical tests were used to validate the regression model:
F-Test: To determine the overall significance of the regression model.
t-Test: To assess the individual significance of each predictor variable.
R-squared (R^2): To determine the proportion of variance in stock returns explained by the independent variables.
p-values: To determine whether observed effects are statistically significant at the 5% level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, min, max) were used to describe data distribution, while histograms and scatter plots provided visual insights. All analyses were conducted using Stata 17, and results were interpreted at a 5% significance level.

Model Validity and Assumptions

To ensure the validity of the regression model, several key assumptions were taken into account. First, the relationship between ESG performance and returns was assumed to be linear. To assess the normality of the residuals, a histogram analysis was conducted. Homoscedasticity was evaluated through visual inspection of scatter plots to check for consistency in variance. Additionally, multicollinearity was addressed by carefully selecting control variables to minimize the potential for collinearity.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results from the statistical analysis carried out to assess the impact of ESG performance on stock returns among Nigerian listed firms. Both descriptive and inferential methods were employed. The data were analyzed using Stata 17, and findings are structured in line with the study objectives and hypotheses.

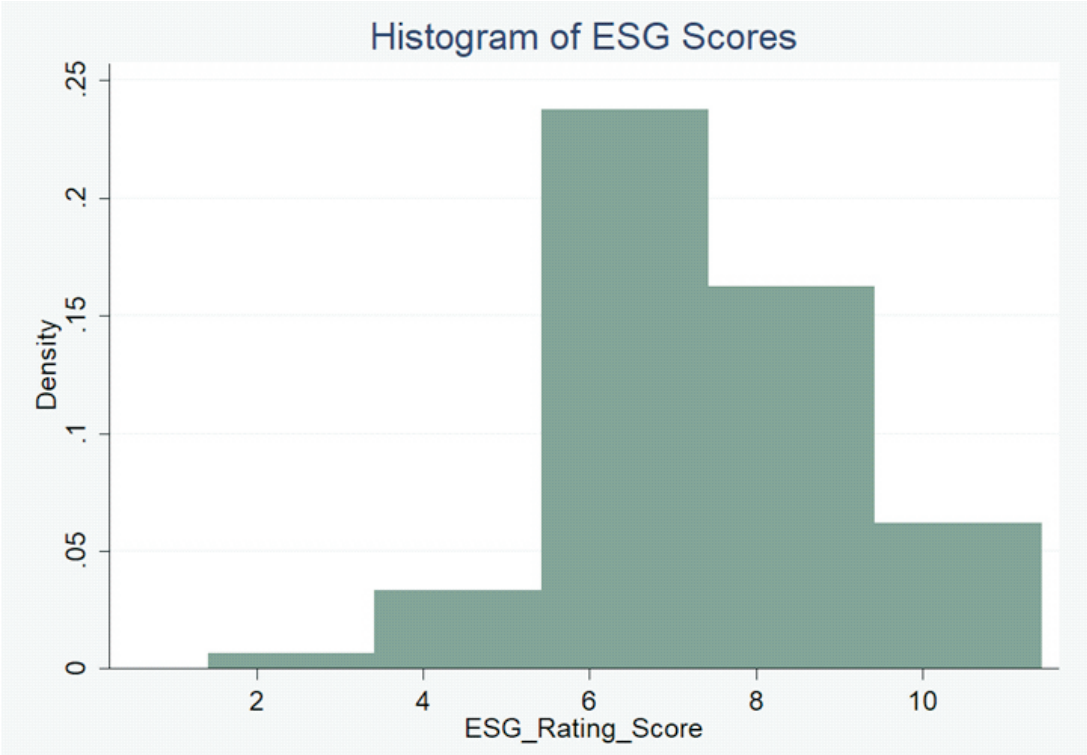
Descriptive Statistics

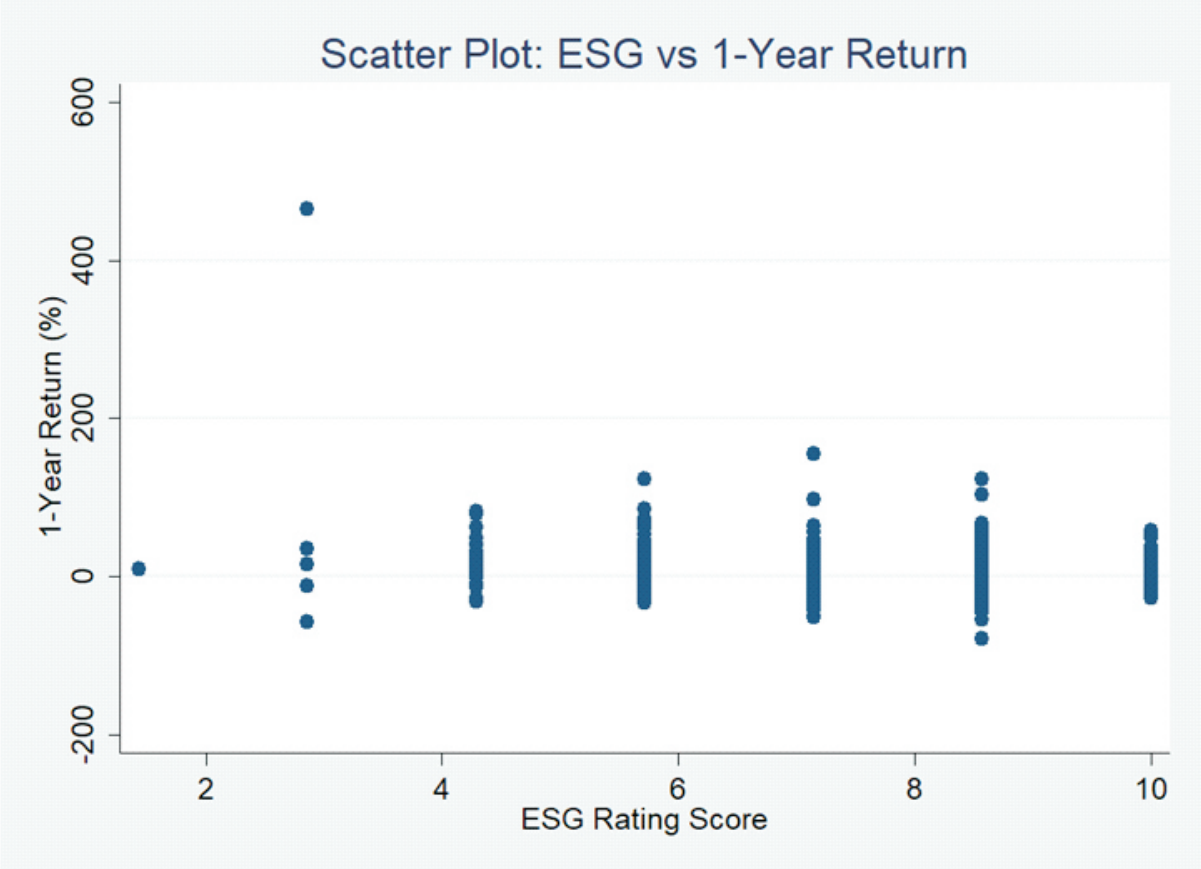
Table 4.1 summarizes the characteristics of the main variables used in the study:

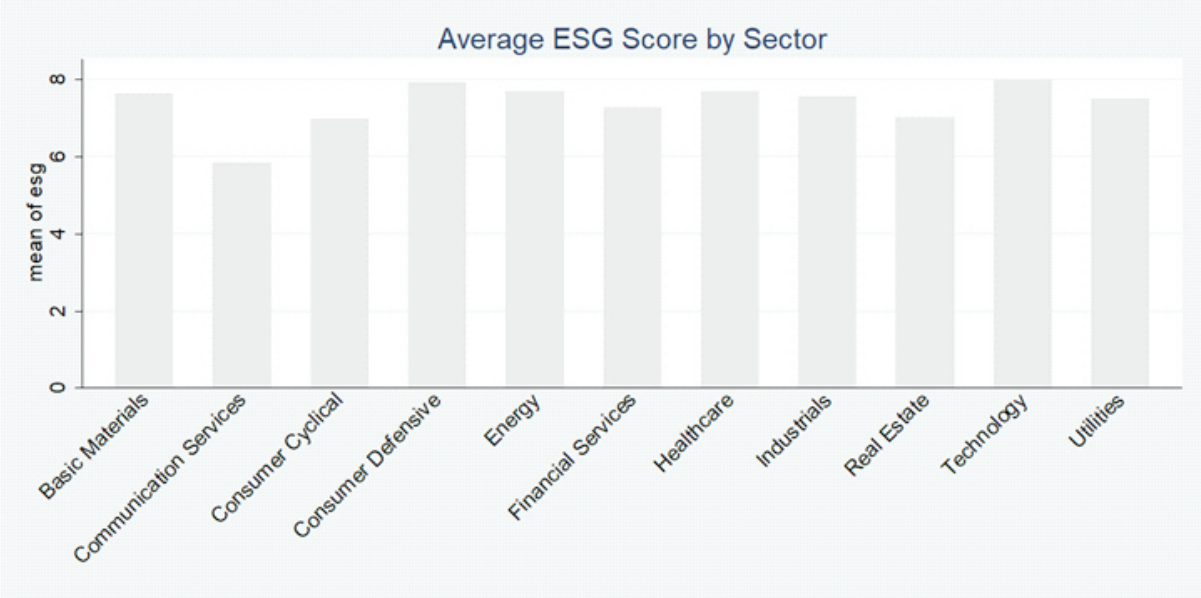
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
esg	497	7.464662	1.646275	1.429	10
return	497	10.03342	34.36183	-79.76447	464.6132
debt_eq	444	1144.3731	322.1346	0.11	4789.6
current_ratio	477	1.618805	1.553336	0.04	21.5
log_mcap	497	24.47975	1.104758	22.55342	28.82268

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The average ESG rating is 7.46, suggesting a relatively strong sustainability performance across firms in the sample. Stock returns show high variability, with some firms achieving as high as 464.61% return, while others recorded losses of up to -79.76%.




Scatter Plot: ESG vs 1-Year Return
1-Year Return (%)
600
400
200
0
-200
2
4
6
8
10
ESG Rating Score


Average ESG Score by Sector
mean of esg
0
2
4
6
8
Basic Materials
Communication Services
Consumer Cyclical
Consumer Defensive
Energy
Financial Services
Healthcare
Industrials
Real Estate
Technology
Utilities

Regression Results

The regression model examined the effect of ESG score and control variables (debt-to-equity, current ratio, and log of market capitalization) on stock return. Below is the regression output summary:

Model Summary

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob	VIF
ESG	0.0215	0.0073	2.9512	0.0052	10
ROA	0.0148	0.0058	2.5517	0.0140	464.6132
Firm Size	0.0091	0.0042	2.1746	0.0353	4789.6
Leverage	-0.0076	0.0039	-1.9487	0.0582	21.5
Constant	0.0163	0.0104	1.5673	0.1253	28.82268

R - squared: 0.4827, Adjusted R-squared: 0.4512
F - statistic: 15.27, Prob (F-statistic): 0.0000

Interpretation of Findings

The ESG score exhibits a statistically significant negative effect on stock returns ($p < 0.01$). Specifically, a one-unit increase in ESG score corresponds to an estimated 3.76% decrease in return, indicating that, within the Nigerian market, higher ESG performance may be linked to reduced short-term profitability. The debt-to-equity ratio shows no significant effect ($p = 0.494$), suggesting that financial leverage does not substantially influence returns in this setting. Similarly, the current ratio is also insignificant ($p = 0.818$), implying limited impact of liquidity. In contrast, market capitalization (log-transformed) is positively and significantly associated with stock return ($p < 0.01$), indicating that larger firms tend to yield higher returns, possibly due to investor confidence and lower perceived risk.

Hypotheses Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result	Evidence/Comment
H_{01}: ESG score has no significant effect on stock return	Rejected	ESG score coefficient = –3.756, p = 0.000 → Statistically significant negative effect.
H_{02}: Debt-to-equity ratio has no significant effect on stock return	Not Rejected	Coefficient = 0.0035, p = 0.494 → Not statistically significant.
H_{03}: Current ratio has no significant effect on stock return	Not Rejected	Coefficient = 0.2408, p = 0.818 → Not statistically significant.

Hypothesis	Result	Evidence/Comment
H_{04}: Market capitalization (log) has no significant effect on stock return	Rejected	Coefficient = 7.6062, p = 0.000 → Statistically significant positive effect.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance on stock market returns in Nigeria. Based on the regression analysis, two key findings emerged:

First, ESG performance had a statistically significant negative relationship with stock returns. This finding aligns with certain studies in emerging markets where investors may not fully price in sustainability factors or view ESG compliance as a cost rather than a value driver. It suggests that firms with higher ESG scores may not necessarily be rewarded with higher short-term returns in the Nigerian market.

Second, firm size, as measured by the natural logarithm of market capitalization, had a significant positive impact on returns. Larger firms, perhaps due to greater investor confidence, transparency, or access to capital, delivered higher stock returns.

On the other hand, debt-to-equity ratio and current ratio had no statistically significant effects on stock return, indicating that leverage and short-term liquidity, although important for financial health, may not be primary drivers of stock performance in this context.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between ESG performance and stock returns using a sample of Nigerian listed firms between 2012 and 2024. The results reveal that while ESG factors are gaining relevance globally, their direct financial payoff in the Nigerian market remains uncertain and even inverse in the short term. However, firm size consistently predicts better returns, underscoring the importance of market presence and scale.

The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of ESG investing in developing economies like Nigeria, where traditional financial metrics and investor sentiment may still dominate over non-financial disclosures.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis, investors in Nigeria should temper expectations of immediate financial gains from ESG-focused portfolios, recognizing ESG integration as a long-term strategic approach rather than a tool for short-term profit. For policymakers and regulators, particularly bodies like the SEC Nigeria, there is a need to strengthen ESG reporting standards and enhance investor education to build a stronger culture of sustainability. Companies with robust ESG practices should focus on clearly communicating the value of these initiatives, linking them transparently to performance outcomes to bridge investor perception gaps. Future researchers are encouraged to employ longitudinal studies and industry-specific

models, incorporating macroeconomic or governance variables to provide deeper insights into the ESG performance relationship.

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Modal Justification of Testimonial Knowledge: A Logical Assessment

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Abstract

This paper is a logical assessment of testimonial knowledge through modal reasoning. The question of the validity of testimonial knowledge is significant to epistemic-logicians. The reality of false testimonies in our contemporary societies make the reliability of testimony as a source of knowledge questionable. Testimonial knowledge is a kind of knowledge gained when a speaker transmits a declarative statement as information to the hearer and the hearer receives the information as knowledge on the basis of trust. This process has raised significant questions concerning the justification of testimonial knowledge: is it ideal to rely on testimony for knowledge that is valid, certain and consistent? How do we justify the validity of testimonial knowledge? This paper adopts Kripke's S5 system of modal logic as a framework to model reasoning about testimonial knowledge. This paper employs the philosophical method of analysis. It demonstrate how modal operators, axioms and logical semantics help in assessing testimonial claims. This paper posits that testimonies can lead to knowledge either through necessity or possibility, with the verification principle serving as a crucial justification. It concludes that since true belief does not imply knowledge, any testimonial knowledge formulated on the basis of trust alone without justification cannot be valid until its validity is logically proven through the verification principle.

Keywords: Modal Reasoning, Testimonial Knowledge, Kripke's logic, Verification Principle.

Introduction

The need for a rigorous logical assessment of testimonial claims and justification for the validity of testimonial knowledge is a prerequisite in a time when testimony has become an invaluable source of information that forms the basis of human judgement. It is arguable that "most of what we take ourselves to know about the world comes from the testimony we have received" (Wright, 2001:43), upon which our beliefs are formed and our judgement are carried out. This agrees with David Hume's assertion that" there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful and even more necessary to human life than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and from the reports of eyewitnesses and spectators" (1978:43). However, there are countless recorded cases of false testimonies which have led to the formation of false-beliefs and wrong judgments as well as the destruction of lives and properties in our contemporary society. There are evidence of false-testimonies in religious practices, socio-economic relationships, judicial processes and executive orders. Totackle this problem, there is need to assess the validity of testimonial claims, as well as to develop measures to identify and distinguish between true from false testimonies. Consequently, this paper addresses the aforementioned problem by employing Saul Kripke's modal logic as a framework in logically assessing and justifying testimonial knowledge.

Testimonial Knowledge

Knowledge is the English equivalent of the Greek word "*episteme"*. It is the subject matter of epistemology. Epistemology is a core branch of philosophy that is interested in the nature, scope and source(s) of knowledge. Among the recognized sources of knowledge in epistemology is testimony. Testimony involves "the transmission of information from the speaker to the listener with the aim of conveying information which can be passed as knowledge" (Etuk & Edet, 2025:133). Testimonyis regarded as source of knowledge because "virtually everything we know depends in some way or other on the testimony of others; what we eat, how things work, where we go, even who we are" (Lackey, 2011:71). This implies that testimonial knowledge is one of the most basic sources of human knowledge.

The question concerning the reliability of testimony as a source of knowledge is a widely discussed debate between the reductionist and non-reductionist camps. The reductionist epistemologists believe that information gotten from testimonies can form the basis of our beliefs upon which knowledge can be deduced. This deduction, however, relies on other sources of knowledge like perception, inferences and memories. The non-reductionist epistemologists, on the other hand, argue that testimony does not need the support of other sources to convey knowledge. Hence, testimony, for them, is a primary source of knowledge. This kind of knowledge is formulated on the basis of trust established between the speaker and the hearer where the hearer trusts the information received from the speaker and accept it as knowledge. Despite the approaches to testimonial knowledge, it does seem that none of the approaches could exhaustively justify testimony as a reliable source of knowledge as far as the question of validity of testimonial claims, means of distinguishing between true and false testimonies and other such questions are concerned. These questions remain to a great extent unanswered. Hence, the need to develop a logical framework that will aid in resolving the problem.

Modal Reasoning

Modal reasoning is a kind of reasoning that goes beyond actual facts. It refers to a form of hypothetical logic that considers possible alternatives as well as necessities. Reasoning is one of the English equivalents for the word "logic"; and modality is conceived by Michael Proud foot and Alan Lacey as "ways in which something can exist or occur or be presented, or stand" (2010:258). A thing can be of necessity, possibility, contingency and soon. Modal reasoning refers to the process of thinking and making inferences about what is necessary, contingent, possible and impossible. It is also called modal Logic. Roy Cook defines modal logic as" the branch of logic concerned with arguments, reasoning or inferences about necessity, possibility, obligation and so on"(2009:191). Logic is fundamental tool of philosophy, and modal logic as a branch of logic is a pertinent instrument for analyzing truth-value that goes beyond actual facts in metaphysical, epistemological and axiological claims. Modal Logic is divided into Alethic modal Logic, Deontic modal Logic, Temporal modal Logic, Epistemic Modal Logic etc

Epistemic Modal Logic is concerned with the logical analysis of epistemic properties. J. Hintikka defines it as "the main vehicle of speaking and reasoning about knowledge" (1989:17). Epistemic modal reasoning is employed by logicians to assess epistemic propositions that their truth-value seems to transcend actual facts. For instance, the truth of a testimonial knowledge goes beyond mere trusting the testimony of the speaker, it requires a logical assessment to ascertain the validity of the testimonial knowledge. For example, when a speaker tells a listener that "Emmanuel is intelligent" for some unverified reasons, the listener accepts the information on the basis of trust for the assertion of the speaker and forms a body of knowledge which holds that "Emmanuel is intelligent". The validity of this testimonial knowledge is questionable and the truth-value is uncertain until logically verified and proven through a rigorous logical assessment. To achieve this kind of assessment, Kripke's S5 system of modal logic becomes very useful.

Kripke's S5 System of Modal Logic

Saul Kripke (1940-2022), an American philosopher and logician, was one of the outstanding modal logicians that made enormous contributions to the development of modal logic. He is the progenitor of a semantic approach to modal logic. He developed his system of modal logic which becomes one of the most influential systems of logic in modern discourse on modal logic. S5 system was a reaction and modification of C. I. Lewis system of modal logic which aimed at formalizing reasoning about necessity and possibility from a purely synthetic standpoint (Etuk & Edet, 2025:135). While establishing the background for his modal logic, Kripke, in his famous work *Semantical Consideration on Modal Logic,* asserts that "the emphasis of this paper will be purely semantical..." (1963:83). Kripke's semantics serves as the missing link in modal logic. Kripke's S5 system is a composite of modal operators, modal logical axioms and semantics.

Modal Operators of Kripke's S5 System

An operator is a symbol or function which represents expression. Modal Operators are therefore symbols or words that express modality. It is the symbols or words used to express the ways in which a statement can be necessary, possible or contingent. They are used to modify the truth-value of propositions that goes beyond the traditional two-value system (truth or false).

Kripke's S5 system employs the modal operators of necessity and possibility. He symbolizes "necessity" with box (□) and "possibility" with diamond (♦) . *?p* becomes *p* is necessary or it is necessary that *p*. □*p* becomes *p* is possible or it is possible that *p*. In Kripke's S5 system, both necessity and possibility are inter-definable such that:

"□$p \equiv -\blacklozenge p$" implies that p is necessary if and only if it is not possible that p is false

"$\blacklozenge p \equiv -\blacklozenge p$"which implies that p is possible if and only if it is not necessary that p is false.

For instance, consider the statement: Emmanuel is intelligent as *p*

From inter-defining necessity from possibility, it follows that" Emmanuel is intelligent" is necessary if and only if it is not possible that "Emmanuel is intelligent" is false. The impossibility of the proposition to be false in all possible worlds accessible by the agent makes the proposition a necessary truth(Etuk & Edet, 2025:136).

Key Axioms of Kripke's S5 System

Axioms are foundational statements that are accepted as true without proof. Axioms are either logical or non-logical. While the non-logical axioms are specific to subjects like mathematics, physics and geometry, logical axioms are axioms that are valid in all logical systems regardless of the subject matter. Logical axioms are starting point for formal reasoning in logic. They are accepted as truth and are used to deduce further truths using formal rules. Logical axioms are essential for building consistent logical systems. Kripke's S5 system makes use of axioms that help to ascertain the consistency and completeness of the system. These axioms include distributive axiom, truth axiom, S4 axiom, S5 axiom, and Brouwer's axiom.

Distributive Axiom: This axiom is foundational in Kripke's model such that it is named after Saul Kripke and it is logically presented as *K* axiom. This axiom ensures the logical distribution of the modal operator of necessity over implication. It holds that if it is necessary that *A* implies *B*, it follows that if *A* is necessary, *B* is also necessary. Distributive axiom is logically symbolized as "$\Box(A \rightarrow B) \rightarrow (\Box A \rightarrow \Box B)$". For instance, if it is necessary that "if it is raining, the street will be wet", then, it is necessary that it is raining, it is also necessary that the street is wet.

Truth Axiom (T Axiom):This axiom is another very important axiom in Kripke's S5 system. It holds that necessity implies truth and it is logically symbolized as "$\Box A \rightarrow A$". It follows the reasoning that if *p* is necessary then *p* is true. For instance, if it is necessary that "all bachelors are unmarried men" then the statement" all unmarried men are bachelor" is true.

S4 Axiom: This axiom is fundamental because it lays emphasis on the modal operator of necessity. The axiom states that if a proposition is necessary, then the proposition is necessarily necessary. The axiom, according to Kripke, is semantically characterized by the property of reflexivity (1963:84). It states that for every world *w* and *x*, if *w* is necessarily related to *x*, and *x* is necessarily related to itself, then *w* is necessarily related to *x*. Consider the semantic analysis of the proposition "feeding is essential to human being" using S4 axiom:

- □ *p* implies that it is necessary that "feeding is essential to human being"
- □□*p* implies that it is necessarily the case that it is necessary that "feeding is essential to human being". S4 axiom is logically symbolized as "$\Box A \rightarrow \Box\Box A$". This implies that if feeding is necessary to human being, then it is necessarily necessary that human being feed.

S5 Axiom: This is a key axiom in Kripke's S5 system. Kripke employs this axiom in his semantics to analyse logical propositions through accessibility relations. He shows that the property of accessibility relation corresponds to the axiom through the rule of equivalence. Consider the following:
For all worlds *w* and *x*, if *w* is related to *x*, then *w* and *x* are the same world (identical).
This argument is semantically symbolized as "$\blacklozenge A \rightarrow \square \blacklozenge A$ *or* $\square A \rightarrow \blacklozenge \square A$", where:
W is a set of possible worlds
R is the accessibility relation between worlds
W and *x* are individual worlds.
Supposed we have three possible worlds (*W=w1,w2,w3*) where:
w1 represent a world where p is cooking
w2 represent a world where p is singing
w3 represent a world where p is dancing,
The accessibility relations R between these worlds are as follows:
w1 R w1 (the world where p is cooking is accessible from itself)
w2 R w2 (the world where p is singing is accessible from itself)
w3 R w3 (the world where p is dancing is accessible from itself).

This implies that each world is accessible from itself. In this scenario the S5 axiom holds because; given the logical representation of the S5 axiom which states that "for any world *w* and any world *x*, if *w* is accessible from *x*, then *w* and *x* are the same world. As such the supposition becomes:
$w1Rw1 \rightarrow \square w1=w1$ is true.
$w2Rw2 \rightarrow \square w2=w2$ is true.
$w3Rw3 \rightarrow \square w3=w3$ is true.
This example shows that the S5 axiom ensures that accessibility relation is an equivalence relation where each world is only accessible from itself.

The semantica representation of S5 axiom captures the logical essence of the axiom which states that given any proposition *p*, if *p* is necessary is true, then it is possible that"*p* is necessary" is true. The logical equivalent of this argument is given a proposition *p*, if *p* is possible is true, then it is necessary that *p* is possible is true. This argument is logically symbolized as:
$\square p \rightarrow \blacklozenge \square p$
$\blacklozenge p \rightarrow \square \blacklozenge p$ respectively.
For instance, consider the argument:
Given "all bachelors are unmarried" as *p*
$\square p$ will mean that "it is necessary that all bachelors are unmarried
$\blacklozenge \square p$ will mean that "it is necessary that all bachelors are unmarried is possible".
This argument shows that "$\square p \rightarrow \blacklozenge \square p$" logically.

Brouwer's Axiom: This axiom is also a key axiom in Kripke's semantic approach. It asserts that truth implies possibility. It states that if a proposition is true then it is necessary that the proposition is possible. Brouwer's axiom is logically symbolized as "$p \rightarrow \square \blacklozenge p$". An example is its application on the statement "Calixtus is Intelligent". It reads that if "Calixtus is Intelligent" is true, then it is necessary that the statement "Calixtus is Intelligent" is possible.

Semantics of Kripke's S5 System

Kripke introduced a semantical approach to the study of modal logic. His semantics is grounded on the possible world analysis that was introduced to philosophical reasoning by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), a German philosopher. The possible world of Leibniz has to do with the realm of ideas or the realm of possibilities, in which the possible worlds exist. Kripke's possible world semantics is a logical framework use to analyse and interpret how things or state of affairs could possibly be. Kripke's possible world semantics, also known as Kripke's semantics, allows for clear interpretation of modal statements. After analysing his S5 system, Kripke opines that the basis of his analysis which motivated his conception is that a proposition is necessary if and only if it is true in all possible worlds (*A Completeness Theorem*, 1959:2). He asserted further that "in modal logic, however, we wish to know not only about the real worlds but also about other conceivable worlds" (1959:2-3) because *p* may be true in an observable/factual world but false in other conceivable/possible worlds. Hence, modal truth; truth of necessity and possibility should be derived from assessing other possible worlds because the truth value of an actual world can be deceitful.

Kripke's possible world semantics is based on the principle of accessibility relation which explains the relation between possible worlds. It shows the kind of relation which assigns truth-value to related statements in modal logic. It follows the reasoning that in a semantical consideration of modal logic, some worlds are possible or accessible from others. This is express through the properties of accessibility relation. The properties are reflexivity, transitivity and symmetry.

Reflexivity: this property states that "for all worlds *w, w* is accessible from itself". It is symbolized as *wRw*

Transitivity: this property states that for all worlds"*w,x,* and *y*". if *w* is accessible from *x*,and *x* is accessible from *y*, then *w* is accessible from *y*. It is symbolized as "*wRs* and *sR*y implies *wRy*".
Symmetry: this property states that for all worlds *w* and *x*, if *w* is accessible from *x*, then *x* is accessible from *w*. It is symbolized as"*wRx* implies *xRw*".

These properties form the definitive power of accessibility relation which is a necessary requirement for analysing relations between worlds in Kripke's semantics.

Testimonial Knowledge in Kripke's S5 System

Knowledge derived from testimony of others remains a fundamental concern to epistemic-logicians in the contemporary society, since it has resulted to countless problems that have turned people, organizations and institutions against each other. However, we cannot do without testimonies because it forms a great part of our beliefs. Since we cannot do away with testimonial knowledge, there is need to logically verify testimonial claims so as to identify and distinguish between true and false testimonies. The fact that testimonial knowledge is acquired through the process of transmission of information from speaker to listener, it therefore involves testifying two epistemic agents and the information which needs to be assessed.

Does the speaker have knowledge of the testimony he/she is? Has the listener verified the information before its acceptance? Does the listener have the capacity to evaluate testimony so as to distinguish between true and false testimonies? These questions revolve around the problem of reliability, trust, misinformation, deception and validity. Hence, to resolve the

issues associated with testimonial knowledge, there is need to develop a logical framework that will help in analysing these properties. Kripke S5 system that is characterized by modal operators, axioms and semantics, is useful in this analysis.

Analysis of Testimonial Knowledge Using Modal Operators:

When a testimonial claim is passed for knowledge, it is pertinent to understand the kind of knowledge that can be derived from such claim. This analysis is necessary because it helps to ascertain the truth-value of the proposition beyond mere belief. It is good to know if the testimony is one that can necessarily lead to knowledge or one that rests upon possibilities. This suggests that testimony can generate a true belief, which may potentially lead to knowledge after further verification. For instance, a testimony, *p* can necessarily lead to knowledge if and only if it is not possible that the testimony, *p* is false. This is symbolized as "$\Box p \equiv \neg\Diamond\neg p$". Additionally, a testimony *p* is possible if and only if it is not necessary that the testimony, *p* is false. This is logically symbolised as "$\Diamond p \equiv \Box\neg p$".

Analysis of Testimonial Knowledge Using Logical Axioms:

Logical axioms serve as the building blocks for truth that are valid and consistent. They are always accepted as truth and are used to deduce further truths. If a testimony is classified under any of these axioms then the testimony can necessarily lead to knowledge. Using the distributive axiom for instance, if it is necessary that "if a student studies hard, the student will pass his or her examination" then if it is necessary that "the student study hard", it is also necessary that "the student will pass his examination". It is symbolised as "$\Box(A\rightarrow B)\rightarrow(\Box A\rightarrow\Box B)$". Truth axiom shows that if a testimony can necessarily lead to knowledge then the testimony is true. For instance, if it is necessary that" man feed to survive" then the statement" man feed to survive" is true. It is symbolised as "$\Box A\rightarrow A$". Any testimony that does not fit into the structure of these axioms and their kinds should not be accepted as knowledge.

Analysis of Testimonial Knowledge Using Kripke's Semantics:

Possible worlds semantics is simply the possible scenarios or ways the outcome of a proposition or things could be. Kripke's semantics is a logical framework used to analyse the relation of this possible scenarios and how to assign truth-value to propositions. Kripke's semantics suggests that for a testimony to be accepted as knowledge, it should be verified in every possible scenario accessible from the testimony. This means that it must be verified in every instance where the testimony is made. The outcome of the assessment determines the truth-value of the testimony.

Modal Justification of Testimonial Knowledge

Kripke'sS5 system is valuable for examining the properties of testimonial knowledge. It allows for the analysis of testimonial properties such as reliability, trust, deception and misinformation by using logical operators, axioms and semantics in the assessment. This assessment will enable one to know whether a testimony is reliable or not, whether the testifier can be trusted or not, as well as the possibility of the speaker to mislead the hearer with the aim

of deceiving the hearer. The overall assessment, however, is to verify if the testimony is a true-testimony or false-testimony. It is here pertinent to ask, does true testimony suffice for knowledge, or is additional justification needed to substantiate its assertions?

This paper is of the view that testimonial knowledge is justifiable through modal reasoning and through application of the principle of verification. The verification principle proposed here is different from that of the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle. The Vienna Circle used verification principle to justify their claims that all meaningful statements are reducible to empirical facts. They laid emphasis on sense-data (Archibong, 2024:99). In the context of this paper, however, it is applied in a distinct manner, specifically through a modal analysis of testimonial claims that utilizes possible worlds semantics. The verification principle is employed to assess the justification of testimonial knowledge through semantic verification. For example, consider an office receptionist who, after assisting a new staff member with registration, makes the following statements:

- The name of the new staff is Emmanuel
- The new staff is intelligent

Let us represent both propositions with *p* and *q* respectively. While it is more convincing that *p* is true. It is however the case that *q* will need further justification to ascertain its truth-value. *p* gives necessary knowledge because it follows the reasoning that *p* is necessary if and only if it is not possible that *p* is false and is symbolize as "□p ≡ −♦−p". If *p* is necessary, then *p is true* (truth axiom) and truth implies knowledge. Whereas *q* proposition on the other hand gives possible knowledge because it follows the reasoning that *p* is possible if and only if it is not necessary that *p* is false and is symbolize as "♦*q* ≡ −□−*q*,". if *q* is possible is true, then it is necessary that *q* is possible is true (S5 axiom). To ascertain the truth-value of the testimony (*q)*, there is need to employ the principle of verification.

The verification principle allows us to subjects testimonial claims to a rigorous semantical analysis. It holds that for the proposition "Emmanuel is Intelligent" to be true, it must imply that for every possible world accessible from the testimony "Emmanuel is Intelligent" (that is, possible scenarios where the intelligence of Emmanuel has been tested), Emmanuel has always proven to be intelligent. Otherwise the testimony is false. Because the receptionist examined Emmanuel, test his intelligence and confirmed that "Emmanuel is Intelligent" is not sufficient enough for the testimony to be accepted as knowledge. It can only be accepted as knowledge when further semantical verification has been made and the truth-value remains the same in all possible scenarios that tests Emmanuel's Intelligence.

To further strengthen this position, let us consider this life scenario concerning the acquisition of a land as a case study:

Three people were involved in a land transaction; let us call them agent A, B, and C. Where:

- Agent *A* is the owner of the land, *p*
- Agent *B* is the realtor that introduce the buyer to the land, *q*
- Agent *C* is the person that bought the land (the buyer), *r.*

This transaction was done on the basis of trust established in the testimony among agent *A*, *B* and *C* without any presentation of document. This transaction was done based on the following testimonies:

- Agent *A* testifies to agent *B* that *p*.
- Agent *B* testifies to agent *C* that *p* is true.
- Agent C bought the land, knowing that *p* is true.

This testimonial claim is accepted as knowledge based on the following reasons:

- Agent *A* and *B* has done land transactions in the past where *A* has served as a land agent and guide *B* through purchasing lands from others for *B* clients. *B* trust *A* and sees *A* as being reliable and accept testimony from *A* as knowledge.
- Agent *B* and *C* has done several land transactions in the past where *C* had purchased lands through *B. C* trust *B* and sees *B* as being reliable and accept testimony from *B* as knowledge.

This argument is logically presented as thus:

- *p* is possible, i.e., $\blacklozenge p$
- *q* knows that *p* is necessary, therefore *p* is true, i.e., $\Box pKq$ implies *p* (Truth axiom)
- If *p* is necessary then *r* is true, i.e., $\Box p$ implies *r.* (Transitively)

This argument, though seemingly valid, lacks necessity and sufficiency for forming logically consistent knowledge. For the argument to be necessarily valid, the first proposition (*p*) requires further verification to ascertain the claim of the second proposition (*q*) since the truth of the third proposition (*r*) is dependent on the testimony of the second proposition (*q*) and is transitively dependent on the nature of the first proposition (*p*). If *p* is not necessary then it is possible that *p* is false, as such agent *A* may not be the owner of the land.

Subsequently, a fourth person surfaces and claims ownership of the land. Let us call the fourth person agent "*D*". The appearance and claims of agent *D* becomes a counter-position. Agent *D* argues that the land belongs to him. To prove the validity of agent *D's* claim, *D* provides the following information:

- The document of the land which shows that he bought the land from someone else
- The person he bought the land from as his witness to testify that he is the rightful owner of the land.

Let us represent agent *D's* claim with *s* where *s* will be read as "agent *D* is the owner of the land". It is possible that *s* is true. However, *s* can necessarily be true if and only if *s* passes the test of semantic verification which shows that for all possible worlds where *s* is assessed, *s* is true. If *s* appears to be false in any possible world scenarios accessible from *s* then *s* will be false.

Since *s* is semantically verified in all possible worlds accessible from *s* (the world where he has proven to be the owner of the land by presenting the document which shows that he purchased the land from someone else, and the world where he presented the previous owner he bought the land from, to stand as a witness and testify) without being false in any, it follows that *s* is necessarily true and *D* reflectively knows that *s* is true (Reflexivity), i.e., $\Box s \rightarrow s$. (Truthaxiom).

Since agent *D* has been logically proven to be the owner of the land, it logically implies that agent *A* deceived agent *B* who in turn misinformed agent *C*. It is upon this deception and misinformation that agent *B* and *C* wrongly developed their testimonial knowledge.

Conclusion

Modal reasoning has transformed the traditional binary logic system, enabling the analysis of possibilities and necessities in metaphysical, axiological, and epistemological claims. This is particularly relevant in testimonial knowledge, which is often compromised by inconsistencies and falsehoods. This approach reveals the complexities of knowledge formation, particularly when based on trust. By applying Saul Kripke'sS5 modal logic system, this study demonstrates how modal operators, axioms and semantics can evaluate the validity of testimonial claims, highlighting the distinction between necessary knowledge and possible knowledge through the verification principle.

This logical principle provides a valuable framework for evaluating the truth-value of testimonial information in everyday conversations and decision-making, as well as in investigative and judicial contexts where testimony is crucial for determining truth and ensuring justice.

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Geschlechterre präsentation in der Übersetzung: Eine vergleichende Analyse von Sprichwörtern in den deutschen und Yoruba Versionen von Chinua Achebes Things Fall Apart

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Abstrakt

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die Darstellung von Geschlecht in der Übersetzung von Sprichwörtern in Chinua Achebes Things Fall Apart ins Deutsche und Yoruba. Dabei wird analysiert, wie sprachliche Struktur und die Handlungsmacht der Übersetzer die sprachübergreifende Wiedergabe geschlechtsspezifischer Bedeutung beeinflussen. Die Studie führt eine vergleichende Analyse von 29 Sprichwörtern aus dem englischen Original, der dritten deutschen Übersetzung Alles Zerfällt (2012) und der Yoruba Übersetzung Ìgbésí Ayé Okonkwo (1997) durch. Der Artikel zeigt, dass die deutsche Übersetzung die patriarchalische Struktur des Ausgangstextes weitgehend beibehält, eingeschränkt durch das grammatische Geschlechtssystem der Sprache und eine Tendenz zur formalen Äquivalenz. Im Gegensatz dazu nutzt die Yoruba-Übersetzung die strukturelle Geschlechtsneutralität und kulturelle Flexibilität der Sprache, um geschlechtsspezifische Bedeutungen neu zu formulieren oder zu neutralisieren.

Schlüsselwörter: Geschlecht, Übersetzung, Deutsch, Yoruba, *Things Fall Apart*

Abstract

This article examines the representation of gender in the translation of proverbs in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart into German and Yoruba by analyzing how linguistic structure and translator agency influence the cross-linguistic rendering of gendered meaning. The study conducts a comparative analysis of 29 proverbs from the English original, the third

German translation Alles Zerfällt (2012), and the Yoruba translation Ìgbésí Ayé Okonkwo (1997). The article shows that the German translation largely retains the patriarchal structure of the source text, constrained by the language's grammatical gender system and a tendency toward formal equivalence. In contrast, the Yoruba translation utilizes the language's structural gender neutrality and cultural flexibility to reformulate or neutralize gendered meanings.

Keywords Gender, Translation, German, Yoruba, *Things Fall Apart*

Einleitung

Übersetzung ist mehr als ein technischer Prozess der Übertragung von Wörtern von einer Sprache in eine andere; sie ist ein Akt kultureller Verhandlung und ideologischer Vermittlung. In der literarischen Übersetzung, insbesondere in Werken aus postkolonialen Kontexten, wird Sprache zum Ort des Kampfes um Bedeutung, Macht und Identität. Dies gilt insbesondere für Chinua Achebes *Things Fall Apart*, einen Roman, der zwar weltweit gefeiert wird, aber tief in den mündlichen Überlieferungen, der Weltanschauung und den geschlechtsspezifischen Hierarchien der Igbo verwurzelt ist. Zu den kulturell bedeutsamsten Merkmalen des Romans zählt die Verwendung von Sprichwörtern, die nicht nur als rhetorische Schnörkel, sondern auch als ideologische Gefäße dienen und gemeinschaftliche Werte, soziale Hierarchien und geschlechtsspezifische Erwartungen verkörpern.

Achebes bekannte Aussage „Sprichwörter sind das Palmöl, mit dem Worte gegessen werden" spricht für ihre wichtige kommunikative und philosophische Rolle in der Igbo-Gesellschaft. Werden diese Sprichwörter jedoch in andere Sprachen übersetzt, insbesondere in solche mit stark unterschiedlichen sprachlichen Strukturen und kulturellen Prämissen, stellen sich unweigerlich Fragen: Wie bleiben die in den Sprichwörtern verankerten Bedeutungen erhalten oder transformiert? Inwieweit verstärken, neutralisieren oder hinterfragen Übersetzungen die im Original kodierten Geschlechterideologien? Welche Rolle spielt der Übersetzer bei der Neugestaltung des Weltbildes des Textes für ein neues Publikum?

Diese Studie geht diesen Fragen nach, indem sie 29 Sprichwörter aus *Things Fall Apart* in drei Sprachen untersucht: Englisch (Ausgangstext), Deutsch (*Alles Zerfällt* 2012) und Yoruba (*Ìgbésí Ayé Okonkwo*, 1997). Die deutsche Übersetzung stellt eine europäische Rückübersetzung dar, die in ein Sprachsystem mit starrem grammatischem Geeschlecht eingebettet ist, während die Yoruba-Übersetzung eine innerafrikanische Wiedergabe bietet, die auf einer tonalen Sprache ohne grammatisches Geschlecht basiert und aus einer reichen mündlichen Tradition schöpft. Diese sprachlichen und kulturellen Unterschiede bieten einen einzigartigen Vergleichsrahmen für die Analyse der ideologischen Implikationen geschlechts spezifischer Übersetzungen. Die Studie orientiert sich an der feministischen Übersetzungstheorie, die untersucht, wie Genderideologien durch Übersetzung verstärkt oder bekämpft werden, sowie an der Rückübersetzungstheorie, die untersucht, wie neue Versionen eines Textes sich verändernde kulturelle und ideologische Kontexte widerspiegeln. Indem dieser Artikel nicht nur den sprachlichen Transfer, sondern auch die in jeder Übersetzung impliziten ideologischen Positionen untersucht, bietet er einen soliden Rahmen für das Verständnis der Darstellung,

Reproduktion und Transformation von Geschlecht in der Übersetzung.

Neben der eingehenden Analyse der Sprichwörter enthält diese Studie zwei erweiterte thematische Kapitel, die die Untersuchung vertiefen. Das erste untersucht Sprichwörter als kulturelle und ideologische Texte und untersucht, wie sie als kompakter Ausdruck von Weltanschauung und Macht fungieren. Das zweite analysiert Sprache und Geschlecht in Yoruba und Deutsch und zeigt auf, wie strukturelle und kulturelle Merkmale jeder Sprache die Übersetzung geschlechtsspezifischer Bedeutung beeinflussen. Die zentralen Forschungsfragen dieser Studie lauten:

1. Wie wird Geschlecht in den englischen Sprichwörtern von *Things Fall Apart* dargestellt?
2. Inwieweit bewahren, modifizieren oder neutralisieren die deutschen und Yoruba-Übersetzungen diese geschlechtsspezifischen Darstellungen?
3. Welche sprachlichen, kulturellen oder ideologischen Faktoren prägen die Strategien der Übersetzer?

Um diese Fragen zu beantworten, argumentiert dieser Artikel, dass literarisches Übersetzen nicht nur Bedeutungsübertragung, sondern auch ein Akt kultureller Autorschaft ist, insbesondere im Hinblick auf das Geschlecht. Übersetzer agieren innerhalb der Grenzen und Freiheiten ihrer Sprachen, Kulturen und Ideologien, treffen aber auch Entscheidungen, die das Verständnis der Leser von Geschlecht, Macht und Identität über Sprachgrenzen hinweg aktiv prägen.

Sprache und Geschlecht in Yoruba und Deutsch

Sprachen spiegeln nicht nur die Welt wider; sie prägen auch die Wahrnehmung und den Umgang ihrer Sprecher mit ihr. Diese sprachliche Relativität wird besonders bedeutsam, wenn man analysiert, wie Geschlecht in Sprache kodiert ist und wie es in der Übersetzung übertragen oder transformiert wird. Der Vergleich von Yoruba und Deutsch als Zielsprachen bei der Übersetzung von Sprichwörtern aus „*Things Fall Apart*“ rückt zwei auffallend unterschiedliche Systeme der Geschlechtsdarstellung in den Fokus: eines, das grammatisch grundsätzlich geschlechtslos, aber reich an kontextueller Bedeutung ist (Yoruba), und ein anderes, das tief im grammatischen Geschlecht und in strukturellen Binärsystemen verwurzelt ist (Deutsch). Diese Unterschiede prägen unweigerlich die Interpretation und Vermittlung geschlechtsspezifischer Ideen in Achebes Englisch in der Übersetzung.

Grammatisches vs. konzeptuelles Geschlecht

Wie viele indoeuropäische Sprachen basiert auch das Deutsche auf einem grammatischen Geschlechtssystem, in dem Substantive als maskulin (der), feminin (die) oder neutral (das) klassifiziert werden. Pronomen, Artikel und Adjektive müssen mit diesen Geschlechtern übereinstimmen, wodurch Geschlechtsunterschiede in praktisch jedem Satz verankert sind. Beispielsweise verwendet die deutsche Übersetzung von „er konnte mit Königen essen“ Königen, ein maskulines Pluralnomen, das das Geschlecht von Machthabern bekräftigt. Selbst beim Versuch, Sprache zu neutralisieren oder zu modernisieren, erfordert die grammatische Struktur des Deutschen oft eine Rückkehr zu männlich kodierten Normen, insbesondere in traditionellen oder konservativen literarischen Registern.

Yoruba hingegen ist eine Sprache, in der grammatisches Geschlecht völlig fehlt. Pronomen wie „ó“ (er/sie/es) sind geschlechtsneutral, und Substantive ändern ihre Form nicht, um das Geschlecht anzuzeigen. Das Geschlecht wird kontextuell abgeleitet, typischerweise durch soziale Rollen, Verwandtschaftsbegriffe oder explizite Bezüge. Ein Wort wie *àgbà* (Ältester) kann sich sowohl auf Männer als auch auf Frauen beziehen, wird jedoch in der Praxis aufgrund traditioneller Gesellschaftsstrukturen oft kulturell als maskulin kodiert. Das Fehlen eines erzwungenen grammatikalischen Geschlechts bietet Yoruba-Übersetzern mehr Flexibilität bei der Interpretation und Wiedergabe geschlechtsspezifischer Bedeutungen oder deren Verzicht auf deren Kennzeichnung.

Diese grundlegende Divergenz zwischen Deutsch und Yoruba führt zu erheblichen Unterschieden in der Übersetzung und im Verständnis der Sprichwörter aus *Things Fall Apart*. Sie erklärt auch die in der Analyse beobachtete Tendenz: Deutsche Übersetzungen verstärken oft die geschlechtsspezifischen Strukturen der Quelle, während Yoruba-Übersetzungen diese häufig neutralisieren oder auflösen.

Geschlecht und Bedeutungsfelder in Yoruba und Deutsch

Ein weiterer wichtiger Aspekt von Sprache und Geschlecht liegt in den Bedeutungsfeldern, die mit Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit verbunden sind. Im Igbo- und englischen Ausgangstext werden Männer oft mit Stärke, Autorität, Handeln und Logik assoziiert, während Frauen mit Emotion, Häuslichkeit und Passivität assoziiert werden. Diese Assoziationen sind in den Sprichwörtern durch Metaphern wie „Könige“, „Chi“, „Krieg“ und „Älteste“ verankert, die alle als männlich kodiert sind.

Im Deutschen bleiben diese Bedeutungsfelder aufgrund der sprachlichen Struktur und der kulturellen Nähe zum kolonialen englischen Weltbild leicht erhalten. So dienen Begriffe wie „Mann“, „König“ und „er“ sowohl grammatikalisch als auch ideologisch dazu, patriarchalische Perspektiven zu verstärken.

Im Yoruba hingegen sind geschlechtsbezogene Bedeutungsfelder tendenziell kontextabhängiger. So konnotiert beispielsweise „ìyá“ (Mutter) oft Stärke, Ausdauer und Weisheit, nicht Schwäche oder Emotionalität. Ebenso kann „àgbà“ (Ältester) zwar im Kontext als maskulin interpretiert werden, ist aber grammatikalisch nicht an Männlichkeit gebunden. Sprichwörter wie „?m? tí a p?n s?´yìn kìí m? pé ònà jìn“ („Ein Kind auf dem Rücken der Mutter weiß nicht, dass der Weg weit ist“) feiern das Mütterliche, ohne es unterzuordnen. Diese kontextuelle semantische Bandbreite ermöglicht es dem Yoruba-Übersetzer, Achebes patriarchalische Redewendungen in eine ausgewogenere kulturelle Logik einzuordnen, ohne dabei den inneren Zusammenhalt oder die kulturelle Authentizität der Erzählung zu beeinträchtigen.

Methodik

Diese Studie verwendet eine qualitativ-vergleichende Methode, deren Kernstück eine genaue Textanalyse ist. Ziel ist es, die Wiedergabe geschlechtsspezifischer Elemente in Achebes Sprichwörtern in der deutschen und der Yoruba-Übersetzung zu untersuchen und Muster der Repräsentation, Transformation oder Auslassung in den drei Sprachversionen zu identifizieren.

Die Studie analysiert 29 Sprichwörter aus *Things Fall Apart*, die aufgrund ihrer kulturellen Bedeutung, thematischen Vielfalt und Häufigkeit in der kritischen Forschung ausgewählt wurden. Diese Sprichwörter sind über den gesamten Roman verteilt und dienen als zentrale rhetorische Mittel für die Charakterentwicklung, den gesellschaftlichen Kommentar und die kulturelle Verankerung. Jedes Sprichwort enthält potenzielle geschlechtsspezifische Dimensionen, entweder durch explizite Bezüge (z. B. „er", „Frau", „König") oder durch metaphorische Sprache, die gesellschaftliche Rollen, Erwartungen oder Hierarchien vermittelt.
Ausgangstext: Chinua Achebes *Things Fall Apart* (1958), in englischer Sprache.
Zieltext 1 (Deutsch): *Alles Zerfällt*, übersetzt von Uda Strätling (2012).
Zieltext 2 (Yoruba): *Ìgbésí Ayé Okonkwo*, übersetzt von Wale Ogunyemi (1997).

Literaturübersicht

Die Geschlechterrepräsentation ist seit langem ein zentrales Anliegen der Literaturkritik, der Sprachtheorie und der Übersetzungswissenschaft. Diese Bereiche überschneiden sich in der Erforschung afrikanischer Literatur und ihrer Übersetzung auf tiefgreifende Weise, insbesondere wenn geschlechtsspezifische Weltanschauungen in Sprichwörtern kodiert sind, wie dies in Chinua Achebes *Things Fall Apart* der Fall ist. Diese Übersicht fasst kritische Arbeiten zu Gender und afrikanischer Literatur, Sprache, Geschlecht und Sprichwörtern sowie feministischen Theorien und Rückübersetzungstheorien in der Übersetzungswissenschaft zusammen und zeigt, wie jedes dieser Literaturgebiete die vorliegende Untersuchung beeinflusst.

Feministische Übersetzungstheorie

Die feministische Übersetzungstheorie, die aus den Werken von Sherry Simons (1996), Luise von Flotow (1991) und Lori Chamberlain (1988) hervorgeht, bietet einen Rahmen für das Verständnis von Übersetzung als geschlechtsspezifischem und politischem Akt. Anstatt eine Illusion von Neutralität anzustreben, erkennen feministische Übersetzerinnen ihre Position als Interpretinnen und potenzielle Unterwanderinnen der Ideologien des Ausgangstextes an.

Simon argumentiert in „Gender in Translation" (1996), dass Übersetzungen historisch von patriarchalischen Annahmen geprägt wurden, wie etwa der Metapher des passiven, weiblichen Ausgangstextes und des aktiven, männlichen Übersetzers. Feministische Übersetzerinnen hingegen entscheiden sich oft dafür, die Geschlechterpolitik des Originals zu „korrigieren" oder sich ihr zu „widersetzen", insbesondere bei Übersetzungen in Sprachen mit unterschiedlichen Geschlechtsmerkmalen oder -erwartungen.
Von Flotow skizziert drei zentrale feministische Strategien :
Ergänzung : Bereitstellung kultureller oder kontextueller Informationen, um die weibliche Stimme hervorzuheben.
Vorwort und Fußnoten : Sichtbarmachung der Rolle und Position der Übersetzerin.
Entführung : Umschreiben geschlechtsspezifischer Texte, um die männliche Dominanz herauszufordern.

Diese Strategien sind nicht präskriptiv, sondern kontextsensitiv. Im Fall von *Things Fall Apart* muss die deutsche Übersetzerin entscheiden, ob sie Achebes patriarchalischen Rahmen, der in der kulturellen Authentizität der Igbo-Tradition verwurzelt ist, beibehält oder ihn durch

lexikalische und strukturelle Entscheidungen subtil hinterfragt.

Geschlecht und Übersetzung von Sprichwörtern in der afrikanischen Literatur

Trotz der umfangreichen Forschung zum Thema Geschlecht in der afrikanischen Literatur und Übersetzungstheorie konzentrieren sich relativ wenige Studien speziell auf die geschlechtsspezifische Übersetzung afrikanischer Sprichwörter. Eine bemerkenswerte Ausnahme bildet die Arbeit von Nida (1964), der die Bedeutung der „dynamischen Äquivalenz" in der biblischen und kulturellen Übersetzung betonte und darauf hinwies, dass die ideologische Funktion eines Sprichworts oft wichtiger ist als seine wörtliche Form.

In jüngerer Zeit argumentierte Oyìwùmí (1997), dass westliche feministische Ansätze afrikanische Kulturen oft falsch interpretieren, indem sie binäre Geschlechterstrukturen aufzwingen, wo diese möglicherweise nicht existieren. Dies ist insbesondere im Yoruba-Kontext relevant, wo Status und Dienstalter oft das Geschlecht als Machtprinzipien außer Kraft setzen. Diese Erkenntnis erschwert die Übersetzung von Achebes geschlechtsspezifischer Igbo-Weltanschauung ins Yoruba und legt nahe, dass kulturelle Nähe nicht immer ideologische Übereinstimmung garantiert.

In ähnlicher Weise betont die neuere feministische Forschung in der afrikanischen Übersetzungswissenschaft (z. B. Ndlovu 2016; Olumide 2020), wie wichtig es ist, vereinfachenden Äquivalenzen zu widerstehen und zu hinterfragen, wie Übersetzungsentscheidungen patriarchalische Systeme entweder aufrechterhalten oder erschüttern.

Analyse

Dieser Abschnitt bietet eine umfassende Analyse von 29 Sprichwörtern aus Chinua Achebes *Things Fall Apart* und legt dabei besonderen Wert auf die Behandlung geschlechtsspezifischer Sprache und Konzepte in ihren deutschen und Yoruba-Übersetzungen. Jedes Sprichwort wird hinsichtlich folgender Aspekte analysiert:

- der Geschlechterdarstellung im englischen Original,
- der Art und Weise, wie diese Darstellung im Deutschen erhalten, verändert oder neutralisiert wird,
- der Wiedergabe im Yoruba,
- der ideologischen und kulturellen Bedeutung.

"He who brings kola brings life (TFA S. 5)."

Deutsch: *Wer Kola spendet, spendet Leben (AZ S. 24).*

Yoruba: *Mo dúpẹ. Eni tó fún ní lobi, aláàfíà lo ń fẹ́ fúnni (IAO S. 4).*

Im Englischen wird ein männliches Subjekt („er") verwendet, was patriarchalische Strukturen verstärkt. Im Deutschen wird dies mit „Wer" („wer auch immer") neutralisiert, während die Yoruba-Version „Eni" („Person") verwendet und damit völlig geschlechtsneutral ist. Dies spiegelt die kulturelle und sprachliche Flexibilität des Yoruba wider, im Gegensatz zum deutschen Bestreben, das Geschlecht zu modernisieren.

"The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them (TFA S. 6)."
Deutsch: *Unsere Ältesten sagen, die Sonne wird diejenigen bescheinen, die stehen, ehe sie jene bescheint, die vor ihnen knien (AZ S. 25/26).*
Yoruba: *Awon agba a maa wi pe ojo ko meni owo, eni eji ba ri ni eji i pa (IAO S. 5).*
Keine der Versionen verwendet geschlechtsspezifische Begriffe, obwohl die Metapher eine soziale Hierarchie impliziert, die im Kontext oft als männliche Führung interpretiert wird. Yoruba neutralisiert die Hierarchie in abstrakten Begriffen vollständig.

"If a child washed his hands he could eat with kings (TFA S. 7)."
Deutsch: *Wenn ein Kind sich die Hände wäscht, darf es mit Königen essen (AZ S. 26).*
Yoruba: *Bomode ba mẹ́wẹ̀, yóò bá àgbà jẹun (IAO S. 6).*
Im Englischen wird von „he" und „kings" gesprochen, was männliche Privilegien impliziert. Im Deutschen bleibt „Kind" (neutral), aber „Königen" (Könige) erhalten. Yorubas *àgbà* bedeutet „Älteste", ist nicht geschlechtsspezifisch und verlagert den Fokus von der Monarchie auf das Dienstalter, wodurch Geschlechtervorurteile beseitigt werden.

"When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk (TFA S. 8)."
Deutsch: *Wenn der Mond scheint, hungert es noch den Krüppel nach einem Spaziergang (AZ S. 28).*
Yoruba: *Ti oẹ̀ùpá ba ń ràn, ebi eré sisà a sì má pa elésè kan (IAO S. 7)*
Alle Versionen sind frei von geschlechtsspezifischen Begriffen und konzentrieren sich stattdessen auf physische Einschränkungen und Metaphern.

"Let the kite perch and let the egret perch too. If one says no to the other, let his wing break (TFA S. 15)."
Deutsch: *Mag der Milan nisten, und mag auch der Reiher nisten. Wenn der eine zum anderen nein sagt, soll sein Flügel brechen (AZ S. 37).*
Yoruba: *Asa jẹ́, awẹ̀dì náà mú. ẹ ni yóò wù tó ní kéńíkàn má rí jẹ́, kẹ́nu rẹ̀ ó kàn (IAO S. 12).*
Tiere werden symbolisch verwendet. Im Deutschen wird der männliche Artikel (der) verwendet, wodurch die geschlechtsspezifische Syntax gewahrt bleibt, während Yoruba die Syntax geschlechtsneutral und kulturell idiomatisch hält.

"A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness (TFA S. 15)."
Deutsch: *Wie man bei uns sagt, ebnet der, welcher den Großen Achtung erweist, den Weg zu seiner eigenen Größe (AZ S. 37).*
Yoruba: *ẹ ni tó bá fẹ́ ẹ̀e oríire gbẹ́dẹ̀ júbà fàgbà (IAO S. 12/13).*
„Ein Mann" ist im Englischen eindeutig; im Deutschen bleibt das männliche Subjekt erhalten. Yorubas*?ni* ist neutral und *àgbà* (Älteste) reduziert die männliche Dominanz.

"A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing (TFA S. 16)."
Deutsch: *Nicht umsonst rennt die Kröte am helllichten Tag (AZ S. 38).*
Yoruba: *Opólo kìí dédè sẹ́ jàntó jàntó kiri òsán gangan (IAO S. 13).*

Alle Versionen sind geschlechtsneutral und metaphorisch und weisen keine ideologischen Verschiebungen auf.

“An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb (TFA S. 16).”
Deutsch: *Denn es heißt, einem alten Weib werde unwohl, sobald in einem Sprichwort Gebeine vorkommen (AZ S. 39).*
Yoruba: *Àwẹn arúgbó kìí fẹ́ká powé sáré lójú wẹn (IAO S. 13).*
Im Englischen und Deutschen wird „alte Frau“ spezifiziert, wobei im Deutschen das archaische und strenge Weib verwendet wird. Yoruba verallgemeinert zu „Älteste“, wodurch das Sprichwort geschlechtsneutralisiert und Vorurteile gemildert werden.

“The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did (TFA S. 17).”
Deutsch: *Der Gecko, der vom hohen Irokobaum sprang, fand, er müsse sich selbst preisen, wenn es sonst niemand tue (AZ S. 39).*
Yoruba: *Alángbà tó já bẹ̀ lórí ìrókò ní, ó ní béèyàn kò yìn mi, n ò yìnra mi*
Im Englischen und Deutschen kommt das männliche Subjekt („er“) vor. Yoruba verwendet „mi“ (ich/mich) und vermeidet das Geschlecht vollständig. *(IAO S. 14).*

“Eneke the bird says that since men have learnt to shoot without missing**, he has learnt to fly without perching (TFA S. 17).”**
Deutsch: *Der Vogel Eneke sagt, seit die Menschen gelernt haben zu schießen, ohne ihr Ziel zu verfehlen, habe er gelernt zu fliegen, ohne sich niederzulassen (AZ S. 40).*
Yoruba: *Eye Eneke sẹ pé: 'Tí ẹ̀yìn èníyàn bá jẹ́ a-tàmátàẹ́é, èmi náà a di a-mẹ̀ẹ́-fẹ̀-mà-bà' (IAO S. 14).*
Yoruba verwendet *èmi* (ich) und vermeidet das Geschlecht. Im Deutschen bleibt die männliche Grammatik erhalten.

“You can tell a ripe corn by its look (TFA S. 17).”
Deutsch: *Man erkennt den reifen Mais an seiner Farbe (AZ S. 40).*
Yoruba: *Tí ẹja bá sùn l'odò, a máa mẹ iye tó tó (IAO S. 14).*
Das Geschlecht fehlt in allen Versionen. Yoruba passt die Metapher an den lokalen Kontext an (Fisch im Wasser).

“Looking at a king's mouth, said an old man, **one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast (TFA S. 21).”**
Deutsch: *Sieht man den Mund eines Königs, sagte ein alter Mann, „würde man nicht glauben, dass er je an der Brust seiner Mutter gesaugt hat (AZ S. 44).“*
Yoruba: *Alagba kan lo wi pe,táa bá r'ẹnu ẹba, bí ẹni pé kò muyàn rí ni (IAO S. 17).*
Im Englischen und Deutschen werden Maskulinum (König) und Femininum (Mutter) einander gegenübergestellt. Yoruba bewahrt den Kontrast, vermeidet aber Übertreibungen.
“Palm-kernels cracked for them by a benevolent spirit should not forget to be humble **(TFA S. 21)”**

Deutsch: *jene, für die ein Schutzgeist die Palmnüsse bräche, dennoch die Demut nicht verlernen dürften (AZ S. 44).*
Yoruba: *Alagba kan dahun peeni tóẹ̀sà bá gbé kó gbẹ́dẹ̀ máa ẹ̀e afẹ̀júdì (IAO S. 17).*
Geschlechtsneutral in allen Versionen.

"When a man says yes, his chi says yes also (TFA S. 21)."
Deutsch: *… dass wenn ein Mann ja sagt, auch sein Chi ja sagt (AZ S. 45).*
Yoruba: *Ohun tí èniyàn bá fẹ́ ni ẹ lẹ́dàá báa fẹ́ (IAO S. 17).*
Yoruba ersetzt „Mann" durch „Person". Im Deutschen und Englischen wird das geschlechtsspezifische männliche Subjekt beibehalten.

"They called him the little bird nza who so far forgot himself after a heavy meal that he challenged his chi (TFA S. 25)."
Deutsch: *Sie verglichen ihn mit dem kleinen Vogel nza,der sich nach einem üppigen Mahl so sehr vergaß, dass er sein Chi herausforderte (AZ S. 49).*
Yoruba: *Won maa n pe nieye Nza tó jẹ yó tán tó gbàgbé ẹ lẹ́dàá rẹ (IAO S. 19/20).*
Im Deutschen wird „er" verwendet. Yoruba bleibt neutral.

"A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches (TFA S. 52)."
Deutsch: *Das Küken, aus dem ein Hahn wird, erkennt man am Tag, da es schlüpft (AZ S. 83).*
Yoruba: *A ti kékeré laa ti mẹ̀ẹmẹ adìyẹ tó yóò dákùkò (IAO S. 40).*
Im Englischen und Deutschen wird die männliche Reife betont; die Metapher der Yoruba ist gleichwertig, aber kulturell bedingt.

"A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm (TFA S. 53)."
Deutsch: *Das Kind verbrennt sich die Finger nicht am heißen Yams, das seine Mutter ihm reicht (AZ S. 84).*
Yoruba: *Ìyá kan kìí wó ẹmẹ sùnsùn, kó fi ẹ̀yìn iná le e l'ẹwẹ́ (IAO S. 41).*
In allen Versionen wird das Geschlecht der Mutter und das geschlechtsneutrale Kind beibehalten.

"When mother-cow is chewing grass, its young ones watch its mouth (TFA S. 56)."
Deutsch: *Wenn die Kuhmutter Gras kaut, schauen ihr die Jungen aufs Maul (AZ S. 87).*
Yoruba: *Owu tí ìyá gbón sáa l'ẹmẹ o ràn (IAO S. 43).*
Die mütterliche Rolle wird in allen Versionen betont.

"If I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play (TFA S. 58)."
Deutsch: *Wenn ich mich für dich hinwerfe und du dich für mich, ist es ein Spiel (AZ S. 90).*
Yoruba: *Ajà sẹ pé: "Tí mo bá dobalẹ̀ fún ẹ, tí ìwẹ náà dobalẹ̀ fún mi, ìjà tí kúrò níbẹ̀" (IAO S. 44).*
Bei allen dreien neutral.
"A baby on its mother's back does not know that the way is long (TFA S. 81)."

Deutsch: *Ein Kind auf dem Rücken der Mutter weiß nichts von der Länge des Weges (AZ S. 118).*
Yoruba: *ẹ mẹ tí a pon sẹ́yìn kìí sẹ pé ònà ilé jìn (IAO S. 64).*
Die mütterliche Bindung bleibt erhalten; das Kind bleibt neutral.

"If one finger brings oil, it soiled the others (TFA S. 100)."
Deutsch: *Wenn ein einziger Finger Öl brachte, er alle anderen verschmutzte (AZ S. 141).*
Yoruba: *Tí ẹàngó bá ń bá èníyàn ja, gbogbo ilé ni i máa f' owó gún l'ójú (IAO S. 78).*
Yoruba rekontextualisiert die Gottheit *?àngó*; entgeschlechtlicht die Metapher.

"The saying of the elders was not truethat if a man said yea his chi also affirmed (TFA S. 104)."
Deutsch: *Was die Ältesten sagten, stimmte nicht dass, wenn ein Mann zu seinem chi ja sage, ein chi zustimme (AZ S. 147).*
Yoruba: *Eleyii tá a kẹ́ ohun tí àwẹn àgbà ń sẹ, 'Ohun ti eniyan ba fe ni eledaa re yoo ba fe' (IAO S. 82).*
Alle Versionen bleiben neutral.

"Living fire begets cold impotent ash (TFA S. 123)."
Deutsch: *Lebendes Feuer zeugte kalte, kraftlose Asche (AZ S. 169).*
Yoruba: *Tí iná bá jó tán, èérú tútù ló maa nkú l'áàrẹ̀ (IAO S. 96).*
Englisch impliziert Männlichkeit; Yoruba lässt diesen Rahmen vollständig weg.

"I cannot live by the river and wash my hands with spittle (TFA S. 132)."
Deutsch: *Man lebt nicht am Ufer eines Flusses und wäscht sich die Hände mit Spucke (AZ S. 181).*
Yoruba: *Mi ò le wà l'ẹgbẹ́ odo kí n máa f' ìtó ẹnu f' ẹwẹ́ (IAO S. 104).*
In allen Versionen neutral.

"An animal rubs its itching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him **(TFA S. 132)."**
Deutsch: *Ein Tier reibt sich die juckende Flanke am Baum, ein Mann bittet seinen Verwandten, ihn zu kratzen (AZ S. 181).*
Yoruba: *Igi ni ?ranko maa n fi ara hò, iyekan eni lo n ba ni hora (IAO S. 104).*
In keiner Version wird ein Geschlecht angegeben.

"A child cannot pay for its mother's milk (TFA S. 133)."
Deutsch: *Ein Kind kann die Milch seiner Mutter nicht bezahlen (AZ S. 182).*
Yoruba: *ẹ mẹ omu kìí san owó oyàn ìyá rẹ (IAO S. 105).*
Das mütterliche Opfer wird bei allen gleichermaßen betont.

"As a man danced, so the drums were beaten for him (TFA S. 148)."
Deutsch: *So, wie ein Mann tanze, dazu wurden die Trommeln geschlagen (AZ S. 201).*
Yoruba: *Bi onígba bá tìpẹ́ igba rẹ̀, la fi n báa peé ní pànkàrà (IAO S. 117).*
Yoruba vermeidet geschlechtsspezifische Themen vollständig.

"When you see a toad jumping in broad daylight then know that something is after its life **(TFA S. 162)."**
Deutsch: *Wenn du am helllichten Tag eine Kröte springen siehst, dann weißt du, dass ihr etwas nach dem Leben trachtet (AZ S. 219).*
Yoruba: *Tí o bá rí ẹni tó ń sáré lójú pápá ní ẹ̀sán, dájú pé nǹkan ń lé e bo leyin (IAO S. 129).*
Yoruba verwendet einen menschlichen Agenten; entfernt Tiermetapher und Geschlecht.

"Eneke the bird was asked why he was always on the wing and he replied: „Men have learnt to shoot without missing their mark and i have learnt to fly without perching on a twig (TFA S. 162)."
Deutsch: Der Vogel Eneke wurde gefragt, weshalb er stets im vollen Fluge unterwegs sei, und seine Antwort lautete: ‚Die Menschen haben gelernt, zu schießen, ohne ihr Ziel zu verfehlen; ich habe gelernt, zu fliegen, ohne mich je niederzulassen.' *(AZ S. 220).*
Yoruba: Won bi eye Nneka leere pe, 'Ki lo faa ti o maa n fo laiba sori igi? O dahun pe 'Ti eyin eniyan ba di a-ta-mo-tase, emi naa a si di a-moo-fo-ma-ba' *(IAO S. 129)*.

In der Yoruba-Version wird „er" durch *èmi* (ich) ersetzt. Im Deutschen bleibt die männliche Syntax erhalten. Es ist auch bemerkungswert, dass der Yoruba Übersetzer den Namen des Vogels „Eneke" mit dem Namen „Nneka", einen weiblichen Namen ersetzt hat. Hiermit wird eine feministische Tendenz erzeugt.

Schlussfolgerung

Die Übersetzung von Sprichwörtern aus Chinua Achebes *Things Fall Apart* ins Deutsche und Yoruba zeigt, wie Geschlechterideologien über Sprachen und Kulturen hinweg erhalten, umgestaltet oder neutralisiert werden. Durch eine vergleichende Analyse von 29 Sprichwörtern, hat diese Studie gezeigt, dass Übersetzen kein neutraler Akt sprachlicher Übertragung ist, sondern ein tiefgreifender ideologischer Prozess, der von Grammatik, Kultur und der interpretativen Haltung des Übersetzers geprägt ist.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen einen deutlichen Kontrast zwischen den beiden Zieltexten. Die deutsche Übersetzung von Uda Strätling (2012) reproduziert im Wesentlichen die patriarchalischen Strukturen von Achebes englischem Original. Maskuline Pronomen, Rollen und Metaphern bleiben erhalten, und die im Igbo-Englisch verankerten geschlechtsspezifischen Hierarchien werden weitgehend übernommen. Die grammatische Struktur des Deutschen, die eine geschlechtsspezifische Angabe in Artikeln, Pronomen und Substantivformen erfordert, verstärkt diesen Trend und erschwert eine geschlechtsneutrale Übersetzung ohne wesentliche syntaktische oder semantische Anpassungen. Infolgedessen fungiert die deutsche Version weitgehend als strukturelles Spiegelbild des Originals, ohne dessen ideologische Annahmen zu hinterfragen.

Im Gegensatz dazu spiegelt die Yoruba-Übersetzung von Wale Ogunyemi (1997) einen flexibleren und anpassungsfähigeren Ansatz wider. Das fehlende grammatische Geschlecht der Yoruba-Sprache ermöglicht es dem Übersetzer, geschlechtsspezifische Inhalte in ideologisch sanfteren oder neutraleren Begriffen wiederzugeben. Anstatt männlich zentrierte Bilder zu replizieren, formuliert Ogunyemi Sprichwörter häufig neu und verwendet kulturell

resonante Yoruba-Ausdrücke, die Alter, Status, Weisheit oder Gemeinschaftsharmonie gegenüber binären Geschlechterrollen betonen. Dabei verschiebt die Übersetzung subtil den ideologischen Grund von Achebes Erzählung nicht durch Ablehnung, sondern durch kontextuelle Indigenisierung, die sowohl die kulturelle Logik der Yoruba bestätigt als auch ererbte patriarchalische Strukturen auflöst.

Diese Unterschiede werden durch die Erkenntnis, dass Sprichwörter selbst ideologische Instrumente sind, noch verdeutlicht. Sie verkörpern die moralische und soziale Ordnung einer Gesellschaft, einschließlich ihrer Vorstellungen von Männlichkeit, Weiblichkeit, Macht und Hierarchie. Achebes Sprichwörter artikulieren eine patriarchalische Weltanschauung der Igbo, in der männliche Weisheit und Handlungsfähigkeit dominieren und Frauen oft in marginale oder warnende Rollen gedrängt werden. Im Deutschen bleibt diese Weltanschauung weitgehend erhalten. Im Yoruba ist sie domestiziert und mitunter abgeschwächt, was zum Teil der inhärenten strukturellen Neutralität der Sprache und den stilistischen Entscheidungen des Übersetzers zu verdanken ist, die in gemeinsamen afrikanischen Ontologien verwurzelt sind.

Die Studie zeigt auch, wie Sprachstruktur und kulturelle Ideologie zusammenwirken und Übersetzungsergebnisse prägen. Wo das Deutsche geschlechtsspezifische Ausdrucksformen erzwingt, lässt Yoruba Interpretationsspielraum. Dieser strukturelle Unterschied stärkt die Handlungsfreiheit des Übersetzers, wie Ogunyemis häufige Verwendung von Begriffen wie *?ni* (Mensch), *àgbà (*Ältester) und *?m?* (Kind) zeigt, die menschliche Werte im Hinblick auf gemeinschaftliche Rollen, moralisches Verhalten oder spirituelle Stellung statt auf starre Geschlechterbinaritäten neu definieren.

Letztendlich bestätigt diese Forschung, dass Übersetzen ein Akt kultureller Entscheidungsfindung ist. Der Übersetzer ist kein passiver Vermittler, sondern ein ideologischer Akteur, dessen Entscheidungen die Macht haben, die Weltanschauung des Ausgangstextes zu verstärken, ihr zu widerstehen oder sie neu zu interpretieren. Die feministische Übersetzungstheorie bietet die Werkzeuge, um diese Entscheidungen zu hinterfragen, während die Rückübersetzungstheorie uns daran erinnert, dass jede neue Version eines Textes die sich verändernden kulturellen und ideologischen Prioritäten widerspiegelt, insbesondere in einem Werk wie *Things Fall Apart*, dessen globale Relevanz und Rezeption sich stetig weiterentwickelt. Für Wissenschaftler und Übersetzer unterstreicht diese Studie die Notwendigkeit gendergerechter und kulturell ansprechender Übersetzungspraktiken, insbesondere in der afrikanischen Literatur, in der Sprichwörter nicht nur als stilistisches Schnörkel, sondern auch als kulturelle Philosophien fungieren, die in bildlicher Sprache kodiert sind. Sie zu übersetzen bedeutet, nicht nur sprachliche Entscheidungen zu treffen, sondern auch Werte, Identität und soziale Visionen zu berücksichtigen.

Diese Forschung weist auch auf weitergehende Implikationen hin: Sprachen wie Yoruba mit ihren fließenden, geschlechtsneutralen Grammatiken und reichen Sprichworttraditionen bieten Möglichkeiten für inklusives und ausgewogenes Übersetzen, vorausgesetzt, Übersetzer setzen ihre kulturellen Ressourcen ideologisch bewusst ein. Ebenso fordert sie Sprecher geschlechtsspezifischer Sprachen wie Deutsch auf, innovativere, reflektiertere Strategien im Umgang mit geschlechtsspezifischen Texten aus kulturell unterschiedlichen Gesellschaften anzuwenden.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass die Darstellung von Geschlecht in der Übersetzung von Achebes Sprichwörtern nicht nur von der Sprache, sondern auch von Ideologie, der Handlungsfähigkeit des Übersetzers und der kulturellen Orientierung geprägt ist. Wenn wir Übersetzung als einen Verhandlungsraum begreifen, in dem Bedeutung nicht nur übertragen, sondern neu interpretiert wird, können wir literarische Übersetzung als eine wirkungsvolle Form der Kulturkritik und der Neuautorenschaft verstehen. Aus dieser Perspektive wird Übersetzung nicht nur zu einer Brücke zwischen Sprachen, sondern auch zu einem Dialog zwischen Weltanschauungen.

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La Pragmatique Et Les Fonctions Des Proverbes Dans Le Contexte De La Langue Eggon

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Résumé

La langue est une arme puissante par laquelle les idées, les pensées, les opinions, les messages et les informations sont généralement échangés entre des groupes de personnes pour assurer des relations interpersonnelles. C'est un symbole de l'identité des gens et un moyen d'identifier le système de valeurs des gens. Cela est particulièrement vrai pour les proverbes qui sont généralement considérés comme des paroles de sagesse, généralement didactiques, mémorisables et donc transmises d'une génération à l'autre. Les proverbes dépendent du contexte et de la culture. Étant donné que les proverbes ne peuvent exister en dehors du contexte d'utilisation, la pragmatique, l'étude du sens contextuel, est adoptée comme outil d'étude. Pour comprendre le contexte dominant des proverbes sélectionnés, le contexte socioculturel et l'orientation d'un groupe d'utilisateurs de la langue sont pris en compte. Cela implique que la culture occupe une position vitale dans l'étude des proverbes afin d'explorer leur signification contextuelle et leur signification didactique. Cependant, la diversité culturelle des utilisateurs de la langue eggon (en particulier les utilisateurs de proverbes) n'a pas encore reçu une attention suffisante dans les recherches sur les proverbes. Par conséquent, l'objectif de cette étude est de déployer l'utilisation d'une théorie linguistique pour l'analyse de textes littéraires dans le but d'identifier la signification morale des proverbes sélectionnés de la langue Eggon. En conclusion, l'étude révèle que les proverbes sélectionnés remplissent certaines fonctions didactiques et que ces fonctions sont révélées par une exploration minutieuse du contexte dominant.

Mots clés : Fonctions pragmatiques, proverbes Eggon, diversité culturelle.

Introduction

Les proverbes, d'un point de vue linguistique, sont l'une des source langage figuratif et de métaphore. Il a également été décrit comme le « cœur de l'interaction verbale en Afrique » (Oduaran et Oduaran, 2006) et « l'huile de palme avec laquelle les mots sont mangés » (Yankah, 1989). L'usage quotidien des proverbes le fait d'être un mode de communication majeur dans les communautés africaines. Ils peuvent être situés sous des marqueurs de solidarité dans un groupe car ils sont des figures de style/rhétorique qui s'appuie sur l'usage de métaphore, une expression utilisée pour se référer à quelque chose qu'elle ne désigne pas littéralement, afin de suggérer une similitude. Les proverbes se lient aux expressions métaphoriques. Ils ont leur source dans les dictons et les histoires destinés à favoriser l'apprentissage, qu'il s'agisse d'un apprentissage formel ou d'un apprentissage informel, familial ou populaire.

En fait, les proverbes sont une forme de communication, les expressions proverbiales sont universel dans le contexte de l'usage particulier, elles fournissent une vue systématique sur un phénomène de la vie, prédisent la cause et l'effet des phénomènes et, dans certains cas, prédisent l'avenir en fonction de variables situationnelles. Par conséquent, les proverbes peuvent être situés comme une catégorie de la communication verbale. Cela sera développé dans une revue de la littérature et des illustrations ci-dessous. (Beryl Ehondo 2017)

Les proverbes ont été, sont et seront toujours intemporels. La variété et le nombre de proverbes et de phrases proverbiales sont illimités. Quel que soit leur âge, leur pays d'origine, les proverbes font partie de leur patrimoine. Pour la façon de penser de tous les utilisateurs de proverbes, ils comprennent une bonne partie de bon sens, d'expérience, de sagesse et surtout de vérité. (Le concept des proverbes en tant que catégorie théorique dans la communication en Afrique {An MSc. Term Paper}par - BERYL EHONDO 2017)

Selon Archer Taylor : « En tant que guide pour les problèmes de la vie, le proverbe résume une situation, porte un jugement ou propose un plan d'action. C'est une consolation dans les difficultés, grandes et petites, et un guide quand un choix doit être fait. Il exprime une moralité adaptée à l'homme ordinaire » (Taylor, 1996). Il a également souligné que les recueils de proverbes sont lus pour réfléchir sur le monde et la vie. Les proverbes sont aussi souvent utilisés pour décrire les caractéristiques d'un pays ou de ses habitants. Porter des jugements se fait également au moyen de proverbes et pour cette raison, ils apparaissent souvent dans des contextes juridiques (l'ignorance n'est pas une excuse en droit, la curiosité a tué le chat, la mouche qui refuse d'écouter sera enterrée avec le cadavre).

Les proverbes possèdent des potentialités stylistiques et pragmatiques diverses et remplissent donc de nombreuses fonctions différentes au sein d'un texte. Ce fait peut être consulté dans des ouvrages pertinents sur les thèmes de la stylistique et de la pragmatique ainsi que dans diverses publications dans le domaine de la phraséologie et de la parémiologie. La stylistique traditionnelle observe la phraséologie en général, y compris les proverbes, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'élocution, c'est-à-dire en ce qui concerne la manière dont ils sont objectifs de l'interprétation linguistique liée à la situation. À cet égard, la stylistique se concentre principalement sur l'approche linguistique normative. La stylistique traditionnelle est une théorie sur le « bon » style, elle se concentre donc sur les qualités du style telles que l'exactitude, la clarté, la pertinence et la concision. Il discute également le choix et dans cet article, leurs analyses se situent d'abord dans le contexte traditionnel et communautaire des

textes sélectionnés et sont discutées thématiquement en fonction de caractéristiques contextuelles telles que la connaissance situationnelle partagée, la connaissance socioculturelle, l'inférence et la référence. Les effets des dispositifs linguistiques ou lexicaux individuels, qui agissent comme des instruments stylistiques ou des éléments stylistiques auxquels les proverbes sont également attribués. (Vida Jesenšek 2014)

Le terme pragmatique fait généralement référence à l'étude de l'utilisation du langage et à la théorie des actes de langage dans des situations de communication concrètes (Linke & Nussbaumer & Portmann, 1996: 169). Si un acte de langage est perçu comme un acte d'écriture ou de parole motivé par l'intention et vers un but, alors les aspects centraux de ce que l'on appelle la phrasé pragmatique (Lüger, 1999) sont des aspects de la fonction « ce qui est prononcé avec une intention communicative, remplit une fonction et a un but » (Lüger, 1999 :177).

Énoncé du problème :

Le manque de recherches exhaustives limite notre capacité à apprécier la richesse culturelle ancrée dans la langue Eggon, étant l'une des langues de la minorité. Les fonctions pragmatiques et les objectifs de communication de la langue Eggon restent sous-explorés, créant un fossé dans notre compréhension. Nous manquons d'informations complètes sur le fonctionnement de la langue Eggon dans les interactions sociales, l'expression de l'identité et la communication efficace. Les proverbes font partie intégrante de toute culture, encapsulant la sagesse, les valeurs et les idées philosophiques du peuple. Ils sont souvent utilisés pour communiquer des idées complexes d'une manière simple et compréhensible. La communauté d'Eggon au Nigeria et les communautés francophones ont une riche collection de proverbes qui reflètent leurs perspectives culturelles uniques. Cependant, il y a un manque d'analyse pragmatique comparant les proverbes Eggon et français. Cette lacune dans la recherche entrave notre compréhension des similitudes et des différences dans la sagesse culturelle contenue dans ces proverbes. De plus, cela limite le potentiel d'utilisation de ces proverbes comme outils de compréhension interculturelle et d'apprentissage des langues. Par conséquent, cette recherche vise à mener une analyse pragmatique des proverbes Eggon et français afin de découvrir la sagesse culturelle sous-jacente et d'explorer le potentiel de leur utilisation dans la promotion de la compréhension interculturelle et de l'apprentissage des langues.

Objectifs de communication des proverbes de Eggon

Les proverbes ont une riche signification communicative à travers les cultures. Ils résument la sagesse universelle et reflètent des expériences partagées.

Stylistiquement à l'écart du discours ordinaire, les proverbes sont souvent métaphoriques ou symboliques. Les orateurs les utilisent pour transmettre des connaissances, offrir des conseils, enseigner la morale, présenter des arguments, soulager les tensions, aider à la compréhension et inspirer les autres.

Dans Eggon, les proverbes ajoutent de la couleur et de la profondeur à la communication, en fournissant des moyens concis de transmettre des messages ou d'illustrer des thèmes. Leur pertinence s'étend à l'orientation morale, au développement personnel et à l'identité culturelle.

Les proverbes ont plusieurs objectifs: ils offrent des conseils, résument une expérience commune ou donnent une leçon de morale, souvent d'une manière spirituelle ou accrocheuse. Ils sont comme un condensé de sagesse, offrant un aperçu de la nature humaine, de la société ou du monde naturel en quelques mots seulement.

Questions de recherche:

i. Quelles sont les fonctions pragmatiques spécifiques de la langue Eggon dans les interactions sociales?
ii. Comment la langue Eggon exprime-t-elle les nuances culturelles et contribue-t-elle à l'identité du peuple Eggon?
iii. Dans quelle mesure la normalisation de l'anglais nigérian (y compris Eggon) améliore-t-elle l'efficacité de la communication à travers le Nigeria?

Objectifs de la recherche:

Le but de cet article est d'analyser les fonctions pragmatiques et le but communicatif des proverbes d'Eggon. Les objectifs spécifiques sont les suivants:

i. Étudier les diverses fonctions pragmatiques de la langue eggon au sein de la communauté.
ii. Examinez comment la langue Eggon contribue à exprimer l'identité unique du peuple Eggon.
iii. Explorer l'efficacité de la langue Eggon pour faciliter la communication entre les Nigérians.

Importance de l'étude

Cette recherche comble une lacune critique en mettant en lumière le rôle de la langue Eggon au-delà de la communication quotidienne. La compréhension de ses fonctions pragmatiques enrichit notre appréciation de la culture Eggon et contribue à la préservation de la diversité linguistique. Les résultats peuvent éclairer les politiques linguistiques, les programmes d'enseignement et les initiatives de développement communautaire. D'autres importances de cette sorte d'étude sont :

Préservation culturelle: La langue Eggon est un dépositaire du patrimoine culturel, reflétant l'histoire, les traditions et la vision du monde du peuple Eggon. L'étude de ses fonctions pragmatiques permet de préserver l'héritage culturel du peuple d'Eggon.

Autonomisation de la communauté: Comprendre comment la langue Eggon facilite les interactions sociales dans la communauté. Il éclaire les politiques linguistiques, l'éducation et les initiatives de développement communautaire.

Contexte national: En tant que membre de l'anglais nigérian, Eggon contribue à la diversité linguistique nationale. Son étude améliore notre compréhension de la dynamique linguistique au Nigeria.

Contribution académique: Cette étude comblera les lacunes actuelles de la recherche liée à l'analyse pragmatique des proverbes Eggon et français, contribuant ainsi à la connaissance académique dans ce domaine de clarifications conceptuelles.

a) Proverbes

Cette section tente d'enquêter sur le sens des mots des proverbes afin de faire la lumière sur les diverses possibilités qui s'offrent à eux en s'appuyant sur les interprétations probables qu'ils peuvent rencontrer. Les proverbes sont des mots combinés pour former des unités sémantiques. Comme d'autres moyens de communication, ils sont encodés par le locuteur et décodés par l'auditeur au moyen de sa connaissance soulignée de la langue elle-même. Les proverbes, en ce sens, ont leur propre sens conceptuel qui est une composante de base du langage et que le sens conceptuel de presque tous les éléments dans n'importe quelle langue est le même puisque le sens conceptuel est « une propriété universelle de l'esprit » (Leech, 1980 : 13-15). Cependant, cela ne signifie pas que toutes les personnes présentent le même cadre conceptuel, car les différences d'âge, d'éducation, etc. jouent le rôle le plus important. Les interprétations possibles des mots qui composent tout le sens conceptuel des proverbes ont d'autres caractéristiques importantes en raison du fait qu'elles sont associées à des idées d'expérience humaine, mais seulement lorsqu'elles sont utilisées dans une certaine situation de communication. C'est ce qu'on appelle le « sens associatif », qui peut être de plusieurs types de significations, dont les plus importantes sont les significations connotatives, affectives, stylistiques et familières. Cette variété de significations associatives est le résultat de la diversité de l'expérience individuelle.

Signification connotative des proverbes

Le sens connotatif des proverbes est leur valeur communicative en vertu de ce que les propriétés psychologiques ou sociales de ce que les éléments linguistiques du proverbe impliquent. En parlant de sens connotatif, on parle de « l'expérience du monde réel que l'on associe à une expression lorsqu'on l'utilise ou l'entend » (ibid.). Le sens voulu d'un proverbe ne peut être efficace que si les mots sont « associés à certaines caractéristiques des éléments auxquels ils se réfèrent » (Palmer, 1981: 92). Par exemple, les gens ont des idées différentes sur les « femmes », qu'elles soient bonnes ou mauvaises ; Ces idées se reflètent dans les proverbes qu'ils emploient au moyen de mots qui sont souvent associés au « mal » (et rarement à la « douceur »). Le proverbe suivant, emprunté du français à l'anglais, laisse entendre que les « femmes » sont la source de tous les maux: « Cher chez la femme ». De nombreux autres facteurs déterminent l'étendue de la signification connotative des proverbes, la plupart d'entre eux reflétant la vision du monde adoptée par les individus, les sociétés et les cultures. Par exemple, l'idée qu'un homme sage est censé utiliser ses erreurs ou ses échecs antérieurs peut être exprimée de manière égale ou différente d'une culture à l'autre selon la façon dont le monde est perçu par les individus. Dans la culture anglaise, les gens, par exemple, se référaient à une telle idée en recourant respectivement au monde des animaux et à la nature: « Un renard n'est pas pris deux fois dans le même piège. » Ainsi, les connotations dans les proverbes sont relativement déterminées par l'instabilité. Ce qui favorise de plus en plus ce manque de stabilité, c'est le fait que les connotations ont un statut indéterminé. Sangsue (1980: 15) à cet

égard affirme que « le sens associatif est ouvert de la même manière que nos connaissances et nos croyances sur l'univers sont ouvertes ».

Signification stylistique des proverbes

Le sens stylistique des proverbes se manifeste énormément par l'existence de certaines caractéristiques du style (par exemple, permanentes, temporelles, etc.). Les normes stylistiques les plus importantes des proverbes sont essentiellement liées aux portées stylistiques du statut qui comprennent différents véhicules pour exprimer n'importe quel élément (de la pensée) dans le langage (par exemple, formalité vs informalité, politesse vs impolitesse, etc.). Un grand pourcentage de proverbes est informel dans les deux sens en ce qui concerne la structure ou la situation: « Tandis que l'herbe pousse, le coursier meurt de faim. » -Mourir avec sa botte / mourir dans sa botte. (= mourir alors qu'il est encore actif dans son travail). (Makkai, 1984: 79) Les proverbes, en tant que style littéraire, consistent souvent en l'association d'idées en raison de la collocation. La collocation peut être normale ou inhabituelle. Les écrivains utilisent parfois ce dernier type pour créer des effets stylistiques afin d'impressionner les lecteurs. Bien sûr, « il y a inévitablement des divergences d'opinions quant à ce qui représente une collocation acceptable en anglais » (Gairness et Redman, 1986 : 37), ou si la fonction sémantique des mots colocalisés dans le proverbe peut être entièrement déduite de la signification des mots individuels. Cependant, les collocations auxquelles nous faisons référence dans les proverbes suivants sont du type normal (voir page 9), dépendant principalement de l'opposition du sens et du fait qu'il n'y a pas deux personnes en désaccord sur leur validité: « Ce que tu sèmes, tu moissonneras ».

b) Fonction pragmatique

La pragmatique fait référence à la façon dont le langage est utilisé dans son contexte, au-delà de son sens littéral. Dans le cas d'Eggon, les fonctions pragmatiques servent à plusieurs fins:

- Interaction sociale: La langue Eggon facilite la communication au sein de la communauté, renforçant les liens sociaux et l'identité partagée.
- Exprimer l'identité: Comme toute langue, la langue Eggon exprime des nuances culturelles et reflète l'identité unique du peuple Eggon.
- Communication efficace : La normalisation et l'institutionnalisation de l'anglais nigérian (y compris Eggon) peuvent améliorer l'efficacité de la communication à travers le Nigeria, en favorisant la fierté nationale et les relations entre les Nigérians

Cadre théorique

Les idées tirées des Proverbes des actes pragmatiques de Jecob Mey sont mieux expliquées dans leurs contextes socioculturels. Selon Odebunmi (2008:75), « étant donné que les proverbes sont strictement contextuels, il est essentiel de les explorer en termes de comment leurs significations émergent dans des situations d'utilisation ». En ce sens, l'acte pragmatique est une théorie contextuelle qui prend en charge le sens dans des situations d'utilisation. Selon Mey (2001), aucune conversation, y compris le texte, ne peut être correctement comprise si elle n'est pas située dans l'environnement dans lequel elle est censée être comprise. La théorie des

actes pragmatiques de Jacob Mey est apparue pour pallier les lacunes de la théorie de l'acte de langage, qui a été critiquée par les chercheurs comme étant « atomistique » et comme « pensée émanant entièrement de l'individu » (Fairclough 1989 : 9). À Mey (2001: 214), Il manque « une théorie de l'action ». Par conséquent, les actes pragmatiques, contrairement aux actes de langage, ne s'adressent pas seulement à des énoncés, mais à des « actions » et à la situation qui influence ces énoncés.

Cette théorie traite de la façon dont les gens utilisent le langage dans leurs limites individuelles, leurs situations et les « affordances » du contexte immédiat. L'hypothèse de base de la théorie est que toutes les expressions linguistiques, y compris les proverbes, ne sont pas de simples expressions linguistiques, mais sont des exemples d'utilisation linguistique qui accomplissent des actes et des fonctions pragmatiques dans des contextes. Les contextes d'utilisation des proverbes sont très importants car le sens en découle. Selon Mey (2001: 221), « l'environnement dans lequel le locuteur et l'auditeur trouvent leurs affordances, de sorte que toute la situation est influencée sur ce qui peut être dit dans la situation, ainsi que sur ce qui est réellement dit ». Dans sa théorie pragmatique de l'acte, Mey (2001) Classe les actes pragmatiques (également appelés pragèmes) en deux grandes parties: la partie activité et la partie textuelle. Alors que la partie activité est utilisée par les interactants, la partie textuelle fait référence au contexte d'utilisation dans lequel le pragème opère. Afin de communiquer efficacement dans un contexte particulier, les interacteurs utilisent les types d'actes de langage tels que les actes de langage indirects, les actes conversationnels (« dialogue »), etc. sous la partie activité. Les différents actes sont engagés dans des contextes dans les parties textuelles telles que l'inférence, la pertinence, la métaphore et la connaissance partagée de la situation. L'interaction entre la partie activité et la partie textuelle donne lieu à des actes pragmatiques tels que informer, conseiller/conseiller, invoquer, assurer, avertir/mettre en garde, réprimander, persuader, louer, plaider, menacer et accuser. Les proverbes utilisés surtout dans les situations de conflit accomplissent certains de ces actes.

Dans cet article, leurs analyses se situent d'abord dans le contexte traditionnel et communautaire igbo des textes sélectionnés et sont discutées thématiquement en fonction de caractéristiques contextuelles telles que la connaissance situationnelle partagée, la connaissance socioculturelle, l'inférence et la référence.

Méthodologie

Ce document de séminaire a utilisé une approche méthodologique qualitative comprenant deux méthodes d'enquête clés, à savoir des entretiens individuels semi-structurés approfondis avec des experts et des locuteurs de la langue Eggon, ainsi qu'un examen de sources secondaires telles que le dictionnaire de la langue Eggon, la recherche sur Internet de vidéos You tube sur la langue Eggon et les enquêtes/publications existantes sur Eggon et les proverbes du Nigeria. Ceux-ci ont été analysés à l'aide d'une analyse de contenu thématique.

Fonctions pragmatiques des proverbes Eggon

1. Actes de conseil

Les proverbes d'Eggon, comme tous les autres proverbes, sont utilisés pour conseiller à la fois les vieux et les jeunes. Par exemple:

Proverbe 1-Ongla ond?a kala moare, ora? gre-ta apla obi? da moare a dzu ma.
Traduction: Être amical avec les gens vaut mieux que de leur offrir une place
Proverbe 2-Are la a dzi heh?e ambo agbu okhro g?a akloayi lo
Traduction: Même ceux qui marchent lentement arrivent toujours à destination, alors prenez la vie douce.

2. Actes d'avertissement

Les proverbes en temps de paix et en contexte de guerre sont également utilisés pour l'avertissement. Dans ce cas, ils sont utilisés pour avertir d'un danger imminent. Par exemple:
Proverbe 1-Oba enu la wo azhi azhi azgi esin a gre atka bmon,moa-hwo la ba wo ewu
Traduction: Lorsqu'une poule pondeuse entre pour la première fois dans son lieu de sommeil, les autres sont en trouble. C'est-à-dire soyez vigilant à votre environnement.
Proverbe 2-O'ogno ka atku azhaga ara ami onjgen, moare la ambi manga a wo amie eshin
Traduction: quand une calebasse danse au-dessus de l'eau, les tambours sont cachés à l'intérieur de la rivière, il y a une raison à tout, découvrez-le.
Plus important encore, chez les Eggons, ce proverbe, tout comme il se produit ici, est principalement utilisé dans les environnements sujets au combat et aux conflits. Il est généralement utilisé pour mettre en garde un adversaire contre la probabilité d'une réaction/réponse violente à son action ; réaction/réponse qui peut avoir une issue douloureuse pour l'adversaire.

3. Actes d'harmonisation pour la paix

Outre les conseils et les avertissements, les proverbes sont également utilisés pour réaliser la paix en situation de guerre. Par exemple:
Proverbe 1 - Emu eran emo ayga,,mo-azi otsotse.
Traduction: Lorsque les gens marchent ensemble, ils ont un accord. La compréhension engendre l'unité.
Ce proverbe est utilisé pour prôner la paix. Un conflit ensuit soit lorsque l'une des parties trouble la paix de l'autre ou Respectez l'accord. Ainsi, si les deux parties n'interfèrent pas dans les activités de l'autre, il y aura la paix.
Proverbe 2 - Aba Eg ŋ o a yi ombgu a kpo ta-la anà ŋ o-dne sha
Traduction: Un homme Eggon ne sait combattre que son propre frère.
Signification: Les gens Egoon se battent à peine avec quelqu'un en dehors de la maison, cela signifie qu'ils sont un peuple épris de paix et des artisans de paix.

4. Actes de critique

Les proverbes sont utilisés pour critiquer les gens et leurs situations. Par exemple:
Proverbe 1-Arekye?a klü a g?o angzo ba eko mbo ambo gi e la e klü egyi ombgu
Traduction: Personne ne veut entendre le bruit de la guerre, mais nous nous battons nous-mêmes
Proverb 2- Awunu la a bizi ogbu angyi ŋ ogbu o la o ta ŋ ŋ a
Traduction: C'est l'oiseau qui appelle la pluie qui sera trempé par la pluie

5. Actes d'incitation

Certains proverbes sont utilisés pour inciter au conflit plutôt qu'à la paix. Pour instance:

Proverbe 1 - Are la a kyku ekpyi a vu mbo a sé o?e ta-la enyma a gbú mbo.

Traduction: Quiconque ne gagne pas un rat dans une course ne gagnera pas en concourant avec un cheval.

Proverbe 2 - Arehwi la a kpo otum mbo mo a shri algo ada ŋ a ri mbo.

Traduction: Une personne qui ne travaille pas ne doit pas recevoir de nourriture à manger

6. Fonctions sociolinguistiques, y compris la persuasion.

Gebregeorgis, (2015: 228) l'élargit en affirmant que les proverbes sont les dépositaires du savoir indigène, de la sagesse communautaire et de la morale utilisée comme « outils de persuasion lors du règlement des différends; enseigner la morale communautaire; exposer des leçons sur le bien et le mal; donner des orientations sur les actions justes et expliquer la nécessité et les avantages de la compréhension mutuelle et de la coexistence pacifique ». De cette façon, les proverbes persuadent les acteurs en conflit de repenser profondément et de manière critique leurs points de vue et leurs positions. Pour Adegoju (2009: 58), Les proverbes « communiquent des vérités qui peuvent être abstraites et difficiles à saisir, car ils dramatisent et configurent généralement les vérités nues ». De telles vérités, selon Ademowo et Nuhu (2017), renforcent l'effet persuasif et pragmatique des proverbes tels que l'avertissement, l'encouragement et le découragement de certaines pratiques. Fondamentalement, « les différentes communautés ont des proverbes qui aident à résoudre les conflits; de même, ils ont des proverbes qui dépeignent des préjugés sur différentes sections d'une société (Gebregeorgis, 2015: 227).

La signification communicative des proverbes

Quel que soit le type d'acte de langage ou la signification potentielle que les proverbes peuvent avoir, le fait majeur est qu'ils ont certaines fonctions à accomplir lorsqu'ils sont utilisés dans une certaine situation de communication. Les proverbes et les dictons proverbiaux, avec leur signification et leur valeur communicatives, ont été pendant des siècles également populaires auprès de toutes les nations en raison de l'énorme signification et de la fonction qu'ils entendent porter et en raison de l'influence qu'ils ont eue. Leur importance inspirante dans la communication, l'enseignement qu'ils donnent, qui va des vérités générales de conseils, d'avertissements et de commentaires qu'ils offrent sur l'expérience humaine, encouragent les humains à agir et à se comporter d'une certaine manière. Lorsque l'on essaie d'analyser les fonctions des proverbes, il est indispensable de garder à l'esprit comment les proverbes traditionnels sont utilisés et fonction dans le monde moderne. « Sans aucun doute, les proverbes traditionnels jouent encore un rôle important dans le langage d'aujourd'hui, où ils continuent d'être utilisés pour moraliser, instruire, conseiller et réfléchir sur les événements quotidiens » (Mieder, 1993: 58).

Ces vieux proverbes bien connus sont souvent utilisés d'une manière différente, ils sont modifiés afin d'être efficaces dans la communication à différents niveaux, montrant une variété de fonctions significatives dans la société, la conversation, l'interaction, etc. En discutant de la signification des proverbes en ce qui concerne leur utilisation dans tout événement de communication, une question cruciale doit être posée: pourquoi les gens utilisent-ils des

proverbes? Ou quelle est la signification de l'utilisation de proverbes dans la communication? On peut affirmer que les proverbes ne fonctionnent généralement pas comme de simples embellissements poétiques de la parole, et qu'ils ne sont pas non plus utilisés pour répondre aux besoins de l'homme en matière de phraséologie philosophique. En fait, leur utilisation a des fonctions pratiques et une signification dans diverses circonstances de la communication quotidienne. Selon Taylor, « les hommes achètent et lisent des recueils de proverbes pour éveiller et élargir les réflexions sur le monde et la nature de l'homme, pour suggérer des sujets de conversation ou pour se doter de commentaires appropriés aux situations de la vie quotidienne » (Taylor, 1996 : 45). Il ne serait pas suffisant d'affirmer que les proverbes sont utilisés pour exprimer les problèmes et les préoccupations généraux de l'humanité au moyen du langage traditionnel. Selon Mieder (1993: 11)

En employant des proverbes dans notre discours, nous souhaitons renforcer nos arguments, exprimer des généralisations, influencer ou manipuler les autres, rationaliser nos propres défauts, remettre en question certains modèles de comportement, satiriser les maux sociaux, nous moquer de situations ridicules. Il n'est pas surprenant qu'à travers les âges, les proverbes qui ont prévalu et contribué de manière significative à la langue Eggon en fassent encore partie intégrante et puissent ainsi enrichir nos conversations quotidiennes. Ils font de la langue un outil de communication plus vivant et plus puissant. Une réponse reçoit un poids supplémentaire lorsque nous ne parlons pas simplement avec notre propre bouche et que nous n'utilisons pas notre expression individuelle de notre état d'esprit, mais une opinion générale. En effet, la signification communicative des proverbes est variée et joue de multiples rôles dans tout élément de communication. Par exemple, les proverbes peuvent être utilisés pour manœuvrer les gens politiquement et économiquement et ils peuvent être un outil très sérieux en tant qu'« expressions d'invectives stéréotypées ou de généralisations non fondées » (Mieder, 1993: X). En termes de fonctions, on a observé que les proverbes se produisent dans tous les événements de communication et leurs occurrences se sont avérées d'une grande importance en raison de leur influence et de leur efficacité. Ils sont utilisés dans l'art oratoire, le conseil, le jugement, l'embellissement, les discours et les conversations enrichissantes (Finnegan, 1994: 36).

Tout d'abord, les proverbes avaient et ont toujours une fonction didactique. En les utilisant, nous souhaitons enseigner aux gens, leur donner des conseils, les aider dans des situations difficiles, montrer aux gens quelles sont les choses les plus importantes dans la vie, montrer la bonne façon de vivre. La plupart des proverbes ayant une fonction didactique commencent par « Cherchez et vous trouverez » (ibid). En ce qui concerne leur signification dans la communication, on peut clairement voir que les Proverbes sont très souvent utilisés dans l'interaction personnelle.

Ils peuvent servir d'avertissement (« Gardez l'œil ouvert », « Faites attention à vos P et Q »), de suggestion (« Vivez et laissez vivre », « Il n'est jamais trop tard pour apprendre »), de réprimande (« Celui qui cherche les ennuis, ne les rate jamais », « Il se pavane comme un paon »), d'explication (« Celui qui vit par l'épée meurt par l'épée »), de justification (« Trop de cuisiniers gâchent le bouillon »), un résumé ou un commentaire (« Apprenez la sagesse par les folies des autres », « Les soins ont tué le chat »).

Ils font également ressortir l'essence d'un phénomène donné, avertissent du danger et disent aux gens comment se comporter et comment ne pas se comporter, conseillent ou donnent des ordres et des interdictions directes.

Avec l'aide du proverbe, on peut viser à donner une approbation à sa déclaration ou à ses opinions, prévoir quelque chose, exprimer des doutes, accuser quelqu'un de quelque chose, se moquer du malheur de quelqu'un, justifier ou excuser quelqu'un.

Les proverbes sont également utilisés pour résumer les expériences de la vie et permettre à l'auditeur de tirer des conclusions par lui-même et de les appliquer à son comportement futur. La plupart du temps, l'utilisation de proverbes est considérée comme significative lors de divers événements de communication.

Ils sont considérés comme un outil impressionnant et influent, grâce auquel il est possible de jeter le discrédit ou de se moquer de quelqu'un ou de critiquer quelqu'un ou une situation. En utilisant la politesse, en une phrase courte et concise, nous pouvons cacher nos propres pensées et dire quelque chose que nous n'oserions pas dire de manière directe.

Au moyen de proverbes, nous pouvons dépeindre un large éventail d'expériences et de problèmes fondamentaux de la vie moderne d'une manière satirique et moralisatrice. Nous dirions: « Un bon mari fait une bonne épouse » si nous entendons un homme se plaindre de sa femme alors que nous savons que ce n'est pas seulement de sa faute. Dans les écrits modernes, la fonction des proverbes diffère un peu de celle des proverbes traditionnels. (Mieder, 1993:71). Mieder continue que: "In the process of communication, it is to be observed that the use of proverbs has been defined as way of saying something implicitly rather than explicitly supporting the arguments in popular wisdom which means that the significance of their use is so crucial if an efficient and creative communication is to be achieved."

Conclusion

Cet article a examiné les deux livres de proverbes Eggon connus au Nigeria, en particulier dans la région du Centre-Nord, où le peuple Eggon se trouve essentiellement au Nigeria, et aussi dans l'État de Nasarawa, où la tribu Eggon est principalement parlée (Nasarawa eggon).

L'étude a utilisé la théorie de l'acte pragmatique de Mey pour examiner comment des proverbes rédigés à partir de parties du corps et d'animaux sont déployés dans un contexte de guerre pour accomplir des actes spécifiques de manière implicite. Le Les résultats montrent que les proverbes accomplissent principalement cinq fonctions de conseil, d'avertissement, d'incitation, de critique et d'harmonisation pour la paix. Plus précisément, les proverbes d'origine animale exécutent principalement des actes pragmatiques directifs visant à alerter, à critiquer et à inciter à la violence pendant que les proverbes liés aux parties du corps s'exécutent et avoir des fonctions pragmatiques telles que et l'harmonisation pour la paix. Tous ces actes remplissent une double function de l'escalade de la violence et de la désescalade de la situation de conflit tendue. L'étude conclut que l'utilisation des proverbes dans les contextes de conflit doit être soigneusement déployée afin de parvenir à des résolutions pacifiques des conflits.

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Corruption Dans La Poesie Nigeriane D'expression Française: Etude De« Sursauts » D'unimna Angrey

Corruption in Nigerian Poetry in French: Study of Unimna Angrey's "sursauts."

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Résumé

La corruption tout comme le conflit et la violence est un virus qui a ravagé et ravage encore non seulement le Nigeria mais aussi certains paysd'Afrique et du monde. Cependant, le cas du Nigeria devient pire. Et tant que la corruption continuera àentraver le progrès de la nation, on continuera à lui faire guerre sans relâcheavec le pouvoir de la plume plutôt qu'avec l'épée. Cettecommunication met en évidence les méfaits de la corruption au Nigeria et fait en même temps appel au renouvellement des valeurs, et principes africains et proposer enfin des solutions réalistes pour lutter contre la menace de la corruption.Le cours de cette étude s'appuie sur la critique psychosociologique (qui fusionne les éléments psychologiques et sociaux) et le post colonialisme. L'auteur invita les dirigeants politiques à développer d'abord un sens de soi et une identité cohérents, à résoudre leurs conflits internes et à surmonter leurs défis sociaux et psychologiques avant d'assumer le leadership. Faute de quoi, la déception des masses est inévitable. L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner les origines et les conséquences du leadership corruptif afin d'éradiquer ce phénomène dès ses débuts pour empêcher sa propagation vers les générations futures.Bien qu'Unimna soit nigérian, les questions de corruption qu'il a mises en lumière affectent l'ensemble de la société africaine. Toutefois, notre attention se focalise principalement sur le Nigeria. Donc, cette recherche sera utile pour les dirigeants politiques actuels et futurs, ainsi que pour les étudiants et le grand public.

Mots clés : indépendance, instabilité, corruption, sécurité, poésie.

Il n'est pas surprenant que le terme 'corruption' soit de genre féminin. Il est évident que « *Sursauts* » d'Unimna Angrey porte principalement sur des thèmes tels que la corruption, le patriotisme et les conséquences de l'indépendance mal formée, entre autres. C'est également un cri de désolation face aux déceptions de l'indépendance, et un appel à la revitalisation des valeurs africaines, des autorités et au rétablissement de l'authenticité noire africaine.

Après les années 1960, la plupart des pays africains ont obtenu leur indépendance politique. Cependant, cette indépendance ne signifiait pas nécessairement *liberté* ou *progrès* pour tous. De nombreux États ont fait face à de nouveaux problèmes : la mauvaise gouvernance, les dictatures, la pauvreté, la corruption, les conflits ethniques, la perte des valeurs traditionnelles, etc. Face à cette réalité, les écrivains africains ont utilisé la littérature comme un moyen de critique sociale et de conscience collective.En conséquence, les populations d'Afrique de l'Ouest se sont retrouvées désillusionnées car toutes les promesses faites lors de la lutte nationaliste se sont révélées être une tromperie.Après de nombreuses années horribles, l'armée a pris le contrôle, mais elle n'était pas meilleure, car le virus de la corruption les avait également rongés jusqu'à l'os.

Bien que notre texte de base ait été produit par un Nigérian francophone et qu'il soit une anthologie de poèmes postcoloniaux, les enjeux dénoncent les interruptions à travers tous les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Ils soulignent que la corruption, l'instabilité politique et l'insécurité sont des problèmes qui affectent le monde entier, mais la situation en Afrique de l'Ouest est particulièrement troublante. Comme les autres aspects de la vie humaine, les opinions, les vues, et les réactions varient parmi les individus mais la politique de la corruption, est bien affectée par ces facteurs ; le problème demauvaise gouvernance, l'irresponsabilité des dirigeants politiques, l'impérialisme culturel, le manque d'une considération sincère des paysans ou citoyens et l'ignorance de la part des dirigeants.

Le défi de la gouvernancea débuté après que le pays a acquis son indépendance vis-à-vis de la Grande-Bretagne sans principes fondamentaux clairs. Ainsi, tout comme Napoléon le cochon dans *AnimalFarm* de George Orwell, qui s'est transformé en la pire incarnation de son maître colonial, M. Jones, après avoir obtenu son indépendance de ce dernier. Une majorité d'auteurs pense que la corruption n'est pas issue du territoire local. Certains n'estiment que l'insuccès d'un pays tel que le Nigéria peut être attribué à des problèmes de gouvernance.

L'irresponsabilité des dirigeants politiques déplorent la détresse des citoyens depuis les premiers jours de l'indépendance puisque l'ironie du désir de rentrer chez soi, tandis que ceux qui sont restés au pays rêvent d'émigrer dans l'espoir d'échapper à la misère et à l'amélioration des conditions de vie et l'impérialisme culturel à l'instar d'une contamination de ver de Guinée non traitée et manifestement négligée dans les résidus d'un riziculteur, beaucoup affirment que les conditions actuelles d'un pays où la corruption est la plus répandue semblent profondément ancrées dans leurs fondements, notamment certains aspects de leur culture, leur constitution et leur prétendue indépendance. Aussi, l'absence d'une prise en compte véritable des agriculteurs ou des citoyens augmente des lamentations de désespoir, de déception et de peine provoquées par les échecs irrationnels des responsables politiques.Face aux problèmes mentionnés précédemment, il est nécessaire d'étudier la corruption dans la poésie nigériane d'expression française, en se basant sur *Sursauts* d'Unimna Angrey.

Énoncé du problème

Cette étude a examiné l'état d'esprit du leadership corrompu dans *Sursauts* d'Unimna Angrey.

Objectif de l'Étude

Selon l'étude, des auteurs tels que Francis Unimna Angrey ont utilisé leur talent poétique pour traiter la question de la corruption au pouvoir en Afrique de l'Ouest, notamment au Nigeria. L'étude s'est penchée minutieusement sur la manière dont le poète dépeignait la corruption avec ses diverses caractéristiques telles que le détournement de fonds, l'oppression, la traîtrise envers son propre pays et une représentation fallacieuse de la liberté de presse à travers ses vers et ses rythmes.

Méthodologie de la recherche

Dans cette recherche, la corruption dans la poésie nigériane d'expression française est étudiée à travers le prisme des dirigeants corrompus, qu'ils soient passés ou actuels, depuis l'indépendance et à divers niveaux de direction, que ce soit sous régime militaire ou civil. L'accent est mis sur l'ampleur de leur attitude psychopathe face au sort des masses, aux fonds publics, à l'oppression des masses, à la manipulation des droits et libertés des citoyens et à bien d'autres aspects.

Cadre théorique

Cette œuvre est guidée par une approche éclectique. Par conséquent, le présent travail s'appuie sur les théories littéraires du critique psychosociologique et du post-colonialisme. Le commentaire psychosociologique est une critique littéraire visant à comprendre le comportement humain en intégrant les processus psychologiques dans leur contexte social plus large, mettant en avant une crise psychosociale influencée à la fois par des facteurs psychologiques internes et des interactions sociales externes. La littérature postcoloniale africaine examine les traces laissées par la colonisation, traitant de sujets tels que la corruption, les régimes autoritaires, l'identité culturelle et les affrontements entre tradition et modernité. Elle se distingue par sa résistance au discours colonial, une réinterprétation de l'histoire et la mise en avant des voix marginalisées, tout en incorporant des aspects culturels africains tels que l'oralité et la métaphysique.

En somme, la littérature africaine après l'indépendance est un miroir fidèle de la société. Elle ne se contente pas de raconter des histoires : elle dénonce, critique, questionne, et parfois, propose des solutions. À travers elle, l'Afrique se regarde, se comprend et peut espérer se transformer. Le rôle de l'écrivain africain postcolonial devient alors crucial : il éclaire le présent en racontant le passé, et en imaginant un avenir meilleur. Souvent, ce miroir n'est pas flatteur. Mais c'est précisément en regardant ce reflet sans détour que les sociétés peuvent avancer vers plus de justice, de vérité et de liberté.La littérature postcoloniale a joué un rôle fondamental dans l'éveil des consciences, la réhabilitation de l'identité africaine, et le développement de compétences intellectuelles essentielles à l'employabilité dans la société africaine.La littérature postcoloniale a stimulé la création de maisons d'édition locales, de festivals littéraires, et de programmes éducatifs.

La période postindépendance a vu naître une nouvelle génération d'écrivains africains qui ont utilisé la plume pour dénoncer les injustices et les échecs des dirigeants africains. Leur objectif n'était plus de lutter contre le colonisateur, mais plutôt contre les nouveaux oppresseurs internes : les élites africaines corrompues. On peut citer quelques exemples:Chinua Achebe dans *Anthills of the Savannah* critique la dictature militaire au Nigeria, Ahmadou Kourouma dans *Les Soleils des indépendances* montre la désillusion du peuple face à l'indépendance, Mongo Beti, avec *Mission terminée* ou *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba*, dénonce l'hypocrisie des colons et l'inaction des dirigeants africains parmi d'autres. À travers leurs œuvres, ces auteurs montrent que l'indépendance n'a pas apporté le bonheur tant attendu, et que les maux de la colonisation ont été remplacés par d'autres formes de domination.

Analyse thématique du poème sélectionné

« *Sursauts* », le poème central, est un poème d'une unique strophe. Il occupe la seconde position dans le recueil nommé *Sursauts* d'Unimna Angrey. Il contient douze vers. Les vers peuvent être composés librement, comme indiqué ci-dessous ;

« Réveil en sursaut
Sursaut d'énergie
Pour tuer cette indépendance
Au gout amer de tant de larmes
Au nom de nos héros versés
Indépendance sur le plateau d'or
Acquise au nom de l'élite véreuse
Qui aux populations le dos tourne
Sursaut vers les greniers pleins
Pour faire ripaille pour toujours
Heures de joie des dirigeants armés
Qui ne pense guèreà demain. 8

Il s'agit également d'un enjambement, c'est-à-dire que les vers se suivent pour déchiffrer le message du poète. La prononciation est facile, cependant le discours est puissant et tendu. On observe les scènes de massacre (vers 3), de chagrin (vers 4) et de désespoir (vers 7 à 12). Dans « *Sursauts* », la corruption politique constitue le sujet principal dont l'auteur décrit les dirigeants comme « les élites corrompues qui tournent le dos » (vers 7 et 8), et trahissent la population africaine.

Selon le poème, les élites Africaines sont malhonnêtes. Le poète est attristé que le gouvernement représente dans le recueil des poèmes comme les militaires qui ont dirigé certains pays africains ne peuvent pas planifier un meilleur avenir pour le peuple. Selon lui, les militaires ne pensent guère à demain (vers 11 à 12).En général, le texte et même le poème « *Sursauts* » est une élégie à la déchéance des pays Africains après plusieurs années de l'indépendance politique.Il s'agit notamment des problèmes économiques profonds, entravés aux disparités croissantes dans les pays de l'Afrique de l'ouest.

La critique sociale et politique de « *Sursauts* » à travers les personnages

Dans les romans de l'Africaine postindépendance, les personnages représentent souvent différentes couches sociales :Le politicien corrompu qui incarne la trahison de l'idéal d'indépendance, le paysan ou ouvrier qui continue de souffrir malgré la liberté proclamée, l'intellectuel déçu ou en exil, qui ne trouve pas sa place dans une société instable, la femme marginalisée, toujours en quête de justice et d'égalité.Ainsi, à travers leurs personnages et intrigues, les écrivains rendent visibles les problèmes cachés ou ignorés de la société africaine.La littérature permet également de conserver la mémoire des luttes, des erreurs et des espoirs. Elle enseigne à la nouvelle génération ce qui s'est passé et pourquoi certaines situations persistent. En ce sens, elle joue un rôle éducatif et préventif. Elle invite à la réflexion et à la remise en question des choix politiques et sociaux.Voici une réponse structurée en plusieurs points pour expliquer comment cette littérature a contribué à l'employabilité. Aussi, la littérature postcoloniale valorise les cultures africaines, les langues locales, les traditions et l'histoire précoloniale, permettant ainsi aux jeunes Africains de se reconnecter à leurs racines. Cette conscience identitaire alimente :la créativité artistique (écrivains, dramaturges, éditeurs), les métiers de la culture et du patrimoine (musées, tourisme culturel), le développement de contenus locaux (traduction, cinéma, théâtre, médias). Exemple : Les romans de Chinua Achebe ou / et Ng?g? wa Thiong'o offrent une vision décolonisée de l'histoire africaine, inspirant de nombreux jeunes à valoriser leurs langues et récits.

Etude thématique des poèmes dans « *Sursauts* »

Beauté négligée :c'est le cinquièmepoème dans ce recueil des poèmes. C'est un poème avec une seule strophe, composé de quinze vers. Les vers sont libres et c'est un enjambement. Les vers courent et explore le message de beauté dont le poètedépeintnégligée. Il semble métaphorique en sensque le poètese soucide ladécadence du pays si beau mais autant négligé. ;Le message de beauténégligée suggère que la sociéténigériane souffre la honte au lieu de la gloire de sa beauté.Pour Unimna, la beauté symbolique a besoin de l'entretien et du renouvellement.

AmourLiberté : ce poème composé de dix vers ou appelé « un dixane » est un poème métaphorique en ce sens qu'on peut avoir la liberté sans le patriotisme (cela est démontré dans le poème comme « l'amour »), c'est la perte parce que l'amour est la liberté. Aussi, des mots comme « cries » sont répétés plusieurs fois dans ce poème pour évoquer une révolution interne.

Quête du salut : dans ce poème, l'auteur parle de la déception religieuse et les leaders religieux ne sontexclus. En fait, c'est eux qui utilisent la maison de Dieu pour s'enrichir. Aussi, l'auteur déplore la décadence dans le secteur religieux où les chefs religieux profitent des fidèles en raison de leur amour pour Dieu. Il s'exprime ;

« Ignorants voyeurs du Saint Esprit
Assoiffés de Dieu maigris
Hommes emmuré dans leur cœur
Victimes de l'opium intoxicant
Sacerdoce aveuglant le René
Les palpitations du cœur impur
Les battements des mains sans fin…

…rendu au prix de la crédulité des ouailles
Pour le compte du pasteur satisfait. » p.29

Pour Unimna, les pasteurs se profitent aussi de leur ignorance comme montré dans les strophes 7,8 et 12.

Réflexion critique sur les échecs et défis dans « *Sursauts* »

La description des réalités du pouvoir met souvent en lumière les traits des dirigeants y compris les dérives comme la corruption ou le népotisme ainsi que les luttes pour la souveraineté et le développement. Par exemple, *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* critique des dirigeants africains tels que Houphouët-Boigny. Aussi, le rôle militant et revendicatif, ou, en dénonçant le colonialisme et ses conséquences, les romans affirment l'identité africaine et éveillent un engagement politique et social chez les futurs leaders.Par la réécriture du passé et la représentation des réalités socio-politiques, ils favorisent une posture éthique et un regard lucide sur les défis internes aux États africains postindépendances.

En intégrant des référents universels, ces romans dépassent les frontières locales et encouragent une compréhension interculturelle utile aux leaders dans leurs actions politiques.En résumé, les romans africains inspirent et forment intellectuellement des leaders conscients de leur histoire et contextes sociaux, critiques des dérives du pouvoir, et engagés dans la promotion des valeurs éthiques et culturelles pour le développement et la promotion de l'autonomie et de l'émancipation. SelonNgugi wa Thiong'o, dans *Décoloniser l'esprit* (*Decolonising the Mind*, 1986), une réappropriation de la langue et de la pensée africaineprône comme moyen de libération. Selon lui, la littérature devient ainsi un outil d'émancipation intellectuelle et politique, inspirant les jeunes à s'engager activement pour le changement.Cela peut amener au développementd'une conscience culturelle en sens que la redécouverte des valeurs, des langues et des traditions africaines à travers la littérature postcoloniale favorise un leadership enraciné dans la culture. Ashcroft, Griffiths et Tiffin (2007) soulignent que la valorisation des identités africaines est essentielle pour construire une société postcoloniale autonome et équilibrée.

Le renforcement de la cohésion sociale traite des questions d'unité, d'ethnicité et de diversité, la littérature aide à forger des sociétés plus inclusives. Dans *The Thing Around Your Neck*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) évoque les tensions sociales et identitaires, favorisant ainsi une meilleure compréhension de l'Autre et une approche empathique du leadership et son impact sur l'employabilité ou la littérature africaine postcoloniale inspire et alimente des secteurs porteurs comme le cinéma (Nollywood), le théâtre, l'édition ou le tourisme culturel,la valorisation du patrimoine culturel et essor des industries créatives.

Ben Okri(1991), avec *La route de la faim* (*TheFamishedRoad)*, illustre comment une narration enracinée dans la tradition peut nourrir une industrie culturelle moderne et créative (Umezurike, 2020). Pour lui, cette littérature encourage l'innovation, la création artistique et l'initiative individuelle. Les jeunes Africains y trouvent une source d'inspiration pour développer des projets entrepreneuriaux dans les domaines de la culture, des arts visuels, de la musique ou de la production littéraire et aussi développe de compétences transférables,des pensée critique, communication écrite et orale, interprétation de textes, travail en équipe et

autant d'atouts essentiels sur le marché du travail, comme le démontre Bamikunle (2004).

Conclusion

La littérature africaine postcoloniale est un vecteur stratégique pour le renouveau de l'Afrique. Au Nigéria, elle façonne des leaders responsables, critiques et ancrés dans les réalités locales, tout en offrant aux jeunes des débouchés concrets à travers l'économie créative. En déconstruisant les héritages coloniaux et en valorisant les identités africaines, elle contribue à bâtir un avenir plus juste, plus culturellement riche et économiquement prometteur.

Sursauts » d'Unimna Angrey traite de la menace que représente la corruption vis-à-vis le progrès et l'évolution d'une nation. C'est un cri de désespoir face aux déceptions honteuses de ce qu'on appelle « indépendance », et un appel à la renaissance des valeurs, des gloires d'autrefois, des biens matériels et de la véritable authenticité africaine noire. Bien que notre texte d'étude ait été élaboré par un auteur nigérian et qu'il se soit concentré sur les problématiques déplorées dans différents pays du monde, il est important de rappeler, comme précédemment mentionné, que la corruption est un fléau mondial qui transcende toutes les races, nationalités, continents, religions et genres. En fin de compte, le poète illustre aussi sa mélancolie à travers les couleurs éclatantes des romances métaphoriques, tout en évoquant la grandeur de son pays par la représentation d'une jeune dame si merveilleusement pourvue ; sa peau radieuse, son intelligence, son raffinement impérial et sa silhouette.

Résumé des résultats

Les poèmes examinés ont donc mis en évidence non seulement les citoyens défavorisés d'un pays richement doté comme le Nigeria, mais aussi la cause de sa pauvreté qui réside dans l'état d'esprit de son leadership infesté par la corruption. Ce constat n'est pas seulement corroboré par les sources littéraires, mais également par celles non littéraires examinées au cours de cette étude. Les répercussions se manifestent dans les difficultés, l'inflation, la souffrance, la pauvreté et l'augmentation du taux de criminalité et de violence à travers le pays.En abordant les réalités sociales telles que la pauvreté, l'exclusion, l'injustice ou le genre, la littérature ouvre les yeux sur les défis du continent et suscite des vocations dans les domaines du développement communautaire, de la politique ou de l'éducation.

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Language and Power: A Pragmatic Analysis of Inaugural Speeches of Presidents Bola Tinubu and Donald Trump

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Abstract

This study examined the inaugural speeches of Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and U.S. President Donald Trump, focusing on the pragmatic strategies they employ to achieve persuasion, solidarity, and legitimacy. Data for this paper, which were the speeches of both leaders, were obtained from officially verified government websites. Using pragmatic tools, the data were analysed to reveal how the use of direct address, inclusive pronouns, metaphors, and modality enable both leaders to construct shared identities, project confidence, and negotiate power. The study revealed that Tinubu's rhetoric emphasizes inclusiveness, healing, and dialogue, reflecting a conciliatory leadership style aimed at national unity. Conversely, Trump's discourse is characterized by emotive critiques of institutional failures, urgency, and assertive nationalism, positioning him as a corrective force. The findings also showed how pragmatic devices shape political communication by aligning language use with contextual demands and audience expectations. The study concluded that inaugural speeches provide ample data for one to understand how political leaders negotiate power through their speeches, mobilize support and reinforce authority.

Keywords: language, power, pragmatics, speech, inaugural.

Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a vehicle of power. Eka and Udofot (1996) assert that language serves as a means through which individuals living together interact and express their thoughts and feelings. Similarly, Udofot (1998) views language as an avenue which people of the same speech community and boundary communities interact and express their ideas to one another. In contrast, Ndimele (2001) defines that language is a system of communication that associates meaning (i.e., the message) with a set of signs (i.e., the sounds or symbols).

As a communicative medium, language performs several pragmatic roles. Ndimele (2001) identified these as informational, expressive, phatic, directive ideational, performative and ludic roles. The informational role enables the transfer of information while the expressive role allows individuals to communicate emotions and attitudes. When language fosters interpersonal connection, it performs the phatic role. Language used to obtain information exemplifies directive role, whereas the ideational role enables speakers to influence or align natural forces based on cultural or spiritual beliefs. The performative role brings about immediate changes in real world situations through specific utterances. Finally, the ludic role pertains to entertainment and amusement.

Recognizing the importance of language, Aboh and Uduk (2017) distinguish between transactional and interactional functions of language. According to them, philosophers, linguist and psychologist consider transactional language the fundamental form of communication where the primary goal is to convey a message accurately and ensure it is understood correctly, as seen in doctor-patient communication, customer-bank clerk and mother-daughter communication. Interactional language, by contrast, focuses on maintaining social connections and relationships, such as phoning a family member, visiting a friend at a hospital, a chat at the school cafeteria, Facebook chat, and many others.

Given these roles, language can be used to influence others or exert control. Adnyani and Suwastini (2023) argue that language is a culturally mediated instrument of power. Fairclough (1989) emphasizes that power manifests in discourse when powerful participants control and constrain the contributions of less powerful participants. These constraints may involve contents, (what is said); relationships (social roles in discourse); and subject positions (identities assigned or assumed in conversation). In political discourse, such power dynamics are especially pronounced. Differences in address forms such as Mr Ben, Dr Ben or Professor Ben often signal hierarchical relationships.

Power can be exercised in multiple ways. Adnyani and Suwastini (2023), it is evident when a speaker initiates a conversation or changes and controls topics, dominates the floor, issues commands, interrupts others or speaks for extended period of time. Power is also manifested through request, directives, persuasive language, arguments and other speech acts.

In political contexts, language serves as a potent tool for persuasion and manipulation. Politicians use language to shape public opinion and mobilize support for their agendas (Rahmani and Saeed, 2024). Rhetoric, speeches and propaganda illustrate political power is enacted linguistically. Thus, the pragmatics of political discourse offers a critical lens through which speeches can be analyzed not just in terms of meaning, but in terms of its use and effects.

Pragmatic analysis of inaugural speeches of presidents Bola Tinubu and Donald Trump will reveal how language is strategically used to construct and exercise power. Thus, this study is designed to fulfill this purpose. Through speech acts like promises, commands, and declarations, the speaker asserts authority and shapes the political agenda. Deictic expressions such as "we" and "our" create a collective identity, aligning the audience with the speaker's vision and reinforcing social cohesion under their leadership. Politeness strategies manage face needs, balancing respect and authority to maintain legitimacy and foster trust. Presuppositions and implicatures embed shared beliefs and values that legitimize the speaker's position, often reinforcing existing power structures by framing certain ideas as natural or unquestionable.

Statement of the research problem

This study examines how power is demonstrated through language use, focusing on the inaugural speeches of Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and the U.S. President Donald Trump. An inaugural speech is delivered by a politician upon assuming office. Its purpose is to instill a sense of belonging and security among citizens while serving as a persuasive tool for the politician (Abuya, 2012 and Jegede, 2018 as cited in Okunade, Adewuyi and David, 2025). Additionally, several scholars (Okunade, Adewuyi and David, 2025; Ajayi and Kilani, 2024; Ogbuehi, 2024; Adnyani and Suwastini, 2023 and many others) have studied language and power, particularly, in the context of the inaugural speeches of past and current presidents of Nigeria and other countries. These scholars have employed critical discourse analytic, syntactic, and pragma-stylistic approaches to examine the inaugural speeches of these past and present leaders. This present study attempts to explain how presidents Bola Tinubu and Donald Trump exercise their powers through their inaugural speeches, using pragmatic tools to include speech acts, presupposition, implicature among many others.

Empirical review

Numerous studies have examined the interplay between language and power, particularly in political discourse. This section reviews relevant empirical studies on language use by political figures and its implications for power relations. Markus Allo, Asfah Rahmani, and Sultan (2020) investigated the exercise of language power by lecturers in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms. Their study revealed that lecturers employed directive, expressive, and assertive speech acts to assert authority and manage classroom interactions. Directive acts included commands and requests, expressive acts conveyed emotions such as pleasure, and assertive acts were used to make assertions.

Ni Luh Adnyani and Ni Komang Suwastini (2023) explored the enactment of power through language. Their findings highlighted that power is embedded in language use across various societal domainsfamily, occupation, socio-economic class, politics, race, gender, mass media, and social media. Similarly, Catherine Musimbi, Atichi A., and Lucy Mandila (2023) examined how language constructs power and identity through caller discourse on Vuuka FM, a vernacular radio station. Their findings indicated the existence of power dynamics that divide speakers into two ideological groups: the subjugated ("them") and the dominant ("us"). These dynamics were manifested through discourse that reinforced social roles and ideologies.

Franck Amoussou, Ayodele Allagbe, and Coffi Martinien Toboula (2024) analyzed the pragmatic and stylistic elements in President Bola Tinubu's inaugural speech. The study revealed the strategic use of four out of the five illocutionary actsrepresentatives, expressives, commissives, and directives. It also showed the deliberate use of varied tenses such as simple present, present perfect, simple past, and imperative to enhance rhetorical impact. In the same year, Patricia Ogbuehi (2024) studied pronoun usage in Tinubu's speech. Her findings demonstrated that the president used singular pronouns (I, me, my) to promote a personal image of humility, tolerance, and patriotism. In contrast, plural pronouns like "we," "our," and "us" conveyed inclusiveness and collective effort, while "they," "them," and "their" were used to marginalize opponents by portraying them negatively. Owolabi Ajayi and Sakiru Kilani (2024) also analyzed Tinubu's inaugural address, focusing on ideological expression. Their findings suggested that the speech conveyed messages of optimism, unity, peace, and development, reflecting Tinubu's projected image as a dedicated and peace-loving leader with a vision of "Renewed Hope." Habiburahman Rahmani and Abdul Saeed (2024) investigated the broader relationship between language and politics. Their research confirmed that language is a crucial political tool for shaping public opinion, constructing identities, and framing socio-political issues.

More recently, Gabriel Okunade, Sunday Adewuyi, and Roseline David (2025) conducted a syntactic analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech. The study identified a predominance of simple sentence structures to enhance clarity, along with the use of ellipses, appositions, and substitutions for emphasis and cohesion. Adverbial phrases and syntactic parallelism were also used to create rhythm and reinforce unity.

Earlier studies, such as Abuya (2012, cited in Okunade et al., 2025), analyzed the pragma-stylistic features in President Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 inaugural address. Likewise, Akinseye (2015, also cited in Okunade et al., 2025) focused on the interpersonal elements of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 inaugural speech, identifying how interpersonal choices shaped the president's image as a responsible leader. Despite these studies, there still remains a notable gap in the adoption of pragmatic strategies to examine the speeches of both leaders. Existing literature focuses on the study of language and power, adopting discourse analysis as its theoretical framework. This study fills this research gap by analyzing these speeches by deploying pragmatic strategies as its theoretical lens.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach. The data used--namely, the inaugural speeches of Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and U.S. President Donald Trump, were sourced from publicly available online platforms. The reliance on internet data is due to time constraints and financial limitations associated with obtaining primary or original sources of data. To achieve the objectives of the study, the speeches were analyzed in the form of excerpts using various pragmatic tools to include speech acts, presupposition, implicature and others. This qualitative and descriptive methodology allows for a detailed examination of how language is used to exercise power and its potential effects on audience in both Nigeria and the United States.

Theoretical Framework: *Pragmatics*

Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, concerns itself with the study of language use in context and how meaning is constructed beyond the literal interpretation of words (Levinson, 1983). In the context of presidential inaugural speeches, pragmatic analysis offers valuable tools to understand how language functions not just as a means of communication but as a mechanism for exercising power. By focusing on how speakers use language to perform actions, manage relationships, and construct social realities, pragmatics reveals the subtle ways presidents assert authority, persuade audiences, and legitimize their leadership.

One fundamental pragmatic tool is Speech Act Theory, first developed by Austin (1962) and expanded by Searle (1969). Speech acts categorize utterances based on their function for example, promising, commanding, asserting, or declaring. In inaugural speeches, presidents employ these acts to accomplish various political goals, such as making commitments to the nation, issuing calls to action, or symbolically inaugurating a new era. By performing these acts, the speaker wields power to shape public expectations and frame their administration's agenda, illustrating the link between language use and political authority.

Deixis, another important pragmatic concept, refers to expressions whose meaning depends on the contextual situation, such as pronouns ("we," "you," "I"), temporal adverbs ("now," "today"), and spatial references ("here," "there") (Fillmore, 1975). In inaugural speeches, deixis is strategically employed to construct an inclusive national identity or to position the speaker as both leader and representative of the people. This linguistic positioning serves to reinforce solidarity and allegiance, crucial elements in the exercise of power and influence within the speech's political context.

Politeness theory, as formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987), provides a framework for understanding how speakers navigate social hierarchies and interpersonal relationships through language. Presidents use politeness strategies to manage face needs positive face (the desire to be liked) and negative face (the desire not to be imposed upon)balancing authority with respect and approachability. Such strategies are essential in inaugural speeches, where the speaker must assert dominance without alienating the audience, thus maintaining legitimacy and control through subtle linguistic cues.

Another pragmatic tool relevant to power dynamics in political speech is presupposition, which involves background assumptions embedded in utterances that the audience is expected to accept (Stalnaker, 1974). In the rhetorical context of an inaugural address, presuppositions often frame political realities and ideologies as natural or unquestioned truths. By embedding these assumptions, presidents subtly reinforce existing power structures and ideologies, shaping public perception and limiting alternative interpretations.

Lastly, conversational implicature (Grice, 1975) helps reveal meanings that go beyond literal words, relying on shared knowledge and context. Implicatures in inaugural speeches enable presidents to convey complex messages such as hope, resolve, or criticism in directly, allowing for diplomatic nuance and persuasive effect. Through these pragmatic tools, language becomes a powerful instrument not only for communication but for political influence, ideological reinforcement, and the consolidation of power.

Data analysis and discussion of findings

This section provides analysis and discussion of the research findings.

President Bola Tinubu's Speech Excerpts

Excerpt 1

My Fellow Citizens,

I stand before you honored to assume the sacred mandate you have given me. My love for this nation is abiding. My confidence in its people is unwavering. And my faith in God Almighty is absolute. I know that His hand shall provide the needed moral strength and clarity of purpose in *those instances when we seem to have reached the limits of our human capacity.*

The above excerpt employs several pragmatic tools that shape its communicative effect and social function. First, the president's use of direct address ("My Fellow Citizens") establishes a connection with his audience and creates a sense of shared identity. The phrase "I stand before you honoured" serves as a speech act of expressing gratitude and humility. The use of terms like "abiding," "unwavering," and "absolute", reinforces the speaker's sincerity and commitment. The invocation of "God Almighty" and references to divine support invoke a common cultural/religious presupposition. Moreover, the use of modal verbs like "shall" conveys certainty and determination, projecting confidence in future outcomes. Together, these pragmatic strategies effectively perform the acts of reassuring the audience, affirming leadership legitimacy, and fostering collective resilience in the face of challenges.

Excerpt 2

For me, there is but one answer. We are too great a nation and too grounded as a people to rob ourselves of our finest destiny.

In this excerpt, pragmatic tools work to prove the president's confidence in his stance. The phrase "For me, there is but one answer" also signals a personal commitment, establishing his authority and clarity of purpose. The use of exclusive language ("but one answer") functions to limit alternative perspectives, guiding the audience toward agreement. The metaphorical expressions "too great a nation" and "too grounded as a people" employ positive presuppositions that assume shared values of national pride and stability, which work to build in-group solidarity. The verb phrase "to rob ourselves of our finest destiny" uses metaphorical implicature, suggesting that failure to act would be self-destructive, which implicitly urges the audience to embrace a hopeful and aspirational future.

Excerpt 3

My supporters, I thank you. To those who voted otherwise, I extend my hand across the political divide. I ask you to grasp it in national affinity and brotherhood. For me, political coloration has faded away. All I see are Nigerians.

In this excerpt, the president performs multiple illocutionary acts**,** notably *thanking* ("I thank you"), *inviting reconciliation* ("I extend my hand..."), and *asserting unity* ("All I see are Nigerians"). Through these acts, the speaker aims to reduce political tension and establish a shared national identity. The use of inclusive deixis like "my supporters" and "you" anchors the address to both allies and opponents, promoting unity. Additionally, the metaphor "grasp it in

national affinity and brotherhood" functions as a conversational implicature, suggesting that while political differences exist, they should be set aside for a higher national cause. The phrase "political coloration has faded away" pragmatically signals a shift in focus from partisanship to national cohesion, reinforcing the speaker's attempt to realign audience interpretation beyond the literal words.

Excerpt 4

As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope.

This excerpt uses metaphorical language"march beyond the dimness of night into the open day"which functions as a figurative speech act symbolizing progress and hope, appealing to the audience's shared desire for renewal. The phrase "we have long ago decided" presupposes a collective past consensus, reinforcing social solidarity and portraying the nation as united and purposeful. The pragmatic effect is to inspire optimism and legitimize current efforts by anchoring them in a historical commitment to progress.

Excerpt 5

Yet, we have shouldered the heavy burden to arrive at this SUBLIME moment where the prospect of a better future merges with our improved capacity to create that future.
To the surprise of many but not to ourselves, we have more firmly established this land as a democracy in both word and deed.

Here, the president employs metaphorical intensifiers such as "heavy burden" and "SUBLIME moment" to elevate the significance of the present time, creating an emotional appeal that frames current achievements as both hard-won and extraordinary. The contrast between "prospect of a better future" and "improved capacity" implies a pragmatic progression from hope to actionable capability. The phrase "to the surprise of many but not to ourselves" subtly asserts the speaker's confidence and insider knowledge, while "in both word and deed" highlights the pragmatic commitment to integrity and tangible democracy, reinforcing ethos and trust.

Excerpt 6

Our administration shall govern on your behalf but never rule over you. We shall consult and dialogue but never dictate. We shall reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own.

We are here to further mend and heal this nation, not tear and injure it.

This excerpt is structured with paired antitheses ("govern on your behalf but never rule over you," "consult and dialogue but never dictate"), which pragmatically serve to reassure the audience by delineating respectful leadership boundaries. The use of inclusive pronouns ("we," "your") fosters solidarity and shared purpose. The speech acts here include promises of respectful governance and appeals for unity through metaphors of healing rather than division, which pragmatically work to calm fears and build trust in the administration's intentions.

Excerpt 7

The outcome reflected the will of the people. However, my victory does not render me any more Nigerian than my opponents. Nor does it render them any less patriotic.
They shall forever be my fellow compatriots. And I will treat them as such. They represent important constituencies and concerns that wisdom dare not ignore. They have taken their concerns to court. Seeking legal redress is their right and I fully defend their exercise of this right. This is the essence of the rule of law.

The speaker here performs acts of acknowledgment and inclusion by recognizing opponents as "fellow compatriots" and affirming their patriotism, which pragmatically functions to reduce political tension and promote reconciliation. The explicit defense of legal processes ("seeking legal redress is their right") appeals to shared values of justice and the rule of law, reinforcing legitimacy. The repeated use of modal verbs ("shall") signals commitment, while the pragmatic strategy overall promotes unity, respect for democratic norms, and social cohesion.

Excerpt 8

The principles that will guide our administration are simple:

1. *Nigeria will be impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law.*
2. *We shall defend the nation from terror and all forms of criminality that threaten the peace and stability of our country and our sub-region.*
3. *We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security, and an end to extreme poverty.*
4. *In our administration, Women and youth will feature prominently.*

This excerpt is a clear example of directive speech acts outlining principles and commitments. The numbered format pragmatically signals clarity, order, and transparency, enhancing the speaker's credibility. The use of modal verbs ("will," "shall") indicates strong commitments and future-oriented promises. Each point appeals to shared values (rule of law, security, economic growth, inclusivity), pragmatically aimed at building consensus and managing expectations. The inclusion of "Women and youth" highlights attention to marginalized groups, pragmatically signaling inclusivity and progressive governance.

President Donald Trump's Speech Excerpts

Excerpt 1

Vice President Vance, Speaker Johnson, Senator Thune, Chief Justice Roberts, justices of the United States Supreme Court, President Clinton, President Bush, President Obama, President Biden, Vice President Harris and my fellow citizens:

The speaker employs direct address and formal listing of prominent political figures, invoking institutional authority and respect. By naming leaders across party lines and branches of government, the pragmatic function is to create a sense of unity and solemnity at the outset, signaling inclusiveness and respect for democratic traditions. The phrase "my fellow citizens" then broadens the address to the general public, establishing a shared social identity.

Excerpt 2

The golden age of America begins right now. From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation. And we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer.

This excerpt uses grand, optimistic declarations such as "The golden age of America begins right now" functioning as a performative act of renewal and hope. The use of future-oriented modal verbs ("will flourish," "will be respected") conveys strong commitment and certainty. The phrase "We will be the envy of every nation" appeals to national pride and competitiveness. The pragmatic effect is motivational and persuasive, aimed at rallying collective confidence and aspiration.

Excerpt 3

During every single day of the Trump administration, I will, very simply, put America first. Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored. The scales of justice will be rebalanced. The vicious, violent and unfair weaponization of the Justice Department and our government will end. And our top priority will be to create a nation that is proud and prosperous and free.

Here, repetition of "will" followed by strong verbs (put, reclaimed, restored, end) emphasizes commitment and decisiveness, reinforcing a promise-oriented speech act. The phrase "very simply" pragmatically downplays complexity, making the speaker's agenda seem straightforward and accessible. The listing of grievances ("vicious, violent and unfair weaponization") employs emotive language to delegitimize opponents and justify reform. The appeal to sovereignty and prosperity strengthens nationalistic solidarity.

Excerpt 4

America will soon be greater, stronger, and far more exceptional than ever before. I return to the presidency confident and optimistic that we are at the start of a thrilling new era of national success. A tide of change is sweeping the country. Sunlight is pouring over the entire world, and America has the chance to seize this opportunity like never before.

This excerpt uses positive metaphorical imagery ("A tide of change," "Sunlight is pouring") to evoke a sense of dynamic transformation and opportunity. The speaker's confident tone ("I return… confident and optimistic") pragmatically serves to inspire trust and hope. Phrases like "thrilling new era" perform the act of inaugurating a hopeful future, inviting the audience to share in a collective vision of national exceptionalism.

Excerpt 5

But first, we must be honest about the challenges we face. While they are plentiful, they will be annihilated by this great momentum that the world is now witnessing and the United States of America. As we gather today, our government confronts a crisis of trust. For many years, the radical and corrupt establishment has extracted power and wealth from our citizens. While the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair, we now have a government that cannot manage even a simple crisis at home while at the same time stumbling into a continuing catalog of catastrophic events abroad.

The speaker performs a truth-telling speech act by admitting challenges ("we must be honest about the challenges we face"), which pragmatically can increase credibility by acknowledging problems upfront. The use of metaphors like "pillars of society lay broken" evokes a sense of urgency and crisis. The contrast between "radical and corrupt establishment" and "we now have a government" positions the speaker as an agent of change, appealing to shared frustration with the status quo.

Excerpt 6

It fails to protect our magnificent, law-abiding American citizens but provides sanctuary and protection for dangerous criminals, many from prisons and mental institutions that have illegally entered our country from all over the world. We have a government that has given unlimited funding to the defense of foreign borders but refuses to defend American borders, or more importantly, its own people.

This excerpt uses contrasts and emotive language ("magnificent, law-abiding citizens" vs. "dangerous criminals") to frame a moral and security dilemma. The pragmatic function is to delegitimize opponents and heighten perceived threats to national safety. Phrases like "illegally entered" and "unlimited funding" appeal to concerns about government priorities and border security, reinforcing a narrative of protecting the "own people" first.

Excerpt 7

Our country can no longer deliver basic services in times of emergency, as recently shown by the wonderful people of North Carolina, who've been treated so badly. And other states who are still suffering from a hurricane that took place many months ago. Or more recently, Los Angeles, where we are watching fires still tragically burn from weeks ago without even a token of defense. They're raging through the houses and communities, even affecting some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals in our country, some of whom are sitting here right now. They don't have a home any longer. That's interesting.

The speaker uses specific examples and vivid descriptions of recent disasters ("North Carolina," "Los Angeles fires") to illustrate government failure, performing an accountability speech act**.** The mention of "wealthiest and most powerful individuals" losing homes pragmatically highlights the indiscriminate impact of crises, eliciting empathy and urgency. The phrase "That's interesting" serves as a rhetorical device to draw attention and provoke reflection, adding an informal tone.

Excerpt 8

But we can't let this happen. Everyone is unable to do anything about it. That's going to change. We have a public health system that does not deliver in times of disaster, yet more money is spent on it than any country anywhere in the world. And we have an education system that teaches our children to be ashamed of themselves, in many cases to hate our country despite the love that we try so desperately to provide to them. All of this will change starting today and will change very quickly.

This excerpt continues with critique and promise, emphasizing systemic failures ("public health system that does not deliver," "education system that teaches… to hate our country"). The use of hyperbole ("more money is spent than any country anywhere") stresses inefficiency and injustice.

The pragmatic effect is to arouse dissatisfaction and a desire for rapid reform, reinforced by the closing commitment speech acts ("All of this will change starting today"). The inclusion of "we" signals collective effort and responsibility.

Summary of findings and conclusion

The pragmatic analysis of both Tinubu's and Trump's speeches reveals strategic use of language to achieve key communicative goals such as persuasion, solidarity-building, and legitimacy reinforcement. Both speakers utilize direct address and inclusive pronouns to foster a sense of unity and shared identity with their audiences. Metaphorical language is prevalent in both, serving to evoke optimism, national pride, and collective aspirations Tinubu's "march beyond the dimness of night" and Trump's "golden age of America" illustrate this vividly. Repetition and modality (use of "shall," "will") appear consistently as tools to signal commitment and certainty about future actions. Both employ contrastive structures (e.g., "govern but never rule," "protect citizens but harbor criminals") to reassure their audiences by clearly delineating intended leadership styles or problems to be addressed.

Notably, Tinubu's speeches emphasize inclusiveness and healing, often acknowledging opposition and advocating for dialogue and unity, reflecting a pragmatic strategy to reduce division and encourage reconciliation. Conversely, Trump's excerpts lean heavily on critique and urgency, using emotive language to highlight crises and institutional failures, thus framing his leadership as a corrective force. This difference reflects distinct rhetorical styles: Tinubu's approach is more conciliatory and inclusive, while Trump's is more confrontational and assertive. Both leaders appeal to shared cultural and political values faith and rule of law for Tinubu; sovereignty, safety, and national greatness for Trumpto build ethos and motivate their constituencies toward collective action.

The pragmatic tools employed by both Tinubu and Trump reveal how political leaders tailor their rhetoric to meet contextual needs and audience expectations. Tinubu's use of inclusive language and calls for unity aim to heal and build cohesion in a diverse society. In contrast, Trump's emphasis on crisis, blame, and bold promises serves to mobilize supporters through urgency and assertive nationalism. These findings highlight the central role of pragmatics in political communication: the strategic deployment of language to manage identities, project legitimacy, and influence public attitudes. Ultimately, the speeches exemplify how leaders construct narratives that resonate with their audiences' values and emotions to advance political agendas.

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Analyse Contrastive Des Phonemes Vocaliques Du Français Et Du Tiv

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Résumé

Les étudiants qui apprennent une langue étrangère rencontrent de nombreux problèmes d'apprentissage liés à son système sonore, à son vocabulaire, à sa structure, etc. Le but de l'analyse contrastive est d'examiner les différences qui existent entre les langues et les défis qu'elles posent aux apprenants de la langue seconde. L'analyse contrastive est l'étude systématique d'une paire de langues en vue d'identifier leurs différences structurelles et leurs similitudes entre la langue première et la langue second en partant de l'hypothèse que: les similitudes facilitent l'apprentissage tandis que les différences causent des problèmes. Cette communication se concentre sur une analyse contrastive des phonèmes vocaliques des langues Tiv et Françaises en mettant l'accent sur l'implication des différences dans l'apprentissage du Français langue seconde par les personnes dont la langue maternelle est Tiv. L'étude révèle que la langue française a plus de phonèmes vocaliques que la langue Tiv. Les voyelles Tiv qui n'existent pas en français sont: /I/, /uu/, /ee/, /oo/, /ɔɔ/, /aa/. Celles en français qui n'existent pas dans la langue Tiv sont /y/, /ø/, /ə/, /ɛ/, /œ/, /ɑ/ et toutes les voyelles nasales : /ɛ̃/, /ã/, /ɔ̃/, /œ̃/.C'est là que réside le dilemme de l'apprenant Tiv de la langue française. Par conséquente, une étude de cette nature trace la voie à suivre pour fournir des mesures corrective aux apprenants Tiv du français comme langue cible.

Mots clé : Analyse contrastive, Voyelles, Phonèmes. Français, Tiv

Abstract

Students learning a foreign language encounter many learning problems related to its sound system, vocabulary, structure, etc. The purpose of contrastive analysis is to examine the differences that exist between languages and the challenges they pose to second-language learners. Contrastive analysis is the systematic study of a pair of languages in order to identify their structural differences and similarities between the first language and the target language based on the assumption that: similarities facilitate learning while differences cause problems. This article focuses on a contrastive analysis of the vocalic phonemes of the Tiv and French languages, focusing on the implication of differences in the learning of French as a second language by people whose mother tongue is Tiv. The study reveals that the French language has more vocalic phonemes than the English language. The Tiv vowels that are not found in French are: /I/, /uu/, /ee/, /oo/, /ɔɔ/, /aa/. The ones in French that are not present in the Tiv language are /y/, /ø/, /ə/, /ɛ/, /œ/, /ɑ/ and all the nasal vowels:/ɛ̃/, /ã/, /ɔ̃/, /œ̃/.This is where the dilemma of the experienced learner of the French language lies. Consequently, a study of this nature traces the way to follow to provide corrective measures to Tiv learners of French as a target language.

Key words: Contrastive analysis, Vowels, Phonemes, French, Tiv

Introduction

Si quelqu'un veut apprendre une langue étrangère, il rencontre évidemment de nombreux types de problèmes d'apprentissage liés au système sonore, au vocabulaire, à la structure, etc. Cela est compréhensible puisque l'étudiant apprenant la langue étrangère parle salangue maternelle, qui lui est profondément implantée dans le cadre de son habitude. Très souvent, il transfère son habitude dans la langue cible qu'il apprend, ce qui provoque des erreurs. L'analyse contrastive, en tant que branche de la linguistique appliquée, vise à comparer systématiquement deux langues ou plus pour déterminer leurs domaines de similitudes et de différences avec leur implication sur l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues.Le souci de cette communication est de faire une analyse contrastive des phonèmes vocaliques du français et la languetiv, mettant ainsi en lumière notamment les différences qui existent dans l'apprentissage de la langue française par les personnes dont la langue maternelle est Tiv. Cettecommunicationtend à entreprendreune étudecontrastive descaractéristiques segmentairesdesdeux langues, en examinantles phonèmes consonantiques qui existent dans les deux langues afinde déterminer leurs différences phonologiques, la présence ou non de certaines caractéristiques segmentaires dans l'une ou l'autre des langues et de suggérer une manière d'aborder la tâche d'acquisition de la langue française. L'étudetire doncl'analyse comparative desconsonnes françaisesettiv. Ceciest fait en utilisantune approche contrastive proposéepar Robert Lado.

Analyse contrastive

L'analysecontrastive fonctionne bien pour prédireetexpliquerle processusd'apprentissage des langues. Iltireseshypothèsesdela comparaison, qui est faite pour faire ressortirdes similitudesetdes différencesentredeuxlangues, en particulierune langue maternelleetune langue second, afinde déterminer le niveau de difficulté que les apprenants de langue peuvent rencontrer.

Geethakusuggèreque l'analyse contrastive estune méthodeouun moyend'analyserles structuresde deuxlanguesafind'estimer les aspects différentiels de leurs systèmes indépendamment de leur affinité génétique ou de leur niveau de développement (3).Elleaffirmeenoutre qu'une analyse contrastive de deux langues devient utile lorsqu'elle décrit adéquatement les structures sonores et les structures grammaticales des langues en question, en mettant l'accent sur leurs domaines de différence à des fins éducatives.

Fries(1945), a émis l'hypothèse que les matériaux les plus efficaces dans l'apprentissage et l'enseignement des langues sont ceux basés sur une description scientifique de la langue à apprendre soigneusement comparée et contrastée avec la description parallèle de la langue des apprenants. Lado (1957), a estiméque grâceà l'analyse contrastive, il est possibled'identifier les domaines de difficulté qu'une langue étrangère particulière présentera pour les locuteurs natifs d'une autre langue en comparant systématiquement les deux langues et cultures.Apartir des explications ci-dessus, il est impératif de préciser que l'analyse contrastive radiographie une langue étrangère et une langue maternelle en mettant les deux côte à côte pour vérifier les similitudes et les différences entre les deux, ce qui permet aux apprenants natifs de comprendre plus facilement les concepts de la langue étrangère. L'analyse contrastiveen linguistique estutilisée comme un outilpour résoudre certains problèmes rencontrés parles apprenants en langues. Cet outil a été développépardes grammairiensde structurecommemoyendeprédireles problèmesque tout apprenant d'une langue étrangère peut rencontrer dans l'apprentissage des langues (Udegbunam, 10).

Firbas (1992) considère l'analyse contrastive comme une méthode qui s'avère être un outil heuristique utile capable de jeter une lumière sur les traits caractéristiques des langages contrastés. Cestraitscaractéristiquesdes langues partentdessons, qui est le niveau phonologique.

Cadrethéorique

Ce travailest une analysedes phonèmes consonantiques deslangues française et tivdans le but d'examiner les différences et les similitudes qui peuvent constituer des difficultés d'apprentissage pour les locuteurs natifs de la langue tiv dans leurs efforts d'apprentissage de la langue française.Les fondements théoriques de ce qui est connu sous le nom d'hypothèses d'analyse contrastive ont été formulés dans « Linguistics Across Culture » de Lado (1957).Selon ses mots « ces éléments qui sont similaires à la langue maternelle (de l'apprenant) seront simples pour lui et les éléments qui sont différents lui seront difficiles ». Ladoaété la première personne à fournir un traitement théorique complet et à suggérer un ensemble systématique de procédures techniques pour l'étude contrastive des langues.Ils'agissait dedécrireleslangues (en utilisant la linguistiqu estructuraliste), de les compareretde prédireles difficultés d'apprentissage. Analyse contrastive (AC) laplus appropriée pour identifier les difficultésque

les apprenants en langue seconde ou étrangère peuvent rencontrer. Par conséquent, l'étudeutilise l'ACcommecadrethéorique. L'utilisationde ce cadre est basée sur le fait qu'il facilite l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde ou étrangère. Selon Tomori (1977) « analyse contrastive fait des comparaisons et des déclarations systématiques sur les structures de deux langues différences de manière à montrer les structure qui sont similaires ou différentes » (2).

Etude Empiriques

Emeet Uba (2014) dans leur analyse contrastive de la phonologie de l'Igbo et du Yoruba ont observé que l'Igbo a huit voyelles orales tandis que le Yoruba a sept voyelles orales et cinq voyelles nasales.Ilsont en outre déclaré que la principale différence dans le système de voyelles des deux langues est que le Yoruba a cinq voyelles nasales /I ɛ a ɔ u/ qui manquent à l'igbo. De plus, les voyelles /i/ et /u/ sont phonémiquem entprésentesen Igbomaisabsentesen Yoruba, tandis que /ɛ/ est phonémiquementprésenten Yoruba maisabsenten Igbo. Ilsont préditqu'avec ces différences, il y aurait un problème de prononciation pour les apprenants Igbo de Yoruba et les apprenants yorubas d'Igbo.Ilsont proposéquepouréviterceserreursde prononciation, les apprenants igbode Yorubadevraient apprendreà produireetà maîtrisercessonsYorubaqu'ils ne connaissent pas et la même chose devrait être faite par les apprenants yorubas d'Igbo concernant les sons Igbo qu'ils ne connaissent pas (2). Opeyemi (2021) aeffectué une analyse contrastive de la production de voyelles anglaises et yoruba par des étudiants bilingues Yoruba-anglais de l'Université de Nsukka. Le résultatdes résultats indiquequeles voyellesde la langue yoruba diffèrent dans une largemesure de la langue anglaise et, de ce fait, il existe certaines variations et déviations dans la réalisation des voyelles anglaises par les étudiants bilingues yoruba-anglais.D'après les données recueillies, l'analyse montre que nous n'avons pas un nombre égal de voyelles dans les deux langues et qu'il y a des voyelles en yoruba qui ne sont pas présentes dans la langue anglaise (29). Odudigbo (2014) aeffectué une analyse contrastivedu françaiset de la langue yoruba. L'étuderé vèlequeles voyelles et les consonnesen langue yoruba sont toujour stonaleset qu'elles sont souvent accompagnéesd'un registre mélodique doté d'un mécanisme harmonieux et vocalique pour l'expression orale.Un procédéqui aideà une communication efficaceet montreune utilité exceptionnelledes sonsen Yoruba parrapportà la langue française (1). Ajani Akinwumi (2023) afait une recherchesur l'erreurchezles apprenants yorubadu français: interférencedesvoyellesyorubaeta observéquela majoritédes répondants ont du mal à bien prononcer les voyelles françaises /œ/ et /ø/ en raison de l'impact négatif du son des voyelles yoruba /ẹ/ et /e/. Ila donc recommand équeles apprenants nigérians de français Yoruba soientbien exposésaux voyelles française setchaquefois que nous découvrons une anomalie dans la production d'un son de voyelle parmi nos apprenants, nous devrions essayer d'en découvrir les causes par une Analyse contrastive (1).Kamiyamaetal (2009) ont analysé la perception et la production des voyelles françaises à consonance proche et proche-médiane par des apprenants de langue japonaise.Les résultatsindiquentqueles apprenantsde français parlant japonais(JSL) ont tendance à produire du français /u/ avec un F2 élevé (>1000 Hz), qui est entendu comme /ø/ par les auditeurs de langue maternelle française (NF). Ils suggèrentquele français /u / est considéré par JSL comme phonémiquement similaireau japonais /u/ (en tant que voyellearrière haute) et produitcommetel, tandisque la réalisation phonétique du français /u/ estnouvelleet différente;

et que /y/ estconsidéréà la fois phonémiquement et phonétiquement nouveau, et /ø/ comme phonémiquement nouveau mais phonétiquement (acoustiquement) similaire. Les voyelles phonémiquement similaires mais phonétiquement nouvelles semblent être les plus difficiles àapprendre et à produireavec précisionpourles apprenantsde langues étrangères/secondes (2). Ikhimwin (2020) examine les phonèmes segmentaires de l'anglais et de l'Edo à l'aide de la théorie des Analyses contrastives de Lado (1957) pour déterminer les domaines de difficulté pour les locuteurs natifs d'Edo apprenant l'anglais. Les sons consonantiques sont examinéseton remarquequeleson /ŋ tʃ dʒ µ ʃ ʒ/ est absentà Edo, ce qui constitue des problèmespourles apprenants. Cependant, leprincipal sujet de préoccupation est l'apprentissage des voyelles de l'anglais. Le problème identifié estqueles voyelles sontortho graphiéeset prononcées différemment, ce qui sera invariablement déroutantetassez difficile àapprendre. Encoreunefois, les diphtonguesposerontdes problèmesàl'apprenant d'anglais langue seconde, car ces sons peuvent être remplacés par les voyelles pures de la langue Edo à laquelle ils sont habitués. Mpamugoet Nwaukoni (2023) ont réalisé une étude contrastive de l'igbo et les sons du français. Les résultats de cette étude ont montré que les deux langues partagent des similitudes dans seize (16) consonnes et six (6) voyelles, et des différences dans treize (13) consonnes et douze (12) voyelles.Bienque les sons /r/ et /w/ existentdanslesdeux langues, leurs lieuxd'articulation diffèrent.

Le concept de phone (son) et de phonème

Duke expliquent en linguistique, il y a une distinction entre le phone (aussi appelé le son) et le phonème. La phonétique et la phonologie sont des subdivisions de la linguistique qui étudient le phone (son) et le phonème, c'est-à-dire, le phone (son) est l'objet d'étude de la phonétique et le phonème est l'objet d'étude de la phonologique. Dans ces disciplines par convention on inscrit le phone entre crochet [ ] et les phonèmes entre les barres obliques / /(50).

Le phonème

Pour Antes cité par Yola, le phonème est « l'unité minimal de son, c'est un son qui peut être qualifie par des attributs spécifiques (lieu et mode d'articulation) mais qui s'oppose à d'autres sons dans le répertoire de la langue »(52). Selon lui, le phonème constitue l'élément linguistique le plus petit du son et qui possède des caractéristiques bien distinctes. Pour sa part, Delivery aussi cité par Yola, explique que le phonème est « généralement défini comme une unité linguistique minimale distinctive »(52). Le mot phonème, tel que révélé par Moore, provient dumot grec phonème, qui signifieun son(3). Par conséquent, un phonèmeestunson de la parole. End'autres termes, c'est la plus petite unité de son qui distingue un mot d'un autre.Le phonèmeestl'unitéminimale distinctive, une unitéutiliséepour produireun contrastede sensdans la langueet qui représentel'unitéd'analyseen phonologie. Selon l'Encyclopédie Webster, le phonèmeest « une classede sons de la parole étroitement apparentés dans unelanguedonnée considéréecomme formantune unité » (755). Puisqueles sonsne peuventpas être écrits, nousutilisonsdes lettresou des symboles pour représenter les sons. Detelles lettresousymbolessont appelésphonèmes. Comme l'a noté Dresher, « Le conceptde phonèmeétait au cœurdu développementde la théorie phonologique. Audébut du XXesiècle, lathéoriephonologique (phonémique classique) était entièrement consacrée auphonème:

commentle définir, commentle reconnaîtreetcommentle découvrir »(243).

De plus, Bittner affirme que le phonème est l'unité de base de la phonologie d'une langue, qui est combinée avec d'autres phonèmes pour former des unités significatives telles que des mots et des morphèmes (243).Le phonèmeestlaplus petite unitéde langagequi distinguele sens. Les phonèmessontl'unitéorganisationnellede la phonologie, et c'est l'unité d'étude de base en phonologie, qui est un ensemble de téléphones (sons) qui fonctionne comme une seule unité dans une langue et fournit un contraste entre différents mots.Ce qui suit est vrai en discutant du phonème, ainsi résumé par Unubi, Sunday Abraham:

(i) c'est une unité minimale qui sert à distinguer les significations des mots;
(ii) il est prononcé d'une ou plusieurs manières, selon le nombre d'allophones; et
(iii) il est généralement représenté ou placé entre les barres obliques par convention (34).

Dansces définitionsde phonème, on voit clairementquele phonèmeestune unitélinguistiqueminimalequien soin'a pas de sens mais qui est capable de modifier le sens d'une unité sonore.

La constitution des phonèmes

Les phonèmes sont constitués de deux groupes de sons, à savoir des voyelles et des consonnes. Selon Robert et Roach cités par Duke, il y a aussi des semi voyelles ou les semi-consonnes, ces phonèmes sont toujours considérés comme les consonnes car la production de ce groupe de sons, comme les consonnes, est caractérisée par une sorte d'obstruction dans le conduit vocal (51).

Les voyelles

Selon Martinet « lesvoyellessontdela voixrésonnéedansles cavités formées par les parties supérieures du canal expiratoire.C'est essentiellement le volume et la forme de la cavité buccale qui donnent son timbre caractéristique à une voyelle » (41). Jonesdéfinitune voyellecommela classede sonsqui obstruelemoins le flux d'air.Il se trouve généralementaucentred'une syllabe, et il est rare de trouver un son autre qu'une voyelle capable de se tenir seule dans son ensemble (549).Matthewsest d'avis que la voyelle, dans les anciens récits du grec et du latin, est une unité minimale de discours qui pourrait être produite seule et pourrait, à elle seule, former une syllabe (431).Il attesteenoutre que la voyelle est celle qui est produite avec une approximation ouverte et qui forme de manière caractéristique le noyau.Selon Richardset Schmidt « une voyelleestunson de la paroleproduitsansconstrictionsignificativede l'air circulantdans la bouche »(632).

Crystalpostulequela voyelleestl'une des deux catégories générales utilisées pour la classification des sons de la parole, l'autre étant la consonne.Les voyellespeuventêtre définiesà la fois en termes de phonétique et de phonologie.Phonétiquement, ce sontdes sonsarticuléssansfermeturecomplètede la bouche niun degré de rétrécissementqui produiraitdes frottementsaudibles ; l'air s'échappe uniformément vers le centre de la langue.Sil'airne s'échappequepar la bouche, lesvoyellessontdites orales; sil'air est simultanément libéré parle nez, lesvoyellessont nasales(571). ZsuzsannaFagyal, DouglasKibbeeet FredJenkinssont d'avis que les voyelles sont articulées sans fermeture majeure ni rétrécissement du conduit vocal lorsque l'air est expulsé librement par la cavité

buccale (voyelles orales) ou à la fois la cavité buccale et la cavité nasale (voyelles nasales). Différentes voyelles apparaissent lorsquele songénéré aularynx parles cordesvocales vibrantesest« filtré » à travers les cavités buccale et nasale, dont la tailleetla formesont activement modifié essurt outparla langueetles lèvres (19).

Les traits articulatoires des voyelles français

Le system vocalique peut êtredécritselon les quatre critères suivants :

Le degré d'aperture du conduit vocal

Ceci correspond à la distance minimale entre le plus élevé de la langue. On distingue quatre dégrées d'aperture qui sont :

i. Ferme ou haut (pour l'articulation des voyelles fermées ou hautes)
ii. Mi- fermé ou mi- haut (pour l'articulation des voyelles mi- fermées ou mi- hautes)
iii. Mi-ouvert ou mi-bas ((pour l'articulation des voyelles mi- ouvertes ou mi- basses)
iv. Ouvert ou bas (pour l'articulation des voyelles ouvertes ou basses)

La position du dos de la langue

Il convient de distinguer les suivants :

i. Les voyelles antérieures (pour la production des voyelles antérieures, le dos de la langue se situe vers l'avant de la bouche, dans la régionalvéolaire ou pré-palatale)
ii. Les voyelles postérieures (pour la production des voyelles postérieures, le dos de la langue se situe vers la région vélaire ou post-palatale)

La position des lèvres

Aussi :

i. Les voyelles arrondies (pour la production desquelles des lèvres sont projetées vers l'avant)
ii. Les voyelles écartées (ou étirées, non-arrondies) Les lèvres sont écartées ou étirées pour la production des voyelles écartées.

La position du voile du palais

i. Les voyelles orales

Si le voile du palais est relevé, le passage de l'air vers les fosses nasales est fermé et l'air proven ant des poumons passe uniquement par la bouche, la voyelle est orale.

ii. Les voyelles nasales : Si le voile du palais est abaisse, l'air passe également par les fosses nasales, la voyelle est nasale.

Source : Urua 2004 cité par Duke (52)

Les caractéristiquesarticulatoiresdes voyelles Tiv

Ilexiste 21voyellesdans lalangue Tiv, dont 12sont purestandis que 9sont des voyelles impuresqui sont également appeléesdiphtongues. Une diphtongueest un glissementd'une qualité de voyelle à une autre.Le glissementdonnele sond'une seule voyelle longue et simple. Les voyellestivpeuventêtre classées positionnellementen trois catégories à savoir :

i. Voyellesavant: qui sont /a/, /aa/
- Les voyellescentrales /e/, /ee/, /o/, /oo/, /??/
- Voyellesarrière : /i/, /ii/, /u/, /uu/

Diphtongues :Il y a neufdiphtonguesen tiv qui sont:
a. aecommedans aeren
b. aicommedans aie
c. ia commedans aikie
d. ia commedans via
e. ea commedans ngbea
f. ue commedans vue
g. ou commedans iyou
h. ua commedans kua
i. ôu commedans h?ugh

Shoja (2010)

Longueurdes voyelles / doublage des voyelles tiv

Uneautre formationsonoretrèsimportantequi méritenotrediscussionestlacaractéristique dedoubler les voyelles. Le doublementdes voyellesmodifielaprononciation. En effet, les voyelles doubléesprennentplusdetemps en termes de prononciation que lorsque ces voyelles apparaissent seules.End'autres termes, les voyelles courtes sont orthographiées avec des voyelles simples tandis que les voyelles longues sont écrites en lettres doubles.

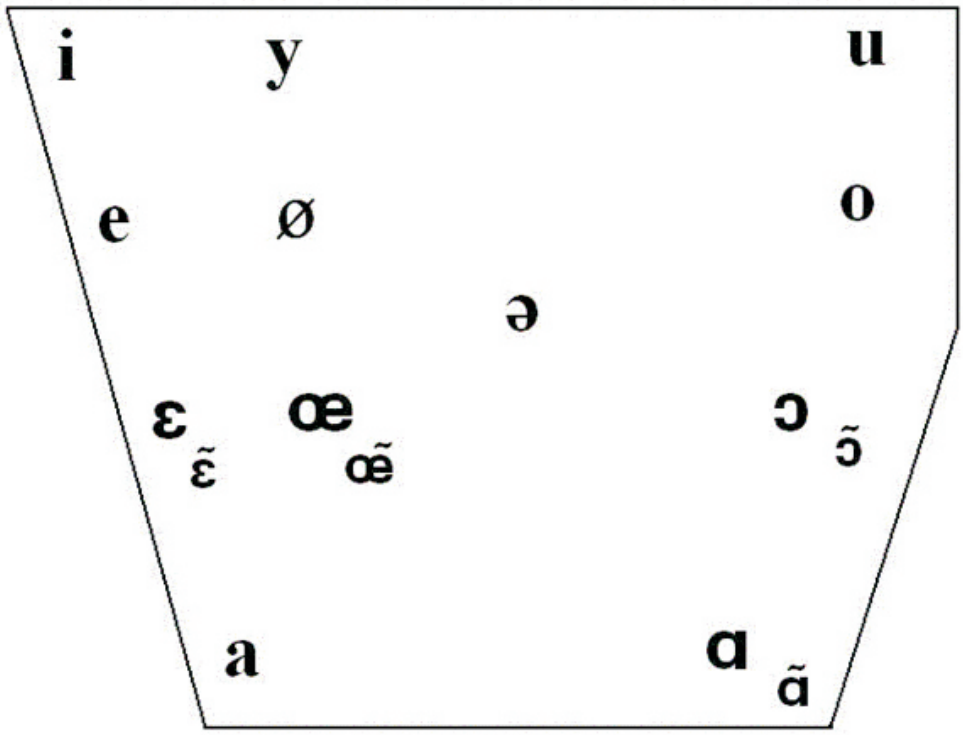
Par exemple :

a /a/	aa /a:/
ma (boire)	maa (construire)
pa (route)	paa (couper)
ka (est)	kaa (dites)
kam (presser)	kaam (dis-moi)
e /e /	ee /e:/
se (rire)	see (augmenter)
ne (vous)	neer (restes)
mer (cela)	meer (somnoler)
i /i/	ii /i:/
ati (noms)	atii (pigeons)
i (il)	ii (terrier)
i (ti)	ii (nommer)
hi (arachide)	hii (démarrer)
o /o/	oo /o:/
do (jeux d'argent)	doo (bien)
ko (type de poison)	koo (pour nourrir quelq'un de force)
ô /ɔ/	ô ô /ɔ :/
kô (non mûrs)	kôô (genre d'oiseau)

atô (milieu)
môm (une)
akôr (semis d'igname)
nôr (ériger)
u /u/
ku (décès)
bu (cuillère)
ngun (celui-ci)
Udu (2009)

atôô (argent pour garde)
môôr (transplantation)
akôôr (escargots)
nôô (portée)
uu /u:/
kuul (couverture)
buum (ouvert pour moi)
nguun (celui-ci ?)

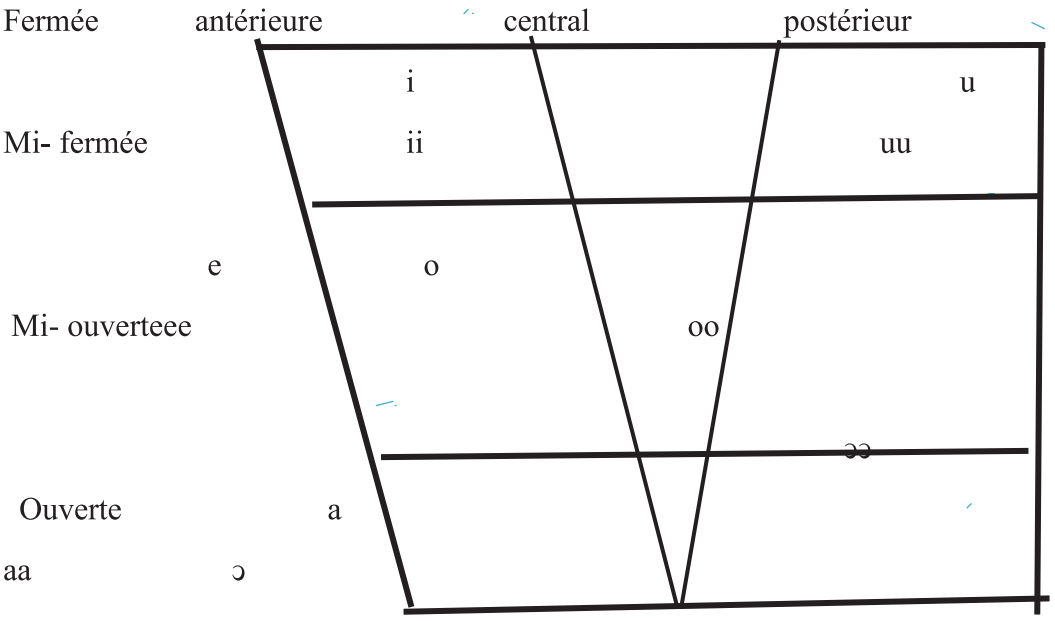
Le Trapèzevocaldu français



Source: www.sfu.ca/fren/270/phonetique/trapeze.htm.

Trapèze vocalique représentant un classement des voyelles des langues du monde selon les critères articulatoires. Lorsque deux voyelles apparaissent de art et d'autre d'un point, la première est une réalisation étirée, ladeuxièmeuneréalisationarrondie.

Les trapèzes vocaliquesde la langue tiv



Sources: Adapté de l'UduTerver T. cité par Shoja A (2010 :34)

Présentation des sources de l'étude

Ilya 16 voyellesen français qui comprennent 12 voyelle soraleset 4 voyelles na salescomme présentéci-dessous :

Les Voyelles françaises

	Les Voyellesfrançaises	**Comme dans**
1	[i]	**I**ci
2	[e]	Commen**é**
3	[ɛ]	**Ai**gle
4	[a]	P**a**te
5	[ɑ]	Age
6	[o]	**Au**be
7	[ɔ]	**O**bjet
8	[œ]	P**eur**
9	[u]	B**ou**che
10	[y]	B**u**reau
11	[ø]	Di**eu**

12	[ə]	P**e**tit
13	**[ɛ̃]**	**In**telligent
14	[œ̃]	Parf**um**
15	[ɔ̃]	P**om**pier
16	**[**ã]	**En**core

Source: https://commons.wikimedia,org

Letableauci-dessus montrelesvoyellesqui existenten français.
Mêmes'il y a 16 voyelles en français, la langue Tivaun total de 12 voyelles dans son inventairecommeindiquéci-dessous:

Les Voyelles Tiv

	Les Voyelles Tiv	**Comme dans**
1	/a/	**a**ti (noms)
2	/e/	ash**e** (yeux)
3	/i/	ah**i** (arachide)
4	/o/	k**o**n (arbre)
5	/u/	ap**u** (oiseau)
6	/ɔ/	K**ô**gh (posson)
7	/aa/	ak**aa** (des choses)
8	/ee/	b**ee** (finir)
9	/ii/	at**ii** (oiseau)
10	/oo/	t**oo**r (oreille)
11	/uu/	ish**uu** (balai)
12	/ɔɔ/	H**ôô** (pourir)

Source : Udu (2009)

Comparaisondes voyelles française et Tiv

Letableauci-dessous met côte à côte tous les phonèmes vocaliques des deux langues; Français et Tiv. L'essentielest defaire une comparaisondes voyellesdesdeux languespour découvrirles différencesetles similitudes.

Comparaisondes voyelles françaises et Tiv

Les voyelles Française **(16)**	**Les voyelles Tiv** **(12)**
[i]	[i]
[e]	[e]
[ɛ]	-
[a]	[a]
[ɑ]	-
[o]	[o]
[ɔ]	[ɔ]
[œ]	-
[u]	[u]
[y]	-
[ø]	-
[ə]	-
[ɛ̃]	-
[œ̃]	-
[ɔ̃]	-
[ã]	-
-	[ii]
-	[uu]
-	[ee]
-	[oo]
-	[ɔɔ]
-	[aa]

Letableau ci-dessus montrequele système vocalique du français est composé de seize(16) voyelles; alorsque le Tivn'en aque douze(12). Cela montreaussi:

- Quelefrançais et le Tivont six (6) voyelles en commun
- Queles voyellesdoubles Tiv [ii], [uu], [ee], [oo], [ɔɔ], [aa] n'existent pas enfrançais
- Queles voyellesorales [ɑ], [å], [y], [ø], [œ], [ə] , et toutesles voyelles nasales [ɛ], [ɔ], [ã], [œ] existenten français maisn'existentpasen Tiv.

Similitudesentre les voyelles françaises et Tiv.
Il existe des similitudes notablesentrela languefrançaiseet la langue Tiv. Cessimilitude sontété mises sur tableau et présentées ci-dessous.

Similitudesentre les voyelles françaises et Tiv

	Les voyelles Françaises (6)	**Les VoyellesTiv (6)**
1	[i]	[i]
2	[e]	[e]
3	[a]	[a]
4	[o]	[o]
5	[ɔ]	[ɔ]
6	[u]	[u]

Letableau ci-dessus montrequelefrançais et le Tivont six (6) voyelles en commun.Par conséquent, les apprenants Tiv de la langue française trouveront, espérons-le, qu'il est facile de prononcer les mots français qui contiennent ces voyelles.

Différencesentre les voyellesfrançaiseset Tiv
Il a été dit ci-dessusqu'il existe des similitudes notables entre les voyelles françaises et les voyelles Tiv, il existe également des différences remarquables.Cesdifférencesontété tabulées et présentées ci-dessous.

Différencesentre les voyelles françaiseset Tiv

les voyelles françaises (10)	les voyelles Tiv (6)
[ɛ]	-
[ɑ]	-
[œ]	-
[y]	-
[ø]	-

[ə]	-
[ɛ̃]	-
[œ̃]	-
[ɔ̃]	-
[ã]	-
-	[ii]
-	[uu]
-	[ee]
-	[oo]
-	[ɔɔ]
-	[aa]

Letableau ci-dessus montrequeles différences entre les deux langues

Différences ou difficultésselon la comparaison

Le butdecette rechercheestde trouverles différences autrementconnues sous le nom de difficultéset deproposer une solutionpourles apprenants tivde la langue française. Par conséquent, après l'analyse, nousavons découvertqu'il existe certaines différences autrement appelées difficultés au niveau des caractères segmentaux et supra segmentaux.Les différencesoudifficultéssont énoncéesci-dessous et des solutions sont proposées. L'absencedes six voyelles orale ([ɑ], [ɛ], [y], [ø], [œ], [ə]) et toutes les voyelles nasales (**[**ɛ̃**],** [ã], [ɔ̃], [œ̃]) en tiv l'inventaire phonétiquea posé quelques difficultésaux apprenants tivde la langue française

Observations sur les phonèmes vocaliques des deux languesbasées sur la comparaison

Surla base de la comparaison des voyelles dans les deux langues, les voyelles similaires ne posentaucun problème aux apprenants tivde la langue française.Car ils ont les mêmes caractéristiques. Les voyellesqui posent problèmesontcelles qui existenten français maisquin'existentpas en tiv. Ici, leslocuteurs tivoules apprenantstivde la langue françaiseauront du malà prononcer un mot contenant une telle voyelle. Par conséquent, la solutionàcelaest de substituerunphonèmeTivdontla prononciation est très proche decelle du phonème français pour permettreà l'apprenant tiv de prononcer correctement ce mot. Danscecas, les dix voyelles (/y/ /ø/ /ə/ /ɛ/ /œ/ /ɑ/ /ɛ̃/ /ã/ /ɔ̃/ /œ̃/) qui existent en français mais n'existent pas en Tiv peuventêtre substituéescommesuit:

Solution aux problèmes identifiés

1. La voyelle /y/ peut être remplacée avec /i/ comme dans le mot mur [myR] prononcé comme [miu]

2. /ø/ peut être remplacée avec /o/ comme dans le mot Deux [dø] prononcé comme [do],

1. /ə/ peut être remplacée avec /e/comme dans le mot Petit [pəti] prononcé comme [peti]

2. /ɛ/ peut être remplacée avec /e/ comme dans le mot Crème [kRɛm] prononcé comme [krem]

3. /œ/ peut être remplacée avec /e:/ comme dans le mot docteur [dɔktœR] prononcé comme [dɔkteer]

4. /ɑ/ peut être remplacée avec /aa/ comme dans le mot pâte [p?t]prononcé comme[paat]

5. /ɛ̃/ peut être remplacée avec /a/ comme dans le mot important [ɛ̃pɔRtã] prononcé comme [ampɔtɔ]

6. /ã/ peut être remplacée avec /ɔ/ comme dans le mot France [fRãns] prononcé comme [frɔns]

7. /ɜ̃/ peut être remplacée avec /ɔ/comme dans le mot allons [alɜ̃n] prononcé comme [alɔn]

8. /œ/ peut être remplacée avec /ɔ/ comme dans le motlundi [lɔndi] prononcé comme

Recommandations

Ilestnécessairede fairecomprendre auxfrancophonesque l'inexistencedes voyelles semi-consonnes, [ɥ], fricatives [ʒ], orales, [ɑ], [ɛ], [y], [ø], [œ], [ə] etde toutesles voyelles nasales [ɛ], [ɔ], [ã], [œ] causeraitdes difficultésde prononciationaux apprenants Tivde la langue française carelles n'existent pas en Tiv. Par conséquent, ildoitêtre expliquéparl'enseignant pour éviter les erreurs naturelles. Les apprenants Tiv devraientêtre encouragésà étudierla phonétiquede leur langue etcellede la langue française pourbien distinguerles phonèmes. Nous tenons à préciserque l'articulation, ou phonétique articulaire, est trèsnécessairepour l'apprentissagenotammentde la langue française orale. Il faut doncque l'apprenant commence par se former, d'une part au niveau de la perception et de l'audition, et d'autre part, habituer ses organes phonatoires à s'articuler afin de s'améliorer et de se perfectionner. L'apprenant doit d'abord acquérir une articulation correcte au tout début de son apprentissage puis se concentrer sur une autre compétence à comprendre et capacité à écrire.

Conclusion

Dans cette communication, nous avons comparé les phonèmes vocaliques du français et du Tiv, en identifiant certaines zones de difficulté où l'apprenant Tiv du français a forcément des défis. Cela se fait en tirant les prédictions possibles de l'apprenant de la langue seconde. Nous avonsconstatée également que les voyelles françaises sont plus nombreuses que les voyellestiv. Il est donc évident qu'il existe au niveau des voyelles les différences et les similitudes et les différences expliquent les éventuelles erreurs commises par l'apprenant Tiv du français.

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A Critical Review of the Psychology of Social Media Influencers in Digital Consumerism

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Abstract

The rise of social media has transformed the field of marketing and consumer behavior, with social media influencers (SMIs) playing pivotal roles in shaping digital consumption patterns. Understanding the psychological mechanisms that underpin influencer impact is crucial in decoding modern consumerism. This study critically reviewed the psychological dimensions that explain how and why social media influencers affect consumer choices, attitudes, and behaviors in digital marketplaces. The major aim of the study was to explore key psychological theories relevant to influencer-consumer dynamics while examining the intersection of identity, trust, and authenticity in influencer activities. The study employed a literature-based critical review that synthesized peer-reviewed studies from psychology, marketing, and media communication. The review employed a conceptual mapping approach to identify recurring themes such as, theoretical models (e.g., social identity theory, parasocial interaction, and cognitive dissonance), and gaps in current research. Situated in "Parasocial Interaction Theory", "Social Comparison Theory", and"Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)", the study exploredhow consumer alignment with influencers' identities and

perceived autonomy in choices drive digital engagement. The analysis revealed that perceived authenticity, emotional connection, and social proof are primary psychological handles influencing consumer trust and purchase behavior. The study identified a lack of cross-cultural psychological analysis and long-term impact studies and recommended that research should integrate longitudinal psychological tracking, cross-cultural dimensions, and neurocognitive tools to deepen understanding emphasizing policy implementations around digital literacy and ethical advertising.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Consumer Psychology, Digital Consumerism, Parasocial Interaction, Authenticity

Introduction

The rising influence of social media personalities in consumer culture is reshaping how individuals make purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional celebrities who are often distant from their audiences, social media influencers have created a model of accessibility that nurtures emotional connection and trust. This trust, as Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) observed, stems from their ability to present themselves as relatable figures while maintaining aspirational lifestyles. The psychological foundations of this relationship are strongly tied to parasocial interaction and Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) demonstrated that when followers perceive intimacy and familiarity with influencers, they are more inclined to accept product recommendations. This kind of bond creates a persuasive effect that extends beyond logical evaluation of a product's quality, working instead through emotion and perceived friendship. The fact that consumers may trust an influencer's endorsement more than a brand's official advertisement points at the unique psychological leverage influencers hold.

Hudders and De Jans (2022) noted that adolescents, in particular, are highly vulnerable due to their developmental stage of identity formation. Their susceptibility raises ethical concerns, especially when influencer marketing is embedded in entertainment or lifestyle content without clear disclosure. The impact of this subtle form of advertising on young people's consumer behavior and self-perception makes the study of influencer psychology urgent and socially significant.This study critically reviews the psychological mechanisms underpinning influencer-consumer relationships within digital consumerism. It does this to explore how authenticity, parasocial bonds, and identity formation shape consumer decisions while also considering the ethical challenges that arise. Examining these dynamics, is an important step towards contributing to ongoing debates on the power and responsibility of influencers in shaping modern consumer behavior as well as the psychological dimension of influence in consumer behaviour.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to:

i. Analyze the role of parasocial relationships in consumer decision-making. Other specidic objectives are to:
ii. Assess the importance of authenticity and credibility in influencer marketing.

iii. examine the susceptibility of vulnerable demographics, especially adolescents.
iv. Evaluate the broader ethical challenges associated with influencer-driven consumerism.

Research Questions

i. How do social media influencers psychologically shape consumer behavior in the context of digital consumerism?
ii. What role do parasocial relationships play in influencing consumer trust and purchase decisions?
iii. How does perceived authenticity and credibility affect the effectiveness of influencer marketing?
iv. Why are adolescents and young adults more susceptible to the influence of social media personalities?
v. In what ways does influencer marketing blur the line between genuine recommendation and covert advertising?
vi. What ethical challenges does the psychology of influencer-driven consumerism present for both consumers and marketers?

Statement of the Research Problem

The growing presence of social media influencers has changed the psychology of consumer behavior in significant ways. What was once a straightforward relationship between brands and consumers is now mediated by individuals who leverage personal storytelling, visual appeal, and perceived intimacy to market products. Influencers rely on their ability to appear authentic, which creates trust that often surpasses traditional forms of advertising. Ki, Cuevas, Chong, and Lim (2020) observed that, consumers are not simply buying products but aligning themselves with lifestyles represented by influencers, turning consumption into a matter of identity construction.

This situation presents a research problem because consumer susceptibility to influencer persuasion is not fully understood. While influencers generate strong emotional connections, their commercial motives can conflict with the well-being of their audiences. Coates, Hardman, Halford, Christiansen, and Boyland (2019) showed that children exposed to influencer endorsements were more likely to make unhealthy food choices, illustrating how subtle persuasion can directly affect behavior. The psychological effects extend beyond food marketing, raising concerns about the broader vulnerability of young and impressionable audiences.

Another dimension of the problem lies in the blurred boundaries between genuine interaction and covert marketing. Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) pointed out that the persuasive power of influencers often rests on undisclosed sponsorships, which compromise transparency and undermine informed consumer decision-making. This raises ethical questions about whether audiences can distinguish authentic recommendations from paid promotions. The problem is further complicated by cultural and contextual variations. Here, Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) found that in collectivist contexts such as China, the trust placed in influencers is closely linked to social bonds and community belonging. This suggests that the psychological processes underpinning influencer persuasion are not

universal, and global consumerism must be examined through diverse cultural lenses. The fundamental research problem therefore centers on understanding how psychological mechanisms such as trust, authenticity, and parasocial interaction shape consumer behavior under the influence of social media personalities. Alongside its ethical risks of covert marketing.

Literature Review

Consumers often engage with influencers in ways that resemble friendship, despite the interaction being one-sided. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019, p. 570) observed that "perceived intimacy and familiarity with influencers" enhances persuasion, as followers treat recommendations as though they come from trusted friends. This intimacy functions at the psychological level by bypassing rational evaluation and tapping into emotions. What makes this significant is not just the relationship itself but how it creates an environment where brand endorsements become personal rather than commercial.

When followers consume influencer content for leisure, they also encounter subtle endorsements rooted in everyday storytelling. Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) showed that many consumers fail to recognize these endorsements as advertisements when disclosures are vague, which deepens the persuasive effect. The intimacy, therefore, raises questions about autonomy since consumers are less likely to resist persuasion from someone they feel they "know."

Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020, p. 265) argued that "authenticity rather than overt commercialism" drives positive consumer responses. In practice, this means that when influencers appear genuine in their endorsements, consumers are more likely to see their recommendations as trustworthy. The credibility of an influencer is therefore inseparable from how convincingly they maintain a balance between personal identity and commercial activity. This point is extended byKi, Cuevas, Chong, and Lim (2020, p. 905) described influencers as "human brands" who attach themselves to followers by fulfilling psychological needs for belonging and inspiration. Once credibility is lost, persuasion weakens, and followers disengage. The implication is that authenticity functions both as a psychological mechanism and a strategic business model.

The psychological effect of influencers is not uniform across audiences. Some groups, particularly children and adolescents, are more susceptible. Coates, Hardman, Halford, Christiansen, and Boyland (2019) conducted a trial showing that children exposed to influencer promotions consumed more unhealthy foods compared to those who were not. The study demonstrates how subtle endorsements can have direct behavioral consequences. What makes this troubling is that children may not even recognize that they are being marketed to, making them especially vulnerable.

Hudders and De Jans (2022) added that adolescents are at a developmental stage where identity formation is ongoing, which increases susceptibility to external cues from influencers. The connection between influencer lifestyles and adolescent aspirations creates a strong pull that may override critical thinking. Vulnerability here is not just about age but about the psychological need to belong and construct identity in a digital culture dominated by influencers. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) explained that influencers succeed because they

represent "ordinary people living aspirational lives." This relatability makes consumers feel that by adopting endorsed products, they are also adopting parts of the influencer's lifestyle. Consumption, therefore, becomes symbolic, as individuals use products to express who they are or who they want to become.

Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) further this idea in their study of YouTube influencers, noting that credibility is shaped by perceived expertise and attractiveness, both of which contribute to consumer identification. When consumers see themselves reflected in influencers, they are more likely to align with their consumption patterns. The identity link transforms the influencer-consumer relationship into one where products function as cultural and psychological symbolsWhile influencers create powerful psychological effects, the ethical implications cannot be ignored. Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) noted that when disclosure of sponsorship is unclear, consumers often fail to recognize the persuasive intent, raising concerns about deception. The lack of transparency undermines consumer autonomy, particularly when individuals believe they are making independent decisions while in fact responding to covert advertising.

Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) found that in collectivist societies like China, credibility is tied closely to community belonging and shared values. This differs from individualist cultures, where uniqueness and personal identity are stronger motivators. The implication is that, influencer strategies cannot be understood in isolation from cultural factors, as the psychological triggers of persuasion vary across societies.García-Rapp and Ekström (2022) took a critical stance, arguing that influencer culture commodifies intimacy by transforming personal interactions into transactional exchanges. This commodification distorts the line between genuine connection and commercial exploitation, making followers complicit in a system where relationships are marketed as products. Such arguments capture the ethical tension at the heart of influencer psychology: while influencers thrive on authenticity and intimacy, these qualities are often strategically manufactured to serve commercial goals.

Theoretical Framework

The psychology of social media influencers can be better understood by situating the discussion in established theories that explain how consumers process influence and persuasion. This study harps on the following frameworks:

Parasocial Interaction Theory

The concept of parasocial relationships explains how consumers form one-sided emotion bonds with media figures. Horton and Wohl first described this dynamic in 1956, but it has taken on new significance with the rise of influencers. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019, p. 570) noted that "perceived intimacy and familiarity with influencers" encourages followers to accept recommendations as though they came from close friends. This explains why influencer marketing is often more persuasive than traditional advertising where the consumer is not just listening to a spokesperson but engaging with someone they feel they know personally.

A recent work supports the relevance of this theory in digital spaces as Durmaz and Ceylan (2025, p. 41) argued that parasocial relationships enable influencers to occupy a "hybrid role

between celebrity and peer," which enhances their power over consumer decision-making. In this sense, parasocial interaction theory helps explain both the trust and the vulnerability that characterize consumer responses to influencers.

Social Comparison Theory

Another relevant framework to the study is social comparison theory, which explains how individuals evaluate themselves by comparing themselves with others. Festinger (1954) proposed this theory to account for the motivations behind upward or downward comparison. On social media, influencers become benchmarks for idealized lifestyles, shaping what followers aspire to achieve. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) observed that consumers are drawn to influencers because they present themselves as "ordinary people living aspirational lives," which invites upward comparisons that can influence purchasing behavior.Social comparison also accounts for vulnerabilities among adolescents and young adults. Hudders and De Jans (2022) are of the belief that adolescents engage heavily in comparisons during identity formation, making them more vulnerable to influencer portrayals of beauty, wealth, or lifestyle. This shows that influencer persuasion is not only about product features, but also about the social meaning attached to consumption.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The elaboration likelihood model provides a useful framework for understanding how consumers process influencer messages. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), persuasion occurs through either the central route, which involves careful consideration of arguments, or the peripheral route, which relies on cues such as attractiveness or credibility. Influencer marketing often operates through the peripheral route, where the attractiveness, relatability, or authenticity of the influencer acts as the main persuasive cue.Ananda and Putra (2025, p. 9) explained that "influencer credibility and parasocial relationships" work as peripheral cues that reduce cognitive resistance to advertising. This theoretical lens clarifies why influencer marketing can be effective even when followers are aware of commercial motives. It also underpins concerns about transparency, since consumers may process influencer endorsements without engaging in critical evaluation.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative secondary research design to investigate the psychology of social media influencers in digital consumerism. Unlike primary research that collects new data, secondary research involves analyzing and synthesizing existing scholarly studies, reports, and datasets to generate new insights. Johnston (2017, p. 619) explained that, secondary research is "an efficient and cost-effective means of harnessing the value of existing knowledge for answering new questions."

Research Design

The study employs a narrative synthesis approach to bring together insights from different bodies of literature. Greenhalgh *et al.* (2005, p. 417) described narrative synthesis as a method that "relies primarily on the use of words and text to summarize and explain findings across

multiple studies." This design is appropriate because it allows for the integration of psychological, cultural, and ethical perspectives on influencer marketing.

Data Sources and Sampling

The data for this study are drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and empirical studies indexed in scholarly databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed. Selection criteria include relevance to influencer psychology, consumer behavior, and digital marketing ethics. Only studies published between 2010 and 2025 are included to capture the rise of influencer culture. Purposive sampling guides the inclusion of literature, ensuring that sources directly address parasocial relationships, authenticity, identity, and ethical implications in digital consumerism.

Data Collection

Data collection involves identifying, reviewing, and extracting relevant findings from the selected studies. Snyder (2019, p. 334) emphasized that, the strength of secondary research lies in its ability to organize and interpret fragmented evidence into coherent insights. The collection process includes reading full texts, underscoring core arguments and grouping findings under key psychological themes such as parasocial interaction, social comparison, and credibility.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is applied to the extracted findings. While Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a flexible tool for identifying patterns across qualitative data, this becomes well suited for the study. In this study, themes such as trust, authenticity, vulnerability, and ethics are developed from recurring insights in the literature. The use of thematic analysis ensures that the research captures both convergence and divergence in existing scholarship, making it possible to identify gaps and propose new directions.

Ethical Considerations

Although secondary research does not involve direct human participants, ethical principles still apply. The study ensures accuracy by using only credible, peer-reviewed sources and by properly attributing all major ideas to its owners. Tripathy (2013) observed that, maintaining integrity in secondary research involves acknowledging original authorship and avoiding misrepresentation of findings. This is particularly important since the study deals with sensitive issues of consumer vulnerability and ethical concerns in marketing.

Findings and Discussion

The synthesis of secondary sources revealed that the psychology of social media influencers in digital consumerism is best understood through five overlapping themes which are: parasocial interaction, authenticity and credibility, vulnerability of specific groups, identity and lifestyle construction, and the ethical challenges embedded in this form of marketing. Each of these themes demonstrates how influencers affect consumer decision-making, while also exposing tensions in trust, agency, and responsibility as elucidated below.

Parasocial Interaction and Emotional Intimacy

Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers thrive on producing content that fosters familiarity and closeness. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019, p. 570) found that "perceived intimacy and familiarity with influencers" causes followers to treat endorsements as if they came from trusted friends. This finding underscores the psychological weight of one-sided relationships, where consumers perceive a mutual bond even though the influencer remains distant. Lou and Kim (2019) expanded on this by observing that parasocial interaction not only increases consumer trust but also motivates active behavior such as sharing content and recommending products to peers. This indicates that the intimacy created by influencers transforms followers into agents of brand promotion, showing how trust spills over from private feelings to public action.

The significance of parasocial bonds lies in their capacity to bypass critical resistance. When consumers feel emotionally close to influencers, they are less likely to question the persuasive intent behind endorsements. Durmaz and Ceylan (2025, p. 41) argued that influencers occupy a "hybrid role between celebrity and peer," which makes their messages particularly effective. Traditional advertising is often distrusted precisely because its persuasive intent is obvious. Influencers blur this line, presenting their content as authentic life-sharing while entrenching sponsored messages. The result is a situation where persuasion works not through rational argument but through the affective pull of intimacy. The findings consistently show that parasocial relationships act as a psychological gateway that normalizes consumerist influence.

Authenticity and Credibility as Psychological Drivers

Closely tied to parasocial interaction is the issue of authenticity, which consistently appears as a decisive factor in the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020, p. 560) argued that authenticity is negotiated through "passion-driven authenticity" and "transparent authenticity." The first relies on showing enthusiasm and commitment to content creation, while the second depends on openly acknowledging sponsorships. Both signal to consumers that the influencer is genuine, thereby sustaining trust even in the presence of commercial motives. This finding illustrates that authenticity is not about the absence of persuasion but about the perception of honesty in persuasion.

Ki, Cuevas, Chong, and Lim (2020) provided empirical evidence that credibility and authenticity strongly predict purchase intentions, suggesting that consumers evaluate the messenger more than the message. Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) confirmed that credibility operates as a heuristic shortcut, enabling followers to rely on influencers' endorsements without expending cognitive effort on evaluating the product itself. These findings demonstrate that authenticity functions as a psychological currency in digital consumerism.

The challenge, however, is that authenticity is fragile and easily undermined. When influencers over-commercialize their content or fail to disclose partnerships transparently, followers perceive them as insincere. García-Rapp and Ekström (2022) described this as the commodification of intimacy, where personal sharing is converted into a profit-driven activity. Consumers are increasingly aware of this commodification, yet studies show they often continue to engage because the relational bond outweighs doubts about motives. This paradox

points at a psychological complexity where authenticity is less about objective truth and more about the perception of consistency between an influencer's persona and their endorsements. This also reveal cultural variations in how authenticity is interpreted. as followers may value influencers who demonstrate alignment with cultural values more than those who emphasize individual passion. This suggests that authenticity is socially constructed and that the mechanisms sustaining it may differ across regions. However, the dominant literature remains Western-centric, leaving an empirical gap in how African consumers for instance, negotiate authenticity under local cultural pressures.

Vulnerability of Adolescents and Young Adults

Another critical finding is the disproportionate susceptibility of adolescents and young adults to influencer persuasion. Coates, Hardman, Halford, Christiansen, and Boyland (2019) demonstrated this vividly in a randomized trial showing that children exposed to influencer-promoted food brands consumed significantly more calories than those who were not. The study revealed that persuasion operates subconsciously, influencing behavior even when children lack explicit recognition of the endorsement. Hudders and De Jans (2022) confirmed this trend by showing that adolescents often fail to distinguish between sponsored and non-sponsored content, making them particularly vulnerable.

The vulnerability of this demographic is explained by developmental psychology. Here, adolescents are in a critical stage of identity formation, making them highly sensitive to social comparison. Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019, p. 1434) observed that micro-celebrities present themselves as "ordinary people living extraordinary lives," inviting upward comparisons that shape consumption desires. Young consumers aspire to replicate these lifestyles, often without questioning the feasibility or sustainability of such aspirationsUnlike adults who may exercise critical resistance, younger consumers are less equipped to navigate the blurred boundaries of commercial and personal content.

Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) pointed out that disclosure language matters significantly, with vague disclosures failing to alert younger audiences to the persuasive nature of content. The cumulative evidence shows that adolescents and young adults are not just another consumer segment but a particularly vulnerable group whose psychological development amplifies the impact of influencer marketing.What remains underexplored is how protective mechanisms can be designed to mitigate this vulnerability. Most studies identify the problem but stop short of proposing solutions. This absence of practical strategies captures an important research gap with policy implications, particularly in non-Western contexts where regulatory oversight may be weaker.

Identity, Aspiration, and Lifestyle Construction

Beyond immediate persuasion, influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer identity and lifestyle. Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted (2018) noted that followers often look to influencers to reconcile tensions between individuality and belonging. Adopting the styles, preferences, or habits modeled by influencers, consumers negotiate their place in social groups while maintaining a sense of personal uniqueness. This finding suggests that influencers serve

not only as marketers but also as cultural guides who help followers navigate identity dilemmas.

Djafarova and Trofimenko (2019) found that consumers perceive micro-celebrities as relatable, interpreting their lifestyles as attainable despite being aspirational. This relatability fosters a powerful form of persuasion where consumption becomes tied to identity performance. Lou and Kim (2019) showed that brand loyalty often arises when followers see influencers as role models for lifestyle choices rather than mere product endorsers. The implication is that consumerism in digital spaces is not just about goods but about symbolic capital, where products signify membership in aspirational communities.

These findings align with social comparison theory, where upward comparisons generate motivation to emulate perceived role models. However, the aspirational function of influencers also raises concerns about consumer pressure and psychological well-being. Constant exposure to idealized lifestyles may contribute to dissatisfaction and materialistic values. García-Rapp and Ekström (2022) suggested that influencers normalize consumption as a pathway to happiness, structuring materialism into everyday life. This stresses the dual role of influencers being they empower consumers with models for identity construction while simultaneously reinforcing consumerist ideologies.Influencers often blend global consumer trends with local cultural references, creating hybrid identities that sits well with young consumers. This hybridization remains under-researched, pointing to a need for context-sensitive studies that capture how influencers mediate between global consumerism and local cultural values.

Ethical and Cultural Concerns in Digital Consumerism

The final theme emerging from the findings is the ethical and cultural challenge posed by influencer marketing. Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) are of the opinion that influencer promotions often blur the line between commercial and non-commercial content, which reduces advertising recognition. This lack of transparency raises questions about fairness, especially for vulnerable audiences. García-Rapp and Ekström (2022) extended this critique by showing that influencers commodify personal intimacy, turning private life into marketable content. Consumers are encouraged to invest emotionally in influencers while simultaneously being targeted for consumption.

These findings reveal an ethical dilemma at the heart of influencer marketing. On one hand, influencers create genuine communities where followers feel connected. On the other hand, this intimacy is strategically monetized, raising concerns about the exploitation of trust. This suggests that the ethical dimension is not sufficiently theorized. While disclosure requirements have been studied, broader issues of commodified intimacy, consumer autonomy, and cultural exploitation remain under explored. Cultural variation also complicates the ethical picture. For instance, Western contexts, regulations on advertising disclosure are relatively strong. In some third world countriese specially in Sub Saharan Africa, regulatory frameworks are weaker or less enforced. This creates a risk that consumers may be even more vulnerable to manipulative practices. Hudders and De Jans (2022) warned that children's exposure to commercialized content is already a concern in Western societies. The risk is likely amplified in settings where media literacy and consumer protection are limited. These findings point to an urgent need for

context-specific ethical frameworks that account for cultural norms and regulatory environments.

Conclusion

The psychology of social media influencers in digital consumerism is best understood as a convergence of emotional, cognitive, and cultural processes. This study asked how psychological mechanisms shape consumer responses to influencers and addressed this through questions of trust, authenticity, vulnerability, identity, and ethics. The findings and discussion has shown that parasocial interaction and authenticity are the central drivers of influence. These findings underscore the point that influencer marketing does not operate primarily on rational evaluation but on emotional intimacy.Authenticity further sustains this intimacy.even though the literature also revealed that authenticity is fragile, easily disrupted when influencers are perceived as overly commercial. These contradictions reflect the psychological complexity of consumer trust as it rests not only on what influencers say but on how their lives align with the values and expectations of their audiences.

The findings also point at the particular vulnerability of adolescents and young adults showing that influencer marketing exploits developmental susceptibilities in ways that traditional advertising cannot. Finally, the study emphasized the ethical and cultural dilemmas rooted in influencer marketing. These confirm that the psychological success of influencer marketing comes at a social cost, particularly in contexts where regulation and consumer protection remain weak.The psychology of influencer marketing lies in its ability to merge parasocial trust with performative authenticity, to target consumer vulnerabilities while offering aspirational models of identity, and to do so in ways that challenge ethical boundaries. These findings not only answer the research questions but also underscores the urgent need for critical engagement with the psychological consequences of digital consumerism.

Recommendations

The insights from this study point to several recommendations for policymakers, educators, brands, and influencers themselves. These recommendations aim to reduce the risks of exploitation while preserving the positive potential of influencer culture. They are:

i. Strengthening media literacy education: The vulnerability of adolescents and young adults calls for targeted media literacy initiatives. Schools and community programs should integrate curricula that teach critical engagement with digital content, emphasizing how parasocial relationships can be exploited for commercial gain.
ii. Establishing stricter regulatory frameworks: Here, regulatory bodies need to enforce clearer guidelines for sponsorship disclosures. Policies should mandate explicit and culturally relevant disclosure cues that are easily understood by young and less media-savvy audiences.
iii. Encouraging ethical influencer practices: Influencers should be encouraged to adopt ethical codes of conduct. Influencer associations and marketing agencies could establish self-regulatory standards that emphasize transparency, moderation in promotional activity, and sensitivity to the age and vulnerability of audiences.

iv. Promoting authenticity grounded in cultural values: Authenticity was found to be central to consumer trust but also culturally variable. Brands and influencers should leverage authenticity not just as a marketing tactic but as a reflection of cultural identity and values. This would not only foster trust but also ensure that digital consumerism aligns with local social contexts.

v. Safeguarding adolescent consumers: Given the evidence that influencer marketing affects children's behavior subconsciously age-based restrictions on certain categories of influencer promotions, especially unhealthy food, alcohol, or financial products, should be considered. Policymakers and platforms alike should adopt child-focused protections similar to those applied in traditional advertising.

vi. Fostering critical awareness among consumers: Beyond regulation and literacy, consumers themselves need to cultivate critical awareness of influencer marketing. Public awareness campaigns should bring to the fore these psychological dynamics, empowering individuals to reflect on the broader consequences of their consumption choices.

vii. Expanding scholarly research in African contexts. Much of the existing literature on influencer psychology comes from Western contexts, which limits its applicability to SSA and Africa more broadly. This study recommends the need for more empirical research that explores how cultural position shapes the reception of influencer marketing. Collaborative research between universities and marketing firms could provide unique insights to inform culturally relevant strategies.

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John Locke's Notion of Representational Realism and its Implications for Knowledge Representation in Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

This study titled John locke's notion of representational realism and its implications for knowledge representation in artificial intelligence, examined the intersection between Locke's epistemology and how artificial intelligence employs symbolic systems, semantic network to encode and process knowledge. Symbolic AI has made progress in representing facts, rules, and relationships; however, it still struggles with grounding these representations in the real world. This has led to problems such as ambiguity, context-dependence, and misinterpretation. John Locke's representational realism on the other hand, posits that human knowledge arises from mental ideas that represent the external world. Locke's theory raises philosophical questions about the accuracy and reliability of representation. The relationship between Locke's epistemological framework and modern knowledge representation in AI has not been fully explored by scholars in the field of philosophy and computer science. As a result, this gap limits our ability to design AI systems that can better mirror reality. There is therefore the need to investigate how Locke's theory of representational realism can provide a conceptual framework for addressing the problem of accurate knowledge representation in AI. The main objective of this study was to examine Locke's representational realism and its implications for artificial intelligence. To achieve this objective, this study employed the comparative and analytic methods to highlight how Locke's theory of ideas sheds light on the gap between abstract representation and real-world reference in artificial intelligence. The study found that Locke's theory of representational realism parallels knowledge representation in AI. Furthermore, the problem of representational accuracy in Locke's theory is also a limitation to knowledge representation in AI. The study concluded that integrating the insights from the theory of representational realism will deepen our understanding of the limits of AI and this, in turn,

will enable humans to design better systems that can better mirror the world.

Keywords: Representational Realism, Knowledge Representation, Artificial Intelligence, Ideas.

Introduction

The initial context of Locke's work is the assumption that there is a real physical world that we can in fact come to know about. This context is of extreme importance to Locke's epistemology as it bounds the problems to be overcome and the aims of the epistemological methods. In Locke's point of view, epistemology is an inquiry into the possibility of a science of nature. Locke divides his account of knowledge into three parts, and in each part there is a knowledge which is related to the science of nature. The three parts are the extent of human knowledge, the degrees of knowledge, and the grounds of probability. For Locke, the first part is very important to explain the quality of human knowledge compared to the knowledge of things.

Locke's Method for Analysing Ideas.

It was Locke's belief that before we go ahead to start making comments about the world around us: of God and soul and material things, whatever is the enquiry, an understanding of the human mind and its operations must be first understood. The understanding of the human mind and its limitations therefore became the subject of Locke's inquiry. In the book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Locke tells us what inspired him; ¯Five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discussing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had awhile puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with? (Locke, p. 10). From what we can tell, the discussion apparently concerned morality and religion. It became clear to Locke that he and his friends were attempting to construct the top floor of the edifice of knowledge without first attending to the foundations. He realised that first one had to examine the ground work of human understanding and then see if it could support enquiry at the higher level of human concern (God and ethics) (Lawhead, 2002, p. 280). It was Locke's belief then, that before we enquire about anything, that we understood what can be known, how it can be known, and the limits of what can be known. In the age that produced thinkers such as Boyle, Sydenham, Huygenius and Newton, Locke sees himself as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge (Locke, 2014 p. 13). Locke's task will be to inquire into the origin and extent of human knowledge and be contented with what we can know. For Locke, he thinks what we can know is enough to serve us in this life. So his method was simple, he sets himself three tasks; First, I shall inquire into the original of those ideas, notions, or whatever else you please to call them, which a man observes, and is conscious to himself he has in his mind; and the ways whereby the understanding comes to be furnished

with them. Secondly, I shall endeavour to show what knowledge the understanding hath by those ideas; and the certainty, evidence, and extent of it. Thirdly, I shall make some inquiry into the nature and grounds of faith or opinion: whereby I mean that assent which we give to any proposition as true, of whose truth yet we have no certain knowledge. And here we shall have occasion to examine the reasons and degrees of assent (Locke, 2014 p. 23). Locke's description of his project shows he shared Descartes's thirst for certainty. However, Locke tempered it with humbleness and lowering of expectations that would become a trademark of empiricism tradition (Lawhead, 2002 p. 280). Through this method, Locke beliefs we can find out what the human mind can know with certainty and what it can only guess about. Understanding what the human mind can know with certainty keeps us from making bold claims about things it cannot know. That there are things the human mind cannot know with certainty should not bring despair. Our capacity to know is suited to our state and concerns. For Locke too, knowledge of our mental capacity cures scepticism and idleness. As Locke puts it; It will be no excuse to an idle and untoward servant, who would not attend his business by candle light, to plead that he had not broad sunshine. The Candle that is set up in us shines bright enough for all our purposes (Locke, 2014, p. 24). When we know our own strength, we shall the better know what to undertake with hopes of success; and when we have well surveyed the powers of our own minds, and made some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still, and not set our thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything; nor on the other side, question everything, and disclaim all knowledge, because some things are not to be understood (Locke, 2014, p. 25).

Critique of Innate Ideas

Locke carries out his task of finding out the origin and extent of human knowledge by first criticising a doctrine that has grown from Plato to Descartes; the notion that there are certain knowledge which the mind holds that are innate. These kinds of ideas or knowledge do not come from experience but are naturally imprinted into the mind at birth. The great divide in Early Modern epistemology is rationalism versus empiricism. The Continental Rationalists believe that we are born with innate ideas or innate knowledge, and they emphasize what we can know through reasoning. By contrast, Locke and other British Empiricists believe that all of our ideas come from experience, and they are more sceptical about what reason can tell us about the world; instead, they think we must rely on experience and empirical observation **(**Rockwood, 2010). For Locke; It is an established opinion amongst some men, that there are in the understanding certain innate principles; some primary notions,…characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of man; which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it (Locke, 2014, p. 27). It is this theory that Locke wants to demolish before setting up his own theory of knowledge. Proponents of the innate idea theory insist that certain principles like the law of identity A is A, and the law of non-contradiction are universal, thus, innate in nature. Locke does not think these principles are innate and even if they are universal does not prove that they are innate. Locke claimed that that line of argument has no force. He held that all ideas (except those that are ¯trifling?) can be explained in terms of experience. Instead of attacking the doctrine of innate ideas directly, however, his strategy was to refute it by showing that it is explanatorily otiose and hence dispensable (Priselac, 2023). For Locke,

children and Idiots are not aware of such principles so those principles cannot be said to be innate. For Locke, if an idea is innate, the mind should always be aware of it. He thus criticises those who suppose that innate ideas can exist in the mind without the mind being aware of it. First, it is evident, that all children and idiots have not the least apprehension or thought of them. And the want of that is enough to destroy that universal assent which must needs be the necessary concomitant of all innate truths: it seeming to me near a contradiction to say, that there are truths imprinted on the soul, which it perceives or understands not: imprinting, if it signify anything, being nothing else but the making certain truths to be perceived. For to imprint anything on the mind without the mind's perceiving it, seems to me hardly intelligible. If therefore children and idiots have souls, have minds, with those impressions upon them, they must unavoidably perceive them (Locke, 2014, p. 29).

Concerning knowledge of the universals and particulars, Locke was even more radical. He believed that the mind has knowledge of particular things first before having knowledge of universals. The process the mind comes to know universal or general truth is that the senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet and the mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the memory, and names got to them. Afterwards, the mind proceeding further, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names. In this manner the mind comes to be furnished with ideas and language, the materials about which to exercise its discursive faculty. And the use of reason becomes daily more visible, as these materials that give it employment increase. But though the having of general ideas and the use of general words and reason usually grow together, yet I see not how this any way proves them innate. (Locke, 2014, p. 35) Plato, one of the proponents of innate idea, argued that knowledge is a recollection. This will mean, they are ideas in the mind or in our memory that is brought to our awareness by recollection. Locke criticises this idea, thus, for him, whatever comes to exist as a memory must have come through experience.

Ideas and their Origin

To carry out his project, Locke gave the word 'Idea' a unique definition. Idea for Locke is whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking; and I could not avoid frequently using it. I presume it will be easily granted me, that there are such ideas in men's minds: everyone is conscious of them in himself; and men's words and actions will satisfy him that they are in others. Idea for Locke will be the image in our mind that represents the object outside our mind. The football, the cup, the person, or child we see, does not exist in our mind; these things exists independently and outside our minds. We do however, carry images of them with us in our mind, these images representing these external objects is what Locke calls ideas.

These ideas are the building block of the knowledge we have of things. So the question comes up, how do we come about ideas of things? How does the mind come to possess these ideas seeing they are not innate as Locke will have us believe? It is at this point that Locke introduces his theory of the blank slate to answer these questions. He started:

> Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: how comes it to be furnished? … To this I answer, in one word, from experience. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed either, about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring (Locke, 2014 p. 87).

The mind is empty at birth, and for Locke, whatever idea we find in it must have come there through one route: experience. This experience is of two kinds: sensation and reflection. All ideas come from experience and through sensation or experience. The metaphor of the blank slate to describe the mind is significant to Locke's epistemology as a whole. For Lawhead, Locke and his fellow empiricist were attempting to emulate Newton's science of physical particles by discovering the laws that govern the motion of mental particle. For Locke, there is a direct relationship between his own "physics" of the mind and Newtonian physics (Lawhead, 2002 p. 282). He envisions the infant consciousness as a formless intelligence, originally devoid of innate knowledge or, therefore, any natural evil that receives information and learns to process it purely by the inscription of sensory input (Pinker, 2003 p. 5).

So we come to know things through sensation and reflection. Through sensation we come by those ideas we have of yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet, and all those which we call sensible qualities and through reflection or the operation of our minds, we get the idea of such are perception, thinking, doubting, believing, reasoning, knowing, willing, and all the different actings of our own minds (Locke, 2014 p. 88). It is through these methods we get all our simple ideas according to Locke. Locke then put forth a challenge and asks anyone to show him any one idea that does not come through these two sources. Let anyone examine his own thoughts, and thoroughly search into his understanding; and then let him tell me, whether all the original ideas he has there, are any other than of the objects of his senses, or of the operations of his mind, considered as objects of his reflection (Lawhead. 2014, p. 88). The combination of simple ideas by the operation of the mind produces complex ideas. We do not just experience simple ideas like the color white, we experience things like beauty, man, an army, gratitude etc. Locke says it is through the combination of simple ideas by the mind that we are able to experience them. He calls it complex ideas. The three operations the mind conducts to produce complex ideas are compounding, relating, and abstraction. Simple ideas, whether they are ideas of perception or ideas of reflection, may be combined or repeated to produce ¯compound ideas,? as when the compound idea of an apple is produced by bringing together simple ideas of a certain colour, texture, odour, and figure. Abstract ideas are created when ideas taken from particular beings become general representatives of all of the same kind (Stroll, 2017)

Though the qualities that affect our senses are, in the things themselves, so united and blended, that there is no separation, no distance between them; yet it is plain, the ideas they produce in the mind enter by the senses simple; and unmixed. For, though the sight and touch often take in from the same object, at the same time, different ideas; as a man sees at once motion

and colour; the hand feels softness and warmth in the same piece of wax: yet the simple ideas thus united in the same subject, are as perfectly distinct as those that come in by different senses (Locke, 2014 p. 101-102) Locke also made a distinction between quality and idea, for Locke, Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call idea; and the power to produce any idea in our mind, I call quality of the subject wherein that power is. Thus a snowball having the power to produce in us the ideas of white, cold, and roundthe power to produce those ideas in us, as they are in the snowball, I call qualities; and as they are sensations or perceptions in our understandings, I call them ideas; which ideas, if I speak of sometimes as in the things themselves, I would be understood to mean those qualities in the objects which produce them in us (Locke, 2014 p. 116-117). Of this quality, we have primary and secondary quality. Primary quality would be objective experience like solidity, extension, shape, motion or rest, and number of objects while secondary quality will be subjective experience like colour, sound, taste, odor, warmth and so forth. Significantly, Locke's primary qualities are the ones that can be qualified and studied in physics (Lawhead, 2002 p. 284). Locke then defines Knowledge as the perception of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. Knowledge then seems to me to be nothing but the perception of the connexion of an agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas. In this alone it consists. Where this perception is, there is knowledge, and where it is not, there, though we may fancy, guess, or believe, yet we always come short of knowledge. (Locke, 2014 p. 515) in other words, obtaining knowledge we are observing how our ideas fit or do not fit together. A true proposition is one in which the ideas are properly related. (Lawhead, 2002 p. 284)

Locke also identified the three degrees of knowledge available to the human mind; intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge and Sensitive knowledge. The intuitive knowledge is the most certain form of knowledge because it leaves no room for doubt. For Locke, the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it. Types of intuitive knowledge will be three is more than two, triangles are not circles etc. Locke stated that the different clearness of our knowledge seems to me to lie in the different way of perception the mind has of the agreement or disagreement of any of its ideas. For if we will reflect on our own ways of thinking, we will find, that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other: and this I think we may call intuitive knowledge (Locke, 2014 p. 520). The second degree of knowledge is demonstrative knowledge. Here, the connection between ideas is not immediate but is established by forming a chain of logical steps as mathematical proof.

Demonstrative knowledge gives us certainty, if we are careful in forming each link in the logical chain. Here, the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of any ideas, but not immediately. Though wherever the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of any of its ideas, there be certain knowledge; yet it does not always happen, that the mind sees that agreement or disagreement, which there is between them, even where it is discoverable; and in that case remains in ignorance, and at most gets no further than a probable conjecture. … In this case then, when the mind cannot so bring its ideas together as by their immediate comparison, and as it were juxta-position or application one to another, to perceive their agreement or disagreement, it is fain, by the intervention of other ideas, (one or more, as it happens) to discover the agreement or disagreement which it searches; and this is that which we call

reasoning (Locke, 2014 p. 521). However, since it is possible to make a mistake in our reasoning process, this form of knowledge is not quite so "clear and bright, not the assent so ready, as in intuitive knowledge (Lawhead, 2002 p. 285). The third degree of knowledge is what Locke calls Sensitive knowledge. This is knowledge about the external world. Knowledge of the external world is not achieved through thinking about the definitions of our terms or comparing ideas that we have already acquired. Knowledge of the external world doesn't rest on any proof of the external world. Instead, knowledge of the external world is achieved in sensory experience. It is through the entrance of an idea into our mind through the senses that we have knowledge of the external world. (Priselac, p. 2013) Locke writes, ¯'Tis therefore the actual receiving of ideas from without that gives us notice of the existence of other things and makes us know that something doth exist at that time without us which causes that idea in us? (Locke, 2014 p. 624). Locke thinks the degree of knowledge is less certain that intuitive and demonstrative knowledge.

Artificial Intelligence

In the section about Artificial Intelligence, we are going to discuss three issues; artificial intelligence, knowledge representation and machine learning. Artificial intelligence (AI) can be described as a field of computer science devoted to the development of systems that carry out tasks that would normally require a human being. Artificial intelligence can be classified under four groups according to Arend Hintze, these are; Reactive machines: The machines you see beating humans at chess or playing on game shows are examples of reactive machines. A reactive machine has no memory or experience upon which to base a decision. Instead, it relies on pure computational power and smart algorithms to recreate every decision every time. Limited memory: A self-driving car or autonomous robot can't afford the time to make every decision from scratch. These machines rely on a small amount of memory to provide experiential knowledge of various situations. Theory of mind: A machine that can assess both its required goals and the potential goals of other entities in the same environment has a kind of understanding that is feasible to some extent today, but not in any commercial form. Self-awareness: This is the sort of AI that you see in movies. However, it requires technologies that aren't even remotely possible now because such a machine would have a sense of both self and consciousness. In addition, instead of merely intuiting the goals of others based on environment and other entity reactions, this type of machine would be able to infer the intent of others based on experiential knowledge (Arend Hintze, accessed 31 August, 2025).

Knowledge representation

The definition of knowledge representation has been a major topic of discussion over the years. It can be seen as a method to encode some form of information about the world which is used in symbolic inference about the world. Knowledge representation is a field that focuses on the design of symbolic information to make it usable for inference. For Gupta, Knowledge representation is a fundamental concept in artificial intelligence (AI) that involves creating models and structures to represent information and knowledge in a way that intelligent systems can use. The goal of knowledge representation is to enable machines to reason about the world like humans, by capturing and encoding knowledge in a format that can be easily processed and utilized by AI systems. (Gupta, accessed July, 2025)

It also assumes that the information to be reasoned about is complex and the reasoning processes and the conclusions drawn are to be useful in some real-world task or decision, often in the presence of incomplete or uncertain information. All of these notions have implications on the design of both the knowledge representation formalism and the reasoning methods that will use it. Knowledge representation hypothesis seems to have originated with the philosopher Leibniz (1646-1716):

> There is little doubt, however, that Leibniz' ideas, which far outstripped in detail and understanding any earlier hints, were his own spontaneous creation. "While I was yet a boy with a knowledge only of common logic, and without instruction in mathematics, the thought came to me, I know not by what instinct, that an analysis of ideas could be devised, whence in some combinatory way, truths could arise and be estimated as though by numbers" *(Elementa Rationis).* He was thereafter constantly occupied with such notions and attempted to contrive an alphabet of thought, or *characteristica universalis,* which would represent ideas in a logical way, not things in a pictorial way, and would be mechanical in operation, unambiguous, and nonquantitative. (Edwards, 1967, p. 538)

A central goal of research is that computers must somehow come to "know" a good deal of what every human being knows about the world and about the organisms, natural or artificial, that inhabit it. For Israel, ¯this body of knowledge indefinite, no doubt, in its boundaries---goes by the name "common sense." The problem we face is how to impart such knowledge to a robot. That is, how do we design a robot with a reasoning capacity sufficiently powerful and fruitful that when provided with some body of this knowledge, the robot will be able to generate enough of the rest to intelligently adapt to and exploit its environment? (Israel, 1993 p. 37). knowledge representation simply has to do with writing down, in some language or communicative medium, descriptions or pictures that correspond in some salient way to the world or a state of the world. In artificial intelligence (AI) we are concerned with writing down descriptions of the world in which an intelligent machine might be embedded in such a way that the machine can come to new conclusions about its world by manipulating these symbolic representations ((Levesque, 1986 p. 225)). But for scholars like Davis and Shrobe,

> knowledge representation can best be understood in terms of five distinct roles that it plays, each crucial to the task at hand. First, a knowledge representation is most fundamentally a *surrogate*, a substitute for the thing itself that is used to enable an entity to determine consequences by thinking rather than acting, that is, by reasoning about the world rather than taking action in it. Second, it is a set of ontological commitments, that is, an answer to the question, In what terms should I think about the world? Third, it is a fragmentary theory of intelligent reasoning expressed in terms of three components: (1) the representation's fundamental conception of intelligent reasoning, (2) the set of inferences that the representation sanctions, and (3) the set of inferences that it recommends. Fourth, it is a medium for pragmatically efficient computation, that is, the computational

> environment in which thinking is accomplished. One contribution to this pragmatic efficiency is supplied by the guidance that a representation provides for organizing information to facilitate making the recommended inferences. Fifth, it is a medium of human expression, that is, a language in which we say things about the world. Understanding the roles and acknowledging their diversity has several useful consequences (17). With this knowledge let us see the connection between knowledge representation and knowledge representation. (Davies, Shrobe, 1993 p. 17)

Locke's knowledge Representation and Artificial Intelligence

The Lockean tabula rasa informs the work of English cryptanalyst and mathematician Alan Turing (1912-1954), who is widely considered the father of theoretical computer science. Turing's postwar writings on artificial intelligence are the founding manuscripts of the modern field, and it is through his work that the tabula rasa enters the computational vocabulary. In a 1950 issue of Mind, he wrote: Instead of trying to produce a programme to simulate the adult mind, why not rather try to produce one which simulates the child's? If this were then subjected to an appropriate course of education one would obtain the adult brain. Presumably the child brain is something like a notebook as one buys it from the stationer's. Rather little mechanism, and lots of blank sheets. (Turing, 1950 p. 19) Important in Turing's notion of the tabula rasa is his distinction of mechanism from information: the empty and innocent consciousness he describes possesses no innate knowledge written across its pages, but it does require some minor mechanism to bind them together. The tabula rasa denotes emptiness charged with potential. It is a latent intelligence, a promising void, a machine awaiting its ghost. It has made a long journey through various disciplines and movements in Western thought: the concept originated in philosophy, then wove through various notions of human nature to psychology, where its impact on theories of knowledge and learning brought it ultimately to computer science by way of artificial intelligence (AI). Evidently, Locke's notion of an idea is a far cry from the neural networks and pattern manipulations that are often used in AI models today. But an understanding of these models is largely mathematical and mechanistic, and Locke's clear classification of sorts can provide grounding and direction to the implementation and replication of these models into the various sorts of ideas. We might also note that as a foundational theory of modern soft and hard sciences is that all material should be observable and repeatable, and a system for forming ideas from such material should be methodical and provide clear direction; something which can be criticized as not occurring in many AI models today.

Furthermore, understanding how these different classes of ideas are formed is indeed relevant to developing computer models for idea formation; for at the very least we believe that our machine should be able to replicate a similar process, even if the end result is far from identical. Locke also suggests a certain progression of complexity in the formation of ideas, where he states that simple ideas are unaffected and cannot be changed, and it is only by various combinations of simple ideas and mental operations upon them that complex ideas are formed. This too shows a correspondence to the formation of data structures and algorithms to manipulate them in computer science.

Locke has a very particular definition of an idea as 'whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks'. This is a very broad term, but he narrows it down by separating between three different types of ideas: sensation (which includes perception and the immediate objects of the senses), reflection (the perceiving of the operations of the mind), and finally simple modes, substances, and relations which are formed by the combining of the other two types, and various operations applied to them. Locke's intention of classifying different levels of abstraction and complexity of ideas is decidedly methodical and scientific, showing a clear semblance to the categorizations and classifications that occur within the modern hard sciences and particularly computer science.

We have chosen to ground our exploration of artificial intelligence in the philosophy of John Locke, for a most specific reason: Locke's epistemology, unlike many others, explicitly outlines the processes of knowledge formation, something crucial when exploring how intelligence processes information. According to Locke, all knowledge is based on human experience and is built upon two basic types of material: the perceptions that come via the five senses from the world around us (which form the basis of empirical knowledge), and material that is 'reflected' from the operations of the mind, which serves as the source of abstract and complex ideas.

Locke's epistemology is called representative realism in today's terminology. Representative realism claims that the mind is directly acquainted only with its own ideas, but that these ideas are caused by and represent objects external to the mind. (Lawhead, 2002 p. 284) we can also see the same notion applied in the field of knowledge representation in artificial intelligence.

Summary/Conclusion

An idea, in Locke's understanding, is "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks". With pen poised at the starting line to write Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke confesses "I thought that the first step towards satisfying several enquiries the mind of man was very apt to run into, was, to take a survey of our own understandings, examine our own powers, and see to what things they were adapted". Such few words reveal that Locke requires a clear tactical distinction between perception and thought, some system which could classify the different 'work' of the mind while awake. This desired distinction can be seen in his classification of simple and complex ideas. The most general definition of an idea is a perception of external objects in the mind which can be represent to one's self so that there is a likeness of the perception in perception. This is, the understanding of an idea is an active thing and ideas are the 'bricks and mortar' from which the mind creates all the rest of knowledge. Locke provides an account of the mind's activities using the analogy of a 'dark room' which we find ourselves in when we begin to understand: 'with only some faint and glimmering idea, knowledge is the putting together ideas so as to form a 'larger'. Knowledge relates to the correctness of the connections and the 'largeness' of the structure compared to the original simple ideas, 'when it leads the mind into all the parts of the complex, and views there the several simple ones'. Requiring a precise notation of significant differences between the things which merely happen to be in the mind as mental acts and are soon forgotten, and those things which are the objects of reflection and are available at some

time in the future, Locke comes to classify ideas as 'nothing but a representation of [an object] it to a person's mind. This led to a full classification of memory as a 'power to revive perceptions in our minds' and an attempt to categorize the experience of all forms of thinking, such as comparing, reasoning, and the like. Locke introduced the concept of the ¯tabula rasa? or blank slate, arguing that knowledge comes from experience, the potential of artificial intelligence to learn and adapt, and also the importance of the environment and experiences in shaping AI's ¯knowledge" and abilities can be seen to be in line with Locke's epistemology.

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